PRESENTATION ON NATIONAL UNITY AND RECONCILIATION PROCESS IN RWANDA

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NURC
I. INTRODUCTION

• National Unity and Reconciliation process in Rwanda is a cornerstone to all national development efforts and a basis for combating all forms of discrimination and exclusion.

• It is the only option to the survival for Rwanda as a nation emerging from a divided past, genocide and is moving towards a reconciled and democratic nation.

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I. Introduction

• Redefining the Rwandan identity and building a shared sense of Rwandanness is at the centre of reconciliation in Rwanda.

• Memory, truth, justice, confessions and forgiveness have been the core threads of reconciliation process in Rwanda.
I. Introduction

• The Rwandan model for unity and reconciliation is inspired and founded on by positive cultural values that have become monumental in conflict resolution mechanisms, citizenship building, good governance and economic empowerment
II. BACKGROUND TO THE NURC

- The creation of National Unity and Reconciliation Commission in March 1999 by a parliamentary law to promote unity and reconciliation among Rwandans in the aftermath of the devastating 1994 genocide, marked a major milestone in changing, fundamentally, effects of bad governance based on discrimination and exclusion.
III. FUNCTIONS OF THE NURC

- Preparing and coordinating the National program for the promotion of national unity and reconciliation,
- Putting in place and developing ways and means to restore and consolidate unity and reconciliation among Rwandans,
- Educating and mobilizing the population on matters relating to national unity and reconciliation
III. FUNCTIONS OF THE NURC

☐ Carrying out research, organizing debates, disseminating ideas and making publications relating to peace, national unity and reconciliation,

☐ Making proposals on measures that can eradicate divisions among Rwandans and reinforce national unity and reconciliation,

☐ Denouncing and combating acts, writings and utterances which are intended to promote any kind of discrimination, intolerance or xenophobia
IV THE WORK OF THE NURC

• Over the last six years of the Commission’s existence, NURC has implemented activities in line with its mandate through three institutional programme units:
  - Civic Education,
  - Peace building and conflict management
  - Communication and information
V. The Commission’s working strategy

Through a number of Grassroots consultations with Rwandan population it become clear for the Commission that the following factors were the major factors of conflicts among Rwandans:

Bad governance, politics of hate, the culture of impunity, ignorance and wide spread poverty.

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V. The Commission’s working strategy:

- Employ grassroots, national summits and Diaspora, international partnership consultations to evaluate unity and reconciliation process.
- Consultations around unity and reconciliation and other topical issues.
- Civic Education program aimed at promoting informed and responsible citizenry.
- Advocacy and support for community initiatives that promote unity and community welfare.
V. The Commission’s working strategy

- Research on key processes such as:
  - Gacaca Courts,
  - Decentralization and Democratization,
  - Land reform,
  - The Role of women in peace and reconciliation processes.

The purpose of research is to establish linkage with unity and reconciliation and how such processes affect social cohesion of Rwandans.
V. The Commission’s working strategy

- Promoting partnership with public, and civil society institutions for integrating reconciliation in their work.
- Mainstream peace and reconciliation process in women and youth organisations, community Associations, cooperatives and religious institutions.
- Establish and build the capacity of Abakangurambaga Institution and student clubs of unity and reconciliation with a view to ensuring their effectiveness.

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V. The Commission’s working strategy

- Development of conflict resolution and civic education manuals to be used at grassroots and national levels.
- Integrating a component of peace, tolerance and reconciliation into National Curriculum for primary and secondary schools.
VI. Home grown traditional approaches to reconciliation:

1. **INGANDO** (solidarity camps), a civic education activity that has facilitated the smooth reintegration of former returnees, X-FAR, provisionally released prisoners back to their communities. Target group include Women, Youth groups, students joining university and local leaders.

2. **INGANDO** (solidarity camps) provide forums to Rwandans to come to terms with their past by facing history, forging a common vision for a united future.
VI. Home grown traditional approaches to reconciliation

• 2. **GACACA**: A traditional Rwandan restorative justice which has been revived to deal with a backlog of genocide cases. Gacaca judges known as Inyangamugayo are elected on the basis of integrity.

• 3. **ABUNZI**: Community reconcilers who resolve day to day conflicts before referring them to Courts
VI. Home grown traditional approaches to reconciliation

• 4. **NJYANAMA**:  
  • Elected democratic Councils that promote inclusion, participation and representation of Rwandans of all walks of life.

• 5. **ABAKANGURAMBAGA**:  
  • Are voluntary community animators who are promoting reconciliation at community levels.

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VI. Home grown traditional approaches to reconciliation

5. **UBUDEHE**:
   - An approach of community support and solidarity in poverty reduction and economic empowerment

6. **UBUSABANE**:
   - Get together festival aimed at enhancing unity and promoting partnerships among communities,
VII. MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS.

- Promotion of unity and reconciliation has become a cornerstone of all national efforts.
- People are willing to live together, work together and find consensus around national interests.
- Emergence of reconciliation initiatives at different levels such as student clubs of reconciliation, reconciliation initiatives at the local level through associations.

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VII. MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS.

- Smooth reintegration of returnees, ex-FAR armed combatants and provisional released prisoners back into the community.
- Integration of former belligerent forces into the national army is a remarkable achievement to guarantee the security and stability of the country and the region. This is a fundamental ingredient to the process of national reconciliation.

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VII. MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS.

Discriminatory practices in identity cards in schools and all forms of discrimination and exclusion have been outlawed.
VII. MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS.

- The creation of National unity and reconciliation Commission is fundamental to the promotion of national unity, stability and rule of law.
- The creation of innovative Gacaca Courts to speed up genocide trials and enhance justice and reconciliation.
VIII. LESSONS LEARNT.

- The crime of genocide destroys hope and trust, as well as dehumanizes people.
- Reconciliation is a painful process that requires the knitting of the torn social fabric, healing wounds, rebuilding a sense of togetherness and creation of institutions that promote national unity, accountability,
VIII. LESSONS LEARNT.

- Trust building and trauma healing are critical to reconciliation.
- National unity and reconciliation is cross-cutting and requires holistic interventions in all aspects of political, social – economic life.
- The resilience and determination of Rwandans to make a head way after horrific genocide determines political, social and economic progress made so far.
VIII. LESSONS LEARNT

- National security in Rwanda has been a critical factor in ensuring peace and stability.
- The political commitment to promote necessary policy and rule of law creates a conducive environment to unity and reconciliation process.
- Participation, inclusion and people empowerment and ownership are critical elements for reconciliation.

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VIII. LESSONS LEARNT.

- A revisit to Rwandan culture has been at the Centre of our reconciliation process.
- Balancing the demands of justice and peace remains central to the process of reconciliation in Rwanda.
- Consultation and participatory approaches is key to enhancing reconciliation and democracy.
- Combating discrimination and genocide ideology is a complex and long-term struggle.
VIII. LESSONS LEARNT

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IX. WAY FORWARD

- The NURC is about to launch a National Unity and Reconciliation policy making which will be a consultative exercise to allow ownership and sustainability of the process.
- The commission will continue to build people’s capacity to ensure systematic mainstreaming of reconciliation.
IX. WAY FORWARD

- The Commission will remain committed to the fundamental principles articulated in CHAPTER II, Article 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda, which are the Cornerstone to building a peaceful and united nation.

- The Commission will always strive to provide a platform on which Rwandans are able to freely express their views on matters affecting them and the nation as a whole.
IX. WAY FORWARD

- The Commission will continue to advocate for social justice, economic empowerment, democracy and rule of law in Rwanda
- The Commission will partner with all the people of the world to fight genocide and its ideology till they are completely eradicated.
THANK YOU
5th Annual Government of Rwanda and Development Partners Meeting

Inama Ngaruka Mwaka ya Gatanu ya Leta y’u Rwanda n’Abaterankunga

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