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NATIONS  
RWANDA



# TURI KUMWE

Newsletter | 2022 Quarter 1

# FOREWORD



**Mr. Fodé Ndiaye**  
UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR

Dear Esteemed Partners and Readers,

Welcome to this year's UN Rwanda first quarter of 2022 Newsletter!

In March, Rwanda has been the epicenter of sustainable development in Africa. First the 8 Africa Regional Forum for Sustainable Development opened by HE Paul Kagame, President of the Republic in the presence of the Deputy Secretary-General, convened ministers, UN senior officials to discuss the best way to build forward better from COVID-19 to achieve the SDGs.

Second, the DSG's interaction with the Rwanda UNCT and the Africa Resident Coordinators and the Africa RCs' mini-retreat (35 physically present in Kigali) to better position UN to continue partnering with Governments, private sector and CSOs in the important journey of the SDGs, leaving no one behind. Last but not least the first awarding ceremony in Africa of Gender Seal and the Private sector to recognize the important work on gender and women empowerment by prominent private and public sector institutions.

History in the making. Before the ARFSD, panel discussions engage youth and women organizations and science and technology, critical elements of the required Africa's transformation. All these events have happened in person in Rwanda because of the tremendous results of the Government and its partners, including UN, in fighting COVID-19 with a rate of 60% of fully vaccinated population. The economy is opening up and recovery is on its way!

Hosting the ARFSD was a great opportunity to showcase our UN and Government collective efforts accelerating the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and we say thank you!

All the human-interest stories that you will read are a reflection of what the Sustainable development agenda is about: reaching the last mile for the vulnerable and excluded and fostering a more equitable, peaceful, inclusive and just society. Learning self-love through peer education by UNICEF, refugee women who are building fortunes and self-reliance through UNHCR support, IOM's interventions for strengthened social cohesion and psycho-social well-being in Rusizi and Bukavu, Young People in Rwanda committed to accelerate the implementation of population and development (ICPD25) action plan with UNFPA, UN Women "Rings the Bell" to highlight a business case for gender equality, FAO Rwanda's twofold contribution in rural women empowerment, Irrigation, and WASH, and From tragedy to hope: Landslide survivors in Karongi District by UNDP.

We are still in the month of gender celebration. The International Women's Day "Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow", calls for our collective action and shared responsibility on two of the biggest challenges of our planet: a climate resilient and friendly humanity and generation equality! COP27, the Conference on climate, will be an opportunity to reiterate our global commitment in the soil of Africa. Egypt will host in November 2022! An opportunity also for Rwanda to show its strong leadership on climate and environment action! Let us imagine a gender equal world. A world free of bias, stereotypes and discrimination. A world that's diverse and better for all. Together we can defeat the pessimism on climate and gender equality and enhance hope. Rwanda will continue to be the go-to location to find solutions on global challenges:

The upcoming Conferences: Commonwealth Heads of Government (CHOGM), Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) and the World Telecommunication Development Conference to be held in Kigali in 2022 will be opportunities for advocacy on various subject matters relevant to us all, including climate and environment, socio-economic needs, digital revolution among others.

I and the UN Family in Rwanda thank the Government, the private sector, the CSOs and all partners for our strong partnership for continuing delivering on national priorities, as we reiterated, during the last Development Partner Retreat in March, our commitment to redouble our services for the people, transforming their lives, mainly for the vulnerable ones. Let us do more, better and differently, in this exciting journey but full of challenges as COVID-19 has taught us and as the consequences of the Ukraine crisis are unfolding. More than ever, vulnerabilities, uncertainties, complexity and ambiguities remain the drivers of our context. But our agility, our creativity, our strongness, our togetherness, our dedication and professionalism, as shown by our March UNCT team building retreat, dictate only one course of action: success! This is more relevant in our country to uphold the torch of hope!

Indeed, every April, the world joins Rwanda to commemorate the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. I and the UN family stand together in solidarity with all Rwandans, with all fallen colleagues and their families! Never again should be a reality here and everywhere. Remember, renew, reunite! The UN will hold its Commemoration on 12th April, 2022 and I welcome you all to join us virtually.

I wish you good health and prosperity.

Turi kumwe!





Delegates ringing the bell at 'Ring the Bell' event in Rwanda.



## UN WOMEN "RINGS THE BELL" TO HIGHLIGHT A BUSINESS CASE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

In celebration of International Women’s Month on 11 March, UN Women Rwanda, Rwanda Stock Exchange and International Finance Corporation hosted the “Ring the Bell for Gender Equality event” for the sixth time in Rwanda, along with 118 other stock exchanges around the world to raise awareness about the pivotal role the private sector can play in advancing gender equality.

The occasion brought together different players in the finance sector, entrepreneurs, the Central Bank, varsity and high school students to discuss the role and opportunities for the private sector to advance gender equality and sustainable development.

The event called for tangible commitments from stock exchanges, market regulator among other players to advance gender equality, to promote increased female representation in boardrooms and growing the pipeline of female talent to ascend to top positions in their markets.

The Vice Governor of the Central Bank and the guest of honor, Soraya Hakuziyaremye re-emphasized the crucial role of the private sector in driving gender equality and encourages private sector increase women participation in decision-making positions. She further added that



**despite the commendable equal academic opportunities presented to women, equal opportunities in access to finance remain a challenge. If capital is channeled to companies that exhibit inclusion, gender equity as values, their peers will start adopting those values.**



UN Women’s Denise Umwali Wa Ngoga, Gender Joint Programme Manager said that the “partnership with Rwanda Stock Exchange gives a clear picture of what can be achieved with regards to gender equality and women empowerment and called for multisectoral collaboration.



# LEARNING SELF-LOVE THROUGH PEER EDUCATION



Rita visits the community center to connect with her peers and discuss about reproductive health.

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## UNICEF IS HELPING YOUTH IN RWANDA TO GAIN AWARENESS ON REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH TO BECOME RESPONSIBLE AND MATURE ADOLESCENTS

Rita became pregnant at the tender age of 18 years old and face a lot of challenges. She had to drop out of school to deal with pregnancy and raise the baby alone as the father had abandoned her. At the moment when she was confused about life, she met the peer volunteer in her community, Gilbert Ntigurirwa.

In 2020, UNICEF partnered with Society for Family Health (SFH) Rwanda to improve access to HIV services among young people aged 15-24 years in Gatsibo district. The project, called UBUZIMA BWIZA, ISHEMA RYANJYE, aims to reduce the rate of new HIV infections and pregnancies among girls and young women through peer education on reproductive health.

Through peer volunteer support, youth in Rwanda gain more knowledge and confidence in addressing their needs for sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention. In 2021, over 50,000 youths were reached with HIV prevention and gender-based violence messages. About 16,000 youths received HIV testing and counseling and roughly 50,000 condoms were distributed for free through HIV outreach activities.

“

Peer volunteers taught me to love myself and become a stronger person for me and my daughter,” Rita says, “I actively participate in these programs and even took my younger sister to the youth corner. My only wish is that what happened to me never happens to my family and friends, she concludes.

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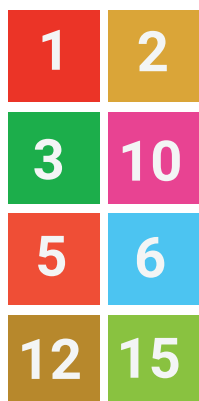


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# FAO RWANDA'S TWOFOLD CONTRIBUTION IN RURAL WOMEN EMPOWERMENT, IRRIGATION, AND WASH

*Alphonsine fetching water from the spring catchment tap.*



Alphonsine Mukeshimana is a farmer and mother of 8 children in Ngoma district, Eastern Rwanda near the Burundi border. Every day for many years she made a 3-hour journey to fetch water to use at home. The water wasn't clean.

"My children and I had to fetch very dirty water, which always caused us intestinal worms," she said.

One day this struggle changed, thanks to the UN's joint project 'Rural Women Economic Empowerment (RWEE)' implemented by four UN agencies. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, UN Women, World Food Programme, and International Fund for Agricultural Development.

FAO as a participating Agency built a spring catchment tap. Now it only takes Alphonsine 30 minutes to get water.

"But since you gave us clean water, we are healthy, we do not suffer from diseases related to dirty water because we now drink pure and clean water." Said Alphonsine Mukeshimana, farmer.

The spring was initially planned for irrigation, supporting the Nkabikorera cooperative who grow maize and tomatoes. In the dry season, this spring catchment serves nine villages and around 300 people fetch clean water from here daily.

"The leadership of Ngoma district highly thanks FAO and RWEE for the tremendous and impactful activities the project continues to carry out for the betterment of people of our district especially of Jarama sector," said Nathalie Niyonagira, Mayor of Ngoma District.



**This is what FAO, the UN is all about. To make sure that we add our modest contribution to what can make the lives of rural women conducive to unleashing their potential,**



Said Gualbert Gbehounou,  
FAO Rwanda Representative

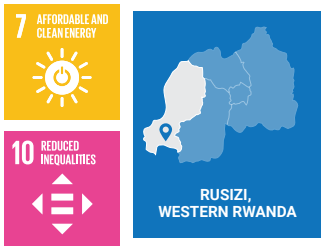
This project was possible thanks to financial contributions from the government of Sweden through the Swedish Development Cooperation Agency and through the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

 [Video version](#)





Discussions with women beneficiaries of ARCT interventions in Rusizi.



## IOM'S INTERVENTIONS FOR STRENGTHENED SOCIAL COHESION AND PSYCHO-SOCIAL WELL-BEING IN RUSIZI AND BUKAVU

Cross-border trade can be a powerful multiplier of wealth. However, too frequently small scale cross-border traders and border communities encounter major challenges in benefitting from it. It is in this perspective that IOM is working to strengthen social cohesion and psycho-social well-being of border communities, small scale cross-border traders and porters.

Between 2019 and 2020, a baseline assessment was conducted in Rusizi/Bukavu and its preliminary findings were discussed with local communities, authorities and partners. The assessment highlighted the challenges experienced particularly by women working as cross-border traders and porters, as well as the criticality of their psycho-social distress. It also paved the way to an operational plan for an intervention aimed at addressing the specific vulnerabilities of cross-border traders and porters working in the area of Rusizi and Bukavu.

In September 2021, IOM's implementing partners started providing psychosocial support to the most vulnerable actors at the border. In Rwanda, activities implemented ranged from training sessions for community psycho-social workers,

to individual, couple and group counselling and advocacy meeting to discuss with relevant authorities the challenges encountered by cross-border traders and porters in their work and daily life.

One of the beneficiaries narrates as follows the immediate benefits of one of the training sessions on the psycho-social approach: "I used to be angry at my business partner as I saw she always quiet and seemed not happy to work with me {...}.

After this training, I realise that she may be having trauma caused by the death of her husband and child, as she almost have all the symptoms described, just that I never realised.

Now I have the skills to listen to her and from here, I intend to approach her in order to be able to explore her problems and help her and also improve communication for our business to go well."

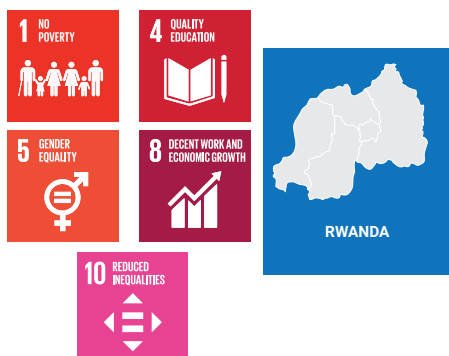
The activities are funded by the European Union under the "Huduma Biashara Usalama", that aims at establishing a One Stop Border Post at the Point of Entry Rusizi II (Rwanda-DR Congo).



# THRIVING REFUGEE WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN RWANDA

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UNCDF is working to put in place a sustainable strategy of financial inclusion



Through the [Rwanda - Expanding Financial Access & Digital and Financial Literacy for Refugees \(REFAD\) programme](#), UNCDF and its partners aim to increase access to and usage of safe, affordable, and convenient financial services by refugees in refugee camps and host communities. By increasing refugees' digital and financial literacy, the programme seeks to boost its beneficiaries' confidence in using financial services including digital financial solutions and ultimately works towards reducing poverty through business and entrepreneurship, supporting local economic development, and increasing financial inclusion.

Discover in this article how UNCDF and partners are working in collaboration with women entrepreneurs to put in place a sustainable strategy of inclusion for a promising future

## UNCDF AND ITS PARTNERS AIM TO INCREASE ACCESS TO AND USAGE OF SAFE, AFFORDABLE, AND CONVENIENT FINANCIAL SERVICES BY REFUGEES IN REFUGEE CAMPS AND HOST COMMUNITIES.

[#BreakingtheBias](#)

 [Read more](#)





# FROM HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS TO ENTREPRENEURS

*Iribagiza Nakabonye (right) and one of her colleagues in a maize farm run by Best Future Women Company.*



## MEET KIZIBA REFUGEE WOMEN WHO ARE BUILDING FORTUNES AND SELF-RELIANCE

Growing up in Kiziba Refugee Camp, Iribagiza Nakabonye and her family from the Democratic Republic of Congo were heavily relying on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs. Now, the 40-year-old woman who has been living in the camp since 1996, is inspiring self-reliance among the refugees and host communities through farming and selling foodstuffs.

“Venturing into small businesses has significantly changed my life,” Nakabonye says. “I no longer depend on humanitarian assistance. I am a proud entrepreneur whose activities benefit not only my family but also other refugees and our host community.”

At Kiziba refugee camp, located in Karongi District in the western part of Rwanda, the mother of seven works together with other four refugee women at ‘Best Future Women Company’, a venture they established a few years ago. They run a restaurant in the refugee camp and do farming activities in the neighbouring community as well.

Their company supplies foods and beverages for various events and activities in the camp. They have also been growing maize and Irish potatoes over the last six years, on more than 3 hectares of land they leased.

As an example of how profitable their business is, Nakabonye says that in March and April 2021, Best Future Women Company secured a tender to supply lunch, snacks, and beverages, banking Frw 8 million (8000 USD) profit in just two months.

“We invested Rwf 5 million (5000 USD) and registered a turnover of Rwf 13 million (13000 USD) through supplying foods and beverages in two months. That’s not bad for us,” Nakabonye proudly shares.

They also play key role in promoting environmental protection and disaster risk reduction. The land in Karongi, where the Kiziba refugee camp is located is hilly and sloppy, and thus prone to soil erosion. Their farming activity, planting different crops in rotation, creating water channels and radical terraces are preventing landslides.

 [Read more](#)







Representatives from different organizations were present to discuss on the implementation of ICPD25 commitment and the progress made from the action plan



## YOUNG PEOPLE IN RWANDA COMMIT TO ACCELERATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ICPD25 ACTION PLAN

Kigali, 16 March 2022, The Ministry of Health in collaboration with UNFPA and AfriYAN organized a stakeholder's reflection meeting on the implementation of Rwanda ICPD25 commitments to self-evaluate on the progress made since the dissemination of the action plan and shaping the next steps towards achieving the Rwanda commitments with a focus on the meaningful youth participation towards achieving the universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights by 2030.

In his opening remarks Minister of State in the Ministry of Health Dr. Tharcisse MPUNGA stressed the role of Rwanda ICPD25 Commitments towards the achievement of the SDGs and recommended stakeholders for their tireless support towards the realization of social economic conditions for all Rwandans.

"The Rwanda ICPD25 Commitments are part of the enormous momentum around efforts to achieve the SDGs, including a renewed commitment to "health for all." Said Dr. MPUNGA Tharcisse

Rwanda in collaboration with development partners have adopted the reintegration

of Comprehensive Sexuality Education program in school curriculum to advance the Increase demand for Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health service.

"Our role as a Ministry is to keep educating our young girls on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. One of our areas of commitment under the ICPD25 Commitments regards Teenage Pregnancies. We have a big role to play in preventing them." Dr Uwamariya Valentine, Minister of Education

"Our commitment is to ensure proper accountability on issues affecting us. We aim to be at the forefront of the realization of the commitments for a country where we live a quality life with dignity, capacity and opportunity to realize our full potential." Evode Niyibizi, Country Director AfriYAN Rwanda.

The validated Rwanda Action Plan prioritizes achieving zero unmet need for family planning, zero preventable maternal deaths, and zero gender-based violence and practices that harm women and girls, all by 2030. UNFPA reiterated its full and continued commitment to support the Government of Rwanda and all partners in advancing the ICPD agenda.

"Let me re-affirm UNFPA's commitment and support to the implementation of the Commitments and to our continued collaboration and partnership as we ensure that the ICPD25 Commitments are achieved in Rwanda." Kwabena Asante Ntiamoah, UNFPA Representative.





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# FROM TRAGEDY TO HOPE

<b>3</b> GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	<b>17</b> PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	 KARONGI, WESTERN RWANDA
<b>13</b> CLIMATE ACTION	<b>15</b> LIFE ON LAND	

## LANDSLIDE SURVIVORS IN KARONGI DISTRICT

For the people of Rwankuba in Karongi District, May 6, 2018, was the day their world almost ended: a mountain gave way after intense rainfall and destroyed everything in its path. Eighteen people were killed, and at least 12 others were injured.

With funding from UNDP Rwanda, the Rwandan Ministry in charge of emergency management (MINEMA) provided 222 affected households with RWF 100,000 each, to support their ability to build back better.

Three and a half years later, their recovery is on solid ground, as the families have found productive ways to invest the funds and rebuild.

Nyampeta Appolinaire, his wife Nyirayeze Domitille, and their granddaughter Muhayimana Jeanette were asleep together when Nyampeta was startled awake.

“I heard the first noise but couldn’t make out what it was,” he recalls.

“In a split second, my legs were trapped under the rocks. The house had fallen on us.

I immediately knew that my grandson, who was asleep in another room would not survive.”

Nyampeta was gravely wounded, and he was still in the hospital when his grandson was buried.

The family lost everything except for a hoe and two goats. For several months, they lived at a neighbors’ house.

But with the support of UNDP and MINEMA, they slowly built a new house and began raising pigs for sale at a nearby livestock market.

They plan to grow maize and beans where their house once stood.





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# AS A DOCTOR THERE ARE CALLS YOU JUST CAN'T IGNORE

*Dr Emile Rwamasirabo discussing Operation Save the Neighbor*



The fourth COVID-19 wave hit the country in early 2022, Rwanda went through a surge in new cases and a spike in deaths. Something had to be done, but what? Rwanda's response to the pandemic had already been rapid, cross-cutting, structured and well-coordinated.



**When you are a medical professional and there is a Health emergency in your community it is your responsibility to be part of the solution.**  
said Dr Emile Rwamasirabo.



Dr Rwamasirabo is a Urological Surgeon, recipient of the Arnold P Gold Award for Humanism in Medicine and a consultant for the World Health Organization (WHO). Like the other doctors in Rwanda Medical Association (RMA) he was paired with community Health workers (CHWs) and assigned COVID-19 patients in Home Based Care.

"As CHWs our skills are limited and the population is aware. Knowing we could ring a renowned Doctor for support boosted our confidence and created trust in the population.

The support system built around us made the crisis bearable." said Rutagarama Wendislas Lead CHW in Gasabo.

With over 2500 cases in 501 villages, Gasabo District had the highest COVID-19 infection rate in the country. Two weeks into the Operation, Doctors noticed dramatic changes. Visits had increased from 30% to 92% coverage and 82% of the patients in Home Based Care had had their oxygen saturation monitored regularly. This allowed early referrals and a decrease in deaths.

"The greatest asset of Rwanda's health system is its people and an innovative spirit. This is a country with limited resources and yet it is making it to the top of a number of global rankings. This is facilitated by the country's belief in home-grown solutions. As a result, WHO finds it easier to provide technical support to the country in meeting its national objectives and targets. We hope that Operation Save the Neighbor will be replicated elsewhere, even beyond crisis times" said Dr Brian Chirombo, WHO Representative in Rwanda.

In Sept 2020, COVID-19 Home Based Care (HBC) was introduced to relieve pressure on Health Facilities. Guidance on home-based COVID-19 care issued by WHO was adapted to the country context with the technical support from the WHO country office. The guidelines produced were instrumental in shaping the country's response. As of end March 2022, 98% of cumulative COVID-19 confirmed cases in Rwanda are being treated from their homes



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# UN DEPUTY CHIEF URGES RESIDENT COORDINATORS IN AFRICA TO MAXIMIZE THEIR CONVENING POWER TO RESCUE THE SDGs

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Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed thanked Resident Coordinators in Africa for their leadership and commitment to supporting all countries and their people at a time of profound global challenge.



Now, the central issue for us is how we will rescue the SDGs and how we are going to bring the UN system along with us. So your coordinating and convening roles will be leaned upon a big-time,



The UN Deputy Secretary-General urged UN Resident Coordinators across Africa to turn a broad range of profound challenges into opportunities with their convening power to support countries for much-needed transformation to “rescue the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).”

Following the opening ceremony of the eighth Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, Amina J. Mohammed met with Resident Coordinators who gathered in Kigali, Rwanda, from all over the continent.

The annual meeting brought a critical touch-point opportunity to identify common priorities, challenges,

and ways to overcome them towards the achievement of the SDGs in the Decade of Action and African Union’s Agenda 2063. Speaking to 29 Resident Coordinators physically present at the Kigali Convention Center and others virtually, she tabled a wide spectrum of emerging issues facing Africa.

On the COVID-19 pandemic, she noted that Africa would be left behind on the recovery until everyone gets vaccines, stressing the lack of vaccine equity. She touched on widening gaps in digital connectivity, looming debt crisis, all too slow progress in gender equality, and Africa on the frontlines of the climate crisis.

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Resident Coordinators across Africa met with the Deputy Secretary-General in Kigali, Rwanda

