



Mr. Fodé Ndiaye
UN Resident Coordinator

FOREWORD

Dear Esteemed Readers and Partners,

I welcome you to this year's 2nd Edition of the UN Rwanda quarterly Newsletter dubbed "Turi Kumwe", relating stories on our joint results cooperating with the Government and other national stakeholders for the benefits of the people in Rwanda.

At the beginning of this quarter in April, the UN Rwanda joined the Government and people of Rwanda to commemorate "Kwibuka27" and mourn the victims of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi by laying wreaths at the UNDP Compound and holding a virtual commemoration. Due to COVID-19 preventive measures, we were not able to have a larger gathering as in the past years, however, physically we were joined by the Ambassador, DG of Europe, America and International Organizations, representing the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, the Ambassador of Belgium, CNLG official, the Chair of the Federation of UN Staff Associations, the Heads of UN agencies, and representatives of the families of UN staff victims of the genocide against the Tutsi who shared touching testimony. **"Kwibuka" is one way to strengthen the bond of solidarity with the Government and the people of Rwanda to ensure Never Again is a reality, everywhere for everyone!**

During the last week of May, Rwanda received **additional 247,000 doses of AstraZeneca COVID-19 through the COVAX facility mechanism** including 117,600 doses donated by the Government of France. Rwanda continued a nation-wide vaccination drive to fully immunize those who had previously received the first doses of AstraZeneca vaccine. **In addition to vaccination, we need to continue adhering to COVID-19 preventive measures to stop the spread of COVID-19. Our behaviours are important in fighting this new wave of contamination.** The UN family commends the Government of Rwanda and continue joining efforts in fighting the spread of COVID-19 and its consequences and in recovering from the pandemic. We remain grateful to the frontline workers, including health providers for keeping us all safe.

The UN Country Team recently concluded its annual Retreat held from the May 19 - 21, 2021 under the Theme: **Together Towards Agenda 2030:**

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"New Ways of Working to Build a Greener, More Resilient, Sustainable and Inclusive Society". Our collective leadership acknowledges Government Officials, Development Partners, Regional entities, Private Sector, UN Staff Association, Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs), Civil Society Organization (CSOs) and UN at global and regional level, representatives for attending, sharing insights and more importantly for designing together new ways of enhancing and improving their partnership with a renewed, more effective and efficient UN. Through frank and high level and very inspiring discussions, our friendly gathering was a great opportunity to collectively evaluate the very complex and challenging context but with great opportunities to innovate and find solutions. We renew our commitment to collectively contribute to changes in Rwandan people's lives, mainly the most vulnerable populations, leaving No One Behind.

In this quarter, the UN in Rwanda received **3 high level missions** to strengthen partnership with the Government. Mr. Huang Xia, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region held discussions focusing on sub-regional issues and the approved UN Strategy for the Great Lakes, with the Government and was received by the President of the Republic of Rwanda. Ms. Bintou Keita, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Head of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo thanked Rwanda's positive support provided after the volcanic eruption. Mr. Filippo Grandi, the UNHCR High Commissioner had engagements highlighting the role of his organization and Governments of the sub-region in managing the refugees' situation with Government officials, with the President of the Republic who received him and with the Donors who promised more support. He also visited the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) center in Gashora and engaged the UN Country team.

The recent **volcanic eruption that happened in Goma** in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo affected all of us in one way or the other. Nearly 416,000 persons were displaced and around 8,000 Congolese crossed into Rwanda and were supported by the Government of Rwanda in collaboration with UN and other partners who have been on the ground providing emergency assistance. The UN at global and national level wish to thank the Government of Rwanda for opening its borders for safety of the Congolese amidst the challenging situation of COVID-19, for providing emergency relief, and facilitating the voluntary repatriation for those who returned back to Goma. We also commend the Government for including the Development Partners in the Coordination structure and to participate in the Post Disaster Needs Assessment and are looking forward to receiving the report with a view to identify areas of support. The disaster also raises the necessity of better understanding hazards and threats, having an operational contingency plan and to have a more risk-informed development aiming at increasing resilience of institutions, systems and communities, the first responders. **Let us continue the courageous spirit as this year still presents more challenges but also increases hope.**

In this Newsletter, you will read stories from **WFP, UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, UN Women, UNFPA, WHO, and UN Volunteers.**

Once again, I wish to extend my appreciation to Government of Rwanda, Development Partners, UN colleagues, and all of you for our continuous cooperation, partnership, resilience, commitment, hard work under challenging situation of COVID-19 to deliver programs that improve lives of the people of Rwanda. UN will continue to play its role through a more networked, more renewed multilateralism, with UN at its center backed by ongoing UN reforms, as on 18 June 2021, the General Assembly adopted resolution 75/286 appointed Mr António Guterres as Secretary-General for a second term of office from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2026. **Union makes force! Turi Kumwe! Stay safe and healthy!**

As we begin the month of July, **I wish you a Happy Liberation Day!**

Umunsi Mwiza Wo kwibohora!

Grandi praises Rwanda for offering life-saving haven for refugees



Somali refugees Abdulbasit and Zainab relax in their temporary home at the Emergency Transit Mechanism in Nyamata, Rwanda. © UNHCR/Will Swanson

When Abdulbasit, his wife Zainab, and their daughter were first evacuated from Libya to Rwanda in 2019, they were unsure what to expect. The couple had been through a harrowing ordeal. On their journey to find safety, the refugees from Somalia found themselves stuck in Libya, where they faced horrific abuse in detention. *“When we got to Libya, we were worried about being in detention and never having freedom,”* said Zainab. *“I had heard that Rwanda was a safe place, and they were welcoming refugees.”*

The couple and their daughter, who was born in Libya, were some of the first refugees and asylum-seekers to be evacuated to Rwanda under a life-saving humanitarian mechanism established nearly two years ago by the Rwandan government, the African Union and UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, supported by international donors such as the European Union. They were brought to the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) in Gashora, Rwanda, where UNHCR provided them with accommodation, food, water, medical care, psychosocial support, and language classes.

“I had heard that Rwanda was a safe place.”

Since that initial flight, some 515 refugees and asylum-seekers have been evacuated from Libya to the ETM. The group remains at the transit facility while long-term solutions are sought. From the group, so far at least 260 refugees and asylum-seekers have been resettled to countries including Canada, France and Norway.

During a three-day visit to Rwanda, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi went to the center and met with Abdulbasit and Zainab, as well as other refugees, who described their journeys and how life has been in the ETM. *“I spoke to some unaccompanied teenagers; I spoke to a family from Somalia. Many of them have harrowing stories of abuse and torture, even of long detention and uncertainty, of despair, and this is a time when they can also try to overcome some of that trauma,”* Grandi said. The High Commissioner praised the Government of Rwanda as well as Niger, the other country welcoming refugees and asylum-seekers being evacuated from Libya, for their

continued solidarity and generosity, giving hope to vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees in dire need of protection and safety.

“I really want to particularly thank the Government of Rwanda,” said Grandi, who also met with the country’s president in Kigali during the trip.

“It was President Kagame’s initiative to launch the ETM in Rwanda a few years ago, and of course we will continue to need this mechanism as long as the situation in Libya continues to be as difficult as it is now.” For Abdulbasit and Zainab, life in Rwanda has brought security and peace of mind. The couple recently welcomed a second daughter. After five years of constant flight, danger and uncertainty, Abdulsabit is hopeful that his young family will soon reach the next, and final, stop on their journey to a new permanent home.

“I am very happy,” Abdulbasit said. *“As a father, I am responsible for my family. I was so worried because we have been waiting for our resettlement case. But I never gave up and I always told my wife also not to give up.”*

UNDP and the Government of Japan partnered to support capacity strengthening of regional security actors



Fighting GBV is everyone's responsibility

Kigali 21 June 2021 – 24 Rwandan military, police and civilian personnel have attended a one-week long course on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) organised by Rwanda Peace Academy (RPA) in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Rwanda and the Government of Japan.

The objective of the course is to equip participants with required knowledge and skills to minimize Sexual and Gender Based Violence in Peace Keeping missions.

While officiating the course, Colonel (Rtd) Jill Rutaremara, the Director of Rwanda Peace Academy reminded that GBV is one of the greatest humanitarian challenges, especially in Peace Support Operations. In conflict-affected states, for example, rape is often used as a strategy of warfare to undermine the enemy and to demoralize and destabilize communities.

The official opening of the course coincided with the launching of the 2021/2022 Project on Strengthening the Capacities of the Rwanda Peace Academy, which is a Regional Peacekeeping Training and Research Institution under the Rwanda's Ministry of Defence.

Under this partnership, the Government of Japan through UNDP have provided a new financial support worth \$210,000 that will enhance the capacity development of regional security sector actors in conflict prevention, conflict management and resolution as well as peacebuilding.

In addition to the SGBV course, four more training courses will be delivered under this project.

"The Government of Japan and the UNDP support African-led peace support activities that build and foster institutions for conflict prevention and sustainable peace. This project is in line with the priority areas of the Yokohama Declaration 2019 and Yokohama Action Plan 2019, which were agreed upon at the 7th Tokyo International Conference on African Development - TICAD7," explained Ms. Yuko Hotta, the Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Japan in Rwanda.

The project also embodies the concept of the New Approach for Peace and Stability in Africa (NAPSA) proposed by the Japanese Government at TICAD7, and will contribute to the achievement of these commitments.

The RPA has been playing an important role in developing the regional capacity for conflict prevention, management, resolution, post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding, based on Rwanda's experience in peacebuilding and by effectively using international best practices.

Colonel (Rtd) Rutaremara appreciate the donors for their timely support to strengthen its capacity for high standard service delivery. "I wish therefore to thank most sincerely the Government of Japan and UNDP for their continued support not only in training but also in research as well as enhancement of the institutional capacity."

For UNDP, investing in peace building and conflict management and conflict prevention contribute to sustainable development and therefore to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Read the full story here:

<https://www.rw.undp.org/content/rwanda/en/home/presscenter/articles/2021/News4/News.html>

“COVID-19 positive, I never regretted my choice of being a midwife. I kept the hope to see myself caring for mothers and babies again.” A story of Mbonabucya Jean Felix, Rwandan Midwife.



Every day in every part of the world, midwives save the lives of women and babies and promote the health and well-being of entire communities. Midwives have faced increasing pressure during the COVID-19 pandemic, and heightened inequalities in their workplaces. They have put their own lives at risk serving others.

Mbonabucya Jean Felix, a Rwandan Male Midwife, currently working at King Faisal Hospital, Kigali, shares his experience of being a midwife in the middle of a pandemic.

Mbonabucya contracted COVID-19 in January 2021. After one month of self-isolation at home, he did not regret his decision of becoming a midwife, instead, he renewed his hope and persistence in a bid to see himself caring for mothers once again.

Being a healthcare provider was his childhood dream, which also influenced his educational background.

“My motivation comes from my mother who was a nurse before the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. With a goal of becoming a healthcare provider, I studied science and after my high school studies, I was admitted in midwifery in the University of Rwanda, former KHI.” He said

To Mbonabucya the midwifery profession is an incomparable gift and an opportunity for someone to serve between God and his creature.

In Rwanda, 93% of maternal deaths happened in health facilities. Errors in diagnosis, taking a long time to make the right decision and mismanagement of patients are the 3 reasons of maternal deaths. Midwives play a big role in preventing that.

“A midwife’s day to day duty is to accompany mothers in their journey to delivery. Imagine a mother losing her baby at the last minute after 9 months of carrying them.”

It is our responsibility to make sure that doesn’t happen.” stated Mbonabucya.

“Our profession requires devotion and speed, because a delay to take a decision may result negatively.” He added

Midwife in the context of COVID-19 response in Rwanda. As the world battles COVID-19, women continue to get pregnant and babies are still being born. Childbirth does not stop for pandemics, and neither do midwives. They are working tirelessly on the front line in maternity wards and health centres to save the lives of women and newborns.

Pregnant women were affected in different ways: Some could not be discharged immediately because of movement restrictions; some women ended up spending two days at the health facilities due to the lack of transportation means

“At the beginning, we were all affected morally (mothers and midwives) and afraid of being infected by COVID-19. Women who tested positive were manifesting signs of depression, as any other COVID-19 patient, thus they need extra care during and after giving birth.”

“As health care providers, even if we were worried as well, we did not stop caring for mothers, we had to follow all protocols and preventive guidelines,

unfortunately some of the midwives contracted COVID-19, and tested positive. I was among them!”

“After testing positive, I isolated myself at home for a month. The number of positive cases was increasing every day and I was worried thinking about how my journey as a midwife may end. It was difficult but I never regretted my choice of being a midwife. I kept the hope to see myself caring for mothers and babies again. Now 3 months since my recovery, I am happy to be back and share the story of my life during this pandemic”.

Celebrating the International Day of the Midwife 2021

The International Day of the Midwife gives Mbonabucya an opportunity to celebrate his achievements as a midwife, and discuss the challenges they face in the profession and how to overcome them especially while we are still fighting the pandemic.

“This is the time my Colleagues and I have to reflect on our role of providing assistance to life giving. Well-being of mothers and babies brings us joy. There’s no peace if the baby is born tired or when the mother falls into your arms due to the carelessness and lack of concentration. We appreciate the support we get from the government, and other partners.” He said

Read the full story here:

<https://rwanda.unfpa.org/en/news/>

Using radio to provide credible information during a pandemic



UNICEF is partnering with one of the most popular FM stations in Rwanda, KISS FM, to educate Rwandans about the novel Coronavirus and address rumours and misconceptions about the virus and its vaccines..

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a widespread impact not just in Rwanda but across the world. Businesses have shut down, the economy has faltered, lives have been lost, jobs forfeited, and the social fabric that has long held societies together has been stretched to breaking point.

Despite all the challenges, Rwandans held steady and remained resilient in the face of the pandemic. The Government of Rwanda formulated a social protection plan for the delivery of free food to at least 20,000 of the most vulnerable households in the capital Kigali at the height of the first lockdown in April last year.

While health and social protection considerations often take center stage during a pandemic, it is equally important to communicate risks and engage with communities in a responsible way that protects people's health.

That's why among other inventions, UNICEF has partnered with one of the most popular FM stations in Rwanda called KISS FM, which reaches nearly 3 million listeners every day through its programmes, according to a survey of radio audiences conducted by the Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority (RURA). The network is popular among young people who make up almost 70% of the Rwandan population.

This group, especially students, also happens to be most at risk against COVID-19.

Using programmes like 'fact or fiction', 'conversations with experts' and 'street talks', KISS FM's hugely popular presenters including the soft-spoken Sandrine Isheja and the effervescent Arthur Nkusi take to the airwaves every day to engage with their listeners in a lively banter, making sure to educate their audiences on COVID-19 related appropriate behaviours, while getting a laugh out of them.

Cyusa Ornella is a young woman who lives in Muhima, a suburb of Kigali City. She's a regular listener of KISS FM programmes, especially the popular breakfast show and gospel music that is a staple on the station.

She also listens to the fact or fiction radio show and the program has taught her a lot!

"As young people, at times we are nonchalant about certain things. But thanks to the 'Fact or Fiction' show, I understand that I have a responsibility to protect myself and by extension protect others from Coronavirus by washing my hands regularly with soap and clean water,

wear my mask whenever I'm out in public, and maintain physical distancing without having to be supervised or constantly reminded by the authorities" Ornella says.

The programmes provide education and entertainment (edutainment) and something to look forward to for listeners in the form of gifts and rewards such as face and helmet masks, hand sanitizers, T-shirts, umbrellas and other practical items.

"When my family comes home from work, I always insist that they wash their hands with soap and clean water before eating anything or even before relaxing in the house. It's very important to me and practicing handwashing is a simple yet effective way to stay safe," says Nicole Munezero.

"I learnt this while listening to KISS FM's breakfast show with Sandrine and Arthur. I'm glad KISS FM is bringing us these informative shows that not only increase our awareness about the deadly Coronavirus, but also enhance our lifestyles and imbue us with knowledge and practical life skills."

Read the full story here:
<https://www.unicef.org>



Using technology and innovation for Gender Equality @UN Women Rwanda

VIRTUAL GENDER CAFÉ:

Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights for an Equal Future

In the lead up to the Generation Equality Forum in Paris this June hosted by President Emmanuel Macron in Paris, UN Women Rwanda successfully hosted a Gender Café in line with Technology and innovation for Gender Equality action coalition, co-led by the Government of Rwanda. Gender Cafés are quarterly platforms and space for us to self-reflect, analyse, and voice concerns through spontaneous dialogues about Gender related topics.

This edition was more interregional, with participation from eastern and southern region UN Women country offices, innovators, and a satellite station at FAWE career center. The gender café had three sections; the first part being an interactive panel dialogue on **Using technology and innovation for Gender Equality** to raise awareness on the digital gender divide, discussions on the issues of digitization, challenges and opportunities. Panelists included experts in ICT and innovation, young people, government leaders, women activists among others namely **Lucy Mbabazi**, Head of Africa Advocacy & Partnerships for the UN based Better than Cash Alliance based in the Africa Hub, Kigali, Rwanda, Josephine Nyiranzeyimana, the Government Chief Information Officer of Rwanda Information Society Authority (RISA), Charlotte Bwiza, a Software Engineer, at the Rwanda Social Security Board and Sangwa Rwabuhiri, a Tech and Innovation Consultant and Former General Manager of the Westwelle Start-up Haus Kigali.

The second session showcased and highlighted best practice innovative solutions that contribute to closing the Gender digital gap, followed by a pitching session by different innovators in Rwanda and in the region in front of a panel of judges. Among innovators included a secondary school student working on an indoor humidity controller and alert system, SRH app for information etc.

We had remarks from Deputy Head of Mission at the embassy of France Madam Cassiope Vienne, Claudette Irere, Hon. Minister of State in charge of ICT and TVET in Rwanda, Anne Githuku-Shongwe, Representative for UN Women's South Africa MCO. In addition, the panel had contributions from two young people including the Captain of the Rwanda Patriots Basketball, Aristide Mugabe whose very well-known following the recent concluded Basketball Africa League games in Kigali, as well as a young physicist and alumna of Gashora Girls Academy of Science and Technology in Rwanda Cleo Ingabire, who were both invited to give a message to the youth that were following the virtual gender cafe.

The event was well covered by the national media including the NewTimes and Igihe in Kinyarwanda and English, in addition to an extensive social media outreach.

UN joint programme enables community leaders to manage response to climate related shocks and coordinate services to the poorest in rural Rwanda



The training was organized in the framework of the UN Joint Programme on Social Protection in the districts of Rutsiro, Nyamagabe, Karongi, Burera and Kirehe.

Community leaders pose for a group photo after the training on Seasonal Livelihoods Programming in Rutsiro district ©WFP/Oscar Nduwayo

The World Food Programme (WFP) in partnership with UNICEF, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and World Relief conducted community-based training through May 2021 aimed at empowering community leaders to understand the seasonality of shocks in their communities and plan for delivery of integrated services to the most vulnerable populations.

Nearly 70 local leaders at the district, sector and cell-levels were trained on WFP's Seasonal Livelihoods Programming toolkit that looks at the historical patterns of good years and bad years and maps out how communities and local authorities generally respond to seasonal fluctuations and the many localized weather shocks faced around Rwanda.

"I'm happy this training helped me to clearly understand my role as a local government leader and understand the realities of my community regarding livelihoods and shocks. I will apply the skills to better plan for accurate response to shocks affecting my community and make clear social protection plans for a strategic response to community needs," said Ezekiel Nsabimana, a Social-Economic Development officer from Gitega cell in Karongi district in western Rwanda.

During the training, community leaders, and local government officials from the district to the cell level were empowered to understand climate related realities and their impact on community livelihoods, for better planning and responsiveness at the community level.

The Seasonal Livelihoods Programming model is a WFP tool applied across the globe to help design shock-responsive and climate-sensitive resilience and social protection programmes. The model builds contextual understanding and capacity of community leaders to design social protection approaches and implement disaster management and shock-responsive public works activities. This is done in a way that is conducive to build community resilience and contribute to accelerating community members' graduation from poverty. With this innovative community-based model, local communities are empowered to enhance their resilience and strengthen their ability to respond to climatic shocks.

Onesphore Habintwari, a development partner coordinator in Rutsiro district in western Rwanda, felt that the training was a wake-up call to ensure that no plan in the district goes without a risk and shock analysis.

"I learned how to prepare a community-based plan and will encourage all partners in my district to strategically plan and respond to the needs especially during shocks caused by disasters, such as landslides. From now onwards, I will always include shocks and disasters in my sector plans," said Onesphore.

According to the National Risk Atlas in Rwanda, the country is prone to regular natural disasters causing physical, social, and economic damages and losses. The most frequent amongst these are droughts, devastating landslides, and floods. The UN Joint Programme promotes integrated social protection that meets the needs of the most vulnerable households, including those in disaster prone areas of Rwanda.

WHO launches the fourth Country Cooperative Strategy (2021-2024)



Meeting for the dissemination of WHO Rwanda Country Cooperation Strategy, Kigali, 25 May 2021

Kigali, 28 May 2021 – The World Health Organization (WHO) Rwanda Country Office (RCO) launched the fourth WHO Country Cooperation Strategy (CCS). The strategy launched provides a roadmap for WHO support to the Government of Rwanda for the next four years (2021-2024).

The event took place at the Kigali, Marriott hotel and gathered leaders of government institutions, different partners and stakeholders as well as representatives of sister UN Agencies. The United Nations Resident Coordinator, Dr. Fode Ndiaye and WHO Africa Regional Director, Dr. Moeti Matshidiso delivered their messages remotely.

Both leaders applauded Rwanda for the strong leadership and significant advances in improving health and the wellbeing of its people. Dr. Matshidiso highlighted the risk of COVID-19 disrupting health systems and threatening to reverse hard fought gains in health and development.

“Rwanda has an enormous task to meet its ambitious goals towards improving the health and well-being of the population. This Country Cooperation Strategy is therefore timely as we all have the responsibility to work together. I encourage the country to use past, present and future lessons from today’s COVID-19 pandemic to continuously improve the resilience of people centered health systems.”

Over the last 16 years WHO and Rwanda have implemented three Cooperation Strategies.

Over the last 16 years WHO and Rwanda have implemented three Cooperation Strategies. The role of WHO as highlighted in this CCS is to support the Government of Rwanda in building upon and sustaining the impressive improvements in the health of its population in the past 20 years.

In his remarks, the Minister of Health, Honorable Dr. Daniel Ngamije who was the guest of honor, highlighted the relevance of having a cooperation strategy.

“We started this journey more than two years ago and today the Strategy is here. This is a tool that regulates our interactions with WHO to make sure we implement what we agreed. It is an important tool we sign to make sure that in the coming years we know what we are doing and which areas we want WHO to make a difference in the support they are providing.”

The development of this CCS was guided by four of the country’s major policy and strategy documents: The National Strategy for Transformation (NST 1) (2017-2024), the National Health Sector Policy (2015), the Fourth Rwanda Health Sector Strategic Plan (HSSP IV) (2018–2024), and the United Nations Development Assistance Plan for Rwanda (UNDAP II) (2018-2023).

WHO Rwanda Representative Dr. Kasonde Mwinga acknowledged the efforts and contributions that led to the development of the strategy.

“This launch has been long in the making. I would like to thank all the contributors who gave insights that led to the development of this fourth Country Cooperation Strategy. The work that we do with the Ministry of Health, we believe is useful for the health of those already here and those of us who are yet to be born. We look forward to work with different partners through different sectors.”

In the next four years, the Government will be addressing a number of challenges to meet the population’s growing demand for quality health care and the changing health needs of the population including: a growing burden of non-communicable diseases, high rates of stunting in children under five, the still high rate of maternal and neonatal mortality, emerging and re-emerging diseases and inadequate access to improved water and sanitation.

The strategic priorities of this CCS and the activities under each priority are designed to support the Government of Rwanda in addressing the aforementioned challenges in order to reach its health goals and targets. A mid-term review of the CCS will be conducted in 2022 and a final evaluation before the end of 2024.

The CCS reflects WHO’s major reform agenda outlined in its 13th General Programme of Work (GPW13) (2019-2023) and the WHO African Regional Transformation Agenda, which aim to improve access to universal health coverage, better protect people from health emergencies, and improve people’s health and well-being. It forms the basis for aligning WHO’s collaboration with other United Nations bodies and development partners in Rwanda.

My experience as IUNV

In my days as a UNV Interpreter, I undertake interpretation and translation services at the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) in Gashora for evacuees from Libya to Rwanda. In line with the ETM's goals to provide emergency protection to refugees, asylum-seekers, children-and-youth at risk, I was privileged to have contributed towards the achievement of the goals of the ETM in particular and UNHCR and partners in general. In that endeavour, I have daily interactions with refugees, case workers and other staff of UNHCR and partner organizations.

Beyond executing my core task as an interpreter/translator, I believe my role helped me in building up a strong rapport which eventually made the evacuees feel well attended. The cultural connection I have makes the communication smooth in all aspects, and it also gives them courage to share their catastrophic life experiences and trauma without reservations, which is the first step towards a healing process and a journey to a descent life. My contribution is always sincerely appreciated by supervisors and colleagues for "displaying professionalism and trustworthiness" at work. For the whole process to be accomplished successfully, I play a vital role in creating conducive environment to encourage the evacuees to open up and cooperate throughout the entire process thereby contributing to the goals of UNHCR and partners in finding a durable solution for the evacuees

The greatest challenge I was experiencing is the horrifying stories of the evacuees I hear every day which I never thought one would experience in life, and it affected me psychologically at first, which I started overcoming with time.



Senait Robel Gebremedhin IUNV serving with UNHCR

The biggest lesson that I have taken is, how resilient we are and there is nothing more satisfying than seeing a happy and smiling refugee by just being kind to them. Covid-19 is still another worldwide challenge, it was an obstacle for us at first, because face to face interaction is really important to read all the emotions which makes it complete, we kept on processing our work remotely, but it was not satisfactory because there are some sensitive stories which really need physical presence to show them empathy as a human being, but with the situation getting better in Rwanda, we resumed the face to face interactions with due diligence to protection guidelines.

It is priceless when I see my effort is making a difference in many lives of refugees and the fact that I can witness this with my own eyes is so heart-warming. Volunteering is all about giving back to individuals or communities, locally or internationally and positively impacting their lives and contributing towards achievement of global efforts by UNHCR. Volunteering helped me to expand my views on the status of refugees across the globe, and efforts by UNHCR and partners, enriched my circle of friends and colleagues and learned a lot from everyone at work. Bottom-line, volunteering helped me become a better person professionally, socially, and ethically!





Mr. Huang Xia, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region visit to Rwanda

UNCT RETREAT 2021



Refugees inclusion in the national vaccination rollout is another mark of the Government of Rwanda's commitment towards the refugee cause.



Sports provides relief to refugees