



Republic of Rwanda
Ministry of Justice

Opening Statement of the Government of Rwanda at the Fourth Universal Periodic Review

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**President of the Human Rights Council,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Members of the Troika,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good morning.

1. I have the honour to present, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Rwanda, our fourth national report to the Universal Periodic Review Working Group. This fourth engagement with the UPR since the mechanism's establishment reflects Rwanda's continued commitment to constructive dialogue and cooperation within this peer-review framework.
2. As H.E. Ambassador has just introduced our delegation, we are grateful for the opportunity to engage in this review, and we approach today's dialogue in a spirit of openness, constructive engagement, and shared learning.

Mr. President,

3. Rwanda attaches great importance to the Universal Periodic Review as a peer-review mechanism founded on equality among States, constructive dialogue, and mutual learning. We value the UPR not as a forum for rhetoric, but as a practical instrument that helps States to assess progress, identify gaps, strengthen institutions, and ultimately deliver better outcomes for people.
4. As Rwanda is reviewed, it is important to note how Rwanda has evolved since the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. In the immediate aftermath of the 1994 genocide, Rwanda faced near-total collapse: over 1, 000,000 tutsis were killed in 100 days, millions of Rwandans were displaced, the economy and infrastructure were totally shattered, and the justice system was left with fewer than 50 lawyers and in the medical field there were under 250 doctors. The country had to rebuild from devastation while pursuing reconciliation and justice.
5. Rwanda's challenging path to recovery was powerfully articulated by H.E. President Paul Kagame at the 2014 commemoration. Allow me to paraphrase parts of the speech: Rwanda was supposed to be a failed state. We could have become a permanent U.N. protectorate, with little hope of ever recovering our nationhood. We could have allowed the country to be physically divided, with groups deemed incompatible assigned to different corners. We could have been engulfed in a never-ending civil war with endless streams of refugees and our children sick and uneducated.
6. But we did not end up like that. What prevented these alternative scenarios was the choices of the people of Rwanda. After 1994, everything was a priority and our people were completely broken.
7. But we made three fundamental choices that guide us to this day. One — we chose to stay together. Two — we chose to be accountable to ourselves. Three — we chose to think big. We may make mistakes, like every country does. We own up and learn and move forward. There is more hard work ahead of us than behind us. But Rwandans, are ready.
8. In line with Rwanda's fundamental choices, the promotion and protection of human rights remain fundamental to establishing a secure and just environment

for all citizens. A clear example of this is Rwanda's National Strategy for Transformation 2 (NST2, 2024–2029) that includes human rights as a cross-cutting priority, emphasizing peace, security, justice, and accountable governance. While its main focus is economic growth and social transformation, NST2 explicitly links development goals with protecting rights, strengthening rule of law, and ensuring inclusive participation.

9. Since our last review in January 2021, during which Rwanda accepted 160 recommendations, we have pursued sustained efforts to implement those commitments through policy reforms, strengthened coordination, and investments in services and institutions. At the same time, we acknowledge that advancing human rights is an ongoing process—one that requires continuous improvement, openness to scrutiny, and collective responsibility among all national stakeholders, with the support of partners.

Mr. President,

10. Rwanda's fourth UPR report was prepared through an inclusive and consultative process coordinated by the Ministry of Justice through the National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-Up (NMIRF), which brings together representatives from all branches of government, the National Commission for Human Rights, and civil society to ensure coordinated reporting and systematic follow-up.

11. Over the past five years, nationwide consultations were conducted with a broad range of stakeholders to take stock of progress in implementing recommendations from the previous cycle and to inform the preparation of the present report, which was subsequently validated prior to submission. We thank all stakeholders for their contributions, in particular One UN Rwanda, including OHCHR and UNDP, and we appreciate the advance questions from delegations.

12. Mr. President, in presenting this statement, I will highlight selected developments since the previous review, focusing on measurable outcomes and key reforms, while also acknowledging remaining challenges and areas where continued effort is required.

CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS, GOVERNANCE, AND JUSTICE

Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

13. Permit me to begin with Civil and Political Rights, Governance, and Justice. Rwanda's efforts in this area have focused on strengthening constitutional guarantees—including freedoms of opinion, expression, press, association, and peaceful assembly—while enabling civic participation, expanding access to information, reinforcing accountability, and enhancing the effectiveness of justice institutions, alongside safeguarding the social cohesion and stability necessary for the enjoyment of all human rights.
14. Rwanda's media landscape has transformed significantly since 1994. In rebuilding after the genocide against the Tutsi, Rwanda has expanded the media sector while remaining attentive to the imperative of preventing hate speech and safeguarding national unity. Today, Rwanda has 39 radio stations and 24 TV stations, alongside five (5) print media houses and 169 licensed online media houses.
15. During the reporting period, Rwanda continued civic education and outreach initiatives in partnership with stakeholders. Since 2021, the Government, working with organisations including Rwanda Bridges to Justice, the Legal Aid Forum, and Coalition Umwana ku Isonga, conducted 42 awareness sessions on civil and political rights, complemented by 33 radio talk shows, 12 television programmes, and four public debates organised with the Association of Rwandan Journalists.
16. To promote access to information, 22 awareness campaigns on the Access to Information Law and political-party regulations reached 3,040 people, consultative dialogues engaged 840 participants, and 15 radio and television programmes reached approximately 4 million viewers. Rwanda has also expanded communication channels between citizens and public institutions through toll-free lines, digital platforms, suggestion boxes, and community

forums, while recognising the importance of responsible use of ICT and social media in a manner consistent with the protection of others and social cohesion.

17. Rwanda continues to modernise its legal and policy framework to align with evolving human rights standards, including through the ongoing revision of the media law in consultation with journalists' associations, civil society organisations, and legal professionals. Rwanda also formalised accession to the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime and its Additional Protocol¹ strengthening cooperation and safeguards against racist and xenophobic acts online, in accordance with the law.
18. In December 2023, Rwanda amended its law on offences and penalties, notably repealing provisions that had criminalized humiliation or insults against foreign officials. Ongoing work on media and access-to-information frameworks aims to further strengthen clarity, protections, and alignment with standards.
19. Rwanda's progress is also assessed through domestic monitoring tools. The Rwanda Media Barometer 2024 recorded an overall score of 76.7%, and Rwanda values such assessments as practical feedback to guide further reforms and investment, including on media development, professional capacity, sustainability, and working conditions.
20. Rwanda guarantees freedom of religion or belief under its Constitution and in accordance with the ICCPR and the African Charter. In July 2024, inspections of places of worship were conducted to address concerns relating to unsafe infrastructure, illegal operation, and harmful practices, leading to the temporary closure of approximately 8,000 prayer houses, the revocation of legal personality for 21 faith-based organisations, and the permanent closure of 43 unregistered faith-based organisations operating 189 unauthorised prayer houses. ADEPR also voluntarily closed more than 1,000 prayer houses. Reopening is pursued through a compliance-first pathway, and 142 prayer houses have reopened; as of 15 December 2025, 84 compliance applications had been submitted through Irembo, and no faith-based organisation has been denied re-registration to date.

¹ Presidential Order No. 020/01 of 26 January 2024.

21. Rwanda adopted Law No. 058/2024 governing NGOs to harmonise the legal framework, strengthen accountability, and streamline registration, including a two-month maximum decision period once a complete file is submitted. Since June 2024, and as of 10 January 2026, 394 NGOs applied (35 international, 359 national) and 133 were registered (21 international, 112 national), with remaining files under processing largely due to incompleteness; there have been no denials and therefore no appeals. The law provides a 24-month compliance period, with the grace period ending in July 2026.

Mr. President,

22. Rwanda continues to promote media professionalism and protection through capacity-building and awareness. Since 2021, 992 journalists have been trained, and 1,231 journalists and 528 human rights defenders participated in 30 sessions, including 100 trained on the right to information and freedom of expression. During the reporting period, 39 public awareness campaigns on media freedom were conducted by the Rwanda Media Commission, the National Commission for Human Rights, the Rwanda Governance Board, the Legal Aid Forum, and the Association of Rwandan Journalists.

23. Rwanda's governance and justice reforms remain anchored in unity and reconciliation. In July 2021, the Cabinet established the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement, consolidating mandates on unity, reconciliation, genocide prevention, survivor support, and civic education.

24. Through Itorero programmes, 128,282 citizens have been trained. Rwanda continues to implement the National Policy of Unity and Reconciliation and is developing the Rwanda National Unity Barometer to update indicators on trust, fairness, inclusiveness, and social cohesion. In 2023, UNESCO inscribed four genocide memorial sites—Nyamata, Murambi, Bisesero, and Kigali—on the World Heritage List.

Excellencies;

25. Turning to access to justice and judicial independence, Rwanda has advanced policy reforms and practical tools to improve efficiency and reduce barriers for citizens, including in rural areas. In this regard, the Cabinet approved the

National Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy and the Criminal Justice Policy on 8 September 2022, institutionalising mediation, conciliation, arbitration, and plea bargaining to promote timely and fair dispute resolution.

26. These reforms have delivered measurable results. By 16 January 2025, 29,358 cases had been resolved through plea bargaining and 8,707 cases through court-annexed mediation. Following the introduction of victim–offender mediation in September 2025, at least 763 cases had been resolved through this approach by 16 January 2026.
27. To further expand access to amicable dispute settlement, Rwanda inaugurated an Alternative Dispute Resolution Centre in Kigali in August 2024. From its inauguration to December 2025, the Centre mediated 197 cases and facilitated the resolution of 564 cases.
28. Rwanda has also continued to strengthen rehabilitation and reintegration: between 2021 and 2024, 9,387 inmates were released on parole and 434 received presidential pardon.
29. Legal aid outreach has been expanded through mobile clinics, which reached 147,829 people in rural and vulnerable communities, while legal education and outreach through these clinics benefited 2,174,279 people, alongside continued pro bono legal services provided by the Rwanda Bar Association and civil society partners.
30. Judicial independence remains constitutionally guaranteed. The Judiciary adopted its Strategic Plan (2024–2029), allocating over 141 billion Rwandan francs to reduce case backlog from 59 per cent in 2023/24 to 30 per cent by 2029, shorten waiting times, strengthen digitalisation, and improve working conditions.
31. These reforms are reflected in external and domestic assessments. The World Justice Project Rule of Law Index ranked Rwanda 40th out of 142 countries globally in 2024, and 39th out of 143 in 2025, while remaining first in Sub-Saharan Africa in both editions. The Chandler Good Government Index 2025 ranked Rwanda 2nd in Africa for overall governance and 29th globally for judicial

independence. Domestically, the Rwanda Governance Scorecard reported overall judicial performance between 73.47% and 79.5% from 2021 to 2025, with court-independence scores consistently between 94.3% and 96%.

Mr. President,

32. Rwanda continues to strengthen protection in areas of heightened vulnerability, including through intensified action against human trafficking and strengthened detention safeguards. Awareness campaigns in early 2024 reached over 50,000 people in border districts, and in May 2025 the Ministry of Justice trained 31 participants from key institutions on victim identification, investigation, and referral. Rwanda also expanded rehabilitation and reintegration through the Halfway Social Reintegration Centre launched in 2025, with an initial capacity of 250 female inmates nearing release and a planned capacity of 2,500 inmates in three phases, supported by strengthened oversight by the National Commission for Human Rights and a dedicated Rwanda Investigation Bureau desk to investigate missing person's claims.
33. In July and November–December 2025, the Government of Rwanda strengthened nationwide prevention and awareness on trafficking in persons (TIP), reaching around 500 youth through Itorero Indangamirwa, conducting a campaign across all districts through schools, communities and media, delivering over 14 radio and television programmes, using social media and SMS to mobile subscribers nationwide, and training hospitality staff in three major hotels, with 74, 63, and 45 participants respectively.

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Mr. President,

Distinguished Members of the Working Group,

34. Rwanda's approach to economic, social and cultural rights is people-centred, focused on progressively realising decent work, health, education, social

protection, and an adequate standard of living, while strengthening resilience to climate-related and other shocks.

35. On work and decent employment, Rwanda prioritised job creation and skills development. Between 2022 and 2024, Rwanda created 949,003 new off-farm jobs (165,586 in 2022, 352,572 in 2023, and 430,845 in 2024). Specialised training courses and the Skills Development Fund trained 4,027 and 23,296 people respectively, with a focus on youth.
36. Rwanda strengthened land access and tenure through Law No. 27/2021 governing land, which recognises land as a common heritage, guarantees equal rights to rural and urban land, grants citizens freehold rights, and provides a framework for foreign access primarily through emphyteutic leases for investment.
37. Rwanda expanded land services through digital tools, including the Land Administration Information System, the Land Administration Tracking Information System, and the national spatial data infrastructure. 59.9% of married couples jointly own land, while 24.6% of women and 14.3% of men report individual ownership; among farmers, 75.4% of women and 77% of men can sell land or use it as collateral.
38. Household electricity access rose from single-digit levels in the early 2000s to over 70% by 2024, driven by grid expansion and off-grid solar solutions, improving living standards and household-level services.
39. Household mobile phone ownership increased from less than 10% in the early 2000s to 85% by 2024, strengthening access to information, markets, and financial inclusion through mobile money.

Mr. President,

40. On the right to health, Rwanda continued strengthening the health system, expanding specialised services, and improving resilience. The Stunting

Prevention and Reduction Project launched in 2022, with World Bank support, contributed to reducing chronic malnutrition among children under five to 26.8% in 2025, down from 33.1% in 2000.

41. Rwanda has achieved notable progress in reducing under-five mortality, a key marker of child survival. The most recent DHS key indicators report show that the under-five mortality rate declined to about 36 deaths per 1,000 live births by 2025, down from 45 per 1,000 live births in 2020.
42. Rwanda has made strong strides in maternal health. The Demographic and Health Survey (2025) shows that 95% of women who gave birth in the two years preceding the survey received at least one antenatal care visit from a skilled provider, with 78% completing four or more visits, while skilled attendance at delivery reached 98%, reflecting sustained investments in accessible and quality maternal care.
43. Rwanda also launched the 4×4 Health Workforce Reform in 2023 to quadruple health professionals in four years, and opened the Kigali Referral Mental Health Centre in September 2023.
44. In August 2025, Rwanda passed a landmark law lowering the age of medical consent for sexual and reproductive health services from 18 to 15 years. This reform allows adolescents to access family planning and reproductive health services without parental consent, aiming to reduce teenage pregnancies and improve youth health outcomes. (Law n° 026/2025 of 17/09/2025 regulating healthcare services)
45. Rwanda continued investment in quality and regulation. By the fiscal year 2023/24, 27 of 54 hospitals had achieved Level II accreditation. The Rwanda Food and Drugs Authority reached WHO Maturity Level 3 in December 2024—one of only eight regulatory authorities in Africa at that level—reflecting strong regulatory capacity. Rwanda successfully contained the Marburg Virus Disease outbreak by end 2024 in line with WHO guidance.
46. Rwanda continues to invest in innovation and regional cooperation, including the host agreement for the African Medicines Agency signed in June 2023 and

initiatives supporting local vaccine production. In April 2025, Rwanda launched the Health Intelligence Center, consolidating real-time national health data to support evidence-based decision-making.

Mr. President,

47. Rwanda continued to advance the rights to food, water and sanitation: food security increased to 83% in 2024, up from 79% in 2017; households in single-dwelling units with access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation are estimated at 88.8%; and in 2024, 89.7% of households had access to an improved source of drinking water, 94% used improved sanitation facilities, and 72% used sanitation facilities that were not shared.
48. Access to safe drinking water in schools improved significantly: by FY 2023/24, coverage reached 73.4% in nursery schools, 69.0% in primary schools, 87.5% in secondary schools, and 77.4% in TVET institutions, up from 56.8%, 55.6%, 63.0%, and 73.5% respectively in FY 2021/22.

Mr. President,

49. Rwanda continues to integrate climate adaptation and mitigation into law and policy: at COP28 in December 2023, Rwanda launched its national carbon market framework under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement and introduced the Rwanda Green Taxonomy, with an implementation roadmap, including digital tools, launched in 2025.
50. Rwanda continues implementing the Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy and its Nationally Determined Contribution, including climate-smart agriculture, irrigation expansion, mechanisation, and landscape restoration, with achievements including 28,266 hectares of land restored, 1,593 rainwater harvesting systems installed, and 23,360 fruit trees planted.

51. Over the past decade, the Rwanda Green Fund mobilised USD 247 million, supported 46 projects, created 176,000 green jobs, and enabled 120,000 people to adapt to climate change; however, Rwanda recognises that climate impacts continue to affect lives and livelihoods, and that international cooperation remains essential, particularly on climate finance and technology transfer.

Mr. President,

52. Rwanda has also intensified poverty reduction and social protection measures. The national poverty rate declined from 39.8% in 2017 to 27.4% in 2024, lifting about 1.5 million people out of poverty, while extreme poverty fell from 11.3% to 5.4%. Poverty declined in urban areas from 18.8% to 12.7% and in rural areas from 44.0% to 31.6%.

53. Under the Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme, 1,244,545 beneficiaries from vulnerable households—including poor older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant and lactating women, caregivers at risk of malnutrition, and other vulnerable groups—receive monthly, non-contributory, and unconditional cash transfers. These transfers protect them from extreme poverty and income insecurity.

54. To improve targeting of the poorest and most vulnerable, Rwanda has operationalized the Imibereho Social Registry - information system (SR-IS), which currently registers 3,547,748 households representing 13,688,310 individuals. Linked with other Government systems, it enables accurate, data-driven beneficiary identification and more efficient and equitable social protection delivery.

55. Under the National Strategy for Sustainable Graduation out of Poverty, in 2023/24 over 315,327 poor households received tailored livelihood support. Classic Public Works implemented 407 projects in 2021–2022 and 428 in 2022–2023 across 350 sectors, while Expanded Public Works supported 100,136 poor households and 94,555 extremely poor households respectively. The recent assessment showing that **62%** of 315, 327 are on a successful pathway towards

graduating out of poverty within the last two years while one-third have demonstrated sustained resilience through diversified income sources.

56. To strengthen access to social protection and poverty graduation support, Rwanda has trained and deployed 14,719 Para-Social Workers nationwide. At the village level, they coach households, connect beneficiaries to opportunities and services, and promote sustainable livelihoods and resilience.
57. Rwanda also expanded support in housing and basic services for vulnerable families. Between 2017 and 2024, 14,547 vulnerable families received furnished houses, and 124 model villages were established. Complementary outreach initiatives also contributed to service delivery and community support.

Mr. President,

58. On the right to education, Rwanda continued to expand access, quality, and inclusion through infrastructure development, increased staffing, targeted measures for girls' education, and strengthened technical and vocational training. Since 2021, Rwanda constructed 20,781 classrooms. School staff increased from 138,038 in the fiscal year 2022/23 to 142,031 in 2023/24.
59. The education budget increased from 521.5 billion Rwandan francs in 2021/22 to 725.3 billion in 2022/23, and to 832.6 billion in 2023/24. Schools offering pre-primary education increased from 4,051 to 4,168, primary schools from 3,932 to 4,041, and TVET schools from 470 to 542.
60. Inclusive education continued to progress. Staff trained in special needs and inclusive education increased from 16,412 in 2022/23 to 17,164 in 2023/24, while the number of children benefiting rose from 40,342 to 42,476. The gross school enrolment rate for children aged 3 to 17 increased from 79.6% in 2022/23 to 92.1% in 2023/24, and the net enrolment rate rose from 53.3% to 59.6%.
61. Secondary enrolment under the 9- and 12-Year Basic Education programmes rose from 288,036 learners in 2008 to 912,035 in 2023/24. The school feeding programme now covers all students in public and government-aided schools and

contributed to enrolment growth from 3,614,004 in 2017 to 4,766,125 in 2024—an increase of 24.2%—while dropout declined from 9.4% in 2020 to 4.7% in 2024. Rwanda has also continued efforts to strengthen girls’ education: female enrolment in general and professional boarding schools increased from 67,219 in 2020/21 to 91,518 in 2023/24, and female participation in upper secondary STEM increased from 66,553 to 97,213 over the same period.

RIGHTS OF PERSONS IN SPECIFIC GROUPS

Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

62. Rwanda continues to prioritize the rights of persons in specific groups through targeted policies, legal reforms, and institutional measures to advance inclusion, protection, and equality.
63. On the rights of the child, Rwanda continued implementation of the Strategic Plan for the Integrated Child Rights Policy, addressing identity, care, health, education, justice, and participation. A major focus has been the transition from institutional care to family-based care through the *Tubarerere Mu Muryango programme*, which has been operational since 2013. Between 2021 and 2024, over 900 children were placed in families under the programme’s second phase. Implementation is coordinated by the National Child Development Agency through Child Protection Officers and a community-based network of 30,000 *Inshuti z’Umuryango*.
64. Rwanda strengthened capacity across the child protection and justice chain: between 2021 and 2024, 24 child-rights trainings reached 820 officials, 288 justice actors were trained in child justice, and a postgraduate diploma in child justice was introduced.
65. Rwanda has continued to prevent and eliminate child labour through awareness, enforcement and coordination. In 2023/24, this included 36 radio and television programmes, 36 community dialogues, and a year-long national campaign.

Reported cases declined from 86 between July 2022 and June 2023, with 39 referred for investigation, to 31 in 2023/24, with 19 referred.

66. Findings from the EICV7 survey (2023/24) show that the child labour rate among children aged 6–17 declined to around 3%, down from about 4% in 2016/17. Child labour remains more prevalent among older adolescents, at about 10.8% for those aged 16–17, while it was under 1% for children aged 6–12.
67. On adolescent sexual and reproductive health, Rwanda strengthened measures to prevent teenage pregnancy and improve access to services through 36 community dialogues, 6 national talk shows, and 120 school health clubs established or equipped since 2021, and continued efforts to protect children from sale, sexual exploitation and online abuse, including 2 national child online protection campaigns in 2023.

Mr. President,

68. On the rights of persons with disabilities, Rwanda continues to strengthen legal protections against discrimination and alignment with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities through ongoing legislative revision, guided by its 2025 Global Disability Summit commitments to remove barriers across education, health, employment, social protection, accessibility, justice and public life; by 2024, 78% of public buildings, including sports and entertainment facilities, were fully accessible.
69. Rwanda also continues to address the rights and well-being of persons with albinism. The 2022 Census recorded over 1,800 persons with albinism, and a national study is underway to strengthen data and planning.

Mr. President,

70. On the rights of women and gender equality, Rwanda continues to strengthen both prevention and response to gender-based violence and to advance women's leadership and empowerment. The number of *Isange One Stop Centres* increased from 44 in 2021 to 48, providing medical, psychosocial, legal and investigative support. Between January 2021 and June 2025, the National

Public Prosecution Authority received 37,403 GBV cases. Of these, 19,242 were filed in court, 17,742 were closed, and 349 were pending, reflecting a 98.8% case-resolution rate. During the same period, 14,815 perpetrators were convicted and sentenced.

71. Rwanda continues to register strong representation of women in decision-making, including 63.3 % of seats in the Chamber of Deputies, 53.8 % in the Senate, 52 % of primary-court judgeships, and 48 % of national-prosecutor posts, with senior leadership extending to the National Bank, NPPA, PSF, DGIE, Office of the Ombudsman, NCHR, RLRC, RCS, RNP, and RIB.
72. Women's economic inclusion has also progressed, including increases in savings and access to financial services. Under the Economic Recovery Fund, 31% of Phase I and 37% of Phase II resources supported women-owned businesses, and over 9,600 women received training in financial literacy and business planning.
73. Rwanda has made impressive strides in women's financial inclusion, a cornerstone of women's empowerment and economic participation. According to the FinScope 2024 report, the proportion of women accessing financial services has risen to 96%, up from 92% in 2020, closing the gender gap in financial inclusion to one percentage point compared to men.

Mr. President,

74. On older persons, Rwanda continued implementation of the National Older Persons Policy and strengthened access to health services, including routine screening for non-communicable diseases at all health centres. Rwanda has also introduced a categorical old-age grant effective the fiscal year 2024/25 to extend regular income support to vulnerable older persons, and Rwanda's ratification of the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Older Persons in January 2022 further reinforces legal protection and commitment.

Mr. President,

75. On refugees and asylum seekers, Rwanda enacted Law No. 042/2024 of 19 April 2024 governing refugees and asylum seekers, ensuring protection and rights consistent with ratified international instruments. Rwanda continues to promote socio-economic inclusion, including integration of refugee students into the national education system and expansion of access to national health insurance. From 2021 to 2024, 257 asylum seekers were granted refugee status. Rwanda acknowledges resource constraints affecting camp-based assistance and continues to promote self-reliance and responsibility-sharing through partnerships, including through the Emergency Transit Mechanism.

CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS

Mr. President,

76. Rwanda recognises that progress in advancing human rights has continued to face contextual and structural challenges that have affected the pace of implementing some recommendations.

77. The enduring legacy of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi and evolving regional dynamics, amplified by digital technologies, have contributed to online hate speech, including genocide denial and minimisation—challenges that Rwanda continues to address through prevention, education, and lawful measures that protect social cohesion and the dignity and safety of all.

78. The COVID-19 pandemic and its aftershocks disrupted service delivery and slowed economic growth during a period when recovery had to be prioritised.

79. Rwanda has also faced increasing climate-related impacts, compounded by our terrain, leading to loss of lives, property, and livelihoods.

80. Persistent social challenges, including teenage pregnancy and overcrowding in correctional facilities, require sustained and coordinated interventions.

81. Rwanda remains committed to addressing these constraints through continued reforms, prevention strategies, and partnership with all stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

82. In conclusion, Rwanda reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights for all persons on its territory. We approach this review in a spirit of openness and constructive engagement. We are here to listen, to respond, and to consider recommendations in good faith—guided by our Constitution, our international obligations, and our national priorities.

83. Rwanda believes that progress is strengthened when it is pursued in partnership. We therefore appreciate the contribution of civil society, national institutions, the private sector, and development partners, including United Nations agencies, whose support continues to be valuable as we pursue reforms and strengthen service delivery.

84. Mr. President, we thank you and the members of the Troika for guiding this process, and we thank all delegations for their attention. We look forward to an interactive dialogue and to the recommendations that will support our continued progress.

I thank you.