

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



BEIJING +25
RWANDA
COUNTRY REPORT

May 2019

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFSOCCA	African Security Organs' Center for Coordination of Action	MINJUST	Ministry of Justice
BDF	Business Development Fund	NCC	National Commission for Children
BPfA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action	NEP	National Employment Program
BIC	Business Incubation Centers	NISR	National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda
BNR	National Bank of Rwanda	NPPA	National Public Prosecution Authority
EDPRS	Economic and Poverty Reduction Strategy	NST-1	National Strategy for Transformation
EICV	Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey	NWC	National Women's Council
ENTRUST	Engendering Rural Transformation for Sustainable Development	PSF	Private Sector Federation
FARG	Genocide Survivors Support and Assistance Fund	RDF	Rwanda Defense Force
FFRP	Rwandan Forum for Women Parliamentarians	RDHS	Rwanda Demographic Health Survey
FFS	Farmer Field Schools	RIB	Rwanda Investigation Bureau
GBV	Gender Based Violence	RNP	Rwanda National Police
GII	Gender Inequality Index	RWAMREC	Rwanda Men's Resource Centre
GMIS	Gender Management Information System	SACCO	Savings and Credits Cooperatives
GMO	Gender Monitoring Office	SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
HIMO	High Intensity Labour Programmes	SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
HSSP	Health Sector Strategic Plan	SSP	Sector strategic Plan
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies	TVET	Technical Vocational Education Training
IOSC	Isange One Stop Centre	UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children
KICD	Kigali International Conference Declaration	UNDP	United Nations Development Program
LTR	Land Tenure Regularization Programme	VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
MIGEPROF	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion	7YGP	Seven Year's Government Program
MINALOC	Ministry of Local Government	WDA	Workforce Development Authority

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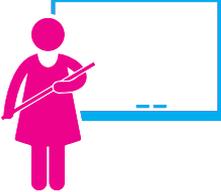
THE BEIJING 12 CRITICAL AREAS

01



**WOMEN AND
POVERTY**

02



**EDUCATION
AND TRAINING
OF WOMEN**

03



**WOMEN
AND HEALTH**

04



**VIOLENCE
AGAINST
WOMEN**

05



**WOMEN
AND ARMED
CONFLICT**

06



**WOMEN
AND THE
ECONOMY**





THE BEIJING 12 CRITICAL AREAS (CONT...)

07



**WOMEN IN
POWER AND
DECISION
MAKING**

08



**INSTITUTIONAL
MECHANISMS**

09



**HUMAN RIGHTS
OF WOMEN**

10



**WOMEN AND
THE MEDIA**

11



**WOMEN
AND THE
ENVIRONMENT**

12



**THE GIRL
CHILD**





GENERAL INTRODUCTION



GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Rwanda has become a country with a stable, peaceful and an effective government after the devastating effects of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi which destroyed the very fabric of the society, the country's economy as well as governance structures¹. To address the negative effects that resulted from the above tragedy, various interventions were progressively implemented to rebuild the nation, starting from the relief and transitional period towards a more stable, socially, and economically transformed country.

Rwanda committed to the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDfA), just one year after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. The commitment to the implementation of the BDfA in such a challenging context appeared like a dream. Twenty-five years later, Rwanda managed to deliver on its commitments in promoting gender equality and empowerment of women and is ranked now as the 6th world wide by 2018 World Economic Forum global gender gap report.

In 2020, the world including Rwanda will be keenly preparing to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the fourth World Conference on Women and the Adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action simultaneously with the 5 years of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs).

The country has deployed tremendous efforts and joined many others in the journey of ensuring equitable and gender responsive development. Mainstreaming gender equality and empowering women and girls have since been part of strategic priorities in the different development frameworks, whose stand is maintained in the new National Strategy for Transformation (NST-1) to guide the government of Rwanda's commitments for national transformation that leaves on one behind.

In this reporting period (2014-2019), Rwanda has made commendable progress in promoting gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. There is evidence that women and girls are increasingly gaining control over productive resources to improve their economic status as well as access to education and health services.

¹ Abbot, P and Mugisha R. (2015). *Land Tenure Regularization Programme: Progress Report for Selected Indicators*. Kigali: DfID.



More importantly women's political participation has been significant in the last two decades and a key preoccupation for the inclusive development. Gender commitments have been mainstreamed in various policies and strategic plans, legal instruments and institutions that support promotion of gender equality and elimination of discrimination against women and girls have been established.

Similarly, Rwanda has embarked on integrating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in its planning framework and tools, including those specific to achieving gender equality and empowerment of women and girls (SDG#5).

The initial SDG Gap Analysis done by Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning in 2016 indicated a high degree of SDG related indicators reflected in the national and sector strategic planning frameworks including SDG 5²

Furthermore, the government of Rwanda has institutionalized gender equality and empowerment of women mechanisms including the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), Gender Monitoring Office (GMO), the National Women's Council (NWC), and Forum for Women Parliamentarians (FFRP). These institutional mechanisms are to ensure policy formulation and coordination, mobilization and empowerment of women and accountability to gender equality.

In a bid to ensure the promotion and protection of the rights of child, both girls and boys, National Early Childhood Development Program (NECDP) has been established to complement the work being done by the national commission for children (NCC). The NECDP particularly coordinates all child nurturing and development initiatives with an overarching aim of ensuring that proper human development goals are achieved. The establishment of these institutions is the first important step to mainstreaming gender commitments and women empowerment in various sectors.

This report is a comprehensive appraisal of the progress made by Rwanda in implementing the 12 critical areas as prescribed under the 1995 BPfA. (The process in documenting this progress is a national level review of the performance made and the challenges encountered towards gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. In this regard, various government ministries,

² *MINECOFIN (2016). Initial SDG Gap Analysis. Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Kigali, Rwanda*





agencies, development partners, civil society organizations and other stakeholders provided information on the status of the progress made and the remaining challenges to be addressed in the future towards effective gender equality and empowerment of women and girls).

The structure of this report follows the reporting guidelines provided by UN Women as follows: the first section provides a macro-analysis of the country's priorities, key achievements, and remaining gaps, building from the previous report submitted in 2014 to-date.

Section 2 gives a more detailed description of measures and actions taken in the past five years considering the previous status reported in 2014, major achievements supported with evidences, and remaining challenges to be addressed in the future.

Section 3 presents information on existing national mechanisms to monitor and ensure effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as well as gender responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for SDGs.

Section 4 presents sources of data and disaggregated statistics for gender equality as well as gender-based methodologies and research to address gender inequalities. This includes disaggregated data on the various commitments related to gender equality, empowerment of women and girls and the implementation of the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets.

Finally, section 5 explains priority areas selected for future interventions.



SECTION 1:



SECTION 1: MACRO-LEVEL PRIORITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

1.1. Major achievements

This sub-section describes the major achievements on gender equality, empowerment of women and girls in Rwanda over the past five years (2014-2019). It is worth noting that some of the previous achievements reported in 2014 especially those related to the constitutional and legal reforms, policies, sector-based gender mainstreaming strategies, and national planning strategies continued to carry on their effects towards gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in subsequent periods.

(i) Gender mainstreaming in the national strategic planning and development frameworks

The government of Rwanda recognizes the centrality of mainstreaming gender equality and empowerment of women in national development. This has been reflected in the vision 2020 revised to transition into vision 2050, the second edition of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS II), Seven-Years Government Program (2010/2017), and the current National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) (2018/19-2023/24). Across the above, a national strategic guidance is provided to cater for gender equality and empowerment of women. Subsequently, the Sector Strategic Plans (SSPs) provide implementable programmes of the national strategies at sector level and District Development Strategies (DDSs) at more decentralized levels.

(ii) Gender responsive legal framework

As a result of the constitutional guarantee of gender equality and women's rights as prescribed in the constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003 revised in 2015, Rwanda has continuously explored and reviewed legal instruments to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are anchored on strong legal reform. The constitutional guarantee of a minimum quota of 30% of women's representation in all decision-making organs has enabled high representation of women in decision making and governance processes.

The constitution guarantees a minimum quota of 30% of women's representation in all decision making organs.

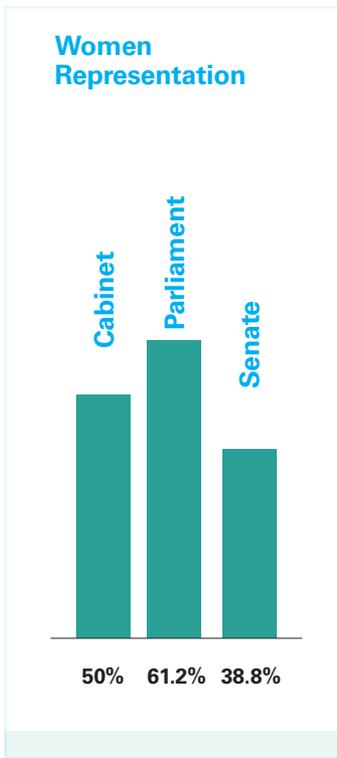




Other remarkable areas resulting from the legal reform include equal rights for women and men in access to land and inheritance rights, equal management of family property, elimination of discrimination at the work place, prohibition of GBV and child abuse and continuous promotion of women’s rights.

(iii) Increased women's power and participation in decision-making

Women’s empowerment and participation in decision making is mainly captured by the ratios of women in parliament, ministerial positions, and other positions in various structures of governance both in public, private, and civil society entities. Women’s representation at various levels and in different sectors has influenced the design and implementation of policies, laws, and programmes that are gender responsive.



Women’s representation in the cabinet has reached 50% (2019) from 36.8% in 2014. In the on-going term of 2018-2023, women parliamentarians stand at 61.2% in the lower chamber and 38% in the Senate³. At decentralized levels, women’s share in the leadership has improved during 2016 - 2018 from 16.7% to 26.7% as District Mayors and 45.2% in District Councils⁴.

In the private sector, the progress of women’s representation is being observed and the current participation rate in the decision making organs varies between 30% for presidential positions and 70% as second vice president in various chambers of the private sector federation at national level. At provincial level, women represent 20% as the first vice-president positions and 60% as the second vice-president positions in the executive committee members⁵.

(iv) Improved health care services

Health care services have improved over the past period. Efforts have been secured to set initiatives and programmes aimed at improving the provision of effective and efficient health services. These initiatives include the community/based health insurance scheme that contribute to women’s access to affordable and

3 Parliament (2018). *Parliament Administrative Data*, Parliament, Kigali, Rwanda

4 MINALOC (2018). *Administrative Data*. Ministry of Local Government, Kigali, Rwanda

5 PSF (2019). *Administrative Data*. Private Sector Federation, Kigali, Rwanda.



quality health services, increased health infrastructure and medical practitioners, use of drone technologies for the emergency health supplies, community health workers, and use of rapid SMS to fast track and address high rate of maternal and child mortality.

These initiatives have led to among other things reduced maternal and infant mortality rates. For Instance, infant mortality rate reduced from 107 deaths per 1000 live births in 2000 to a much lower 32 deaths in 2014/15. The under - 5 years death rate declined from 196 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2000 to 50 deaths in 2014/2015.

(v) Financing for Gender Equality

With regard to financing for gender equality, the government of Rwanda in partnership with other stakeholders has institutionalized gender responsive budgeting (GRB) programme. In this respect the Organic Law N° 12/2013/OL of 12/09/2013 on State Finances and Property was adopted to enforce GRB. This constitutes an important tool namely Gender Budget Statement (GBS) to engender planning, budgeting, implementation and reporting processes. The GBS is a mandatory annex to the budget framework paper by all budget agencies which is annually submitted to the Ministry of finance and planning and the parliament for budget negotiations and approval. This has enabled actors specifically public institutions to use public resources in a manner that benefits both men and women and boys and girls.

1.2. Key challenges and strategies

Despite the progress mentioned above, there are still some challenges impeding full attainment of gender equality and women's empowerment. Some of these are described below:

- (1) Poverty among women and girls:** In spite of the on-going innovative and home-grown solutions, especially the social protection programmes like "One cow per poor family and Vision 2020 Umurenge Program (VUP) programme" meant to address poverty among the population, a significant number of women and girls still experience poverty. Findings of the newly released report of the Fifth Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey- EICV-5 (2016/17) show that more female headed households are classified as poor (39.5%) than male headed-households (37.6%)⁶. The

⁶ NISR, *EICV 5- Poverty Thematic Report, 2016/17*. National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, Kigali, Rwanda.



report also indicates that adult women are more likely to be living in poverty (34.8%) than adult males (31.6%), and heavily involved in subsistence farming with limited access to improved agriculture inputs due to their low economic capacity. This data shows that more effort is still required to address poverty among women and girls.

(2) **Limited access to and control over productive resources and entrepreneurship skills:** Rwanda aspires to become a knowledge-based economy focusing on information, communication and technology. However, ICT literacy rate among women is still low at 7% compared to 11% of men in the same age category⁷. Women’s engagement in various programmes and government initiatives requires some specific skills and capacities where their involvement needs improvement. In addition, literacy levels among females aged 15 years and above in Rwanda stand at 69%. This means that 31% of females aged 15 and above neither read nor write and this affects their access to employment opportunities especially in productive jobs.

(3). **Gender Based Violence (GBV):** In the course of eliminating all forms of GBV and violence against women, Rwanda has demonstrated a strong commitment to putting an end to GBV categorised as a national security, human rights, and a development issue. Policies, gender sensitive laws and strategies have been put in place to curb GBV at all levels. The most outstanding model to handle cases of gender based violence is the established Isange One Stop Centers country wide to provide holistic services to the victims of GBV and child abuse under one roof. The centers have increased from 9 in 2014 to 44, established in each district hospital. Though such efforts are in place, some challenges related to GBV still exist including low reporting, limited evidence especially in cases of sexual violence/child defilement, teenage pregnancy and limited control over resources. These are linked to limited women’s economic empowerment, negative social norms and the culture of silence on GBV issues which hinders reporting of cases and curtails prevention and effective legal assistance efforts to victims of GBV.

44 Isange One Stop Centers established countrywide for free 24/7 holistic services to GBV and child abuse victims.

⁷ NISR, EICV 5- Gender Thematic Report, 2016/17. National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, Kigali, Rwanda.





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- (4) **Unpaid care work:** Women in Rwanda do more unpaid care work than their male counterparts. For example, data from the labour force survey of 2018 shows that women spend an average of 25.3 hours per week on unpaid care compared to 13.5 hours for their male counterparts. This limits women's participation in productive and paid economic activities as well as in political and leadership spheres. This does not only affect women as individuals but also the whole economy.
- (5) **Limited access to alternative sources of energy for poor women:** In Rwanda, 84.7% of women depend on firewood as the main source of cooking energy⁸. This is largely due to limited accessibility and affordability to the high cost of alternative sources of energy (e.g. cooking gas and biogas). Again, due to social cultural beliefs and gender stereotypes, women and children are mainly responsible for providing cooking fuel in their homes. Limited access to these alternative energy sources increases their workload and limits their engagement in other productive activities.

8 *NISR, EICV 5- Utilities and Amenities Thematic Report, 2016/17. National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, Kigali, Rwanda.*



SECTION 2:



SECTION 2: PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN OF THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION SINCE 2014

2.1. National policy, legal and strategic frameworks

Rwanda has committed to gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in its development agenda and this is demonstrated in setting enabling legal, policy and strategic frameworks. From the legal perspective, the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003, revised in 2015, constitutes the main reference for the entire legal reform to ensure women's fundamental human rights and freedoms. Secondly, the constitution guarantees equal rights between Rwandans and between men and women. The latter is affirmed by a constitutional requirement to have a minimum of 30% of all decision-making positions in public institutions/organs reserved for women.

At policy level, gender equality and empowerment of women are at the center of the national planning and strategic development frameworks. The country's priorities are set mainly in its vision 2020 and NST1. These priorities are translated into more implementable actions in each sector through the Sector Strategic Plan at central level and District Development Strategies at a more decentralized level.

The Vision 2050 programme which is being developed has already set gender equality and empowerment of women as one of its main aspirations for the national transformation and prosperity of Rwanda⁹. For the NST1, women are expected to contribute significantly to the overall economic production. It envisages further increase of women's access to economic opportunities through mainstreaming gender equality in all productive sectors and also through elimination of any kind of violence and discrimination.

Specifically, the NST1 emphasizes women's access to finance, creation of decent jobs, scaling up early childhood development programs, fighting Gender Based Violence (GBV), human trafficking and strengthening institutions promoting gender equality and empowerment of women and girls¹⁰.

9 MINICOFIN (2016). *The Rwanda we want: Towards "Vision 2050"*. National Dialogue Presentation, 16th December, 2016.

10 GoR (2017). *7 Years Government Programme: National Strategy for*



There are 16 SSPs that operationalize the goals and aspirations of the national vision for transformation into programmes and interventions at sector level include those related to gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. In each SSP, gender related priorities are identified, mainstreamed, and implemented through sector interventions. More so, about 10 out of 16 sectors have developed their respective gender mainstreaming strategies to guide gender responsive interventions at all levels.

For example, the agriculture gender mainstreaming strategy developed in 2010 has guided the ministry, its agencies, and their partners to effectively mainstream gender in various agriculture value chains and programmes such as the Crop Intensification Program (CIP). As effects of this strategy implementation, women have increasingly benefited from land use and management, access to agriculture extension services, increased agriculture and livestock production, and crop and livestock marketing as detailed in the next sub-sections.

This case, a second generation of sector gender mainstreaming strategy is being developed and envisages to sustain gender gains and accelerate the implementation of gender commitments in agriculture sector.

For effective implementation, the National Gender Policy (2010) continues to provide a policy framework to promote gender equality and equity and for mainstreaming gender needs and concerns across all sectors.

For financing for gender equality, the Organic Law N° 12/2013/OL of 12/09/2013 on State Finances and Property was adopted to enforce GRB, GBS engenders planning, budgeting, implementation, and reporting processes. The GBS is a mandatory annex to the budget framework paper by all budget agencies which is annually submitted to the parliament for budget negotiations and approval.

This has allowed increased gender mainstreaming in a non-traditional gender responsive sector at the same time responding to pressing needs of women like access to health centers, improved proximity of schools for girls, access to non-farm jobs for women among others.

The Organic Law N°12/2013/OL of 12/09/2013 on State Finances and Property was adopted to enforce GRB through GBS as a mandatory annex to the Budget framework paper.

Transformation (NST1). Government of Rwanda, Kigali, Rwanda. (Internet). http://www.minecofin.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/NST1_7YGP_Final.pdf. Accessed 19th Feb. 2019





2.2. Progress across the 12 critical areas of concern

This sub-section describes the progress made across the 12 critical areas of concern of the BPFa. It explains policy and legal reforms, institutional mechanisms, programmes and initiatives, and practices that have enabled effective implementation of interventions geared towards empowerment of women and girls. The progress entails further major achievements, challenges as well as strategies for improvement with focus on the period 2014 - 2019.

2.2.1. Women and poverty

(i) Policies and strategies to reduce poverty among women

In addition to the above macro-economic policies, strategies and plans, the government of Rwanda continues to implement policies and social protection programmes aimed at reducing poverty among women and girls. The national social protection policy identifies the need to support women's participation in productive activities, reduce vulnerability in general and promote sustainable economic and social development centered on risk management, good coordination of saving actions and protection of vulnerable people¹¹.

In this regard, a number of social protection programmes were initiated to deal with poverty among women and girls. These include: Vision 2020 Umurenge Program (VUP), Ubudehe, One cup of milk per child program, and One Cow per Poor Family (Known as GIRINKA), the Genocide Survivors Support and Assistance Fund (FARG) and other social security initiatives.

These pro-poor programmes provide direct support in terms of cash transfers, facilitation in accessing financial and credit services, offer of employment opportunities through collective actions such as feeder road maintenance and construction of terraces for soil erosion control and provision of assets such as cows for improved social welfare and production purposes.

In addition, there is a new scheme on maternity leave which gives a full paid leave to female employees who are absent from employment for the purpose of pregnancy, giving birth, and

11 *Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Local Government, National Social Protection Policy in Rwanda, p 1*



subsequently caring for the new born. This is established by the law N° 003/2016 of 30/03/2016 relating to maternity leave benefit scheme. The scheme has introduced 12 weeks (3 months) of fully paid leave during which a monthly compensation equivalent to the worker's last salary shall be given. With this maternity leave benefits regime, mothers no longer face the hard choice of either completing 12 weeks and lose 80% of their salary or return to work after 6 weeks to keep their income from salary¹².

(ii) Laws and administrative practices for equal rights and access to economic resources

The law governing land in Rwanda (2013) guarantees equal rights on land access, ownership, management and utilization for both males and females. In addition, law N° 27/2016 of 08/07/2016 governing Matrimonial Regimes, Donations and Successions provides for women's equal inheritance rights with men. Both laws have greatly increased women's access and ownership over productive resources which they never had before. Since land is a main factor of production and investment, land rights extended to women by these laws have enabled them to own and use land for investment purposes. Access to economic resources contributes to the attainment of SDGs 5.5.a which mandates governments to "Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources.

(iii) Current status of poverty among women and girls

Poverty levels among adult women and girls have reduced from 35.9% in 2014 to 34.8% in 2018 while it stands at 44.8% among girls aged less than 16 years old.¹³ This is partly explained by increased access to various services and products from social protection programmes and improved access to productive resources such as land. For example, the VUP which is designed to provide a safety net for the poor is well considered a key driving factor for poverty reduction among poor male and female headed households, especially through its component of public works.

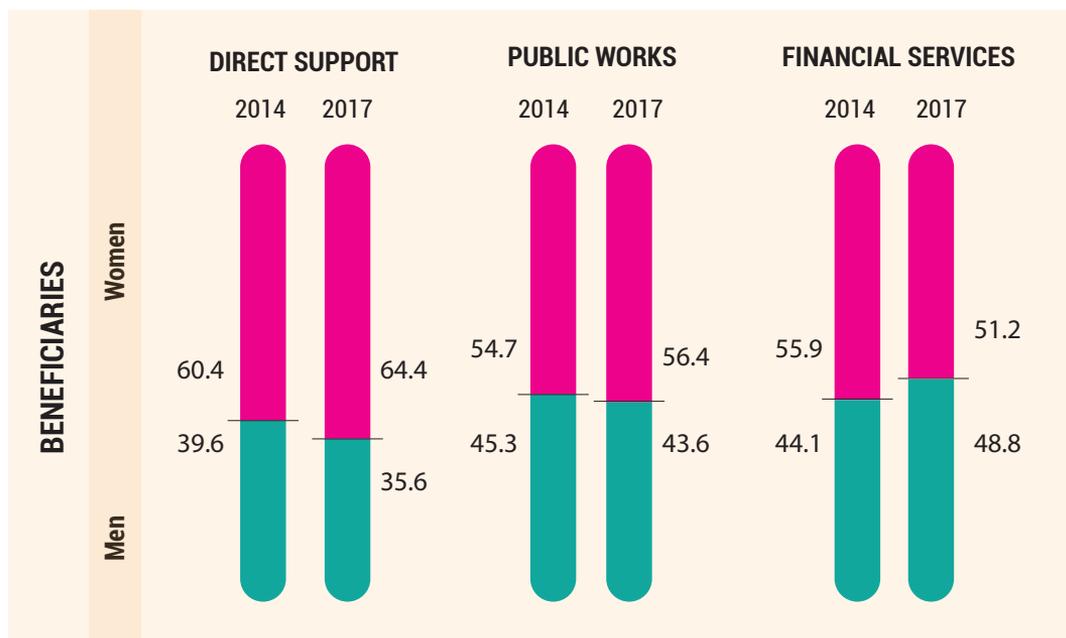
12 *RSSB (2016). Press Announcement. Rwanda Social Security Board, Kigali, Rwanda.*

13 *NISR, EICV 5- Poverty Profile Report, 2016/17. National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, Kigali, Rwanda.*



The programme has now reached 4.4% of the population from 4.0% in 2014¹⁴. Females have increasingly been targeted as VUP beneficiaries for direct support and public works (see Table 1)

Table 1: VUP Participant beneficiaries (2014-2017)



Source: NISR, EICV 5- VUP Thematic Report, 2016/17.

In addition, access and use of land for production among women has generally improved because of the legal reform and effective implementation of the Land Tenure Regularization programme initiated in 2008. Subsequently, about 77% of female headed household have the right to sell or use their land as collateral against 80% of male headed households. Access to land is critical in empowering women to play an active role in economic development. About 38% of women have accessed credit using land as collateral.

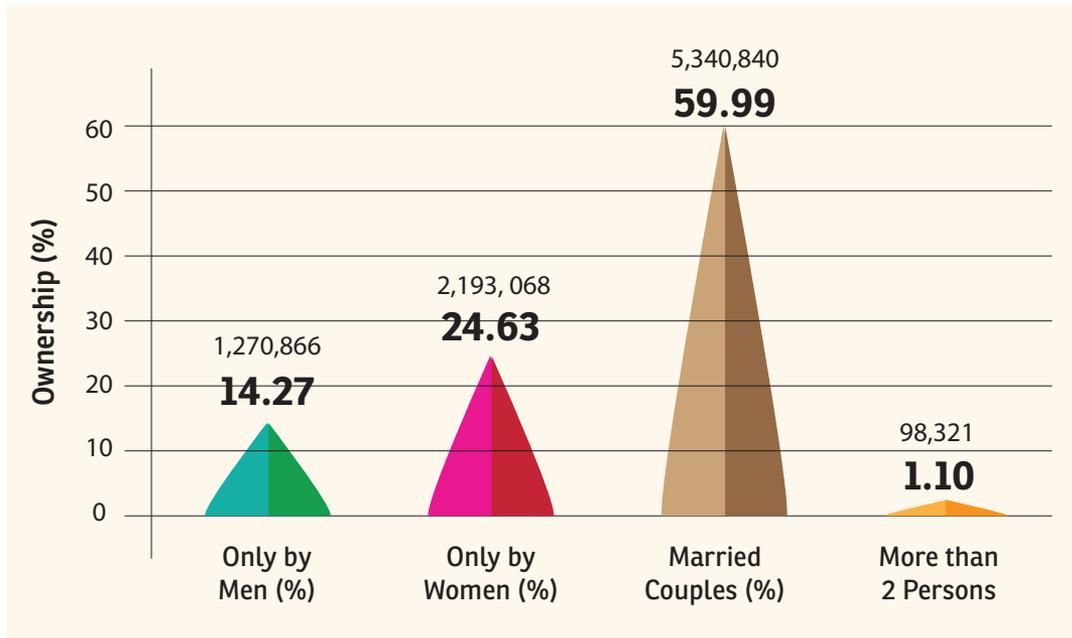
This shows a tremendous shift compared to the period before, when women were denied land ownership rights. The following figure (1) shows current land ownership trends by both men and women in Rwanda.

Access to land is critical in empowering women to play an active role in economic development. About 38% of women have accessed credit using land as collateral.

14 NISR, EICV 5- Poverty Profile Report, 2016/17



Figure 1: Land ownership by categories



Source: RNRA, Administrative Data, 2019¹⁵

(iv) Financial inclusion for women and girls

The government of Rwanda, working with its partners has created diverse savings and credits schemes as well as financial institutions in order to boost and enforce women’s savings and access to finance initiatives. These comprise the establishment of savings and credit cooperatives known as Umurenge SACCO at decentralized administrative sector level, intermediary support services by specific institutions such as the Business Guarantee Fund (BGF), Duterimbere Cooperative (COPEDU) and other guarantee funds. Women’s membership to Umurenge SACCO has increased by 5% points from 61% in 2014 to 66.1% in 2018.

15 RNRA (2019). Administrative Data. Rwanda Natural Resource Authority, Ministry of Environment, Kigali, Rwanda.



In addition, there is a specific Youth and Women Access to Finance Strategy (2012) aimed at increasing the financial capacity of women and youth, and promoting entrepreneurship and business skills.

These initiatives have greatly contributed to increased women's financial inclusion from 39% in 2013 to 86% in 2016¹⁶. Currently, women with savings accounts are estimated at 39.7% and the number of women who borrowed from the banking sector more than tripled from 10,254 in June 2011 to 38,282 in June 2016¹⁷.

More loans seem to be acquired from informal sources with 32.6% for men and 28.8% for women. Women are increasingly being facilitated through various types of guarantee funds as depicted in table (2).

16 *Access to Finance Rwanda (AFR). FinScope (2016). Women and Financial Inclusion in Rwanda, Kigali, Rwanda.*

17 *BNR (2018). Financial Stability Report. National Bank of Rwanda, Kigali, Rwanda.*



Table 2: Percentage share of women and men for the guarantee fund products by BDF

Products	Cum. # of projects		Cum. Loan (%)		Cum. Guarantee Amount		
	Total Projects	% Share of Women	% Share of Men	% Share of Women	% Share of Men	% Share of Women	% Share of Men
 Agricultural Guarantee Fund (AGF)	 1272	 32.1	 67.9	 20.6	 79.4	 28.1	 78.1
 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)	 5578	 42.3	 57.7	 42.4	 57.6	 79.3	 55.8
 Rural Investment Facility (RIF)	 11257	 31.2	 68.8	 29.6	 70.4	 43.3	 69.8
 Post-Harvest Grant	 54	 27.8	 72.2	 10.1	 89.9	 12.1	 89.2

BDF, Administrative Data, 2017¹⁸

18 BDF (2017). Administrative Data. Business Development Fund. Kigali, Rwanda.



Apart from the products channeled through BDF, other commercial banks also have some specific financial support services for women such as “Zamuka Mugore” by the Bank of Kigali which mainly targets women engaged in economic activities. This product has been very successful. Within four months of implementation, 1,127 women opened an account, with RWF 32,693,013 paid in as savings, and RWF 462,225,000 paid out as loans. The product is being piloted in five branches, with a plan of scaling up to the other branches at the end of the pilot.

Overall, efforts on financial inclusion for women during the last four years are impressive. The level of financial exclusion has significantly declined from 32% in 2012 to 13% in 2016 due to enabling conditions such as increased use of Mobile money services, proximity to financial services by Umurenge SACCOs, agent banking, and improved land ownership which has enabled women get collateral for loans. However, there remain some challenges to be addressed in the future including: limited skills in developing some good and bankable projects, high interest rates on credit (currently estimated at an average rate of 17%).

2.2.2. Education and training of women

Education is a fundamental human right and an essential tool to ensure that all Rwandan citizens - women and men, girls and boys - realize their full potentials¹⁹. From this perspective, the government of Rwanda has committed to make education at all levels more accessible and for all and more relevant to the national needs while ensuring that disadvantaged persons such as women and girls, the poor, and people with disabilities have access to meaningful learning opportunities. The introduction of twelve years basic education programmes (12 YBE), construction of education infrastructure (e.g. Schools and education labs), and measures for quality assurance in the education sector, all contribute to the advancement of education for girls.

At policy level, the 2008 girl's education policy and the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) (2013-2018) aimed at guiding a progressive elimination of gender disparities in education and training that hamper education for women and girls. As result of the policy implementation alongside other programmes in the education sector, the status of girls' education has tremendously improved at primary, secondary, and tertiary education.

¹⁹ MINEDUC (2003), *Education Policy and its Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP)*, Kigali, Rwanda



Number of female students with disabilities increased from 44.8% in 2015 up to 47% in 2017 in primary schools and from 47.0% in 2015 to 50.5% in 2017 in secondary education.

The gender parity has been stable at primary and secondary level with current girl's enrollment at 49.7% and 53.2% respectively, while it was estimated at 42.6% for tertiary education in 2018.

In the context of inclusive education, the government of Rwanda has enacted Law No 71/2018 of 31/08/2018 relating to the protection of a child and this provides specific protection to children with disabilities. Under Art 18 the government takes care of the child with special physical or mental disabilities where deemed necessary. The number of female students with disabilities attending primary school has increased from 44.8% in 2015 up to 47% in 2017 while that of secondary school students in the same category has increased from 47.0% in 2015 to 50.5% in 2017.²⁰ Art 20 protects Children infected or affected by an incurable disease, child benefits from a special protection and assistance of the government depending on government means. Children under 3 years who live with their mothers in prison are taken to kindergarten by their teachers in the morning and returned to their mothers at lunch time.



With HeForShe Rwanda's impact commitments implementation, Female enrollment in TVET has increased from 41.8% in 2015 to 43.8% in 2018.

In order to increase women's employment opportunities and diversified skills, Rwanda has continued to strengthen demand driven Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) programs to close the skills gap as stated in HeForShe Rwanda's impact commitment. Female enrollment at TVET level has increased from 41.8% (2015) to 43.8% (2018).²¹

The government in collaboration with its partners has continued to mobilize women and girls to participate in TVET through mentorship and peer to peer approaches associated with the use of social media as well as special radio programs designed for young girls and women such as Ni Nyampinga, "Kazi ni Kazi". In addition to this, the National Employment Program (NEP) provides start-up kits to the young graduates to enable them create more jobs.

Despite efforts made by the government to increase the participation of women and girls in TVET, their participation in traditionally male dominated trades such as motto vehicle and engine mechanics, masonry, carpentry, plumbing and domestic electricity, among others is still limited and affects women's chances for employment and enhanced economic empowerment.

20 MINEDUC. *Education Statistical Yearbooks (2015 and 2018)*. Ministry of Education, Kigali, Rwanda

21 MINEDUC. *Education Statistical Yearbook (2018)*. Ministry of Education, Kigali, Rwanda



Looking at the ICT industry, it is an emerging key sector facilitating rapid economic growth. Therefore, women's participation in this very sector will yield significant contributions in social and economic transformation. The country has introduced multiple programmes meant to bridge the gender digital divide and attain parity in access, usage, and innovation. Some of the initiated strategies comprise WEMTECH strategy, Girls in ICT mentorship and networking, and Digital Ambassador Program.

In addition, the Ministry in charge of ICT and Innovations has a weekly radio show entitled "U Rwanda Mu Ikoranabuhanga" aimed at raising awareness on the country's ICT agenda. Specific topics linking women and ICT are also aired to motivate women and increase their role in economic development through ICT.

As a result of these initiatives, female's representation in ICT education has positively changed from 32.3% in 2015/16 to 41.8% in 2016/17. In addition, ICT has facilitated the use of E-learning system for women and girls, which offers a great opportunity to access required skills and education without prejudice to their daily responsibilities. Enrollment of girls in STEM, digital fluency and literacy are being reinforced by innovative initiatives for STEM awareness campaigns like Teck Women, MISS GEEK, Techkobwa and WeCode programs. The number of girls participating in these new emerging fields such as STEM and digital fluency and literacy is currently estimated at 45.6% (see Table below).



Table 3: STEM students enrolled in Upper Secondary from 2016 to 2018

Years	2016	2017	2018
Female	 56,783	 56,637	 63,915
Male	 67,384	 62,455	 76,141
Total Students/ STEM	 124,167	 119,092	 140,056
Percentage of Female/STEM	 45.7	 47.5	 45.6

Source: MINEDUC, Education Statistical Yearbook, 2018

Table 4: STEM Students Enrolled in Tertiary Education (2015-2018)

Years	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Female	 9,249	 12,014	 11,084
Male	 15,976	 24,032	 24,508
Total Students/ STEM	 25,225	 36,046	 35,592
Percentage of Female/ STEM	 36.7%	 33.3%	 31.1%

Source: MINEDUC, Education Statistical Yearbooks, 2016-2018



The access to safe water and sanitation facilities in schools and other education settings for female students has improved. Current estimates show improvement in use of separate toilet facilities for boys and girls at school from 90.8% to 93.1% between 2014 and 2017 with some variations between urban and rural areas as well as the City of Kigali²². Similarly, facilities or services at schools (e.g. school feeding and girls' rooms), women model TVET school of excellence, a gender resource guide module for TVET schools, appointment and training of career guidance focal persons in TVET schools, and Special Needs Education Coordinators (SNECOs) "Imboni z'uburezi"; all create an enabling environment for girls' education.

In regard to sexual and reproductive health rights, law N° 21/2016 of 20/05/2016 relating to Human Reproductive Health provides that all persons have equal rights in relation to human reproductive health and that no person shall be denied such rights based on any form of discrimination. Furthermore the law N° 68/2018 of 30/08/2018 determining offenses and penalties in general removed barriers hindering women and girls to legal and safe abortion. Similarly, there is a ministerial order to operationalise the provisions of penal law on abortion. Other policy supportive actions include the integration of Sexual Reproductive Health in the national education curriculum and development of a manual on Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) to guide different actors in mobilizing youth including girls through use of youth friendly mobilization strategies such as drama, sports, street theaters, youth clubs and community campaigns.

As an approach, clubs have been established in some schools to provide comprehensive sexual and reproductive knowledge among students. This helps students to think critically about informed choices and protect themselves. Comprehensive sexuality education is vital in combating cases of unwanted pregnancies and the spread of STDs because it equips young people with knowledge and competences that enable them to make safe and responsible choices.

With regard to literacy levels, an adult education policy which constitutes an important pillar for supporting lifelong learning and building a dynamic literate environment for men and women and hence promoting literacy in the nation building, has been put in place. This policy has enabled provision of adult and lifelong learning education opportunities to the people in Rwanda including

22 NISR, *EICV 5- Utilities and Amenities Thematic Report, 2016/17*, National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, Kigali, Rwanda.



women. Specifically, for women, the number of women who have received adult literacy education has increased from 70,053 in 2014 to 81,145 in 2018 although the percentage has remained at around 61% of all people who received adult education. Importantly, adult education has opened opportunities for women to participate in various community led activities and has improved their confidence in different communication settings.

Table 5: Number of female/male trained in adult literacy education by sex

Years		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Male		42,603	36,987	49,293	61,556	51,220
Female		70,053	58,842	76,872	90,459	81,145
Total No. of Learners		112,656	95,829	126,165	152,015	132,365
Percentage of Female Learners		62.2	61.4	60.9	59.5	61.3

Source: MINEDUC, Education Statistical Yearbooks, 2014 - 2018

2. 2. 3. Women and health

The health sector in Rwanda has received remarkable interventions that have improved health standards in general and that of women in particular. Improved women’s health is seen not only as a social condition but also a human rights principle as prescribed in the constitution which guarantees good health and support to the population for its realization (article 45). Similarly, policy and strategic planning process in the health sector emphasize universal



access to equitable and affordable quality health services by all Rwandans. This is justified through improved access and quality of essential health services and by strengthening resources and management mechanisms of health support systems to ensure optimal performance of the health programmes.

New laws, policies, and strategies to improve and expand health services particular to women and girls have been formulated. These include: the national health sector policy (2015), the Fourth Health Sector Strategic Plan (HSSP IV) (2018-2024), Non-Communicable Disease Policy (2015), and the law N° 21/2016 of 20/05/2016 relating to Human Reproductive Health. Consequently, the status of sexual and reproductive health services, mental, maternal health and community access to health insurance as well as HIV related services has substantially improved as described below. The reference was made to the Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey (RDHS-2014/2015), produced after every five years, to provide the trends in the health sector while awaiting the next RDHS to be published in September 2020.

Table 6: Key trends in health sector

Intervention Area	Current Status
 <p>Child health</p>	<p>The infant mortality rate has significantly reduced from 107 deaths per 1000 live births in 2000 to a much lower 32 deaths in 2014/15.</p> <p>The under – 5 years death rate has declined from 196 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2000 to 50 deaths in 2014/15.</p> <p>The RDHS (2015) reports 93% of children aged 12-23 months have received all basic vaccines; this is slightly higher than the figure of 90% reported in the 2010 RDHS;</p>

Source: NISR, RDHS, 2014/15



Key trends in health sector (Cont...)



Maternal health

The maternal mortality ratio (MMR) has also declined significantly from 1,071 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2000 to 210 deaths per 100,000 live in 2014/15¹.

From the RDHS of 2014/15, about 99% of women with a live birth in the five years preceding the survey have consistently received at least one antenatal care from a skilled health provider, almost the same level was found in the 2010 RDHS (98%); 43.9% of women make the recommended four or more antenatal care visits during their pregnancy, an increase of 9% since 2010 (35%);

The percentage of pregnant women delivering in health facilities is at 91% while 91% were assisted by a skilled health service provider in 2015 compared to 69% in 2010.



Reproductive health

The percentage of women using any modern contraceptive methods of family planning has gradually increased standing at 48% in 2014/2015 from 45% in 2010.

Source: NISR, RDHS, 2014/15



Key trends in health sector (Cont...)

Intervention Area	Current Status
 <p data-bbox="172 710 323 820">Community access to health insurance</p>	<p data-bbox="395 540 893 630">Health insurance coverage subscription for the total population is 73.9% of which 74.5% are women in 2016/2017.</p> <p data-bbox="395 658 893 801">The proportion of women and girls subscribed under health insurance is 74.5% out of which 94% of women have Mutuelle de Santé (community-based health insurance).</p>
 <p data-bbox="172 1110 316 1220">Infectious diseases control and prevention</p>	<p data-bbox="395 883 893 1115">The National HIV prevalence in Rwanda among adult population (15-49 yrs) has remained stable at 3% since 2005 (both DHS, 2010, 2015). HIV prevalence remains higher among women (3.6%) than among men (2.2%). The highest HIV prevalence is among women aged 35-39 (7.9%) and among men aged 40-44 (7.3%).</p> <p data-bbox="395 1144 893 1325">The transmission of HIV from mother to child has dropped from 10% in 2002 to 1.5% in 2018. Overall 50% reduction of new HIV infections over a decade and nearly 82% reduction of AIDS related deaths for the same period.</p>

Source: NISR, RDHS, 2014/15²³

23 NISR, RDHS, 2014/15 National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) (Rwanda), Ministry of Health (MOH) (Rwanda), and ICF International. 2016. Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey 2014-15. Rockville, Maryland, USA: NISR, MOH, and ICF International.



Introduction of drones technologies, use of RAPID SMS and Community Health Workers has contributed to reduced maternal and child mortality rates.



It is clear from the above statistics that child and maternal mortality rates have substantially reduced due to government and partner’s initiatives. These among others include the implementation of integrated management childhood illnesses in all health facilities, exclusive breast feeding (1000 days campaign), aggressive immunization campaigns, increased community health insurance coverage and for other health insurance schemes²⁴ (see table 6), use of drones technologies that ensures efficiency and timeliness in the delivery of much needed supplies like blood.

Also the use of RAPID SMS (used to easy communication for any emergency cases regarding child and maternal health), increased health professionals, significant increase of public and private health facilities with a focus on specialized services have improved geographical access to health services by all Rwandans and women in particular. More so, the institutionalization of Community Health Workers have played a critical role for maternal and child health service provision at community level across the country.

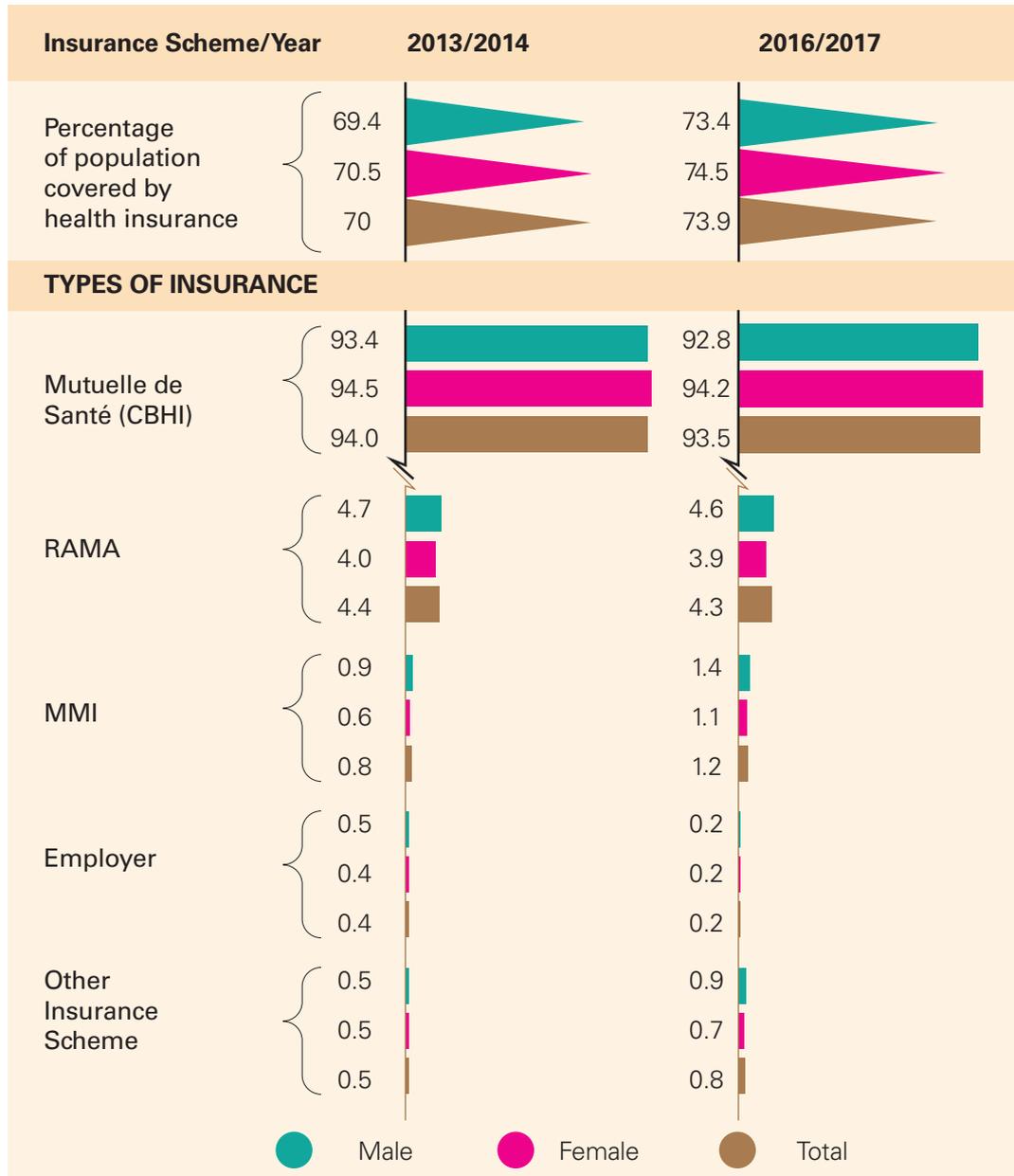
The improvements in reproductive health are related to increased knowledge about fertility control acquired from various trainings on health issues as well as, on gender responsiveness training by health service providers and by education institutions from primary to university levels. This level of knowledge is nearly universal among women in Rwanda and remains an important determinant of access to and use of contraception methods. This is in line with aspirations for SDG # 5.6 on “Ensure women’s universal access to sexual and reproductive health and productive rights”. However, the involvement and participation of men in family planning remains marginal and yet family planning issues should be decided on jointly by men and women.

Furthermore, the community-based health insurance scheme (mutuelle de santé) is part of the key performance indicators for the regular annual performance evaluation (known as Imihigo) for the Central and Local Government leaders (see Table 6). The scheme has greatly contributed to improved access to health care and services for the community in general and for women in particular.

²⁴ *GMO (2018). Gender Profile in Health Sector. Gender Monitoring Office, Kigali, Rwanda*



Table 7: Health Insurance Coverage (%)



Source: NISR, EICV4 (2013/14), EICV5 (2016/17)



2.2.4. Violence against women

i) Laws to fight Gender Based Violence (GBV)

The government of Rwanda has made progress in prevention and elimination of all forms of gender-based violence (GBV). It has established an institutional framework designed to implement legal and policy provisions to fight and manage GBV. There has been progressive legal and policy improvement that represent a decisive step towards gender equality and creating a more conducive environment for preventing and responding to GBV. Specifically, GBV has been criminalized and is therefore punishable under Rwanda jurisdiction. Law N° 68/2018 of 30/08/2018 determining offenses and penalties in general prescribes heavy punishment for child defilement, marital rape, sexual violence and harassment of a spouse. Specifically, the law regarding prevention and punishment of GBV provides for the prevention, protection and relief of victims of gender-based violence. It stipulates procedures and guidelines to be followed by courts in relation to punishment, protection and compensation of victims of gender-based violence. Also, law N° 51/2018 of 13/08/2018 relating to the prevention, suppression and punishment of trafficking in persons and exploitation of others protects women and girls against human trafficking and article 24 specifically prohibits sexual exploitation.

The new law N° 66/2018 of 30/08/2018 regulating labour in Rwanda prohibits sexual harassment at the work place under article 8. Again, in an effort to ensure access to justice by victims of sexual gender violence, victims are exempt from court fees.

ii) Protection and rehabilitation of GBV survivors' dignity pillar

In an effort to provide timely and affordable comprehensive support to female victims of GBV and those of child abuse, the Government of Rwanda has pursued the scale - up of Isange One Stop Centre. Isange One Stop Centers provide comprehensive services to victims of GBV under the same roof and free of charge on a 24 hours 7 days basis. These services include medical care, psychosocial support, legal services, relief and re-integration. So far, 44 Isange One Stop Centers have been established across the 30 District hospitals, compared to 9 centers in 2014. Hot-lines are provided to report cases of violence and these are operational 24hours a day. This has increased the number of GBV and VAWG cases reported and service providers' knowledge of GBV victims to be supported. To enhance quality service delivery, males and



female investigators were trained. This has enhanced their skills in handling and dealing with GBV with the required attention. At national level a mechanism for coordination composed of government institutions has been established. At the central level the steering committee comprises of representatives from Ministry of health, Rwanda National Police, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, Rwanda Investigation Bureau, Gender Monitoring Office, Ministry of Local Government. The membership of the committee is specifically chosen to ensure effective coordination, monitoring, and evaluation of ant-GBV interventions among key service providers in the prevention and response to GBV.

At decentralized administrative entities, community structures and initiatives including “Inshuti z’Umuryango” or Friends of Family, community policing, Child Protection Committees from the village to the district levels have been introduced and trained to raise awareness on GBV consequences, the importance of reporting GBV and referral processes in case of GBV related abuse, among the population. Other initiatives which bring together men and women to discuss issues affecting their communities, including GBV and child protection at community level, have also been implemented. A case in point is the “Parents’ Evening Forum” or “Umugoroba w’Ababyeyi;” community work (umuganda) both platforms for discussing and resolving family conflicts, creating awareness on GBV and child abuse cases in terms of prevention, reporting and available response mechanisms for victims of GBV and child abuse²⁵.

In order to ensure that child abuse and GBV victims access justice, each district has 3 personnel responsible for ease of access to justice services through MAJ. MAJ provide legal aid services and disseminate laws to the population.

Among the 3 personnel, one is in charge of GBV and child abuse which facilitates easy access to justice for victims. The following table presents data trends in terms of women and girls assisted by MAJ countrywide since 2014/5-2019.

25 NISR, EICV 5- Poverty Profile Report, 2016/17



Table 8: Trends of women victims of GBV assisted by MAJ

Women assisted in various categories of GBV services	2014/15	2018/19/
# of written legal aid services provided to women	554	864
# of women who received and given legal advice verbally	381	1900
# of women assisted in courts	260	3363
# of women assisted by MAJ	11,533	37146
Total of women assisted	12,728	43,273

Source: MINIJUST, Annual Reports (2014/15, 2018/19).

iii). Institutional and administrative actions to address violence against women and girls

Specialised units have been established in the Anti-Gender Based Violence Division and two Directorates namely: directorate of Family and Child Protection and Directorate of Isange One Stop Center in Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB). These are in addition to the gender desks operational at Rwanda Defense Forces (RDF) and National Public Prosecution Authority (NPPA) whose role is to address GBV issues in their respective mandates and contribute to GBV prevention and response.

The existence of free hot-lines in RNP, RDF, NPPA, Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB) and GMO is also one of the measures put in place to quickly and appropriately deal with cases of GBV,



child abuse and human trafficking. Other measures include special trainings on GBV, child abuse and human trafficking given to investigators and other law enforcement officers, intelligence network for anti-trafficking in persons, local partnership with stakeholders, and international cooperation and collaboration.

In 2018, the Ministry of Justice established a National Steering Committee composed of representatives from government institutions and civil society organizations to fight human trafficking. MINIJUST also developed and disseminated a training manual on human trafficking to ensure harmonized capacity development and awareness raising among stakeholders. RIB has got a specific anti-human trafficking directorate dealing with transnational crimes including human trafficking. Furthermore, strict border control measures aimed at preventing cross-border trafficking have been established. These include joint operations between Rwanda National Police and the directorate general of immigration and emigration for the identification and rescue of potential victims of human trafficking, daily control of human movements at all borders and individual checking of every passenger to know his/her origin, destination and reason for traveling so as to ensure that there is no unaccompanied child who crosses the border. Victims of human trafficking are given social assistance and reintegrated to prevent re-trafficking. They are also provided with safe spaces (shelter) taking into consideration gender aspects.

In addition to existing institutions that work to promote gender equality and GVB prevention, the Rwanda forensic laboratory and Rwanda Investigation Bureau have been established and continue to provide communities with rapid, victim focused and user friendly GBV response services. More specifically, the Rwanda forensic laboratory is a key milestone with regard to the investigation of GBV crimes because it enables gathering of undisputable DNA evidence to help in prosecution and trail of perpetrators of GBV.

Other initiatives include GBV clinics that are conducted every year country wide to ensure accountability of GBV service providers at the decentralised levels and raise awareness on the available GBV services. Regular campaigns including Radio and TV talk shows are conducted to raise awareness on GBV. A specific case in point is Umurage (inheritance) which was introduced to prevent GBV in families.

Establishment of Rwanda forensic laboratory is key for undisputable DNA evidences to help in prosecution and trial of perpetrators of GBV.



However, in spite of the commitments and achievements registered in this area so far, domestic violence is still prevalent and affecting women and girls, their families and the society at large. Going forward, the country shall continue to put efforts in holistic and multi-dimensional approaches such as focusing on behavior change, economic empowerment of women and girls, strong coordination, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting of interventions against GBV as well as engaging men in the fight of GBV.

2.2.5. Women and armed conflicts

Although the consequences of the genocide are still felt, Rwanda's peace and security context has tremendously changed making Rwanda a stable and peaceful country. According to the 5th Edition of the Rwanda Governance Scorecard of 2018, the Safety and Security Pillar out-scored other pillars winning citizens confidence at 94.97%²⁶. From a global and continental perspective, Rwanda ranks 11th and 2nd safest country respectively²⁷. In the post-conflict era, the government of Rwanda embarked on the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment which is still perceived as a prerequisite to sustainable peace and development and remains an important pillar for nation building. Consequently, Rwandan women have contributed to, and continue to play a vital role in the development of their country in all spheres including those related to maintaining peace and security at national, regional, and international spheres.

i). Role of women in peace building and peace keeping

Rwanda has a robust legal and policy framework as well as, institutional mechanisms to create and sustain a peaceful and conflict-free nation. In addition, Rwanda has developed a National Action Plan (NAP) 2009-2012 and 2018-2022 to implement the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on women peace and security, as a practical step to sustain and expand registered gains in the women, peace and security agenda. The country has also adopted the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, as well as, designed and started implementing both the 7 - year government programme and National Strategy for Transformation which

26 *RGB (2018). 5th edition of the Rwanda Governance Score Card: The State of Governance in Rwanda. Rwanda Governance Board, Kigali, Rwanda.*
27 *The Gallup 2018 Global Law and Order Report. (Internet). Accessed from: https://www.insightcrime.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Gallup_Global_Law_And_Order_Report_2018.pdf. March, 2019.*





mainstreams and expand the women, peace and security agenda related gains from first 1325 NAP action plan. Currently, women constitute 4.6% of the total country's force. In the last six years, the number of women deployed for peace mission has increased from 0.4% to 3.3%.²⁸

At the grass root level, women are playing a visible role in conflict management and justice structures. They represent 44.3% of community mediators (Abunzi) and 48% of the access to Justice Bureaus (MAJ). They also contribute to providing free legal services to citizens including victims of GBV and child abuse. Women in security organs actively participate in peace building initiatives at both regional and international levels. In 2015, Rwanda was the second highest contributor of female police peace-keepers. This sends a positive message to the communities especially on the capacities and professionalism of women in peace and security affairs.

In a bid to increase the participation of women in peace keeping missions, security organs (Rwanda Defense Force, Rwanda National Police, and Rwanda Correctional Services) are implementing some provisions in the national gender policy to allow significant numbers of women serve in the armed forces by recruiting and training women in order to increase their proportion in peacekeeping operations. Female personnel in Rwanda Defense Force are also offered equal opportunities to join military specialized departments such as aviation, engineering, medicine among others, which prepares them for special tasks and missions. The increased participation of women in peacekeeping operations is observed in their services as military observers and staff officers in all Rwandan contingents deployed in support of UN missions (MINUSCA, UNAMID, UNMISS and UNISFA).

Based on their secondary constitutional role, Rwanda Defence Force in partnership with other government institutions conduct activities to support national social-economic development initiatives. Army is involved in outreach development programs such as offering quality health care services to the general public, construction of water points and pipe lines, constructing shelters and women and children have been among the beneficiaries of these citizen outreach program.

Through Ndabaga Association (Rwanda Patriotic Army (RPA) and EX-FAR combatants) established in 2001, women ex-

At the grass root level, women represent 44.3% of community mediators (Abunzi) and 48% of the access to Justice Bureaus (MAJ).

28 MINADEF (2019). *Administrative Data*. Ministry of Defense, Kigali, Rwanda



combatants are fostering development, unity and reconciliation as their core mission. Through cooperatives, women are helped to improve on their socio-economic welfare and contribute to national development. Indeed, about 152 cooperatives have been established since 2002 to assist demobilized combatants including women who constitute 608 out of 11,512 members. The issue of relief and economic recovery of ex-combatants is also being addressed. On top of mandatory re-integration benefits, all female ex-combatants receive similar and equal benefits as those of their male counterparts. So far, 449 women have been demobilised and reintegrated.

The demobilization and reintegration programme continue to provide support to women ex-combatants in form of widow grants, and disability allowances. A specialized reinsertion support to child ex-combatants is also provided in form of psychosocial support, recreational opportunities, literacy and numeric education to mention a few. Additional reintegration services include formal and vocational training, provision of income generation activities and entrepreneurship courses to female ex-combatants.

While Rwandan women have played a positive role in peace and security, more comprehensive strategies to increase full participation of women in conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms are still needed. Few women and girls are featured in peace negotiations, though women have been instrumental in driving forward peace and reconciliation processes within Rwandan communities. In this regard, the government is committed to continue implementing programs and policies that ensure women's full and unequivocal participation in prevention of violence and conflicts.

ii) Protection, assistance and training to refugee women

Rwanda has hosted many refugee communities from neighboring countries, especially Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and protects them in accordance with international law and regulations. The government works closely with national and international agencies and NGOs to provide services to refugee women and girls. For instance, prevention and response services are provided jointly by the Ministry in charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA), UNHCR, Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration (DGIE), Rwanda National Police (RNP) and Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB) in all refugee locations. Prevention of women's/girls' trafficking in



refugee camps has also been emphasized. In collaboration with UNHCR and MINEMA, IOM initiated a multi-year project on counter trafficking at national level in 2018. Services rendered to survivors of violence and human trafficking victims include shelters, help lines, dedicated health services, legal, and justice services, counseling among others. Multi-sectoral response is available to victims of SGBV including victims of trafficking for sex through SGBV/protection partners in the camps whereas general trafficking (or attempt to trafficking) cases are directly handled by UNHCR and government agencies.

Like in other areas, the girl child protection, prevention and response mechanisms through community-based structures (child protection Committees and Clubs) and awareness activities are in place specifically for children in refugee camps. Sport and art are great tools for protection because they enhance children and youth awareness on various issues, help them to interact better and build their confidence to refer incidents of violation to the Child Protection clubs and other protection actors.

Refugee female teachers are empowered through trainings to meet the national teaching standards and be part of the teaching staff in national schools. Also the school of excellence program where boys and girls are encouraged to study hard and obtain high grades for better future education opportunities has been established in the refugee camps, and this encourage better performance of all students and girls in particular. The tertiary education scholarships give great opportunities for young women to work hard and obtain high grades and take effective roles in the communities. Through DAFI scholarships and Kepler connected learning programs many young women prove their capacities to lead and be role models for others.

From leadership perspective women in refugee camps hold leadership positions. Structures like women opportunity centers, community centers, safe spaces and youth friendly spaces have been built in refugee camps over the past years to support refugees. Women and girls are taking the leadership and mentoring roles in camps through training and effective participation in targeted programs such as sport and art programs. These programs are helping them to raise their self-esteem, gain self-confidence and become role models for other women. Refugee women and girls are encouraged to support each other, but more special projects on women empowerment and leadership programs are still needed in the camps.



2.2.6. Women and the economy

i) Employment opportunities and access to economic resources

Women's participation in the economy is key to achieving sustainable national development. The government of Rwanda is aware of this and therefore continues to improve women's opportunities for engagement in the economy through a number of mechanisms including implementing new enabling policies, laws and programmes to help women participate in and gain from the economic development process. For instance, law No 66/2018 of 30/08/2018 regulating Labour in Rwanda has been passed and is now operational. This law provides for equal rights to employment for both women and men, girls and boys, and guarantees equal remuneration for equal work for both females and males.

The country has further established various employment programmes including Create a Job programme (Hangumurimo), VUP, and National Employment Programme (NEP). The NEP programme aims at creating sufficient and productive jobs, increase skills and create positive work related attitudes within workforce in both public and private institutions with special focus on youth and women. The implementation of the programme cuts across various sectors and involves various stakeholders including those that are promoting skills development, entrepreneurship and business advancement, labour markets interventions, and job creation.

Currently, about 43% of the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are owned by women. In the same framework, Hangumurimo programme has led to the creation of 23,122 jobs of which 67% are occupied by females (15,523). Approximately 80% of the jobs created are off farm jobs implying that more women are currently doing off-farm jobs than before. On the other hand, Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (VUP) Public Works employ 49% female-heads of households.

Women's labor force participation rate is estimated at 45.8% while the unemployment rate stands at 17.1%. The main occupation areas for women comprise agriculture, forestry and fishing (54.6%), human health and social work (53.9%), financial and insurance activities (49.9%), education (47.5%), manufacturing (44.3%), and whole sale, retail trade, repair of motorcycles and



vehicles (41.7%)²⁹. Clearly, there is a significant shift in job trends with more women currently participating in traditionally male dominated trades such as manufacturing, construction, finance, and motor-vehicle mechanics, to mention a few.

Table 9: Women and men in labour force participation

	Male	Female	Total
Labour Force Participation rate	63.9	45.8	54.2
Employment to population ratio	55.2	37.9	46.0
Under employment rate	25.2	32.0	28.2
Unemployment rate	13.5	17.1	15.1
Youth unemployment rate (16-30 Years)	16.0	21.9	18.7

Source: NISR, Labour Force Survey, 2018

In order to continue supporting women and girls to actively participate in economic development, the government of Rwanda and partners have introduced multidimensional programmes and initiatives to allow women and girls access to productive economic resources. Access to land remains an instrumental factor in enabling women’s productive capacities. Both the land law and inheritance law have enabled more women to own land than before. Women can now make decisions over land, including

29 NISR (2017). Labour Force Survey. National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda. Kigali, Rwanda.





using it as collateral for bank loans. Indeed, data shows that about 39.9% of women have acquired loans and credit using their land as collateral and 25.5% women accessed agriculture loans using their land as collateral. Thus, land ownership has been very instrumental in contributing to women's access to finance and hence improved women's contribution to the economy.

The gender equality seal initiative seeks to eliminate gender gaps in the private sector and comes at the right time when the country has positioned the private sector as the engine of the national transformation

In its efforts to ensure that the private sector embraces gender equality and enhance women's economic empowerment, the government of Rwanda in collaboration with the United Nations partners initiated the Gender Equality Seal (GES) certification programme for the private sector. The objective of the initiative is to promote gender diverse work place environments for participating companies. The initiative is designed in a way that allows companies to do a self-assessment on selected gender indicators namely; gender pay gaps, women's roles in decision-making, work-life balance, women's/men's access to non-traditional jobs, sexual harassment and nonsexist communication. The self-assessment exercise identifies gender gaps and recommendations to bridge the gaps.

Companies which successfully implement recommendations that bridge the identified gender gaps are awarded a gender equality seal as a recognition for their efforts in promoting gender diverse work environments. The gender equality seal certification initiative is expected to not only increase the number of females working in private sector companies but also in decision-making positions as well as increasing the number of females accessing non-traditional jobs which in most cases are paid highly compared to traditional jobs.

ii). Women's participation in entrepreneurship and business

The private sector development strategy (2013-2018) shows that women are employed in survival enterprises due to lack of access to decent jobs/formal employment and opportunities to develop their businesses. The strategy has committed to increase economic opportunities for both men and women. In order to achieve that, the sector committed to apply a "gender lens" in each intervention related to the implementation of strategy, understanding the barriers and issues specifically faced by women as both entrepreneurs and employees and what is required to overcome them. Apart from this strategy, there are other programmes and initiatives aimed to facilitate women's participation in entrepreneurship and business development.





In addition to financial support services already mentioned, the government continues to initiate more strategies to enhance women's involvement in business and job creation.

In the context of "Made in Rwanda Policy," various workshop facilities known as "Udukiro" for tailors, carpenters, and artisans among others have been constructed to facilitate job creation and access to market with focus on women and the youth. Women and girls are provided with training in different aspects such as trading, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, packaging and marketing to increase their participation in business and their product sales through Business Incubation Centers (BIC) established in different parts of the country. Women and girls are also benefiting from practical advisory services through Proximity Business Advisors operating at the community level.

In the agriculture sector which employs majority women, e-Isoko platform has been initiated to disseminate market information easily to the farmers. This information is channeled through their organizations and Farmer Field Schools (FFS).

Multiple trading facilities or selling points have been constructed in both urban and rural areas of Rwanda. This has dramatically reduced the number of women street vendors and improved business stability for women who were illegally vending their merchandise on the streets. Organized selling points have also increased marketing negotiation power of women vendors at the same time offering them a more secure environment of work. Consequently, these organized selling points have contributed to improved security for women and girls who were prone to violence on the streets. Women have also been supported to participate in the national and international trade fairs. This has enabled them to expand their business networks, as well as participate in learning and experience sharing both of which are essential for their business expansion.

The above interventions have led to increased ownership of SMEs and businesses by women. Results of the business establishment census by NISR indicates that 33% of the total establishments in 2017 were owned by women compared to 27% in 2014. The use of mobile phones has expanded trading opportunities, facilitated access to rapid market information and consequently contributed to increased access to financial services.

30 NISR (2014 and 2017). *Establishment Censuses*. National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, Kigali, Rwanda.



Use of mobile phones has increased access to financial services with more than 37% of women currently transact business using mobile money.

Current data indicates that more than 37% of women transact business using mobile money which saves them time and other expenses such as transport. There too has been an increase of women’s participation in economic decision – making bodies. Findings of a study by New Faces New Voices show that women represent 25% of board members, 31% of CEOs, 25% of senior management staff, and 36.5% of women employees in the private sector³¹.

iii). Women's participation in Agriculture

Women are key players in the agriculture sector, producing for both home consumption and the market. The government of Rwanda has developed an agriculture gender mainstreaming strategy to guide the integration of gender in agriculture sector. Furthermore, a comprehensive program for crop intensification (CIP) has been implemented since 2007/8. This programme focuses on increasing economies of scale from the land use consolidation, increasing use of agricultural inputs (seeds and fertilisers), improving agriculture marketing and extension services. Women have participated in, and benefited from the above components at various scales. For example, in the area of land use consolidation, women’s participation stands at 32%, about 36% have benefited from irrigation investment, 36% accessed improved seeds, 32% used fertilisers, and 11% have benefited from artificial insemination services (11%)³². This does not benefit women only but also contribution to increased agriculture productivity.

The role of women in provision of extension services has also increased. Extension services are channeled mainly through the Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and Community Farmer Promoters. Women facilitators through the FFS are currently estimated at 28% and women constitute 21% of community farmer promoters. Women also hold 52% membership of Farmer Field Schools and 39.4% of people registered under the agriculture subsidy program known as Smart Nkunganire which supports women’s access to expensive production inputs such as improved seeds and inorganic fertilizers³³.

Despite the high representation of women in the agriculture sector, they are more engaged in the production part of the value chain and less in agro-processing, marketing and export. Also gender power relations in the households determine who

31 *New Faces New Voices (2018), Kigali, Rwanda.*

32 *RAB (2018). Annual Report Rwanda Agriculture Board, Kigali, Rwanda*

33 *Source: RAB Website, Smart Nkunganire, 2019 B Report.*



sells produce and who controls the money gained from the sale. Consequently, men who are in most cases heads of households sell agriculture produce and control money from the sale. This can also be explained by women's relative time poverty due to their caring roles at the household and community levels, which limit their mobility and engagement outside of their homes. Strategies have been put in place by the agriculture gender mainstreaming strategy under revision to ensure that household based approaches which promote equitable decision-making regarding access to market and control over household resources including agriculture produces, are used.

Agriculture exports represent 70% of the total Rwandan exports. These largely include coffee and tea which make 90% of export revenues. Women's participation in this economic venture remains minimal. Only 10% of coffee exporters in Rwanda and 3% of tea exporters are women compared to men who form 57% of coffee exporters and 12% of tea exporters³⁴. This data confirms women's limited involvement in agriculture export business which in turn curtails their income streams. This is an urgent need to look into and design strategies that will involve more women in agriculture export trade.

iv). Elimination of occupational segregation and harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men

There are legal measures in Rwanda meant to prohibit occupational segregation. The new law N° 66/2018 of 30/08/2018 regulating Labour in Rwanda provides for equal rights to employment for both women and men, girls and boys, and guarantees equal remuneration for equal work for both females and males. Apart from having non-discriminative legal framework, the country has taken further steps to ensure that women and girls are enrolled in previously male dominated trades that are more economic viable. In response to the demand of specific technical and vocational skills, TVET schools have been established along other support services such as special guarantee funds and toolkits.

In Rwanda, women bear most of the burden of unpaid domestic care work such as cooking, cleaning, and taking care of the sick which leave them with limited time to participate in productive work. The government of Rwanda and partners acknowledge the need to bridge the gaps in family responsibilities between women

34 *GMO (2015). Gender Profile in Agriculture Sector, unpublished material. Gender Monitoring Office, Kigali, Rwanda.*



and men. In this respect, the recent law N° 32/2016 of 28/08/2016 governing persons and family prescribes how spouses (both female and male) are supposed to jointly manage the household, provide moral and material support to the household members as well as, maintain the home in all other aspects. Men are also being sensitised to take part in domestic tasks previously considered to be solely executed by women and girls. In the same spirit, the government and its partners have invested more in men engagement through Men engage approach, which focuses on equal household division of labour and equitable decision making which help women to participate in other productive activities outside their homes. Also, Rwanda Men's Resource Centre (RWAMREC) initiated male centered approach in promoting gender equality and equity. Therefore, reducing women's heavy work load and harmonising home related responsibilities are crucial not only for women's empowerment but also as means to capitalise on their productive capacities in economic development.

2.2.7. Women in power and decision-making

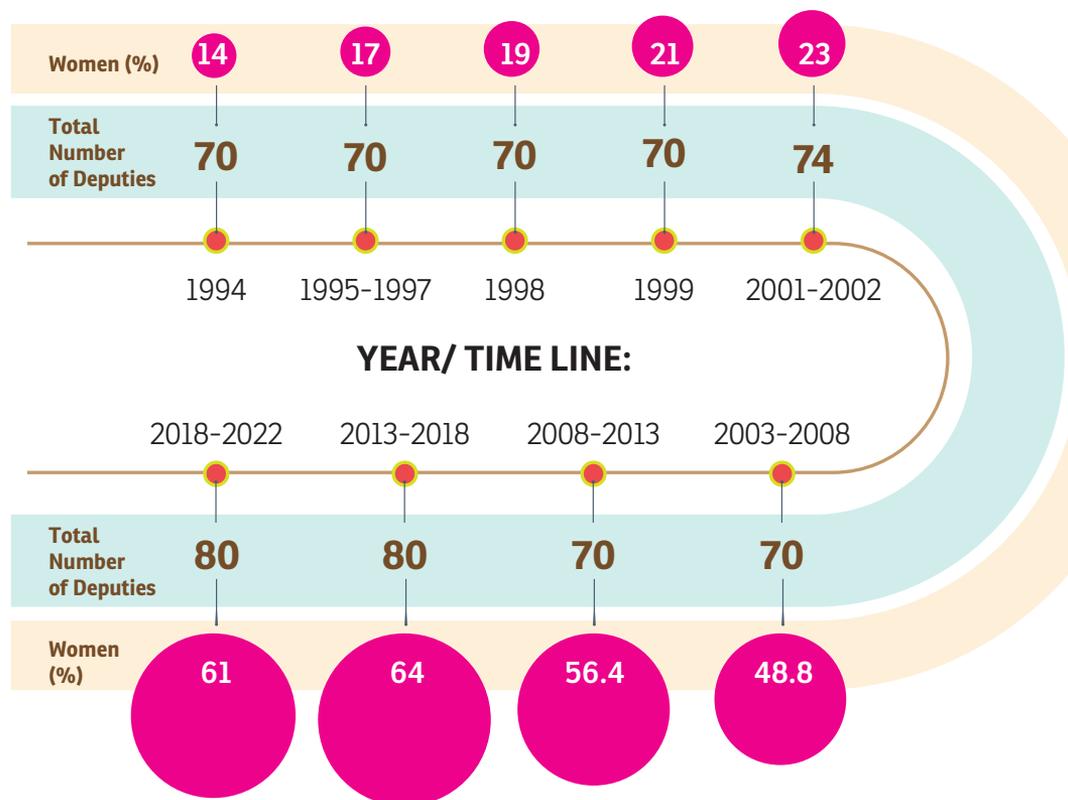
The government has set legal and institutional measures to continue ensuring women's equal access to, and full participation in power structures and decision-making. The constitution maintains the 30% quota of minimum representation of women in decision making positions at all decision-making organs. The law N° 10/20/2013/OL of 11/07/2013 regulating political party organisations and politicians prohibits any form of discrimination based on gender, sex, race, and religion in political parties and each political party organization shall have at least 30% of women in decision-making positions. This has increased the number of women in decision-making positions generally in both appointed and elective positions. Evidence to this is presented in the following sub-section.

i). Women in the Parliament, Cabinet and decentralized government entities

Currently, women constitute 61% of members of the chamber of deputies compared to 64% in 2014. Though there was a reduction, women's representation in Parliament is still high. In addition, women currently occupy 50% of cabinet positions compared to 47.3% in 2016/17. In the judiciary, women occupy 49.7% of total positions in 2017. This high representation of women in the parliament, the cabinet, and the judiciary is a result of increased political space and capacities of women and girls to assume governance roles in Rwanda.



Figure 2. Women's participation in the parliament



Source: Parliament, Administrative Data, 2018³⁵

At the level of decentralized entities, women's representation now varies between 16.7% and 66.7%. A high representation is seen at the participation in the District Councils where positions are electable and at Vice-Mayors in charge of social affairs. Women representation is still low with regards to the position of the district mayor. Specifically, only 27% of district mayors are women although this is an improvement from 2014/15 when women district mayors were just 10%. This applies as well for the executive secretaries at Sector Level (the third lowest administrative entity in Rwanda) where men represent 83.9% compared to 16.1% of women. Women's representation at various positions of leadership should

35 Parliament (2018). Parliament Administrative Data, Parliament, Kigali, Rwanda.



help in galvanising other women to make their voices heard and to put forward gender equality and empowerment of women and girls at the forefront of the national transformation process. It has also helped women to increase their self-esteem, confidence and civic engagement both as voters and candidates.

Table 10: Women in decentralized local government

Year		2014/15	2016	2017	2018
District Councils	M	57	54.8	54.8	54.8
	F	43	45.2	45.2	45.2
District Mayor	M	90	83.3	80.0	73.3
	F	10	16.7	20.0	26.7
Vice Mayors Social Affairs	M	16.4	26.7	23.3	33.3
	F	83.6	73.3	76.7	66.7
Vice Mayors/Economic Affairs	M	83.3	80.0	83.3	83.3
	F	16.7	20.0	16.7	16.7

Source: MINALOC, Administrative Data, 2018³⁶.

Women’s representation in the private sector is still limited. Looking at the 10 chambers of the Private Sector Federation (PSF), statistics show that women occupy 30% of presidential positions in all the 10 chambers of the private sector, 10% of first vice president positions and 70% of the second vice president positions at national level. At provincial level, women represent

36 MINALOC (2018). MINALOC Administrative Data, Ministry of Local Government, Kigali, Rwanda



20% of the first vice president positions and 60% of the second vice president positions and of the executive committee members. At the district level, women hold 7% of the presidential positions, 13% of first vice president positions and 77% of second vice president positions. Women's low representation in the private sector decision making positions is somewhat linked to their lower level of involvement in the private sector related activities. There are still some impediments such as limited capacities for entrepreneurship and heavy workload of unpaid care-work at household levels which conspire to exclude women from decision making positions. Furthermore, the government continues to set mechanism to enable their active contribution of all sectors of national development.

Despite high representation of women in various decision-making positions in the public sector, more needs to be done to increase women's uptake of decision-making positions at decentralized level such as position of Vice Mayors in charge of economic affairs and District Executive Secretaries, among others. The National Women's Council (NWC) in collaboration with other actors will continue to promote women in leadership programme and its related awareness raising and capacity building activities at decentralized government and non-government entities as captured by the National Decentralized Policy of 2004.

2.2.8. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

The institutional mechanisms for gender equality and empowerment of women are driven by the gender machinery which is composed of the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), Gender Monitoring Office (GMO), National Women's Council (NWC), Rwandan Forum for Women Parliamentarians (FFRP), National Commission for Children (NCC), and National Early Childhood Development (NECDP) program. These institutions continue to play a major role of coordinating policy implementation, monitoring gender mainstreaming, the fight against GBV, promotion and protection of children's rights as well as empowerment of women and girls for their active participation in the national development processes. Others include lobbying and advocacy for gender responsive laws and fidelity to gender equality principles within parliament and other government institutions, as well as, promotion and protection of human rights including those specific to women and children.



2.2.9. Human rights of women

A lot has been achieved by the Government of Rwanda in promoting and protecting the human rights of women. The principle of equality between women and men and the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sex are enshrined in the constitution and other legal instruments. The following instruments among others paved the way for the active participation of women in social, economic, and political spheres of national transformation.

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966,
- The International Convention on Civil and Political Rights of 1966,
- The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979,
- The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women of 2003.

In addition to regional and international legal framework, Rwanda has also enacted national gender responsive laws to guarantee women's rights. For example, the recent National Human Rights Action Plan 2017/2020 provides specific interventions for women's rights.

These include increasing women's participation in decision-making positions at the local level, increasing women's numbers in senior managerial positions in the private sector and increasing efforts to empower women economically. Interventions therein continue to be implemented by different actors in diversified domains. Furthermore, Civil Society Organizations continue to engage constructively with the government in promoting and protecting women's rights. For example, PROFEMMES/TWESE HAMWE an umbrella of 58 organizations involved in promoting women, peace, and development, is engaged in promoting women's rights and building their capacities to fully engage in social and economic development.

With regard to legal education, members of the gender machinery, justice institutions, civil society organizations, and other actors continue to educate and raise awareness on the various laws through simplified and user friendly guides on laws promoting gender equality which are designed and distributed to people at community level.





As demonstrated across other critical areas of concerns, women in Rwanda continue to enjoy their fundamental human rights such as access and control over resources including land, access to quality education and health care services, participation in productive economic activities including those traditionally reserved for men, access to financial services and right to participate in governance activities and processes.

2.2.10 Women and the media

The role of media is capital in promoting good governance and transformative information and communication. Media can play a significant role in promoting good governance by disseminating developmental information. The constitution of the republic of Rwanda guarantees media freedom. Consequently, the government of Rwanda has designed laws, policies, strategies, and programmes to guide practitioners in exercising media freedom. Both the revised national media policy (2014-2020) and gender mainstreaming strategy in the media sector (2013) aim to create a professional, responsible, plural and economically viable media sector that apprehends the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination of women in the media sector.

However, the media sector in Rwanda, particularly the leadership is male dominated. Only 24.5% of accredited journalists are female, and women constitute just 14.1% of owners or managers of media houses. The percentage of women in decision making positions in the media governing bodies varies between 28.5% and 50%. Also, only 40% of women occupy decision making positions in Rwanda Community Radio Network (RCRN)³⁷.

Engaging more female journalists is essential in challenging persistent cultural gender stereotype that reserves journalism profession for men not women. There is an increasing reliance on internet as a channel for accessing different services, engaging in e-commerce, e-banking, and other IT based services.

Rwanda is considered one of the countries with the highest internet user growth rates in Africa (8.9%) compared to the continent's average growth rate of 2.4%³⁸. Consequently, there is a growing trend in ownership of ICT devices and internet access among female-headed households. This has improved their access to information and communication gadgets such as radios (59%), mobile phones (54%), computers (2%), and

National Media Policy (2014-2020) and gender mainstreaming strategy in the sector aim to apprehend the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination of women in the media sector.

³⁷ Data obtained during consultation with the media sector.

³⁸ GoR (2017). 7YGP's Evaluation.



TV sets (6%). These gadgets are vital in communicating matters pertaining to gender equality, empowerment of women, GBV, security, health, among others.

In spite of many women using social media and participating in various national dialogue platforms, their participation in this particular sector remains limited and it has been a concern for the government and other actors. Initiatives to enhance women's active role in the media, improve ICT literacy, and capitalise on ICT efficiency have been introduced and implemented. These comprise the use of Rapid SMS (by Community Health Workers), MsGeek (to encourage young girls to be innovative and develop new ideas), TechKobwa Boot Camp (to encourage women excel in technologies) and ICT campaigns (aimed at improving ICT awareness among young girls).

In regard to enabling access to information and participation of disabled people, use of sign language/interpretation for people with disabilities has been introduced in various communication channels. This is in line with the principle of inclusion of different categories of people in this particular sector.

Women media practitioners are also engaged in promoting gender equality in the media sector. To this end, an association of women journalists (known as ARFEM) has been established to strengthen the capacities of its members. It trains journalists in areas of media management, reporting on gender issues, reporting on GBV related issues, and other issues related to gender and media. Challenges in the media sector which need to be addressed include: low representation of females in leadership, limited opportunities and motivation for women to grow in the media career carrier, limited number of female journalists working in the mainstream media as opposed to working as public relations officers as is currently the case, and limited operationalization of the gender policy in the media sector among others.





2.2.11. Women and Environment

(1) Integration of gender perspectives and concerns in environmental policies and strategies

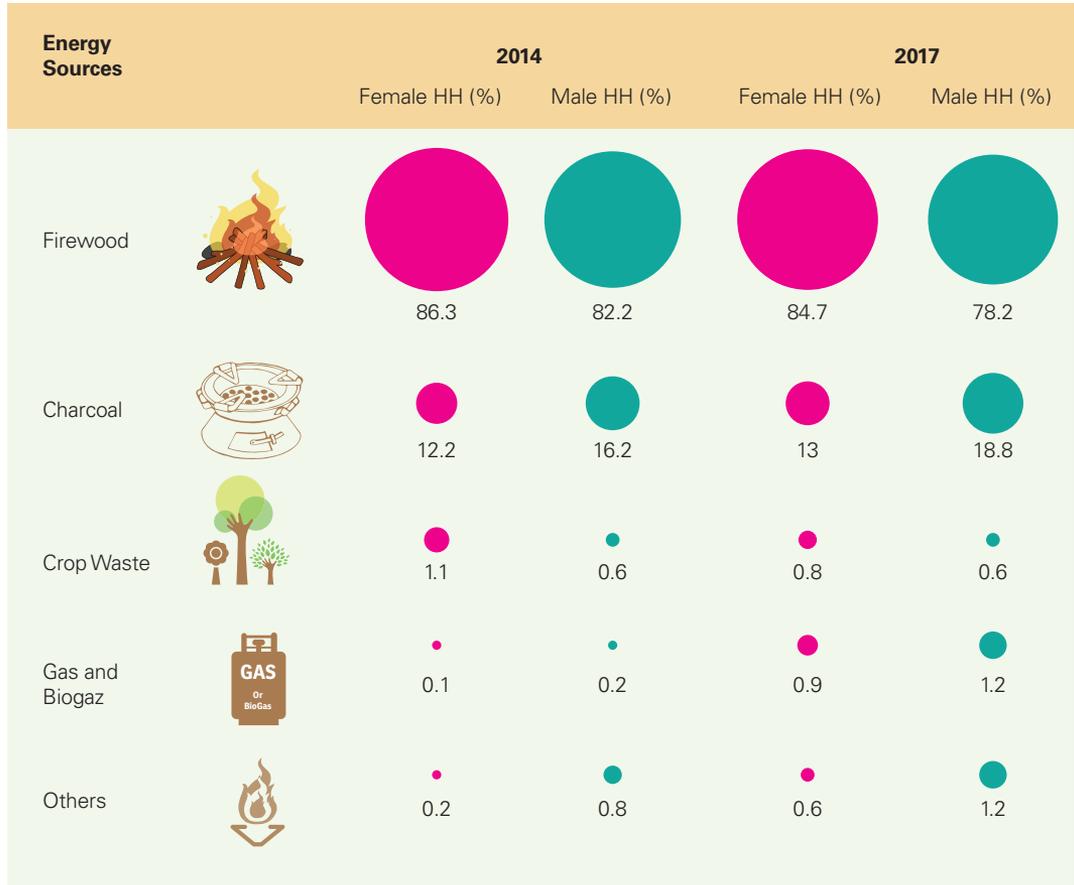
Environmental sustainability is one of the prominent policy and development areas in the overall development framework and strategies in Rwanda. Gender mainstreaming in the environmental sector is well captured and documented in the country's sector policies and strategies including the national energy policy (2015), the Infrastructure Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (2017-2022), the Energy Sector Strategic Plan (2013/14 - 2017/18) - (2018/19 - 2023/24), Water and Sanitation Sector Strategic Plan (2013-2018) as well as the policy/strategy for relocation of people from high risk zones including women. All these strategies integrate gender equality dimensions in various thematic areas such as health hazards, increased women's access to and control of land, water, energy, and other natural resources, promotion of education of women and girls in science, engineering, technology and other disciplines relating to the natural environment.

The current discourse regarding gender equality and empowerment as far as environmental sustainability is concerned in Rwanda is the use of alternative fuels like cooking gas and biogas which are considered both as energy and time saving for women. Despite a persistent high reliance on use of firewood by majority of female and male headed households (84.7% and 78.2% respectively), the use of alternative energy sources among women has generally increased. About 13.5% of female headed households use improved cooking stoves. Access to electricity has increased from 16.2% in 2013/14 to 20.3% in 2016/17 while the use of solar panel has increased from 1% to 4.5% in the same period. More access to these alternative energy sources reduces women's workload in firewood collection and saves time for women to engage in other productive economic activities. In addition, about 76% of women have access to information on environmental issues in the country.

13.5% of female HHHs use improved cooking stoves, access to electricity increased from 16.2% in 2014 to 20.3% in 2017 by females HHHs and use of solar panel increased from 1% to 4.5% respectively.



Table 11: Access to energy sources %



Source: NISR, EICV5 (2016/17).³⁹

Women’s awareness of health consequences of using non-improved cooking stoves has improved. It is currently reported that 48%⁴⁰ of women households are aware of negative effects on health and environment effects of cooking with polluting energy sources, especially firewood and charcoal. These dangers include eye problems, headaches, diseases of the respiratory system. There are on-going investment efforts and campaigns to increase

39 NISR, EICV 5- Gender Thematic Report, 2016/17, National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, Kigali, Rwanda.

40 Ibid



the use of clean energy such as Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), biogas and improved cook stoves to preserve the health conditions of women and the entire family members.

In relation to women's decision-making in the environmental sector, women represent between 29% and 50% of staff in the ministry of environment and its agencies and 15% of district officers in charge of environment. In the infrastructure sector where water and energy fall, women's representation stands at 25% of the total employees at top management level, 20% of senior management, and only 23% of directors in the sector are women. This progress indicates the on-going efforts in integrating gender dimensions in these key sectors with greater potential for women's transformation.

There is an increasing debate worldwide on how climate change may accentuate existing gender inequalities partly explained by different adaptive capacities between men and women to cope with climate change and its variability effects⁴¹. Major adaptation measures used in Rwanda consist of irrigation, terraces, ditches combined with erosion fences, and tree planting. These initiatives help women to deal with climate change effects. The current data estimates female headed households with irrigated land to be at 3.5% (in 2017) an increase of 0.9% from the 2014 figure of 2.6%. (in 2014) while it is estimated at 62.5% of land protected against soil erosion compared to 71.7% in the same period. These measures help women deal with effects of climate change and variability for their increased production and hence the resulting income.

2.2.12. The Girl Child

(i) Development and rights of the Girl Child

There are specific provisions in the existing legal and policy framework aimed at protecting and promoting the rights of the child, in particular the girl child. In 2016, Rwanda enacted law N° 27/2016 of 08/07/2016 governing matrimonial regimes, donations and successions. This law provides for equal inheritance rights between boys and girls and prohibits discrimination of any kind in this regard. The same law provides that where parents decide to donate a property or patrimonial rights to their children, they must do it without any discrimination between girls and boys. In the same vein, law N° 71/2018 of 31/08/2018 relating to the protection

41 UNDP (2012). *Overview of linkages between gender and climate change: gender and climate change capacity development series. United Nations Development Programme.*



of the child guarantees equal rights to girls and boys and prohibits any form of child exploitation. This provision is reiterated in the labour law which prohibits employment of children under age of 16 as well as harmful child labor practices. This is consistent with regional and international legal instruments and national policies related to child protection.

The government of Rwanda has also prioritized early childhood development (ECD). The ECD policy was revised in 2016 to ensure a holistic child development process that addresses the healthy, physical, social and emotional aspects of child growth. Different stakeholders have also combined their efforts to ensure full implementation of the national plan for the elimination of malnutrition. Special measures have been taken to improve the nutrition status of mothers and children.

These include the distribution of special food supplements like nutri-mama, promotion of school feeding, one cup of milk per child, promotion of kitchen gardens at house-hold level, and community cooking demonstrations by nutrition experts on how to prepare a balanced diet.

In respect to awareness raising among the community, parents in Rwanda are continuously sensitized on the importance of girl's education. They are rallied to support the girls' education by fighting all that causes girls to drop out of school. For example, with regards to domestic work burden which makes some girls drop out of school, parents are encouraged to reduce girls' domestic work by engaging boys in performing household work that would otherwise be done by girls. This is largely being implemented using peer to peer and role model approaches such as Boys for Change as well as using male gender champions or community activists to mobilize men and boys to embrace positive masculinity. This is among other actions that involve challenging gender stereotypes and norms by doing household chores like cooking which are traditionally reserved for women and girls.

Different innovative initiatives have been introduced to ensure equitable and inclusive education for girls in Rwanda. These include affirmative actions to promote girl's enrollment, retention, completion and boosting academic performance such as constructing and equipping girl's rooms in schools and sensitizing girls on the importance of these rooms, as well as promoting gender sensitive schools by training school leaders, teachers and parents on equal treatment of girls and boys. The HeForShe impact commitments are being implemented to triple girls'





enrollment in TVET so as to increase their chances of securing employment, and to eradicate all forms of GBV. Initiatives like “Inkubito z’Icyeza” (awards and scholarship schemes for girls) a under Imbuto Foundation and Ninyampinga Program support best performing girls from vulnerable families to access school to pursue their dreams as well as inspiring girls in general to participate in STEM, ICT, and job creation through mentorship and awards for best performing girls.

(ii) Prevention of violence against the girl child

Rwanda’s legal, policy and administrative frameworks focus on eradicating all forms of violence against the girl child among other issues. The law determining offenses and penalties criminalizes human trafficking and sale of children. Similarly, the law protecting the rights of the child provides that “a child with physical or mental disability shall be entitled to a special protection by the government and enjoy all rights recognized to the child without any discrimination related to their state or any other situation which would result from it.” This constitutes a strong basis for GBV prevention and response.

The government of Rwanda has also continued to implement interventions protecting the girl child against any form of violence. These include: the scale-up of Isange One Stop Centers services to include medical care, psycho-social support, legal services, as well as relieve and re-integration. A free hot-line on which to report incidents of child abuse is also in place. In addition, different awareness campaigns have been conducted in and out of schools to raise awareness among children on their rights, strategies to prevent GBV, and reporting channels.

Other community based initiatives such as Inshuti z’Umuryango (Friends of Family) and Umugoroba w’Ababyeyi (Parents’ Evening Forum) are being used as mechanisms to provide advisory services to families regarding prevention of family conflicts and serve as GBV reporting channels.

The girl child participation in national development is promoted through child committees established from the community up to the national level. Since 2012, representatives of children including girls participate in the annual National Children Summit and advocate for issues affecting them. Other mechanisms to ensure protection of their rights include birth registration campaigns that are regularly held in the country by different institutions and organizations.

Initiatives like “Inkubito z’Icyeza” under Imbuto Foundation and Ninyampinga Program support best performing girls from vulnerable families to access education and inspire them to participate in STEM, ICT and job creation.



SECTION 3



SECTION 3: NATIONAL MECHANISMS FOR EFFECTIVE GENDER EQUALITY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SDGS

This section addresses national mechanisms in place so far which can be used to effectively implement gender equality related SDGs in Rwanda. We start by describing the existing mechanism that ensures proper coordination of gender related activities from all sectors. In the second sub-section we describe the main approach used to effectively implement gender equality interventions.

3.1. Mechanisms and processes for gender equality

Rwanda has a national mechanism for effective gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. This is constituted by many actors namely: the gender machinery, the sector working group, the Joint Sector Review and Forward Looking Joint Sector Review, the Social Cluster, and the National Gender Cluster.

- a. **The Gender Machinery:** To address specific issues related to gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, the government of Rwanda committed to put in place policies, strategies, and institutions that would translate its commitments into concrete and practical targets and actions regarding gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. Roles of national coordination, implementation and accountability of gender equality in Rwanda continue to be the core mandate of the existing gender machinery institutions. Each member of the gender machinery has its own roles and responsibilities as earlier indicated in this report (see section 1). These include: strategic coordination of policy implementation, monitoring of implementation and compliance to gender mainstreaming and the fight against GBV and VAWG, empowerment of women to participate in various social, economic, and governance related activities, lobbying and advocacy for gender responsive laws and regulations, promotion and protection of children's rights (both boys and girls), promotion and protection of human rights including women's and girls'.



- b. Joint Sector Working Group:** This forum brings together both government and development partners to assess and foresee performance in the various represented sectors, focusing on the development outcomes for the sector informed by the national development strategies such as 7YGP: NST1 and the regional or global development strategies such as EAC vision 2050 and Agenda 2030 for SDGs. The platform enforces the principle of inclusiveness and participation of all stakeholders, and promotes continuous dialogue between government officials and development partners in the social sector. It is chaired by the Lead Ministry and co-chaired by the lead development partner.
- c. Social Cluster:** Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls related issues are discussed under the social cluster currently chaired by the Ministry of Education. Representative members from the public, private, and civil society entities meet regularly on monthly basis to discuss emerging issues in the sectors concerned, sector policies, strategies, and programmes and key interventions needed to be implemented by all stakeholders.
- d. National Gender Cluster:** The national gender cluster was initiated with the aim of creating a specific forum to engage with various stakeholders from the public sector, private sector, civil society organizations and faith-based organizations on emerging issues pertaining gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in all clusters (social, economic, and governance). The cluster is also subdivided into sub-clusters to ensure effective and efficient service delivery in addressing gender related developmental issues.



3.2. The approach for effective gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

Three major approaches are used to ensure effective gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in Rwanda. These include gender mainstreaming, economic empowerment through different programmes and specific services for women and girls and implementing a gender responsive legal framework.

i. Gender mainstreaming

To ensure that gender equality and empowerment of women is effectively addressed, the aspirations and goals of the country in this particular area are given due consideration in all planning processes as reflected in national development strategies such as Vision 2020, the 7YGP/NST1, Sector Strategic Plans and District Development Strategies. In this regard, specific sector gender mainstreaming strategies prescribe how each sector will embody gender equality priorities: private sector strategy (2015), infrastructure strategy (2017-2022) (energy, water, transport, and housing), justice sector strategy (2017), national communication strategy for gender and education and agriculture gender mainstreaming strategy (2010). Other sectors are also in the process of developing sector specific gender mainstreaming strategies - those in pipeline include the Sports and Culture Sector.

ii. Empowerment of women and girls for gender equality

There are various initiatives already documented in this report aimed at empowering women and girls economically, socially and politically. Those not yet explored in this report include the Rwanda Women Economic Empowerment (RWEE Programme). This programme is jointly run by UN based organizations and the government of Rwanda. It implements numerous activities meant to economically empower women such as social protection programs largely targeting women in category 1 of ubudehe - a home grown poverty ranking scheme. This programme is further evidence of the commitment of the government of Rwanda to increase participation of women in the political, economic and social development agenda of the country.



iii. Gender Budget Statement

The gender responsive budgeting program is a government initiative which came into existence in 2008. It aims at enforcing gender mainstreaming in national planning and budgeting processes. It is meant to ensure that government agencies develop budgets that aim at addressing persistent gender inequalities in different sectors and communities. Every fiscal year the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning releases two planning and budgeting call circulars requiring all budget agencies to show clearly how cross-cutting issues including gender and family promotion will be mainstreamed in their budgets. It is further advised to consult the lead ministry for each cross-cutting issue to seek required support in making gender responsive sector budgets before they are submitted to MINECOFIN and the parliament for approval.

iv. Annual Imihigo Planning

Since 2006, the Rwandan government introduced a performance contract mechanism called “Imihigo”. Every year, each institution (both at Ministry and District levels) signs a performance contract with its supervising body outlining main results and targets it expects to achieve including those related to gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in that particular year. This point of accountability mechanism has greatly increased and impacted the development momentum in all aspects.

3. 3. Integrating Gender-SDG related indicators towards effective gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

The Government of Rwanda has already embarked on the process of integrating SDGs in available strategic instruments and planning tools. An initial SDG gaps analysis was conducted at national level by the government of Rwanda with support of One UN.

This was to assess Rwanda’s readiness to implement the SDGs and to establish the degree of alignment at the indicators ‘level between the current national development framework and the SDGs. It was found out after this gaps analysis for example,





that about 71% of the indicators related to SDG-5 are already covered in the national and sector strategic plans.⁴²

Furthermore, the government “Guide for Sustainable Development Goals” was developed in both English and in the national language Kinyarwanda to support the integration of SDGs in the planning process.⁴³ Also, planners have been mandated to ensure all Sector Strategic Plans are aligned with SDGs.

42 MINICOFIN (2016). *Initial SDG Gap Analysis*. Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Kigali, Rwanda.

43 (See http://www.minecofin.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/Guide_to_SDGs_in_Rwanda_ENG.pdf)



SECTION 4



SECTION 4: SOURCES OF DATA AND DISAGGREGATED STATISTICS FOR GENDER EQUALITY

This section provides the current status of the availability of data disaggregated by sex and gender that is useful for the monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development.

4.1. Gender statistics and disaggregated data

Gender statistics: The National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda in collaboration with other partners regularly generates gender statistics as part of its 3 - year regular household and living conditions census (EICV) which is now in its 5th generation. This EICV has a specific Gender Thematic Reporting on relevant gender statistics. In addition, based on specific demand by development partners, other gender statistics are also collected under a comprehensive gender statistics framework.

Gender Sector Profile. The Gender Monitoring Office Conducts regular sector level gender profiles to assess the performance of each sector in mainstreaming gender equality and empowerment of women. The established baseline guide decision makers for effective gender mainstreaming in policies, programs and projects.

Gender Management Information System (GMIS). This is a newly developed gender management information system launched in March 2019 by GMO. It is expected to play a major role in gathering, storing and disseminating gender related data on regular basis which data can help policy makers design appropriate or deliberate interventions to improve gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in Rwanda.

Disaggregated data by sex: The National Institute of Statistics (NISR) whose main mandate is to generate timely and reliable statistics for evidence-based policy and decision making, conducts more than 30 categories of surveys⁴⁴ with disaggregated data by sex covering most of the 12 critical areas of the Beijing Declaration

The newly developed gender management information system (GMIS) launched in March 2019 by GMO is expected to play a major role in gathering, storing and disseminating gender related data on regular basis from all the sectors, for informed decisions.

44 <http://www.statistics.gov.rw/datasources/surveys>



and Platform for action and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development. Data within these surveys is important for analysis and monitoring of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in Rwanda among other purposes.

Other sources of gender disaggregated data constitute different institutions and organizations (both local and global) which collect data or produce reports on a regular basis with inclusion of relevant gender specific information needed to inform policy and decision makers on issues of gender equality and empowerment of women.

These include:

FinScope Surveys collected by Access to Finance Rwanda in collaboration with public and donor organizations. (http://www.afr.rw/IMG/pdf/finscope_rwanda_2016_report.pdf),

The World Bank Open Data: the World Bank Databank collects regular data on various socio-economic indicators with some specific data on gender and on Rwanda. This helps to compare Rwanda with other countries and to supplement some gaps in data collected by local agencies. (<https://data.worldbank.org/>).

Gender Inequality Index: the Gender Inequality Index (GII) is a composite measure of gender inequality using three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and the labour market. It is produced annually as part of the Human Development Indices and Indicators collected for the Human Development Reports by the UNDP45.

The gap in gender statistics: Most gender statistics are collected on specific demand or within a period of 3 - 5 years, making it difficult to find some gender related data that would inform annual planning and monitoring of compliance to gender equality and empowerment of women.

45 UNDP (2018). *Human Development Indicators and Indices. United Development Nations.* (Internet): file:///E:/L4D%20Files/2019_Projects/Gender_Monitoring_Office/Materials_2019/2018_human_development_statistical_update.pdf. Accessed 20th Feb. 2019. file:///E:/L4D%20Files/2019_Projects/Gender_Monitoring_Office/Materials_2019/2018_human_development_statistical_update.pdf



4.2. Gender-based methodologies and research to address gender equality

Gender equality and empowerment of women remain considerable cross-cutting research and policy themes. Various methodologies and research approaches have been used to generate evidence needed to inform policy and development interventions in this particular area.

Key initiatives in this respect comprise:

A regular gender thematic report produced by the National Institute of Statistics in collaboration with the Gender Monitoring Office, and other development partners provides the updated and reliable information on gender statistics. The Information is gathered on a three-year basis among a cross-sectional sample of 14,580 households as part of the entire household and living conditions expenses census (EICV) initiated in 2000/2001.

Gender profiles in key development sectors conducted by GMO on annual or bi-annual basis to monitor progress made in each sector or sub-sector.

Individual or group research conducted by academic institutions, individual researchers and scholars in the very domain, gender based research projects commissioned by civil society organizations among others. Hundreds of peer reviewed papers and books have been published (see Google Scholar in different years) on different dimensions of gender focusing on Rwanda or comparing Rwanda with other countries in the World.

The Center for Gender Studies at the University of Rwanda conducts gender related studies. There is also a research grant to initiate research and capacity development at the University of Rwanda in the area of "Engendering Rural Transformation for Sustainable Development (ENTRUST) in Rwanda for the next five years (2019-2024). It is an upcoming project to be implemented under the UR-SIDA cooperation. One of the proposed research themes is the empowerment of women and girls towards rural transformation.

Gender assessment conducted by non-state actors mainly civil society organizations. These are conducted to support their advocacy roles and also to inform the general public with an independent view on the status of gender equality and empowerment of women.



SECTION 5



SECTION 5: FUTURE COUNTRY PRIORITIES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Looking at the current progress that the country has made, future priority actions in the context of implementing the BPfA are in line with national commitments towards the social economic transformation and sustainable development of Rwanda and commitments of the Agenda 2030. Set priorities aim at addressing persisting bottlenecks to the full attainment of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls as described below:

- (1) Poverty reduction among women and Girls:** Consistent with the national strategies for the improvement of quality of life of Rwandans, future interventions to eradicate poverty should entail multiple interventions across different sectors that offer incomes, decent jobs, savings pro-poor and inclusive complementary social protection programs. In addition, to address child stunting, the government of Rwanda will continue to reinforce strategies to educate and avail highly nutritious food supplements to affected children (both girls and boys), pregnant and breast feeding mothers.
- (2) Bridge the gender divide in ICT, STEM and TVET education programs:** Actions in this particular area will focus on increasing female enrollment and completion in these programs, promoting competence-based gender responsive programs by increasing the female dividend in trades with more labor market potentials. The central concern will be to ensure that the training received by women and girls prepares them for the current and future entrepreneurship and employment opportunities.
- (3) Continue efforts to prevent and eradicate GBV and Child abuse:** Future interventions are geared towards ensuring a community free from GBV and child abuse. To achieve this, future interventions aim at changing the mindset of community members on GBV, enhance access to justice for victims of GBV and decentralize comprehensive services of Isange One Stop Centers. Further interventions should also strengthen existing measures to prevent GBV issues (e.g. teenage pregnancy, human trafficking, family



conflicts); rehabilitate and reintegrate GBV victims; improve accountability to ensure due diligence in processing, documenting, reporting GBV cases and bringing justice to the victims.

- (4) Increase women's access to affordable and reliable sources of clean energy:** the energy sector is designing strategies and interventions aimed at reducing high dependence of women on Biomass as the main source of fuel/energy by improving access to and use of alternative clean energy sources namely cooking gas and biogas in both urban and rural areas. Furthermore, improving women's capacity to adapt to climate change and variability will be enforced as part of future priorities to reduce their negative effects especially on women.
- (5) Measures to address unpaid care work, and negative gender norms and stereotypes:** Unpaid care work is one of the reasons for women's limited participation in productive activities and their economic empowerment. Similarly, negative gender norms and stereotypes remain the main obstacles to gender equality and women's economic empowerment in various sectors. Future interventions will therefore target the reduction of women's work load in the household, mobilizing men towards participation in some of the reproductive roles, establishment of community based early childhood development centers (ECDs), as well as awareness campaigns towards eradication cultural barriers and practices that hinder full participation of women and girls in socio- economic and governance spheres.





ANNEXES



ANNEX 1: INFORMATION ON THE PROCESS OF PREPARATION OF THE NATIONAL REVIEW

The process of the preparation of the national review of the Beijing +25 country report was participatory and consultative to enable the consideration perspectives from key stakeholders in regards to the implementation of twelve critical areas of concern. Key steps in gathering the information needed involved an extensive literature review of relevant materials from both national and internal published documents and multi-level consultations. The consultation process considered officials from the public, private sectors, CSO and non- governmental organizations and Development Partners in the form unstructured interviews and consultative workshops on major achievements, challenges and future perspectives in respect to the 12 critical areas.

To facilitate this process, an inter-disciplinary committee was established mainly from government entities to enable the collection of updated information from their respective domains and to participate in the validation sessions of this report. Presented below a list of institutions that took part in the development of this report.



PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources

Ministry of Defense

Ministry of ICT& Innovation

Ministry of Health

Ministry of Justice

Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning

Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion

Ministry of Environment

Ministry of Education

Ministry in charge of Emergency Management

Ministry of Trade and Industry

Ministry of Local Government

Rwanda Investigation Bureau

Rwanda National Police

National Women's Council

National Commission for Children

National Commission for People with Disabilities

National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda

Rwanda Environment Management Authority



PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS *(Cont')*

Rwanda Governance Board

Rwanda Correctional Services

Media High Council

National Public Prosecution Authority

Rwanda Agricultural Board

Business Development Fund

Workforce Development Authority

Local Administrative Entities Development Agency

Rwanda Broadcasting Agency

Rwanda Cooperative Agency

Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission

PRIVATE SECTOR

Private Sector Federation

Chamber of Women Entrepreneurs



NON - STATE ACTORS AND PARTNERS

UN Agencies

Action Aid- Rwanda

Oxfam Rwanda

Care International-Rwanda

Transparency International –Rwanda chapter

Girl Effect

Pro-Femmes Twese Hamwe

Rwanda Men's Resource Centre (RWAMREC)

Save the Children International

Adventist Development Relief Agency Rwanda (ADRA)

Legal Aid Forum (LAF)

Plan International -Rwanda

Collectif des Ligues et Associations de Défense des Droits de l'Homme au Rwanda (CLADHO)

Rwanda Association of University Women (RAUW)

Young Women Christian Association (YWCA)

Women Investment Fund (WIF)

Faith Victory Association (FVA)

Duterimbere ONG

Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP)



NON - STATE ACTORS AND PARTNERS (Cont')

Rwanda Media Commission

National Union of Disability Organizations of Rwanda
(NUDOR)

Association des Guides du Rwanda (AGR)

ARCT Ruhuka

Avega Agahozo

Reseau des femmes

Haguruka

Akilah institute

Kepler Rwanda

Dot Rwanda

Women for Women International

New Faces New Voices

Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development

Rwanda Development Organization

Handicap International



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