

FOREWORD



Ozonnia Ojielo UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR

Dear esteemed partners and colleagues,

I am thrilled to share with you the second edition of the UN Rwanda Newsletter. This publication serves as a testament to the incredible progress and inspiring stories that have emerged from various Joint Programmes we are implementing with your excellent and unwavering support and fruitful partnership.

Within the pages of this newsletter, you will discover stories that embody the resilience, innovation, and determination of the people of Rwanda. These stories highlight the transformative power of collaborative efforts and the positive impact that the United Nations Country Team, in partnership with the Government of Rwanda and Development Partners, made in various areas of development.

One such story takes us to Eastern Rwanda, at Maranyundo Girls School, where a group of talented young minds shine in the field of robotics.

Through their dedication and creativity, these girls are defying expectations and embracing a world of endless possibilities.

We also delve into the realm of healthcare, where the UN's 1000 Health Posts Joint Programme has brought relief to communities, ensuring easier access to vital healthcare services. Testimonies of Mothers like Nimuyizere 's echo the sentiments of countless individuals who no longer have to endure long distances to receive the care they need.

In Western Rwanda, meet Mr. Emmanuel Nahayo, a young engineer who lives with albinism. Inclusion and empowerment of people with disabilities are at the forefront of our endeavours and the powerful words of Nahayo show that together we can strive to create a society that embraces diversity and recognizes the inherent strength in every individual. Inclusion is a strength.

There is Hope Away from Home. This Newsletter will also take you to Southern Rwanda, in Mugombwa Refugee Camp. The spirit of resilience continues to prevail in the face of adversity, as demonstrated by Desange Nyiramugisha, a Congolese refugee who has transformed her family's life through agricultural initiatives. By engaging in farming, she has ensured food security and provided hope and inspiration to those facing similar challenges.

Dear Readers,

In this quarter the United Nations Country Team has carried out various activities and events, but one of them is the commemoration of the second International Day for Countering Hate Speech. In the hybrid event, education emerged as a powerful tool in the fight against hate speech, as diplomats and experts emphasized its significance in countering Hate Speech and preventing tragedies like the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. Through education, we can create a more inclusive and compassionate world.

Early June, I had the pleasure to welcome Mrs. Rabab Fatima, UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing States. She had very productive engagements with our government counterparts on the upcoming 3rd United Nations Conference on the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3), which Rwanda will host in June next year. In her words, "Rwanda is ready."

In this quarter we also embarked on crafting the new UN Rwanda Common Country Analysis which will inspire our next Cooperation Framework.

This was a snapshot of what you are going to read, and I invite you to immerse yourself in the compelling human-interest stories contained within this newsletter, stories that exemplify the remarkable progress and boundless potential of Rwanda. May they inspire you to continue supporting our shared vision of achieving Sustainable Development Goals Leaving No one Behind.

Turikumwe!











Students from Maranyundo Girls School rejoiced in celebration following their triumphant victory in the Firtst Lego League competition.

SHINING IN ROBOTICS: MARANYUNDO GIRLS SCHOOL'S INSPIRING STORY

In the radiant embrace of midday sun, within the walls of Maranyundo Girls School, nestled in the picturesque Bugesera district of Eastern Rwanda, a scene of captivating creativity unfolds. Gathered around a table, a spirited group of ten girls immerse themselves in a realm that might appear as mere toys to an unobservant guest. Yet, this space holds a magical name: the Maker Space.

With hushed voices brimming with enthusiasm, these young minds exchange ideas, their hands alight on a vibrant tapestry of sketches, delicate metals, and whimsical car-like contraptions. These are actually small robots. Shania Mwiza, a student of senior five in Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics, is one of these talented girls.

"Just as its name, Maker Space, is a place where we come to make, express our ideas, and make tangible things, from our ideas. We use the materials available to produce something. We might not make a real robot, but we make an ideal robot of what we want to produce if we ever get enough materials" she said.

"This small robot you see is supplying renewable energy by pushing a button, it manipulates a windmill. It also works in a hydroelectric power station, in solar energy, etc. Every robot we make here is to solve problems we see in our environment. We saw how a robot can do many things on its own to solve those problems in case, in the future, there is any situation where there is not a person figure to be addressing those challenges or there is a lot of work to do, and you cannot be everywhere at the same time. You see the industrialisation is growing, there will be a lot of work to be done. We are trying to use robots to carry out those missions" she added.

Teaching students, especially girls, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics is of paramount importance. These disciplines ignite curiosity, foster problem-solving skills, and cultivate a passion for exploration.

By empowering young minds with these tools, educators unleash their potential as architects of a brighter future. That is exactly what Maranyundo Girls School, the Government of Rwanda, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, (UNESCO), and partners are doing.









Emillien Nimuyizere breastfeeding her newborn baby as she interacts with the nurse

"IT WAS HECTIC," NIMUYIZERE EXPRESSES A SIGH OF RELIEF AS SHE NO LONGER HAS TO WALK A LONG DISTANCE TO ACCESS HEALTHCARE SERVICES, THANKS TO THE UN'S 1000 HEALTH POSTS JOINT PROGRAMME.

When you enter Girubuzima Health Post-Batima compound, you get welcomed by the symphony of newborn cries, echoing with the joy of new life. The air is filled with anticipation as mothers of the little ones, born just a day before or on the cusp of their first breath, eagerly await their discharge to embark on the journey home.

Outside at the reception, several patients from the neighbourhood areas are comfortably seated, waiting to meet a health care provider and among them are young children, expecting mothers, and students, waiting for their names to be read to enter the consultation room.

Girubuzima Health Post-Batima is located in Mbuganzeri village, Batima cell, Rweru sector, Bugesera district in the Eastern province. This is approximately five kilometres from the main road heading to Nemba One Stop Border Post, Eastern Rwanda.

In the waiting room, two expectant mothers are tirelessly and patiently waiting for their time to exultantly cradle their lovely angels. Meanwhile, on another bed, Emillien Nimuyizere beaming with excitement had just given birth to a handsome baby boy eight hours before.

"This is my firstborn, I'm super excited, and I thank the nurses and management of Batima health post who have untiringly helped me to deliver my son", The 25 years old and smiling mother said as she kept on prudently breastfeeding her baby hov

The mother is in a healthy mood as she waits to be discharged in a few hours. Madam Nimuyizere is among the 10 mothers who delivered from this health post in the first two weeks of June, in addition to 34 mothers who delivered at Batima HP in the previous month. Before the upgrade of this facility from First-Generation to Second-Generation Health Post, mothers like Nimuyizere and other patients were supposed to walk for around 20 km to access health services at Nzangwa Health Centre.

However, upgrading the new health post and extending services closer to the community has made their lives easier. "It was so hectic. We used to spend almost 2 hours walking to Nzangwa Healthcare Centre. Today I used almost 45 minutes to reach here. We are all in jubilation, especially expectant mothers living around this area. Thanks to the United Nations and the Government of Rwanda" she said smiling.













UN Rwanda collaborates with various Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to advance the Leave No One Behind principle

"INCLUSION IS STRENGTH" NAHAYO COMMENDS THE UN'S JOINT PROGRAMME ON INCLUSION

Emmanuel Nahayo Barekayo, 27, lives in Nyamasheke district, Western Rwanda. Turikumwe met him in Kigali, where he was attending the celebration of the 9th International Albinism Awareness Day. A day dedicated to raising awareness about the rights and challenges faced by individuals with albinism.

"This day means a lot to me and other people with albinism I represent in my district. It reminds us of all that disability is not inability," said Barekayo.

Albinism, a genetic condition characterised by a lack of pigmentation in the skin, hair, and eyes, affects individuals across Rwanda and around the globe. Sadly, it is often accompanied by discrimination, stigma, and various forms of violence. Barekayo, an engineer, expresses gratitude for the sound policies like the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities; Inclusive Education Policy; National Rehabilitation Policy; Accessible Infrastructure Policy; Employment and Entrepreneurship Promotion Policy for Persons with Disabilities; and many more established by the Government of Rwanda.

He also lauds the support of the United Nations and partners, noting a positive mindset shift in how Rwandans now perceive people with albinism.

"Considering the progress made in addressing the issue of discrimination, I can say that we have reached an improved level. When I apply for a job or a tender, I am treated equally as other applicants who do not live with Albinism. The situation has truly improved" he added.

This is one of the results of various programmes that are implemented by partners across the country to foster the inclusion of people with disabilities in all of Rwanda's socio-economic development plans.

From January 2022, the United Nations is implementing a Joint Programme titled "Strengthening disability inclusion accountability and Coordination in Rwanda" This Joint Programme brings together 5 participating UN Agencies, UNDP as a lead technical agency, UNICEF, UN Women, UNFPA, and UNHCR.

These agencies collaborate with the Government of Rwanda and the National Union of Disability Organisations in Rwanda (NUDOR), which serves as an umbrella for several Organisations of People with Disability. One of its members is the Organisation for Integration and Promotion of People with Albinism (OIPPA), to which Mr. Nahayo belongs.













Desange Nyiramugisha stands in her living room checking on her maize produce.

SOWING SEEDS OF HOPE: REFUGEE EMPOWERMENT THROUGH AGRICULTURE IN RWANDA

Living as a refugee in a camp presents numerous physical and emotional shocks, but adequate food is one of the major timely concerns. With rising prices and shrinking aid to refugees globally, the limited food supply exacerbates the already difficult living conditions for families in the camp.

However, Desange Nyiramugisha, a Congolese refugee residing in the Mugombwa Refugee Camp in the Gisagara district of Southern Rwanda, has managed to overcome these prevalent adversaries by embracing farming to transform her family's life.

Engaging in maize farming through the UN Rwanda's Joint Programme, commonly known as the "Misizi Marshland Project" Nyiramugisha is among the successful refugees who have ensured an ample food supply for her loved ones, defying all the odds. "Our monthly allowance is insufficient, and you know buying food is expensive. But with this project, when I cultivate and harvest maize and another foodstuff, my children drink porridge, and we also eat the beans we harvest". She said, adding, "My life is different from that of a refugee who doesn't farm."

Nyiramugisha has been living in Rwanda as a refugee for the last 12 years since she fled from her home country, the Democratic Republic of Congo. She explains how her life has improved with a great sense of hope and peace.

The Misizi Marshland Joint Programme began in 2018 and brought together UNHCR, FAO, and WFP.

IKEA Foundation funded it with the aim to enhance the socio-economic inclusion of refugees while increasing livelihood opportunities and food security for both refugees and Rwandans.

For the project to be successful and benefit the community, the district authority provided the land. At the same time, FAO contributed seeds and technical expertise, while UNHCR engaged the refugee communities, in registering and participating in agriculture activities. WFP supported the development of marshland agriculture and linked farmers with markets. By working side by side on farms and by sharing resources, the Joint Programme contributed to boosting the peaceful coexistence of refugees and host communities "This programme united us. You cannot tell who a refugee is and who is not," said Jean Niyitegeka, a Gisagara district resident.

Ms. Aissatou Masseck Dieng-Ndiaye, UNHCR Representative, believes that the partnership between the Government, host communities, refugees, and the participating United Nations Agencies was key to the programme's success.

"We worked closely with the district authorities and the private sector to ensure the sustainability of marshland agriculture in the long term. This is truly an example of the global compact on refugees in action," she said,

"Agriculture is one of the sectors helping refugees to have food security, generate more income, and have a better life in the host country. We thank the Government for the generosity." Said Ms. Coumba Sow, the FAO Representative.











Participants from East African Countries during the launch of the Joint Project in Kigali.

RESILIENCE UNLEASHED: HARNESSING EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS

On the nights of May 2nd and 3rd, 2023, Rwanda witnessed an unprecedented rainfall event in some parts of the West and Northern provinces, with one district recording 182.6mm of rainfall in a single day, according to the Ministry in Charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA)

High school student Adissa Uwisaba will not forget this moment "When the flooding started and debris all over, we evacuated the house and spent the night outside to avoid being washed away by heavy rains. The next morning authorities temporarily relocated us to churches, that day I missed school," she said in an interview with MINEMA.

MINEMA said this was a historical moment as it surpassed records from the past five decades. The World Meteorological Report also indicates that the past eight years have been the warmest on record in Rwanda.

"This incident resulted in the loss of 135 lives, numerous injuries, and extensive infrastructure damage. These circumstances require our immediate attention," stated Philippe Habinshuti, the Permanent Secretary of MINEMA.

Mr. Habinshuti made these remarks during the launch of the newly initiated Joint Programme on Climate Change and Early Warning Systems. If effectively implemented across the region, the initiative holds the potential to mitigate the impact of climate change in Rwanda and the wider East African region.

Implementing the CREWS East Africa initiative involves collaborative efforts between the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO),

the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), and the World Bank. These agencies are jointly working closely with various regional entities, as well as the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) and National Disaster Management Authorities (NDMAs) of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. "This Joint Project is essential.

Early warning systems are crucial in mitigating the impacts of climate change-related shocks by providing timely information and alerts to our vulnerable communities. They enable early action, helping to save lives, protect livelihoods, and reduce the overall socio-economic impacts of such shocks," said Macklin Merchades, Joint Programme Focal point. Merchades also works for Tanzania Meteorological Agency (TMA)

The Joint Programme aligns with and bolsters the aspirations of the Early Warnings for All Initiative (EW4All) initiative, which UN Secretary-General António Guterres introduced at COP27. In Africa, 13 countries have been selected to pioneer this initiative. Its overarching vision is to ensure that every individual, particularly the most vulnerable, has access to timely and precise early warnings by 2027.

"Our ambition goes beyond the mere launch of projects and initiatives. We are committed to taking concrete actions. We must generate the political momentum to amplify investments in country-led early warning systems," Ozonnia Ojielo, UN Resident Coordinator, said at the official launch of the Joint Programme.







Alice Wairimu Nderitu, Adviser to UN Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide Speaking at international Day for Countering to the Hate Speech

FROM WORDS TO ATROCITIES: THE DEVASTATING IMPACT OF HATE SPEECH

In 1994, Emmnauel Rwibutso, 29, was in his mother's womb. Only now can he narrate the ordeal his mother was going through during the 1994 genocide perpetrated against the Tutsi.

"During the genocide, my mother wished to die with me because she couldn't continue hiding with me in her womb anymore. She was tired, and militiamen were searching everywhere. So, she crawled into the sewage drain, hoping her belly would burst and I would die with her. But it didn't work," he said with a profound melancholy.

Though Rwibutso and his mother miraculously survived, the genocide claimed the life of his father, who was a UN staff. His name is engraved on a monument built in the UNDP Rwanda compound. The death of Rwibutso's father and other more than one million innocent Tutsis was a result of long-time planning. The planning included using various channels like radio, newspapers, and rallies to disseminate hate speeches against Tutsis.

Hate speech and genocide are intricately linked, with hate speech often serving as a catalyst for inciting violence and enabling the perpetration of mass atrocities. Hate speech spreads toxic ideologies, dehumanises targeted groups, and fuels societal division and animosity. In Rwanda, Hate Speech baptised Tutsis "Cockroaches."

"Hate speech is not a joke. It can be lethal. We are all aware of how it preceded and contributed to the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi through channels like Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (LTLM).

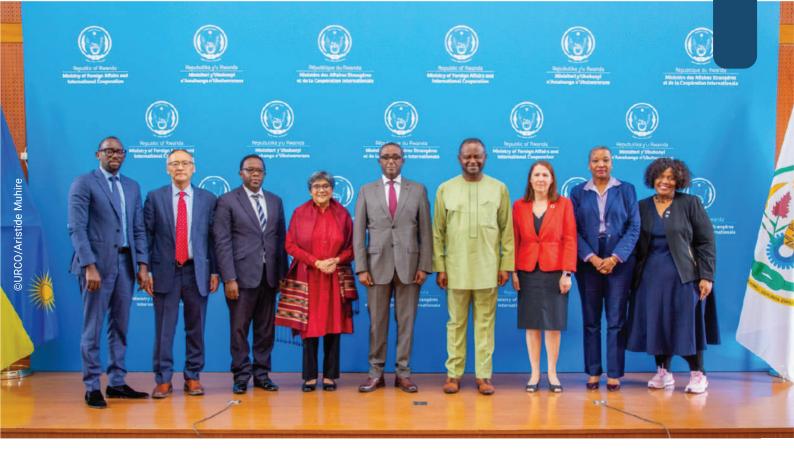
It continues to be weaponised worldwide, targeting people based on their identity," said Mrs. Alice Wairimu Nderitu, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide.

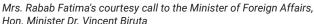
Mrs. Nderitu addressed the participants who attended the hybrid event to mark the second edition of International Day for Countering Hare Speech, organised by the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator and the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement on 16th June 2023. The ceremony brought together the diplomatic community, civil society, senior government officials, the National Consultative Forum of Political Organisations, the Rwanda Religious Leaders Forum, Heads of Agencies, and UN Rwanda staff.

Attending virtually, the Honorable Minister of National Unity and Civic Engagement, Honourable Minister Jean-Damascène Bizimana, reiterated Rwanda's commitment to collaborating with all stakeholders in the fight against hate speech.

"It all begins with the choice of an ideology that is then propagated through a discourse of hatred directed against a targeted population to be eliminated. I would like to reaffirm Rwanda's commitment to the fight against any form of divisiveness, and hatred, and, above all, to put an end to its spread through any means possible."

During the event, the UN Resident Coordinator, Ozonnia Ojielo, emphasised the necessity of collective efforts from all stakeholders to eradicate hate speech, particularly among the new generation, through various means, including education.









THE KIGALI PROGRAMME OF ACTION TO CHART A PROPER PATH FOR LDC'S ECONOMIC GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT- USG MRS. RABAB FATIMA

Unless a robust and sustainable roadmap is established and implemented for landlocked and developing countries to prosper, a significant global population will likely remain vulnerable, hindering the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) continue to face many issues, especially the lack of access to the global marketplace, inadequate transport and logistics infrastructure, heavy overdependence on neighbouring countries, and insufficient ICT infrastructure. These challenges pose significant obstacles to the realisation of the SDGs.

To tackle these issues, Mrs. Rabab Fatima, the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative of the UN OHRLLS, Secretary-General of the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, believes that the 3rd United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries will provide a suitable platform for all stakeholders to convene and discuss potential solutions to the mentioned challenges.

"The Kigali Programme of Action will define the state of affairs and how we respond to the particular priorities and challenges of the landlocked developing countries for the next decade," she said.

Mrs. Rabab made these statements in an exclusive interview with UN Rwanda News Desk during her visit to Rwanda. The purpose of her visit was to consult with the host country on the preparations for the conference, to sensitise the political leaders to the importance of the conference for the common development agenda, and to visit the proposed venue of the conference.

"It's an opportunity to reflect on what we have achieved over the last 10 years but also look at the new challenges and the new priorities for the landlocked developing countries and see how best we can have an actionable forward-looking new programme," she said.

The UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries is held every 10 years. The 3rd Conference which Rwanda will host next year will provide a successor to the Vienna Programme of Action 2014 and will be called the Kigali Programme of Action 2024. The Conference will be a great platform that opens possibilities to explore innovative solutions and to build meaningful partnerships to unlock the potential of landlocked developing countries in different parts of the world.



Click here to watch the interview











Members of UNCT, PMT, and RCO Staff posing for a group photo in Rubavu district

THE 2023 UN RWANDA COMMON COUNTRY ANALYSIS CHARTS A PATH FORWARD TO EFFECTIVE **DELIVERY OF UN PROGRAMMATIC SUPPORT**

The United Nations Common Country Analysis (CCA) serves as the analytical baseline for the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (Cooperation Framework) and provides the basis for policy dialogue and prioritization with stakeholders on sustainable development strategies and solutions at the country level.

The United Nations Rwanda has embarked on the process of updating the CCA to provide impartial, independent, and collective analysis of key challenges and opportunities Rwanda faces in pursuit of sustainable development.

"By 2035 Rwanda wants to be in a middle-income status and an upper-middle-income economy by 2050. It plans to achieve this through a series of seven-year National Strategies for Transformation (NST), underpinned by sectoral strategies focused on meeting the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With our collective offer, we can surely connect to that journey and be an appropriate and useful partner" said Ozonnia Ojielo, UN Resident Coordinator.

The 2023 CCA update task will be conducted in four successive phases, including the planning and strategizing phase; Data gathering; Data analysis and report synthesis, Presentation, and validation. Guided by the 5Ps: People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace, and Partnerships, the CCA will analyse the themes based on an integrated framework, structuring the context analysis, and detailing how available data will be identified, incorporated into an evidence base,

to arrive at a composite of the country context which will inform the development of the Cooperation Framework. The Cooperation Framework will constitute the UN's strategic and collective offer to Rwanda over the next five years.

Click on the following links to learn more about the discussions held under each pillar.

















Following the mid-2021 update of the CCA that was used to inform the formulation of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF, 2018-2024) for Rwanda, the updated CCA will inspire the next cooperation framework commencing in 2024/2025.

The outcome will be used to ensure the next UNSDCF is fit for purpose in Rwanda and that UN policy, programming, and advocacy priorities are relevant, and their effective implementation contributes significantly to the achievement of the domesticated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through coherent and efficient approaches.





FOOTBALL FOR THE GOALS

CERTIFICATE OF MEMBERSHIP

The United Nations welcomes

Veteran Clubs World Championship

as an Official Member of Football for the Goals and values its commitment to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals





VETERAN CLUBS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP JOINS UN'S FOOTBALL FOR THE GOALS INITIATIVE

The United Nations Department of Global Communications has accepted the Veteran Clubs World Championship (VCWC) as a member of the UN's Football for the Goals (FFTG) initiative. The information was released in an official letter sent to the VCWC by Maher Nasser, Director, Outreach Division, on 22nd June 2023.

In the letter sent with a Certificate of Membership, Mr. Maher said that by joining FFTG, Veteran Clubs World Championship commits to advocating for the achievement of and implementing policies aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

"Our team looks forward to collaborating with and supporting Veteran Clubs World Championship as it becomes a champion for sustainable development and human rights and drives positive change within the football community and beyond", he added.

"I think by using these stellar names, we have the ability to amplify a message that goes beyond some of the echo chambers that they tend to operate within by reaching out to the average person who may not understand SDGs as much as they need to, through a vehicle that speaks to their emotions and their minds," said Francis Nkwain, Founder of Best of Africa.

Football for the Goals is a United Nations initiative that provides a platform for the global football community to engage with and advocate for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

It is an opportunity to build on football's powerful and influential reach and to work together to become agents of change by aligning messaging, strategies, and operations with the aspirations of the SDGs.

In an exclusive interview during the VCWC Business Club Cocktail, VCWC Chairman Fred Siewe said the football legends have a lot of potential to unlock partnerships for the goals.

"We are very happy to partner with the United Nations to disseminate the impactful messages of the Sustainable Development Goals. Football legends will not only be participating in the championships but also, they will contribute to various forums that speak to important ideas to accelerate the Sustainable Development Goals," he said.

Apart from group matches expected to kick start in May next year, the partnership of the United Nations and VCWC will see football legends, government institutions, and partners co-create various forums aligned with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

The forums include Peace Forum on 11 May 2024, Education Forum on 13 May 2024, Health Forum on 15 May 2024, Tourism Forum on 17 May 2024 and Business Forum on 18 May 2024.



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