



# UN WOMEN RWANDA SPECIAL NEWSLETTER

January – May 2024



# Foreword

## To Our Esteemed Partners and Readers,

It is my great pleasure to present to you our special newsletter, highlighting some of the UN Women's impactful contributions over the past four months in support of the Government of Rwanda's efforts to advance gender equality, women's rights, and empowerment across all spheres of society.

The stories cover achievements under UN Women's normative, coordination and operational mandates, especially work on women's economic empowerment, bridging the digital gender divide, and much more. The results registered are testament to the effective partnerships that we maintain with stakeholders across the board, including with Government Institutions, Development Agencies, Civil Society Organizations, Women's Organizations, Private Sector, Youth, Media and UN Agencies.

The edition zooms in on the 2024 Women's Month and celebration of the International Women's Day. On March 8th, Rwanda joined the world to commemorate this day on a special note of celebrating women's role and contributions to reconstruction, peace, and development of the country over the past 30 years following the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi. The event was graced with the leadership of His Excellency the President of the Republic, the First Lady accompanied by top government officials, partners, and representatives of all segments of the population. It also highlights the special IWD event whereby under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, the United Nations demonstrated its committed partnership with the Government of Rwanda towards the achievement of its gender equality targets, women's empowerment and sustainable development over the past 30 years. Other inspirational events organized by UN Women together with its esteemed partners throughout the women's month, bringing together an assortment of stakeholders to reflect on the global theme of the year, calling for more investments in gender equality as well as the national theme have also been captured.



Within these pages, you will also see how through the African Girls Can Code Initiative, girls from each district in Rwanda have been empowered with key robotics and ICT skills to become the innovators of the present and future, creating digital solutions to the global challenges that we face. You will also discover how Rwanda's achievements and approaches to promote gender equality and women's rights are being recognized globally attracting dedicated study visits from neighboring governments.

We extend our sincere appreciation to all partners including the Government of Rwanda, The Embassy of Sweden, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), GIZ, Siemens, UN Agencies, and many more who have stood with us in breaking barriers to women's rights and implementing transformative programmes that will make gender equality a lived reality for all women, girls, men and boys in Rwanda.

*I wish you all an enjoyable read and look forward to our continued collaboration.*

**Jennet Kem**  
UN Women Country Representative

1

# LEVERAGING UN WOMEN'S NORMATIVE MANDATE



# International Women`s Day National Celebrations in Rwanda

**30  
YEARS:**

Women in  
the country's  
development



*H.E Paul Kagame speaking at the IWD event at BK Arena. Photo Courtesy: The New Times*

The national IWD celebrations convened over 6000 participants at the Kigali BK Arena, the biggest sports complex in the country to celebrate Rwanda's remarkable journey towards gender equality and women's empowerment over the past 30 years, bringing together women leaders, government and development partners, youth, CSOs, security organs, HeForShe champions and media.

The event provided a platform for an interactive engagement between the President of the Republic as the lead HeForShe champion and the general public on issues related to VAW, women economic empowerment, unpaid care work, bridging the gender divide, etc.

This was another opportunity for him to reaffirm his commitments on forging progress on women's empowerment and gender equality at all national levels.

Speaking at the IWD celebration, H.E Paul emphasized that **“a woman is a pillar of a family and holds great responsibility at the household level and external matters. Therefore, it is comprehensible to give women their rights, with no barriers to their wellbeing and development.”** H.E Paul Kagame said.





## Some of the key takeaways from the Q&A session with H.E Paul Kagame:

➤ Encouraged young girls to stay committed to their education and not to shy away from ICT and STEM fields, as those are skills that will remain future proof and will continually present opportunities.

➤ The president recognized women's participation to the country's development as a source of national pride, emphasizing that present day achievements are a result of women taking up leadership and decision-making roles across various sectors, which was not always the case in past years.

➤ He called for strengthened action and commitment to break all barriers that hinder women's increased representation and meaningful participation in leadership.

➤ The president set forth a vision that all children in Rwanda should grow up with full recognition and understanding of their rights.

➤ Upon request from a young female footballer who highlighted the lack of reliable donors within the sports sector, the president committed to keep working towards consistent and reliable funding mechanisms for sporting initiatives in the country through the Ministry of Sports.



Led by the UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Ozonnia Ojielo, Representatives from various UN agencies in Rwanda were also present at the national celebrations, showcasing the UN's commitment to partnering with the Government of Rwanda towards the advancement of women's rights. The UN Women Representative, Ms. Jennet Kem also took the opportunity to interact with the diverse partners present at the event including, development agencies, security organs, youth, civil society, among others.

During the event, various women leaders and young girls also addressed the audience by sharing their resilient contributions to key sectors including the Chief Gender Monitor, the Chairperson of the National Women's Council, the Deputy Governor of the National Bank of Rwanda, as well as three young women who have excelled as entrepreneurs and leaders across various disciplines.



*UN Women Representative, Jennet Kem, interacting with representatives of security organs at the IWD celebrations. Photo:UN Women/Geno Ochieng*



*UN and Development Partners present at the National IWD Celebrations. Photo:UN Women/Geno Ochieng*

2

# RWANDA'S VISIBILITY AND IMPACT AT CSW68



# Pre-CSW68 Preparatory Meeting and Side Event



Rwanda delegates taking part in the pre-CSW preparatory meeting. *Photo: UN Women/Geno Ochieng*



The UN Women Country Representative (left), Minister of Gender and Family Promotion (centre), and Chief Gender Monitor (right) at the pre-CSW preparatory meeting. *Photo: UN Women/Geno Ochieng*

Ahead of CSW68 in New York, UN Women in partnership with the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion convened all national stakeholders attending CSW68 meeting to brief the attendees on the history of CSW and its significance to the achievement of gender equality commitments on a global, regional, and national scale. This meeting also served to shape a common understanding and narrative that would guide Rwanda's participation and objectives for CSW68. The CSW took place from 11 - 22 March 2024 under the priority theme,

*“Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective”.*



# Financing and Accountability for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment: Learning from the past, co-creating the future

On the sidelines of CSW68, UN Women Country Offices in Rwanda, Cameroon, and Uganda in partnership with the Ministries in charge of gender equality in the respective countries organized an interactive side-event under the theme “Financing and Accountability for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment: Learning from the past, co-creating the future”.

The main objective was to showcase Rwanda, Uganda, and Cameroon’s advances in financing for gender equality, including through Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) and accountability, as well as building partnerships to embrace new financing modalities in the evolving global context.

Countries shared their GRB programmatic experiences over the years as well as discussed efforts to institutionalize financing for GEWE through budget laws, dedicated budget lines, budget circulars and budget statements. Representatives also demonstrated how these had been enforced at both central and local levels. In attendance were:



*Diverse participants taking part in the CSW68 side event.  
Photo: UN Women/Geno Ochieng*

- **Hon. Betty Amongi Akena**, Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development in Uganda
- A Representative of the Minister of Women’s Empowerment and the Family in Cameroon
- **Amb. Ernest Rwamucyo**, Representative of Rwanda to the UN
- **Ms. Jemimah Njuki**, Chief of the Economic Empowerment section at UN Women,
- **Ms. Jennet Kem**, UN Women Country Representative in Rwanda.





Development partners and Women`s Rights Organizations present at the Pre-IWD luncheon. *Photo: UN Women/Geno Ochieng*

## Some of the key takeaways from the enriching session include:

- The need to strengthen institutional capacity towards financing for gender equality, and the establishment of accountability frameworks.
- Innovative approaches and partnerships need to be strengthened and accelerated to push the financing for gender equality agenda forward.
- Lessons learned in the realm of gender financing need to be documented, and regular platforms to share these experiences among countries should be established.
- Promote private-public partnerships and government laws that consider women as contributors to development and not as beneficiaries.
- CSOs and NGOs should be viewed as valuable partners in the development of national financing strategies, ensuring that efforts are relevant, actionable, and impactful

## Pre-International Women`s Day Luncheon with Development Partners and Women`s Rights Organizations

In the lead up to the International Women`s Day, UN Women in partnership with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) convened Women`s Rights Organizations together with Development Partners for an interactive luncheon to decipher the existing structural gaps that continue to inhibit women`s empowerment in Rwanda, and to define the clear-cut areas of intervention and partnership with the development community and CSOs to address these issues.

Speaking at the luncheon, Gaudence Mushiymana, the Executive Director of UNABU emphasized that investing in women is of utmost importance, especially for vulnerable women, including those living with disabilities. Sustainable development should not discriminate based on abilities, but should be pursued in full recognition of diversity and inclusivity as guiding principles.



Mary Balikungeri, the director of the Rwandan Women's Network also stated that there is urgent need to develop a succession plan with Women's Rights Organizations in order to sustain the gains made by previous generations and ensure that youth remain steadfast and committed to the pursuit of GEWE in the future.

Moving forward, some key action points derived from the discussions included: the need to ensure that all development interventions are inclusive and tailor made to the needs of beneficiaries especially women belonging to different vulnerable groups, investing in value chains for women in the informal sector, disability inclusive financing for climate change action, increased engagement of men as key actors towards women's economic empowerment, and much more



*UN Women Country Representative, Jennet Kem, addressing participants at the pre-IWD luncheon.  
Photo: UN Women/Geno Ochieng*

## Partnership with Parliaments: Women Parliamentarians from Somalia visit Rwanda.



*The delegation of women parliamentarians from Somalia with national partners, including the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion and Parliament of Rwanda.  
Photo: UN Women/Geno Ochieng*

Taking place from the 29th of January to the 2nd of February 2024, UN Women Rwanda together with the Somalia Country Office, facilitated a study visit for a cohort of women parliamentarians came to to witness firsthand the significant gains registered by the country towards gender equality and women's empowerment. Throughout the week, the women parliamentarians met with a wide array of stakeholders including members of the Parliament of Rwanda, Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, the Gender Monitoring Office (GMO), Rwanda Governance Board, partners from civil society, and many more.

These various meetings created a platform for in depth discussions to share experiences, successes, lessons learned, challenges, etc., with the ultimate objective of informing strategic actions and perspectives to overcome barriers to women's empowerment in Somalia and strengthen efforts for gender equality within their unique national context.

# Delivering As One:

## The UN Celebrates 30 years of partnership with Rwanda toward gender equality and women’s empowerment



*Hon. Minister of Gender and Family Promotion, Dr. Valentine Uwamariya delivering keynote remarks at the UN Joint IWD 2024 event. Photo:UN Women*

In celebration of the international women’s day, the UN Gender Theme Group (GTG) led by the GTG Chair Ms. Jennet Kem, UN Women Country Representative organized a UN Joint event on the 2nd of April 2024 dubbed “UN Partnership in Rwanda’s 30 Year Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Journey” to celebrate the role of women in Rwanda’s development. The event set out to recognize and celebrate the remarkable journey of partnership between the UN and the Government of Rwanda towards advancing gender equality across all aspects of society.

Speaking at the event were the UN Resident Coordinator and the Minister of Gender and Family Promotion as the guest of honor.

Hon. Minister of Gender and Family Promotion and guest of honor Dr. Valentine Uwamariya, recognized Rwanda’s journey towards GEWE and said that it is marked with remarkable progress driven by the visionary leadership of the Government and the unwavering dedication of Rwandans. “While we celebrate the progress we have made, we must also acknowledge that our work is far from over. Women and girls continue to face countless challenges including GBV, limited access to finance, economic inequality and under representation in the decision-making processes.” She reiterated. **“As we look to the future, it is imperative that we deepen our efforts to address these challenges and build a world where every woman and girl can realize and enjoy her full potential.”** She concluded.





The UN Resident Coordinator delivering opening remarks are the UN Joint IWD event. **Photo:** UN Women



The celebrations entailed an insightful panel discussion featuring FCDO, Rwanda Women`s Network, Embassy of Sweden and UNDP. **Photo:** UN Women



The UN Women Country Representative delivering closing remarks at the event. **Photo:** UN Women



Young boys and girls from the Sherrie Silver Foundation giving an entertaining performance at the event. **Photo:** UN Women

Delivering his remarks, Dr. Ozonnia Ojielo, UNRC said that “If we look at the theme for this year, it is easy to focus on the successes however, it’s time that we talk about the next steps. What are the next frontiers? It is by looking at the frontiers that we can put our successes into perspective. We acknowledge and celebrate successes but there is more ahead of us in our common journey towards gender equality.” He noted.

The discussions culminated to an engaging panel discussion, moderated by the Director of Development at the British High Commission in Kigali, featuring Rwanda Women`s Network, the Embassy of Sweden and UNDP who elaborated the trajectory towards gender equality that Rwanda has followed as well as highlighting the invaluable role of partnership between the Government of Rwanda and development agencies towards significant gains. Some of the key discussion points include:

- **Women’s land ownership rights, inheritance and GBV laws,**
- **Financing for gender equality (Gender Budget statements),**
- **Sex disaggregated data generation,**
- **Establishment of the Isange One Stop Center,**
- **Development of the national gender standards**
- **Establishment of the National Gender Machinery and many more.**

Delivering closing remarks, the UN Women Country Representative, Ms. Jenet Kem called on participants to strengthen efforts to document the stories of gender equality and women`s empowerment (GEWE) in Rwanda, stating that the achievements made over the past 30 years should be widely shared to further strengthen Rwanda`s position as a global role model for GEWE.

The event was also graced by electrifying performances by young boys and girls from the Sherrie Silver Foundation which supports vulnerable children in Rwanda through nurturing their talents and providing a platform for their artistic expression.

# 3

## COORDINATING GENDER IN THE DEVELOPMENT SPHERE



# GEF Bi-Annual Reflection Day



Diverse stakeholders contributing to Rwanda's Generation Equality commitments present at the bi-annual reflection meeting. **Photo:** UN Women

On 28 March 2024, UN Women in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion convened over 40 stakeholders from government, development agencies, civil society, media and private sector at Ubumwe Grande hotel to move towards the implementation and realization of Generation Equality Forum commitments.

The comprehensive second bi-annual reflection roundtable captured and deliberated the progress made by partners directly contributing to Rwanda's GEF commitments, specifically by showcasing progress on their targets through interactive focus groups and together established timelines, targets, resources, and assigned clear responsibilities to accelerate implementation by 2026. Representatives from lead institutions and participants in attendance recommended a consolidated one-year joint action plan for each intervention area, outlining a clear path forward.

Delivering opening remarks, the Minister of Gender and Family Promotion, Dr. Valentine Uwamariya reiterated the Government of Rwanda's commitment within the Action Coalition on Technology and Innovation, emphasizing that Rwanda believes that equipping women with the knowledge and tools to leverage ICT effectively will unlock new pathways to empowerment, entrepreneurship, and leadership.

***“Rwanda’s commitment to gender equality is evident in our participation in the Generation Equality Forum. Through the Action Coalition of Technology & Innovation, we aim to address gender disparities in tech for inclusive solutions for all women and girls.”*** she said.

Delivering remarks, the UN Women Representative, Ms. Jennet Kem emphasized that the digital revolution is what drives our lives today. To fully leverage the opportunities that it presents, men and women need to equally participate and collaborate towards shaping its adoption and evolution.



The UN Women Representative delivering remarks at the bi-annual reflection meeting. **Photo:** UN Women



Hon. Minister of Gender and Family Promotion delivering opening remarks at the GEF bi-annual meeting. **Photo:** UN Women

# Development Partners Informal Gender Task Team Meeting



Members of the informal Development Partners Gender Task Team present at the meeting. Photo: UN Women

In the efforts to collectively inform actions towards gender equality, UN Women convened development partners for an informal gender group/task force for an interactive session to brainstorm and shape discussions in the upcoming national frameworks and development working groups on the 5th of April 2024, at UN Women. In attendance were Representatives from FCDO, Swedish Embassy GIZ, UN Women, UNICEF, WHO, UNRCO, UNFPA, IOM, EU (online). The informal DPs Gender Task Team is an outcome of the Breakfast Meeting organized by UN Women in collaboration with the Embassy of Sweden on the sidelines of the Women Deliver 2023 Conference in Kigali, which also coincided with UN Women Executive Director's country visit.

Specifically, the main points of discussion and action focus on:

- **Mainstreaming gender within the upcoming National Strategy for Transformation (NST2).**
- **The upcoming national presidential and parliamentary election were also discussed, highlighting the need for consolidating**

**the GEWE gains in political leadership of the country, especially the proportion of parliamentary seats held by women.**

- **The need to support efforts to increase women's representation in local governance structures.**
- **A coordinated approach to avoid duplication of efforts with national partners to maximize impact of GEWE interventions.**

It was ultimately recommended that the informal DP gender group be strengthened through quarterly engagements in the UN Gender Theme Group (GTG).



Participants at the informal Development Partners Gender Task Team meeting. Photo: UN Women



4

**FOSTERING NEW  
PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR ACCELERATED  
PROGRESS ON  
GENDER EQUALITY**

# Investing in Women for Accelerated Progress: The Equity Women`s Forum



*UN Women Representative, Ms. Jennet Kem, delivering remarks at the Equity Women`s Forum.  
Photo: UN Women*

On the 27th of March 2024, UN Women in partnership with Equity Foundation convened over 250 partners from government institutions, development agencies, private sector, NGOs, and rural women for an engaging Women`s Forum at the Kigali Convention Center in celebration of the International Women`s Month.

As part of this forum, women participants under the UN Joint Programme on Rural Women`s Economic Empowerment (JP-RWEE) got the opportunity to showcase their businesses, related products (agriculture, handcrafts, textiles, etc.) and services through an elaborate and interactive exhibition.

Speaking at the event, the UN Women Representative called for increased investment efforts towards women`s empowerment and strengthened partnerships to scale up the impact of initiatives geared towards bolstering women`s economic status and opportunities.

“Poverty around the world owns a woman`s face and women are shock absorbers. Investing in women is the right thing to do, it`s not a charity act, it`s investing in our future.” said Ms. Jennet Kem.

Hannington Namara, Managing Director at Equity Foundation, spoke to the invaluable role of women in national development stating, “We understand the significant impact women play, and recognize that creating opportunities for them contributes not only to their growth, but that of the entire nation. We pledge to collaborate with all partners to forge opportunities and tackle all barriers to women`s economic inclusion.”



*Equity Foundation Managing Director, Hannington Namara delivering remarks at the event. Photo: UN Women*



5

# KEY PROGRAMMATIC INTERVENTIONS

# Bridging The Gender Digital Divide In Rwanda: The African Girls Can Code Initiative National Coding Bootcamp

From 27 March – 05 April 2024, 75 girls from Rwanda embarked on a two-week intensive and practical coding, robotics, and innovation bootcamp. Held at the GIZ Digital Transformation Center, the girls were selected from each district across the entire country, recognized by the Ministry of Education as some of the highest achievers in secondary education. With their selection, each girl was also awarded a laptop to facilitate their learning throughout the bootcamp and beyond.

During the two-week coding camp which was organized by UN Women in partnership with the Ministries of Education, Gender and Family Promotion, ICT and Innovation, together with other partners, the participating girls were taken through a robust curriculum covering a wide array of topics including;

- SPIKE PRIME Robotics,
- Programming,
- Virtual Reality,
- Mobile Application Development,
- and Gender Equality concepts.

During these sessions, the girls were also inspired by prominent guests such as Hon. Gaspard Twagirayezu, Minister of Education in Rwanda, Mr. Thorsten Schafer Gumbel, Chair of the GIZ Management Board, and Edyne Umuhoza, a young female pilot from Rwanda.



Hon. Minister of Education and the UN Women Representative visiting the AGCCI participants during a coding session. **Photo:UN Women**



All 75 AGCCI participating girls were awarded laptops to foster their development in coding and robotics. **Photo:UN Women**

Following this bootcamp, each girl will also be part of the Siemens Empower Her mentorship programme that will connect them to prominent leaders in the ICT sector.

*“The experience I have had over the past two weeks has been unbelievable. I couldn’t believe that I was able to use my very own hands to build a robot from scratch that can follow my commands. My vision is to take part now fully in Robotics and ICT moving forward.”* exclaimed Uwase Carine, one of the participating girls.



Girls participating in an interactive robotics session at the AGCCI coding bootcamp. **Photo:UN Women/Geno Ochieng**



# Strategic Workshop under the Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (JP-RWEE)

The first year of implementing the second phase of the JP-RWEE programme activities was geared towards creating strategic partnerships and preliminary work for implementation, including onboarding of new beneficiaries, fostering partnerships with new districts, selection and onboarding of implementing partners, and development of a baseline survey.



Participants during the JP-RWEE high-level workshop.  
Photo: UN Women

To assess the progress of these priorities, technical focal points and Country Representatives from each of the four implementing agencies under the joint programme (UN Women, FAO, IFAD and WFP) convened for a week-long workshop to:

- Review and validate the Year 1 progress report and finalize the 2024 annual work plan.
- Validate ongoing and planned strategic partnerships
- Set the strategic orientation for each outcome component and design intended results and activities
- Final review and validation of the Phase II programme baseline report and gender-responsive value chain and market analyses.
- Design and formulate the Phase II sustainability/exit strategy, communication and KM strategy and M&E framework and plan.



UN Representatives and JP-RWEE Technical Staff interacting with project participants during a focus group discussion.  
Photo: UN Women

Representatives of the four UN agencies participated in a half day high-level meeting and provided strategic guidance to the programme technical team and also took part in a full day joint field visit to select JPRWEE government partners and project beneficiaries.

# Building On Our Greatest Asset: UN Women Staff Retreat 2024



The UN Women Rwanda team during the week-long annual Staff Retreat. **Photo:** UN Women/Geno Ochieng

The UN Women Rwanda Country Office has cultivated a culture of holding planning and reflection retreats on an annual basis to bring staff to speed on the programmatic and operational frameworks that guide its interventions, as well as promoting staff well-being. The UN Women Rwanda Country Office is also in the final year of implementing its Strategic Note (2019-2024) which is also the same year for initiating the development and approval of the next five-year Strategic Note. It is within this background that UN Women convened all staff for a four day retreat from 22nd to 26th April 2024 at Classic Resort hotel, in Musanze District to:

- i. Provide an overview of strategic and programmatic frameworks to UN Women’s work at global, regional and country levels.
- ii. Provide an overview of the 2024 Annual Work Plan and its smooth implementation, as well as each staff member’s role.
- iii. Brainstorm on resource mobilization strategies and innovative approaches to enhance donor engagement.
- iv. Discuss on the roadmap to developing the new UN Women Rwanda Strategic Note (2025-2029), drawing lessons from the ongoing Country Portfolio Evaluation.



The UN Women Rwanda team during the annual staff retreat. **Photo:** UN Women/Geno Ochieng

- v. Define individual pillar implementation plans towards the AWP 2024 while also preparing for the individual PMDs.
- vi. Enhance understanding of office performance indicators and commit to improvement.
- vii. Agree on measures to keep improving work-life balance and wellbeing.

This week-long retreat concluded with renewed commitment and vision to innovate, strengthen partnerships, and shape new avenues for even more impactful results for gender equality and women’s empowerment in Rwanda.



# UN Commemoration of The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi

On the 30th of April 2024, the UN in Rwanda convened to officially commemorate the 30th anniversary of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi. Convening all UN agencies, members of the diplomatic community, government partners, and family members of UN staff who tragically lost their lives in 1994, the event set out to remember, reflect and pay tribute to those who passed on as a result of this grim period in the nation's history. This was also an opportunity for the UN to publicly reiterate its unwavering commitment to working hand in hand with the Government of Rwanda to continue on an upward trajectory, ensuring that all citizens can lead a peaceful, unified, and prosperous life.

In his remarks, the UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Ozonnia Ojielo gave recognition to the failure of the international community in preventing the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi and reaffirmed that the UN is dedicated to working with all Rwandans to sustain reconciliation efforts and always uphold peace.

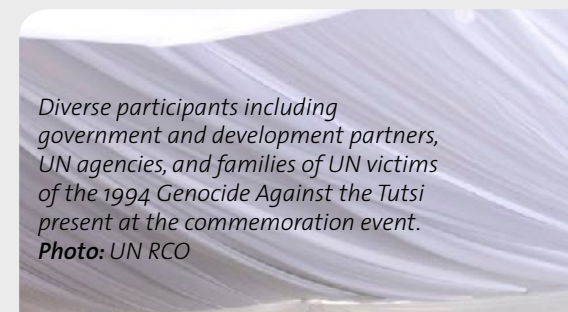
“In the aftermath of the Genocide, as the UN, we embarked on a journey of reflection and action. We recognize that the international community failed to prevent or effectively respond to the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi, and we acknowledge our collective responsibility to prevent such horrors from ever happening again.

*“Going forward, let us reaffirm our commitment to the principles of humanity, solidarity, and justice. Let us strive to build a world where every individual can live free from fear and persecution, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, or nationality.”* said Mr. Ojielo.



*UN Women Representative, Ms. Jennet Kem laying a wreath of flowers during the UN Commemoration of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi.*

**Photo:** UN RCO



*Diverse participants including government and development partners, UN agencies, and families of UN victims of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi present at the commemoration event.*

**Photo:** UN RCO



# Engaging Men and Boys for The Promotion of Gender Equality: Launch of The National Transformative Strategy



Hon. Minister of Gender and Family Promotion, Dr. Valentine Uwamariya delivering remarks at the event.  
Photo: UN Women

Rwanda has achieved significant milestones in gender equality and women’s empowerment, garnering global recognition as a gender champion. Despite commendable progress, inequalities still persist between men and women, particularly within socio-cultural systems which have been constructed through patriarchal norms that have historically favored men and boys, resulting in the marginalization of women and girls in various spheres, including economic participation.

In response to this, UN Women in partnership with the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) led the development of a National Transformation Strategy to engage men and boys as allies and champions for the advancement of women’s rights and gender equality. Upon its completion, this transformative strategy was officially launched on 16 May 2024 at the Kigali Marriott Hotel, bringing together diverse stakeholders actively working to enhance the engagement of men and boys in national GEWE priorities.

Delivering opening remarks, the Minister of Gender and Family Promotion, Dr. Valentine Uwamariya spoke to how this strategy will strengthen and equip all stakeholders with an actionable framework for men engage initiatives, stating “We envision a future where gender equality is not a distant goal, but a tangible reality. This strategy will equip us to challenge & reshape harmful gender norms at all levels, bringing men and boys as agents of positive social transformation.”



An insightful panel discussion followed featuring representatives from UN Women, Care International, AEGIS Trust, and the Rwanda Men’s Resource Centre (RWAMREC) which highlighted the various men engage initiatives being led by the individual institutions and the resulting impact from these interventions. The panelists also exchanged and interacted with the audience around the challenges and lessons learned from their experience on GEWE programming, providing actionable recommendations to strengthen national efforts.

Closing the event, the UN Women Programme Management Specialist, Emma Carine Uwantege called on all to commit to breaking discriminatory social norms and stereotypes for lasting progress on gender equality, stating, “The construction of negative or positive masculinities begins in social environments such as our homes and communities. We must challenge unequal power relations and patriarchal systems, bringing men and boys as role models for lasting progress on gender equality and sustainable development.”



Participants at the launch of the National Transformative Strategy to Engage Men and Boys for Gender Equality.  
Photo: UN Women



An interactive panel discussion featuring UN Women, Care International, AEGIS Trust and RWAMREC took place at the event.  
Photo: UN Women



# Conclusion

This year, UN Women Rwanda is at the conclusion of its current five-year Strategic Note (2019 -2024) which through its implementation has contributed to significant progress in improving the lives of women and girls through economic empowerment, governance and leadership, ending gender-based violence, technology and innovation, and much more. The results achieved over the past five years pave way for a new round of innovative programming and partnerships to build on the progress made and accelerate efforts to achieve national development targets.

As we develop our new Strategic Note, UN Women looks forward to engaging with all stakeholders across diverse domains to ensure that our next line of programming is relevant, responsive and transformational, fully aligning with the Government of Rwanda`s development targets and frameworks.

We recognize that gender equality can only be achieved through a coordinated and collaborative approach, putting partnerships at the core of our efforts as witnessed in the results highlighted within this newsletter. We are therefore eager to build on our existing partnerships, as well as foster new ones that will bolster our efforts, making sure that no woman or girl is left behind in all development ambitions and interventions.

The results mentioned in this newsletter confirm that there is continual progress being made on GEWE in Rwanda, and it is our hope that these results reignite and strengthen our collective commitment to sustain and accelerate the empowerment of women and girls.

*AGCCI participants posing for a photo with Edyne Umuhoza, a young female pilot from Rwanda. Photo: UN Women*



# UN Women`s Engagement In The Digital Realm

## Social Media Engagement

**UN Women Rwanda** @unwomenrwanda · Mar 8 Promote

A happy #IWD2024 to all ! Today we join over 6000 women, girls & male champions under the theme "Imyaka 30:Umugore mu Iterambere" to celebrate #Rwanda's remarkable journey & achievements towards advancing the rights of women and girls over the past #30years. #InvestInWomen

Ministry of Gender & Family Promotion | Rwanda and 8 others

2 23 50 3.1K

**UN Women Rwanda** @unwomenrwanda · Apr 6

Edyne Umuhoza, a young Rwandan pilot with Rwandair flying the Boeing also spoke to the girls about her journey&challenges as a young woman in aviation, saying it's male dominated but has nothing to do with capacity but rather social norms.& encouraged girls to join the industry.

1 4 246

**UN Women Rwanda** @unwomenrwanda · Apr 2

"Substantial investment is required to address the persisting & emerging gender gaps. UN is pleased to join the government & people of Rwanda in this recognition & to reaffirm our continued partnership in advancing gender #equality & women's empowerment in the country"@ozonnia.

2 5 350

**UN Women Rwanda** @unwomenrwanda · Feb 6 Promote

Gisele was faced with significant challenges when she fell pregnant as a teenager. Forced to solely raise her children, read her inspiring story of how she broke common stereotypes and is now living a fulfilling life through mechanical engineering.

[tinyurl.com/mv5e9hd2](http://tinyurl.com/mv5e9hd2)

UMUTONI GISELE  
MECHANICAL UN WOMEN PROJECT PARTICIPANT

YWCA Rwanda and 2 others

4 4 854

**UN Women Rwanda** @unwomenrwanda · Mar 27 Promote

Rep @JennetKem:Poverty around the world owns a woman's face& women are shock absorbers. "So investing in women is the right thing to do, is not a charity act, it's investing in our future.

She acknowledged @RwEquityBank as a valuable partner in empowering women. #InvestInWomen

EQUITY WOMEN FORUM

UN Women Africa and UN Rwanda

1 12 24 2.3K

**UN Women Rwanda** @unwomenrwanda · Mar 21 Promote

At the margins of #CSW68 in #NY, @UN\_Women together with Ministries of Gender in #Rwanda, #Cameroon, #Uganda hosted a side event convening global partners to discuss financing & accountability for #GenderEquality & #WomenEmpowerment, share past experiences & co-create the future.

UN Women Africa and 8 others

1 10 17 1.7K



# UN Women In The News



**From where I stand:** “I now publicly recognize myself as an agent for change and actively work to fight against social norms that discriminate against people living with disabilities.” | UN Women – Africa

[Read more](#)



How Gakenke-based mining cooperative is embracing gender equality, fighting against GBV in sector - The New Times

[Read more](#)



Gisele Umutoni breaking stereotypes in mechanical engineering in Rwanda | UN Women – Africa

[Read more](#)



From conflict to bumper harvests: one couple’s journey through the Gender Action Learning System | Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress Towards Rural Women’s Economic Empowerment - JP RWEE

[Read more](#)



Bridging the Gender Digital Gap: Rwanda’s Leadership in Technology & Innovation for Gender Equality | UN Women – Africa

[Read more](#)



Invest in women. Accelerate progress! - The New Times

[Read more](#)



Empowering girls through robotics and coding in Rwanda | UN Women – Africa

[Read more](#)



Investing in women’s safety and economic empowerment in Rwanda | UN Women – Africa

[Read more](#)



National International Women’s Day 2024 Celebrations in Rwanda | UN Women – Africa

[Read more](#)





4 KN 67 St  
Kigali, Rwanda