



UN WOMEN RWANDA SPECIAL NEWSLETTER

HIGHLIGHTS FROM QUARTER 3
& QUARTER 4, 2024





Message from the UN Women Country Representative

Jennet Kem
UN Women Country Representative

Dear Esteemed Partners and Readers,

As we step into 2025, we take a moment to reflect on the remarkable strides made in advancing **gender equality and women's empowerment** in Rwanda over the past year. Through strengthened partnerships, we have reinforced our collective commitment to advocating for the rights of women and girls.

Key milestones from this period include our active participation in the **Youth Connekt Africa Summit**, where we championed **gender-responsive innovation**, provided a platform for young women and girls to showcase their innovations and Rwanda's **historic increase in women's representation in the Chamber of Deputies**, reaffirming the country's leadership in gender equality. Additionally, the endorsement of the national operational plan for young women and girls, focusing on **HIV prevention, gender-based violence (GBV), and sexual and reproductive health (SRH)**, marks a critical step toward ensuring their health, safety, and empowerment.

Our continued efforts in **economic empowerment, policy advocacy, and gender coordination** including the **revitalization of the National Gender and Family Cluster**, are shaping a more inclusive and equitable society. We also witnessed **strong national collaboration during the 16 Days of Activism on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls**, amplifying voices and driving concrete action.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the unwavering support of our valued partners including the **Government of Rwanda, development agencies, UN entities, civil society, and implementing partners**. Your dedication fuels our collective progress, and together, we will continue to break **barriers and drive transformative change**.

As we embark on 2025, let us **build on this momentum**, striving for a world where equality, justice, and opportunity are a lived reality for all.

Enjoy the read!

Jennet Kem
UN Women Country Representative

Youth Connekt Africa Summit 2024: Empowering Youth Through Innovation



The UN Women and FAO plenary session on “Youth Perspectives for Inclusive Agrifood Systems in Africa” at the Youth Connekt Africa Summit 2024. Photo: UN Women/Next Line

From November 8-11, 2024, Kigali hosted the 7th Youth Connekt Africa Summit, bringing together over 3,000 young people from across the continent under the theme “**Jobs for Youth Through Innovative Skilling.**” The event provided a dynamic platform to advance gender equality, youth empowerment, and innovation, fostering collaboration among key stakeholders across Africa.

UN Women utilized this platform to address the gender digital divide and empower young women innovators. Through targeted parallel events, UN Women put a spotlight to young women in agriculture, technology, and entrepreneurship through sessions such as the mini-hackathon which engaged young women innovators from AU member states particularly Mali, Senegal, Mozambique and Rwanda, promoting the development of inclusive solutions.



In addition, collaborating with partners such as Smart Africa, FAO, and the AU, UN Women hosted impactful initiatives, including the “**Youth Perspectives for Inclusive Agrifood Systems in Africa and Empowering the Next Generation of Women Innovators**” TED-style talk. These efforts underscored strategies to bridge the gender digital divide and ensure inclusivity in Africa’s innovation landscape, creating opportunities for young women across the continent.

[Read full article here](#)

Galvanizing public action to end GBV through the 16 Days of Activism



An engaging panel discussion at the 16 Days High-level dialogue in Rwanda shared key insights to prevent and respond to GBV within families and society at large. Photo: UN Women

The 16 Days of Activism was marked by various events hosted by UN Women, in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) and key stakeholders, to address gender-based violence (GBV) in Rwanda. The theme, “All for GBV-free families,” focused on family cohesion and collective responsibility in preventing GBV.

Key activities included a high-level dialogue bringing together policymakers, leaders, and the public to promote family empowerment and violence prevention. The Minister of Gender and Family Promotion, Ms. Uwimana Consolée, officiated the event, which emphasized the importance of safe, resilient families.

On December 8, 2024, a Car Free Day in Kigali was organized, featuring a public march and sports activities to raise awareness about GBV. On December 9, the UN family in Rwanda hosted an event to reflect on its role in supporting Rwanda’s efforts to end GBV, with calls for urgent action and unity in tackling the issue.



Stop.Act.Unite was the call to action as the UN came together to commemorate the 16 Days of Activism in Rwanda. Photo: UN Women

A notable event was the Inter-University Debate on GBV Prevention, held on December 9-10, 2024, where over 40 students from 12 universities debated the causes and solutions to GBV.

Throughout these events, the message was clear: there is a need for collective action to eliminate GBV from families, communities, and society.

Watch

CEDAW, a Guiding Framework for Gender Equality



Multisectoral partners at the national CEDAW consultations. Photo: UN Women/Pearl Karungi



In 2024, Rwanda presented its 10th Periodic Report before the Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), following which the committee released its Concluding Observations to guide the government of Rwanda in its efforts to achieve gender equality, eliminate discrimination against women, and ensure the full protection of women's rights in line with international standards.

Taking place from 3-5 December 2024, UN Women in partnership with the UN Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), MIGEPROF, and MINIJUST brought multisectoral partners together to review, prioritize, and develop a two-year action plan and roadmap for the implementation of the CEDAW recommendations. The consultations provided a detailed overview of International and national human rights instruments and mechanisms, leading to in-depth discussions among national partners on the status of gender equality and human rights in Rwanda, and effective collaborative approaches to accelerate the achievement of the recommendations and global commitments made by the country.

[Read more here](#)

Revitalizing the National Gender and Family Cluster (NGFC)



Hon. Minister Uwimana Consolee, Minister of Gender and Family Promotion delivering remarks. Photo: UN Women/Geno Ochieng

Taking place on 10th December 2024, UN Women in partnership with the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, convened the “National Gender and Family Cluster” (NGFC) in an occasion to revitalize the multi-stakeholder platform for strengthened coordination of gender equality and family cohesion efforts. Established in 2010, The National Gender and Family Cluster (NGFC), brings together government, civil society, private sector, and development partners to align on the implementation of national and global gender equality commitments.



Hon. Minister Uwimana Consolee, Minister of Gender and Family Promotion delivering remarks. Photo: UN Women/Geno Ochieng

Delivering remarks, Hon. Minister Uwimana Consolee, Minister of Gender and Family Promotion, highlighted the importance of aligning efforts with Vision 2050 and NST2, and called for strengthened partnerships and community based structures in support of Gender Transformative Approaches.

In her closing remarks, the UN Women Country Representative, Ms. Jennet Kem stressed the importance of leveraging disaggregated data to guide evidence-based strategies addressing persistent barriers faced by women, driving more impactful interventions.

Rwanda reaffirms its unwavering commitment to gender equality with 63.8 per cent of women in the Chamber of Deputies



Some of the newly elected women members of the lower house during the swearing in ceremony. Photo Credit: President's office.

In a remarkable stride towards gender equality, Rwanda has once again demonstrated its unwavering commitment to gender parity in its latest 2024 legislative election results. The percentage of women's representation in the Chamber of Deputies increased from 61.3 in 2018 to 63.8 per cent of seats in 2024. According to the Constitution, at least 30 per cent of the lawmakers in the lower house must be women. That means that the percentage quota allocated to women corresponds to 24 MPs as the Chamber of Deputies has a total of 80 members. Other special categories include youth and people living with disabilities and for the first time, people living with disabilities are represented by a woman.

This achievement not only cements Rwanda's status as a global leader in women's representation but also underscores the nation's dedication to creating a more inclusive and equitable society. These figures are more than just numbers; they reflect the country's ongoing commitment to empowering women and ensuring their voices are heard at the highest levels of decision-making. UN Women proudly acknowledges and commends this significant milestone, which serves as an inspiring example for countries around the world.

[Read the full article here](#)

Launching the Adolescent Girls and Young Women Operational Plan: A Multi-Sectoral Milestone

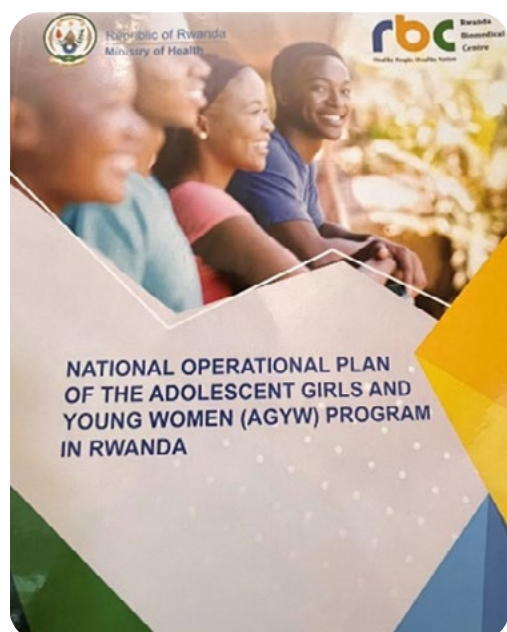


A Rwandan traditional performance at the national World AIDS Day celebrations. Photo: UN Women

On December 2, 2024, UN Women and the Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC) officially endorsed the Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) operational plan during a multi-sectoral meeting in Rubavu. The event, held alongside World AIDS Day, brought together stakeholders including PEPFAR, UNAIDS, UNFPA, and USAID to address the triple threats of HIV, adolescent pregnancy, and GBV among AGYW. The discussions focused on **fostering effective partnerships, ensuring financial sustainability, and promoting accountability.**

The endorsed plan emphasizes integrated services in mental health, HIV prevention, and SRH, aiming for long-term impact on AGYW's well-being. Stakeholders pledged collective action through a cohesive framework for implementation, monitoring, and advocacy.

[Read full article here](#)



Post-CSW68 Stakeholder Consultations: Advancing gender equality in Rwanda



Ms. Tikikel Alemu, UN Women Programme Specialist speaking at the post CSW68 workshop. Photo: UN Women/Pearl Karungi

2024 marked the sixty-eighth session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68), which focused on “**Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty, strengthening institutions, and financing with a gender perspective.**” The session concluded with globally agreed recommendations for national implementation.

On July 5, 2024, UN Women, in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), organized a post-CSW68 reflection and planning workshop. Participants included government representatives, CSOs, and UN agencies, who reviewed the conclusions and developed a tailored national implementation plan.

Ms. Tikikel Alemu, UN Women Programme Management Specialist, called for enhanced collaboration to drive progress on gender equality, while CSW68 attendees shared insights on global networking and self-assessment as key tools for combating GBV. Mr. Silas Ngayaboshya, MIGEPROF’s Director General, highlighted the importance of collective efforts to translate CSW68 conclusions into impactful actions for women and girls in Rwanda.

The workshop concluded with the adoption of a national implementation plan to guide coordinated efforts toward achieving CSW68 goals.

Celebrating the invaluable role of rural women



UN Women and partners donated energy and time saving technologies including cooking stoves to rural women at the national IRWD celebrations. Photo: UN Women/Geno Ochieng

On the 15th of October 2024, the district of Nyamagabe convened in an elaborate occasion to celebrate the critical role of rural women in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving nation-wide food security and nutrition, and eradicating poverty.

Under the national theme, “Ibidukikije, Ubuzima bwacu”, which translates to **“Nature is us”, derived from the global theme, “Rural Women Sustaining Nature for Our Collective Future: Building climate resilience, conserving biodiversity, and caring for land towards gender equality and empowerment of women and girls.”**, diverse partners from government institutions and development organizations joined the community to recognize rural women through various forms of entertainment, exhibitions, testimonials, speeches, support to women and much more. Under its dedicated “3R Programme on Unpaid Care Work”, UN Women and partners donated various energy and time saving technologies to rural women as part of the celebrations.

Integrated across the proceedings, distinguished guest addressed the audience including the Minister of Gender and Family Promotion, Hon. Uwimana Consolee, Chairperson of the National Women’s Council, Ms. Belancille Nyirajyambere, the Mayor of Nyamagabe District, Mr. Hildebrand Niyomwungeri, and the UN Women Country Representative, Ms. Jennet Kem.

In her remarks, the Minister of Gender and Family Promotion not only commended rural women for their invaluable contribution to Rwanda’s development, but also shed light on the persistent challenges that they face in subsistence farming, unpaid care work, access to time saving technologies, and socio-cultural perceptions. She called for the commitment of all stakeholders to jointly tackle these issues, which will be critical in reducing malnutrition, improving public hygiene, combating climate change, and enhancing women’s participation in productive work, ultimately accelerating the achievement of commitments made under NST2.

Empowering Media Professionals to Combat GBV in Rwanda

From June 12-14, 2024, UN Women and the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) trained 50 journalists and social media influencers to enhance their capacity to address GBV, including online violence. The training tackled challenges such as **insufficient media training, sensationalism, and harmful stereotypes, emphasizing ethical reporting, media reforms, and digital platform regulations.** Participants pledged to establish a journalist network dedicated to combating GBV in all its forms, driving responsible and impactful media coverage



Rwanda Investigation Bureau Spokesperson, Dr Thierry Murangira, facilitating on online GBV at the media training.
Photo Credit: UN Women/Pearl Karungi

[Read full article here](#)

Promoting Gender Equality in the Care Economy for Socio-Economic Progress in Rwanda

Commencing on the 26th of November 2024, UN Women in partnership with MIGEPROF, and the Government of Germany convened an extensive cohort of national partners from government, civil society, development agencies, academia and media, directly contributing to the care economy in Rwanda, for a weeklong workshop as a platform for renewed understanding, sharing of experiences and results, and strategizing to advance gender equality in the care economy for strengthened socio-economic development in Rwanda. The workshop explored various subject areas including policy frameworks, men engagement and community mobilization and their role in levelling the unequal burden of unpaid care work on women and girls. Ultimately, the workshop facilitated the creation of national priorities, actionable plans, and strategies to integrate the reduction and redistribution of unpaid care work into women's economic empowerment programs.



Participants of the Advancing Gender Equality in the Care Economy Workshop.
Photo: UN Women/Geno Ochieng

Strengthening GBV Response through Capacity Building of Nurses



Participants at the forensic training. Photo: UN Women/Geno Ochieng

In June 2024, UN Women and the Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB) successfully trained 54 nurses from over 45 hospitals hosting Isange One Stop Centres (IOSCs) across Rwanda. The training enhanced the nurses' skills in responding to GBV and child abuse cases, focusing on **forensic examination, evidence collection and preservation, and physical assessment techniques**. It also identified critical gaps in service delivery, including inadequate tools and infrastructure, and proposed actionable recommendations such as developing a forensic evidence manual and providing advanced equipment to improve IOSC services nationwide.

Fostering GBV-Free Schools and Advancing Gender Equality in Unpaid Care Work



Mayor of Nyaruguru District delivering key remarks at the awareness raising event. Photo: Nyaruguru district (Mayor's Office)

From September 10-13, 2024, UN Women, in partnership with Nyaruguru District, trained 100 teachers from primary, secondary, and TVET schools to address sexual harassment, GBV, and the impact of gender inequality on unpaid care work in schools. Through participatory sessions, the training enhanced teachers' understanding of gender concepts and mainstreaming strategies. Equipped with these skills, teachers are now better prepared to transform social norms, promote equitable parental practices, and foster men's engagement in advancing gender equality.

Developing the future women leaders of Rwanda's local governance

UN Women Representative, Ms. Jennet Kem, presenting a certificate to a young woman who completed the 6-month internship program. Photo: UN Women/Geno Ochieng



UN Women, in collaboration with RALGA, celebrated the graduation of 116 young women who completed a transformative 6-month internship program in local governance on August 14, 2024. This initiative equips young women with the skills and experience needed for leadership roles, fostering their meaningful participation in governance. As the program enters its next phase, another cohort of young women will benefit from this opportunity to advance gender equality and sustainable development in Rwanda.

[Read the full story here.](#)

Technology as an enabler for Gender Equality and Family Cohesion



Leveraging the potential of youth and technology to drive gender equality and sustainable development, UN Women in partnership with the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) and the Rwanda Information Society Authority (RISA) launched the nationwide Gender and Family Sector Digital Innovation Challenge. **This initiative was developed to strengthen the participation of youth in developing actionable tech-based solutions to issues related to gender based violence, family cohesion and education.** Spanning a period of three months, numerous innovations were critically evaluated with only six making it to the final awarding stage. Leading the competition, a team of young female students from the Rwanda Coding Academy, and a young female led startup known as Leins Tech were awarded the top prize of 5 million Rwandan Francs each to further develop their prototypes which were related to family cohesion and education.



Members of the two winning teams of the Gender and Family Sector Digital Innovation Challenge.
Photo: UN Women

Strengthening action for rural women's economic empowerment through cross-country learning initiatives



Taking place across the week of the 16th of September, the JP-RWEE focal points from Tanzania programme visited Rwanda for an exchange visit to capture experiences, lessons learned and witness firsthand the transformative impact of the programme on rural women in Rwanda.

Visiting the programme's activities in Kirehe and Ngoma districts, the delegation from Tanzania got the opportunity to interact with the mayors of both districts, gaining valuable insights into the importance of strong partnerships with local authorities in ensuring programmatic progress and sustainability, and got to witness the commitment of the Government of Rwanda to empowering rural women. Following the high-level meetings, the delegation met with programme participants, taking the opportunity to exchange and get a first-hand account of

the programme's impact and learn about the various interventions being implemented. Some of these included the Gender Action Learning System (GALS), Farmer Field & Life Schools (FFLS), and Climate Smart Agriculture practices, such as zero energy cooling chambers (ZECC), solar-powered irrigation systems, and greenhouse farming. These initiatives demonstrated innovative approaches to improving agricultural productivity and sustainability.

In addition to learning from Rwanda's experiences, the delegation shared their own insights and best practices from their work in Tanzania. This exchange of knowledge deepened mutual understanding and fostered collaboration between the two countries, enriching both teams with fresh ideas to strengthen the impact of the JPRWEE.

UN Women: Shaping the next five years of action for Gender Equality in Rwanda

Rwanda Country Portfolio Evaluation review workshop



*UN Women partners gathered for the evaluation of the country portfolio.
Photo: UN Women/Geno Ochieng*



UN Women Rwanda Country Office carried out a country portfolio evaluation to assess the impact of its interventions implemented in the framework of its 5 year Strategic Note 2019-2024.



The findings of the evaluation report were presented to the external reference group which provided strategic insights that aimed to shape the design of the Country Office's new Strategic Note. Partners represented at the consultative workshop underlined the importance **of strengthened collaboration to enhance thought leadership in gender equality to inform Rwanda's development processes, engaging youth activists for progress on GEWE, and leveraging existing accountability mechanisms to promote GEWE in the poorest districts of the country.**

Development of the UN Women Rwanda Strategic Note (SN) 2025 – 2029



Kebedech AMBAYE, the Regional Strategic Planning Specialist facilitating a session at the retreat. Photo:UN Women/Geno Ochieng

To jointly shape the next five years of its programming in Rwanda, the UN Women Country Office in partnership with the East and Southern Africa Regional Office organized a three-day staff retreat dedicated to analyzing the achievements and challenges encountered during the implementation of the current SN (2019-2024) to extract valuable lessons, identifying key strategic areas for intervention, and establishing clear outcomes and measurable indicators that will guide the implementation and evaluation of the next SN.

The retreat provided and opportune platform to draw on staff expertise and valuable insights to inform the development of this multi-year programming framework.

Improving GEWE programme effectiveness through results-based management and reporting



To enhance the effectiveness of its GEWE initiatives in Rwanda, UN Women gathered a diverse group of partners for a comprehensive Gender Responsive Results-Based Management (RBM) training. Held in Musanze District from 2nd to 4th September 2024, the training provided participants with knowledge and tools for **developing, implementing, monitoring, and reporting projects using evidence-based methods**. The workshop also enabled peer learning, allowing attendees to share experiences and best practices for effective gender-responsive RBM and financial management.



Implementing partners (left) and Barbara Bamanya, M&E Specialist (right) taking part in sessions at the RBM Training. Photo: UN Women/Geno Ochieng

Similarly, from 9th to 12th September 2024, the UN Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (JP-RWEE), implemented by UN Women, WFP, FAO, and IFAD, conducted a training on Results-Based Reporting, equipping partners with skills to **track, measure, and report programmatic outcomes effectively**.



Colette Nyinawuntu delivering a presentation during the JP-RWEE Results based reporting training. Photo: UN Women/Pearl Karungi

Strengthening Partnerships for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

On September 24, 2024, the UN Gender Theme Group (UN-GTG) and the Development Partners Informal Gender Group (DPIGG) held their inaugural meeting to exchange experiences and explore collaboration opportunities for advancing GEWE in Rwanda. Co-chaired by Ms. Jennet Kem (UN Women), Ms. Martina Fors Mohlin (Swedish Embassy), and Ms. Anna Wilson (FCDO), the session fostered discussions on challenges, synergies, and best practices. Key recommendations included integrating gender into the remaining NST2 development processes, stakeholder mapping of GEWE interventions, and enhancing collaboration for strategic joint advocacy efforts.

Members of the UN-GTG and the DPIGG. Photo: UN Women/Geno Ochieng



Celebrating Sweden's Partnership in Advancing Gender Equality

On July 10, 2024, UN Women hosted a farewell luncheon for outgoing Swedish Ambassador to Rwanda, H.E. Johanna Teague, to honor Sweden's significant contributions to gender equality and women's empowerment under her leadership.

H.E. Teague commended UN Women's success in positioning Rwanda as a global leader in gender equality while acknowledging the ongoing challenges. The UN Women Country Representative expressed deep gratitude for Sweden's continued partnership and welcomed future collaboration with the incoming Ambassador.



A luncheon to bid farewell to the outgoing Swedish Ambassador, H.E. Johanna Teague, was hosted by Ms. Jennet Kem, the UN Women Country Representative. Photo Credit: UN Women/ Geno Ochieng

Voices From the Field

From Struggling Farmers to Prosperous Partners: How JP-RWEE Transformed Monique and Theodate's Lives

In Gisagara District, Rwanda, the UN Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (JP-RWEE), implemented by UN Women, WFP, FAO, and IFAD, is empowering over 2,000 farmers with skills to boost productivity and climate resilience. Among the beneficiaries is UWIMANA Monique, who, with her husband Theodate, transformed their farming practices through the Farmer Field and Life Schools (FFLS) approach. Their harvests increased five-fold, from 10 to 50 kilograms weekly, improving their economic stability and family well-being. Read Monique's inspiring story and learn more about JP-RWEE's impact [here](#).



Monique and her husband cultivate an expansive tree tomato farm as part of their agricultural activities. Photo: UN Women/Geno Ochieng

Lucide Pascale's Journey: Empowered by the African Girls Can Code & Siemens EmpowerHER Initiative

Lucide Pascale Isingizwe's inspiring journey showcases the transformative impact of the African Girls Can Code Initiative (AGCCI) and the Siemens EmpowerHer program. As an AGCCI alumna, she has demonstrated exceptional dedication and talent, culminating in her selection to represent Rwanda at the prestigious Bürgerfest Citizens' Festival in Berlin on September 12, 2024. Hosted by the Federal President of Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Lucide joined five other AGCCI alumni from across Africa to spotlight the continent's growing tech talent.



Lucide teaching young children how to code during the Bürgerfest Citizens' Festival at Bellevue Palace in Berlin. Photo:Siemens/Stefan Höderath

[Read the full story here.](#)



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