

EU-, UN-, AU- und Außenpolitik

- The New Times, 02.11.2015 (<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2015-11-02/194028/>)

World law enforcement chiefs in Kigali to discuss policing issues

By Eugene Kwiguka

MORE THAN 1,000 delegates are expected to convene in Kigali today for the 84th General Assembly of Interpol, the world's largest international police organisation.

Running under the theme, "Interpol 2020: Policing Global Threats in a Dynamic Environment," the four-day meeting will be attended by heads and representatives of law enforcement institutions and agencies from 190 member countries of Interpol, including chiefs of police, prosecutors, heads of regional and international police organisations, partners in policing and government officials, among others.

According to Rwanda National Police (RNP) officers who are facilitating the event, participants at the meeting will discuss a range of current policing and security issues, including cross-border challenges faced by police today such as terrorism, the organised criminal groups behind drug and human trafficking, and the different facets of cyber crime.

The RNP said in a statement that "given the sophisticated nature of crime in the 21st century, it's imperative that the security and law enforcement institutions cooperate globally."

"Rwanda's hosting of the 84th Interpol AGM (Annual General Meeting) is another milestone achievement for RNP and Rwanda in general in its greater vision of cooperation to make the world a safer place," said RNP officials in a concept note for the meeting.

Rwandan officers to present

Police Spokesperson Celestin Twahirwa told *The New Times* last week that Rwandan police officers are among experts who will give presentations that will inform some of the meeting's resolutions about a better preservation of global security.

"We are happy to host such an international meeting and we hope its resolutions will help to make the world a safer place," Twahirwa said.

Interpol's role is to enable police around the world to work together to make the world a safer place.

Cooperation of the RNP with Interpol has led to many successful results, including the arrest of a number of fugitives of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, the handling of over 36 cases of human trafficking since 2009 involving 153 victims, and the interception of several stolen vehicles.

Rwanda National Police have also been working with Interpol to detect and intercept drug traffickers, forged documents and counterfeit money, illicit goods, and fake pharmaceuticals among other things.

Rwanda became a member of Interpol in 1974 and the Rwanda National Police has been active in international police since it was created in 2000.

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- The New Times, 03.11.2015 (<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2015-11-03/194056/>)

Kagame lauds Interpol for keeping the world safe

By Eugene Kwiguka

PRESIDENT PAUL KAGAME has lauded the work of international police organisation, Interpol, in making the world a safer place by promoting and enhancing cooperation among the world's police forces to fight crimes.

While officially opening the 84th General Assembly of Interpol in Kigali, yesterday,

Kagame described security as essential.

"Security is the foundation for everything. When it breaks down, the costs are huge: loss of life, destruction of trust within society and in public institutions, and economic stagnation. We experienced the worst of this in Rwanda where the country's security forces at the time were at the forefront of the genocidal machinery."

"Allow me to express our sincere gratitude to Interpol for your efforts in tracking down fugitives wanted for Genocide in Rwanda, and helping to deliver justice for victims and survivors – even though there remains much work to be done. Many more of these fugitives are still at large and we will have to continue working with Interpol, and the international community, to ensure justice is done," Kagame said, adding that "the world could learn a lot from how Interpol has conducted its affairs: quietly, effectively and collaboratively."

'RNP embodies good governance'

Speaking on Rwanda's work to build institutions that serve the interest of citizens, President Kagame pointed to Rwanda National Police as key to good governance.

"In the last 21 years, Rwanda has worked to build effective, citizen-focused governance institutions. One of them, notably, is the Rwanda National Police, which this year marks its 15th anniversary. Today, this young police force, working closely with communities, provides one of the most secure environments in the world, where Rwandans can pursue socio-economic transformation," the President said.

The cooperation of the Rwanda National Police (RNP) with Interpol has led to many successful results, including the arrest of a number of fugitives of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, the handling of more than 36 cases of human trafficking since 2009 involving 153 victims, and the interception of several stolen vehicles.

Rwanda National Police has also been working with Interpol to detect and intercept drug traffickers, forged documents and counterfeit money, illicit goods, and fake pharmaceuticals, among others.

Interpol's role is to enable police around the world to work together to make the world a safer place.

Speaking at the summit's opening, Interpol President Mireille Ballestrazzi paid tribute to the victims of the Genocide against the Tutsi and commended Rwanda's progress to date.

"I wish to salute the women and men of this country for the extraordinary resilience they have

shown in the wake of the genocide 21 years ago that left the country in mourning," Ballestrazzi said.

"While paying tribute to the memory of the victims of this barbarity, I also wish to highlight the long way Rwanda has come since, and the concrete results it has achieved in progress and development."

Ballestrazzi also emphasised at the organisation's summit yesterday that the cooperation among the world's police forces to counter crimes remains crucial in a globalised world.

"In our globalised environment – a threat for one of us constitutes a threat for all of us. International cooperation is essential for each and every State to guarantee its security. Cooperation is the only way forward," Ballestrazzi added, quoting President Kagame's speech at the 70th United Nations General Assembly.

Running under the theme, "Interpol 2020: Policing Global Threats in a Dynamic Environment," the four-day meeting opened yesterday with the presence of 850 delegates from 149 countries out of the 190 countries that make up the organisation.

They will discuss a range of current policing and security issues, including cross-border challenges faced by police such as terrorism, the organised criminal groups behind drug and human trafficking, and the different facets of cyber crime.

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- The New Times, 03.11.2015 (<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2015-11-03/194054/>)

Rwanda, US attorneys general hold bilateral talks

By Athan Tashobya

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL of the United States, Loretta E. Lynch, yesterday held talks with her Rwandan counterpart, Johnston Busingye.

Briefing journalists after their closed-door meeting, Lynch said the discussions aimed at strengthening bilateral relations in areas of access to justice and how to make the system accessible for the population.

"I was delighted to meet with him [Busingye] and the team, and we heard about the work they are doing in important areas such as access to justice, and making the system accessible for all Rwandans," she said.

"We had a very successful discussion on a number of areas of interest and I look forward to continuing our strong working relationship with the Government of Rwanda."

Lynch is the first US attorney-general to visit Rwanda, a visit Busingye believes is significant to Rwanda's justice sector.

Busingye, also the Justice min-

ister outlined areas of discussion such as access to justice, international prosecutions, law-making, taking forward Rwanda's judicial capacity, building frameworks and partnership.

Also discussed was the obligation of the international community on bringing fugitives of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi to book, according to the minister.

"It is important for the world to bring Genocide fugitives to account, it is important for the world to understand that it is an obligation of every state in the world to do what they must do in order to have these people have their day in court," Busingye said.

"That's basically what we said. And, we both agree on this. We look forward to having a team in the ministry and affiliated institutions putting together areas of cooperation and then we take it forward. That's what she promised too."

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- The New Times, 04.11.2015 (<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2015-11-04/194087/>)

Rwanda peacekeepers construct youth centres in Darfur

By Times Reporter

RWANDA PEACEKEEPERS

(Rwanbatt42) in Zalingei, Central Sector, Darfur, have constructed two youth centres for Sudanese residents.

The centres constructed for residents of Hassa Hissa and Hamadia IDP camps were handed over on Monday.

The youth leader of Hamadia IDP Camp Shaffi Abdallah Abdul Karim Nourdin said they were grateful for the project and thanked Rwanbatt42, according to a statement from Rwanda Defense Forces (RDF).

"We are really thankful for this kind of project that is useful in our lives," he said.

The centres, with capacity to accommodate 200 people at a go will benefit both girls and boys for social and education matters.

The project funded by United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) was aimed at promoting youth development.

The youths used to gather in grass thatched houses. Hassa Hissa and Hamadia IDP camps are home to about one hundred and ten thousand Internally Displaced People.

The chief guest, UNAMID Central Sector Head Office, Lamech Kawiche urged the leadership of the two IDP camps to use the facilities for the benefit of all.

He said, "This is a multipurpose centre to be used by any

segment of the community, be flexible in using the facility, everyone should use it."

The UNAMID Sector Central Commander, Brig Gen George Rwigamba congratulated Rwanda Peacekeepers for honoring the pledge they made.

"We thank UNAMID and Rwanbatt42 for successfully fulfilling the pledge they made," he said.

He also thanked the community for the tireless support rendered.

"This shows us that you can even do better than this. We shall have other projects like this with other Rwanda Peacekeepers coming in the future," he added.

The IDP camps representatives thanked the UNAMID and Rwanda Peacekeepers for taking care of them.

The Commanding Officer Rwanbatt42, Lt Col Venant Bizimungu, commended the leadership of the two communities for giving a hand, affirming that Rwanda Peacekeepers were ready to work with them.

Besides the mandated tasks of peacekeeping, the Rwandan contingent in Darfur supports the local population by engaging in developmental projects funded by the UNAMID through Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) that bring impact in the citizen's lives.

- The New Times, 04.11.2015 (<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2015-11-04/194092/>)

USAID supports dairy sector with Rwf253 million

By Hudson Kuteesa
and John Mbaraga

THE UNITED States Agency for International Development (USAID) has extended Rwf253 million (\$335,095) to key players in the local dairy sector.

The support was channelled through the Rwanda Dairy Competitiveness Programme II (RDCP II) and is to be implemented by Land O'Lakes International Development, Inc.

Rwf106 million (\$142,481) of the support will go to Rwanda National Dairy Platform – a private multi-stakeholder group advocating for the needs of the dairy industry. Rwf103 million (\$138,524) will go to the Rwanda Agricultural Livestock Inspection and Certification Services (RALIS). Additionally, ten milk collection centres will receive assorted equipment worth Rwf45 million (\$59,367).

Malick Haidara, the acting director of the USAID economic growth office, said the grant would play a key role in sustaining the growth of the dairy industry.

"We are confident that this grant will be properly used to develop the dairy sector and promote sustainability. I believe that this will be achieved when all levels have the common understanding about the activity," he said.

According to Dennis Karamuзи, the leader of RDCP II, this grant will help in improving production and quality of the milk, as well as ease the process of collecting the milk.

Francis Karemera, the president of Kibondo Farmers Cooperative in Gatsibo that received a milk tanker, said the equipment will be important to both the dairy cooperatives and the society.

"Our services cut across the whole society and this equipment will benefit all. For example, our partner, Inyange Industries need milk, so this equipment will be used to transport it easily to them," he said.

In attendance was also the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, Innocent Musabyimana, who reminded the dairy farmers to work hard to increase production.

He also reaffirmed government support to enhance milk production and consumption as it contributes to the development of the country.

From 2012, USAID's Rwanda Dairy Competitiveness Program II has provided Rwf855 million (\$1,145,130) to dairy value chain actors.

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- The New Times, 04.11.2015 (<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2015-11-04/194085/>)



WEEKLY MUSINGS Sunny Ntayombya

Poverty rose by six per cent? You racists, tell that to the birds

the data for the NISR for publication.

According to this nameless source, "there was a disagreement between OPM (Oxford Policy Management) and Rwanda over the methodology used".

Bear with me now. So far, all we know is that some unknown person, whether in the OPM, the NISR or in the reporter's mind (it wouldn't be the first time for a journalist to invent a source), said that the two organisations disagreed on methodology used to source the data for the EICV4.

Thus far, all that is in dispute is what the EICV4 numbers mean and how they were arrived at. So far so good. That is a dispute for statisticians and mathematicians.

Where Nicolas Germain and France 24 go off the rails is when they attempt to use the dispute over EICV4 numbers to tar Rwanda's development strides. That, my friends, is where they lose the plot.

In order to do so, they enlist the aid of renowned Rwanda hater and professor of African law and politics, Belgian Filip Reyntjens. Think I'm being unfair to him by calling him a hater, and therefore a man totally lacking in impartiality? Just do a little research and him and you'll discover the role he played in pre-1994 Rwanda.

Anyway, if we are to believe France 24 and Reyntjens, the source contacted the academic with OPM's initial methodology and together they

reevaluated the EICV4.

Unsurprisingly, the two found that instead of poverty falling, it had gone up by a whole SIX PERCENT in 2013-2014!

Now, I admit that I'm no expert in the numbers game, but what I will have to call 'bullshit' (if you could excuse my language), is Reyntjens and his 'source' trying to tell me that despite the increased child enrolment in school, increased agricultural productivity, the increased social protection programmes to help the very poor and the better use of the few resources we have, we've gone backwards! How is this possible economically or arithmetically, if you will?

I'm not the only one who disputes Reyntjens' wonky math. When asked to comment on the academic's 'findings', a spokesperson for the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DfID) said, "we believe the revision of the methodology used to estimate poverty levels for the EICV4 poverty survey was justified".

The DfID assessment is something that Reyntjens, unsurprisingly, disputes as well (despite that they are actually working on the ground, and he hasn't stepped on our soil for years).

But as anyone who has either dealt with the man or his academic work will tell you, when it comes to Rwanda, Reyntjens doesn't think straight or allow his prejudice

to be put on the backburner, not even for a little while.

If the editors at France 24 had been fair, they would not have given the article the time of day. But as I've come to expect from them, all standards of fairness and impartiality were thrown out the window when it came to a poor African country. I hate to say it, but the story and how it was reported was tinged with racist overtones.

I'm not jumping to conclusions. What was this story REALLY about?

A white organisation, the OPM, does a survey in an African country. It compiles its data and hands over the results to its black African commissioning partner, the NISR.

The African organisation takes a look at the document it receives and thinks to itself, "hold on a minute. This doesn't seem right".

It gets its experts to reevaluate the data and comes up with a result. A result not only trusted by the citizenry (because they actually live the results) but by major development partners.

In reaction to such brazen uppity-ness, a white media organization working hand in hand with a white academic moves to tarnish the work on the black African organisation. And after this organization, the entire government.

It is disgusting and it is obvious. But I've gotten used to it so it's unsurprising.

The writer is a journalist

- The New Times, 05.11.2015 (<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2015-11-05/194120/>)

We have no doubt in Rwanda's poverty figures – says IMF chief

By Kenneth Agutamba

THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund (IMF) does not doubt statistics contained in the fourth Rwanda Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey (ECVA) report, which indicated that Rwanda's poverty levels reduced by 5.8 per cent in the last three years.

This comes after French news media, France24, published a controversial story quoting, of all sources, a Belgian professor of law and politics Filip Reyntjens and several other anonymous voices, that Rwanda manipulated its recent poverty figures.

Reacting to the article that has come under heavy criticism for its lack of accuracy, fairness and objectivity,

Laure Redifer, a senior IMF official, said: "I have seen with my own eyes the transformation in Rwanda over the years, which really confirms what the figures on poverty are saying."

Redifer was speaking at a joint media briefing with government officials, in Kigali, yesterday. The briefing, which was attended by Finance and Economic Planning minister Claver Gatete and central bank governor John Rwangombwa, among other senior officials, was primarily aimed at announcing findings and recommendations of the IMF delegation, after the review.

"We have no reason to doubt the numbers. At least from my personal experience in Rwanda, what the numbers say can easily be confirmed on ground," Redifer said.

Redifer has been heading a delegation of senior IMF officials in the country since the last week of October and met with various government officials for the fourth review of the country's economic and financial programme.

The programme is monitored under the IMF's Policy Support Instrument (PSI) which is designed for countries that 'do not need balance of payments financial support, but guides governments on how to design effective economic programmes.'

Such programmes, once approved by the IMF's Executive Board, act as signals to donors, multilateral development banks, and markets, of the Fund's endorsement of a country's economic policies.

Reliable statistics

France24, in an article published on Monday, claimed that Rwandan authorities manipulated the latest official statistics on poverty to make it look like it was going down, while much of the source data suggested it was actually on the increase. But Redifer rebutted the article and the claims of the sources, saying instead that the IMF is impressed by the quality and reliability of Rwandan statistics.

Minister Gatete also dismissed the allegations and lashed out at the French media for quoting Professor Reyntjens who he said, "cannot be regarded as an expert on Rwanda let alone on matters of poverty economics."

"The model used by our National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) to calculate these numbers is published on its website for all to see, to ensure transparency and international professional standards," said Gatete, adding that there was no room for politics in the numbers.

In a press statement issued on Tuesday, NISR director-general Yusuf Murangwa also dismissed the claims that Rwanda conveniently changed the definition of poverty to suit its purposes, as "fundamentally wrong."

"There was no change to the definition of poverty in Rwanda [as alleged by the article]. It has remained fixed at 2,500 calories since the first EICV in 2000. That baseline is high in comparative perspective," Murangwa said in the statement.

According to the article, Rwanda allegedly manipulated its latest update on poverty to make it look like levels dropped by 5.8 yet it allegedly increased by 6 per cent; but this claim has been received by widespread scorn and condemnation, in and out of Rwanda.

Stronger growth in 2015

Meanwhile, in a joint government and IMF statement issued yesterday, Minister Gatete announced that Rwanda's economic performance in 2015 will be stronger than previously anticipated by both parties.

The minister noted that growth in the first half of the year averaged 7.3 percent with construction and services performing particularly strongly while agriculture and manufacturing also grew roughly in line with the projections.

"Therefore, projected GDP growth for 2015 has been revised upward from 6.5 to 7.0 per cent," Gatete announced, yesterday.

Consumer price inflation is also expected to remain lower than 5 per cent for the remainder of the year in spite of the higher food and utility prices recorded in the month of September.

Regarding Rwanda's performance under the IMF's policy support instrument, Redifer said her team was impressed and explained that the government's policies, as of end of June this year, were consistent with expectations.

"Significant progress was made on structural reforms especially on tax policy and administration," she said.

Doubtful 2016

Although 2015 prospects are turning out to be better than earlier anticipated, the IMF delegation said 2016 looks doubtful on account of external risks in the global economy which is likely to negatively affect Rwanda's own growth prospects.

Redifer explained that in light of lower global commodity prices and weaker growth prospects in the country's main export markets which have already affected mining activities, the performance of Rwanda's exports in the near term is expected to drop substantially.

"This will put pressure on the balance of payments and the mission (IMF) expects economic growth in 2016 to moderate to between 6 and 6.5 percent, lower than 7 per cent previously projected," Redifer announced.

IMF officials encouraged government to take steps to tighten economic policies in response to the external risks by, among others, ensuring exchange rate flexibility-a monetary system that allows the exchange rate to be determined by supply and demand.

The IMF delegation was also briefed about the government's forward-looking structural reforms aimed at strengthening the efficiency of Rwanda's public spending, investment, tax compliance and broadening of the country's tax base.

Asked whether the weaker 2016 growth prospects won't have a negative impact on the mobilisation of domestic revenues, Rwanda Revenue Authority Commissioner General Richard Tusabe said the negative impact, if any, will be manageable.

"Yes, weaker growth may have a negative impact on our domestic tax collection but we intend to compensate that by boosting compliance levels on the side of tax payers as well as improving efficiency on our own side," said Tusabe.

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- The New Times, 05.11.2015 (<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2015-11-05/194126/>)

Media Houses must endeavour to maintain high ethical standards

FRENCH international news organisation, France24, this week, published a story alleging that Rwanda's poverty statistics were manipulated. Given that the Rwandan government has been picking a lot of good scores in poverty eradication strategies and efforts with definite results, the article attracted a lot of attention from various actors.

The Government of Rwanda and the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda that carries research and published the report are, of course, put on the spot when such allegations come up. And so are development partners who finance some of the programmes that have lifted Rwandans out of poverty.

Before publishing a story of such magnitude, the ethical thing France24 journalists should have done was to verify the allegations.

There are credible sources in and out of Rwanda who have independently carried out research with regards to poverty in the country who France24 could have consulted prior to running the story. Accuracy, fairness and objectivity are standards of ethics that any reputable news organisation should strive for. Needless to say, France24 is aware of these ethical standards required of the profession and, flouting it so blatantly, whether by omission or commission, committed a grave violation of these standards.

The fact that the main source quoted in the story is not objective when it comes to Rwanda makes one question the motivation behind publishing the story.

Whereas Western media organisations have the tendency to treat Africa with disdain in their coverage—seeking to paint a milieu of thorns even where roses are sprouting—it would be important that they recognise the essence of feedback, crosscheck further and clarify.

This is why, a few months ago, when US President was visiting Kenya, CNN referred to the East African country as a hot bed of terror. The media house went on to apologise for their sloppy statement and pulled down the report.

To err is human and that is the same for media organisations, but it is through correcting errors that credibility is maintained.



- The New Times, 05.11.2015 (<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2015-11-05/194119/>)

Rwandan-Canadian joint venture to boost energy supply

By Athan Tashobya

LOCAL energy firm East African Power has entered into a joint venture with its Canadian counterpart Afritech Energy to set up hydropower plants in Rubavu and Rutsiro districts.

The venture will see four hydropower plants constructed in Bihongora, Karambo II, Gatare-Sebeya and Muregeya.

Bihongora Hydropower project is located on Bihongora River in Kanama Sector, while Karambo II Hydropower Project is on Karambo River in Rubavu District.

Gatare-Sebeya Hydropower Project will channel water from both the Gatare and the Sebeya Rivers and will combine these flows into one powerhouse at their convergence.

The project is located in Kanombe Sector, Rutsiro District, in the Western Province.

Muregeya Cascades Hydropower Project will include four separate hydropower plants along the Muregeya River in Mushubati and Mukura Sectors in Rutsiro District.

Bihongora (5.3MW) and Karambo II (0.7MW) will both begin by mid-2016, according to officials, while Gatare-Sebeya (1.3MW) and the first of the Muregeya Cascades (4.2MW) projects will begin later in 2016.

Announcing the project dubbed, "Empowering Villages," in Kigali on Tuesday, Dan Munkittrick, the chairperson of East African Power, said it is estimated to cost \$40 million (about Rwf 29 billion).

East African Power made an initial commitment of \$500,000 (about Rwf367 million) to the hydropower projects expected to produce 11megawatts upon completion.

"We invest in villages because we want them empowered economically. Rwanda has a vision for change, a vision that is aimed at transforming the lives of citizens. This is our opportunity, too, and it's not for just making financial profits but to transform lives," Munkittrick said.

"Our model beneficiaries are children, rural women and to improve the social impact. We are here because

we know that increase in power generation will enable development in the community. That's why we call it empowering villages."

Rwanda seeks to generate 563 megawatts by 2017 up from the current 160 megawatts installed capacity.

Afritech Energy chief executive Bonaventure Gapitene said the investment comes as a result of government's initiative to extend incentives in the energy sector and other sectors that are critical to making the country a private sector-led economy by 2020.

"We are partnering with the government to achieve the set targets in energy sector. The partnership involves two passionate companies that wish to be part of this country's development, given that the government has also made it easy for the investor to do business here," he said.

According to Gapitene, negotiations are ongoing and construction works should take at least 18 months.

The executive chair of Afritech Energy, Dan Klinck, reiterated that electricity would entice entrepreneurship upcountry and eventually see more microbusinesses grow.

"Those businesses will generate jobs, incomes, and skills and improve livelihood. Beyond energy generation, we envision libraries, schools and laboratories through energy generation and distribution. Energy connectivity empowers all," said Klinck.

Afritech Energy is a Canadian-Rwandan joint energy development venture that provides a range of engineering, procurement and construction services across the energy sector.

Jean Bosco Mugiraneza, the chief executive of Rwanda Energy Group (REG), told *The New Times*, yesterday, that the utility is in negotiation with Afritech Energy and for a power purchase agreement for the first two Bihongora and Karambo II projects.

"This initiative is a testimony of the government's drive to encourage private sector in energy development. There is goodwill from stakeholders," said Mugiraneza.

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- The New Times, 05.11.2015 (<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2015-11-05/194118/>)

Rwanda, CAR air service deal to boost trade

By Peterson Tumwebaze

TRADE AND TOURISM between Rwanda and the Central Africa Republic (CAR) could increase, thanks to the Bilateral Air Service Agreement (BASA) signed between the two countries yesterday.

The agreement means the national carrier, RwandAir, can fly to the CAR without any limitation (granted the fifth freedom).

It also allows the two countries to establish and strengthen bilateral co-operation in the air transport industry while facilitating the ease of doing business between Rwanda and CAR, Alexis Nzahabwanimana, the state minister for transport, said.

“The agreement provides us a business opportunity to strengthen our commercial aviation and make it more profitable for our people to trade and share experiences without any limitations,” Nzahabwanimana said during the signing ceremony in Kigali.

The deal also provides opportunities for both countries’ airlines to grow in a more liberalised global environment, the minister added.

The main objective of the agreement, according to Arnaud Djoubaye Abazene, the minister for transport and civil aviation in Central Africa Republic, is to provide a framework that encourages competition and the development of new and expanded international air services between the two countries.

This will help boost tourism and strengthen bilateral relationships between the two countries, he added.

“By enabling our airlines to market themselves in a manner that is unhampered, we will be able to fast-track economic growth and help facilitate both countries’ international trade

objectives,” Djoubaye Abazene, said.

The agreement stipulates that both parties must recognise air transportation is a direct contributor to a dynamic economy and is a leading trade and tourism facilitator.

And that market forces should determine the price, quality, frequency and range of air services options and not bilateral restrictions.

According to the deal, both countries national carriers must have the opportunity to compete in international markets on a reasonably level playing field.

Jean Paul Nyirubutama, the RwandAir acting chief executive, said the agreement presents a huge opportunity for the national carrier to start operating Kigali- Bangui route.

“We are currently studying the market and obviously considering flying to Bangui as part of our expansion strategy very soon,” Nyirubutama said.

He added that liberalising the airspace between the two countries will translate into increased air service levels between two states consequently reducing flight charges.

Recently, the Northern Corridor member states (Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya and South Sudan) agreed to liberalise their airspace, allowing local airlines the fifth freedom.

The initiative is expected to significantly improve the regional aviation sector with airlines like Kenya Airways and RwandAir operating under the fifth freedom arrangement.

Last year, Rwanda and Equatorial Guinea signed a general cooperation agreement in different areas, including air transport to facilitate trade.

The country is also yet to sign open sky policy agreements with Malawi and Tanzania.

- The New Times, 06.11.2015 (<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2015-11-06/194154/>)

We fulfilled 94% of UN rights watchdog proposals, says govt

By Collins Mwai

RWANDA has so far implemented 63 of 67 recommendations made by the Human Rights Council Working Group of the United Nations.

Rwanda on Wednesday participated in the ongoing universal periodic review on human rights that is currently underway in Geneva, Switzerland.

In 2011, Rwanda accepted to implement 67 Human Rights Council universal periodic review recommendations relating to human rights practices in the country.

The Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the world as well as addressing instances of human rights violations.

Johnstone Busingye, the minister for justice, presented Rwanda's progress in the implementation of the recommendations and in establishing fundamental human rights and freedoms.

Busingye said the government was committed to ensuring that Rwandans enjoy the dignity and respect they are entitled to.

The remaining four recommendations were in the implementation process, the minister added.

Espousing same ideal

He said promotion of rights and freedoms was enshrined in the national Vision 2020 and second Economic Development Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRSII) making it top priority for the government.

"Our story today, as in 2011, is one of promise and defiant hope. We will continue to comply with local and international commitments and obligations in spite of

the odds bequeathed to us by our history generally and the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in particular," Busingye, who is also the Attorney-General, said.

He added that Rwandans had chosen not to forget the Genocide as it acts as a reminder of where the country has come from and never go back there.

"As our President says, we cannot turn the clock back nor can we undo the harm caused, but we have the power to determine the future so that what happened never happens again," he said.

Busingye added that the present dispensation was based on a political culture that values diversity and consensus building where Rwandans are at the centre of the planning processes and are active participants in the implementation of programmes that impact their lives.

"We now have a system of laws and institutions that guarantees justice for all and gives Rwandans the confidence their unhindered potential," he said.

By investing heavily in social economic development, the minister noted, the government was encouraging a mindset shift away from the passive attitude of the report to one of self sufficiency, innovation and an entrepreneurial spirit.

The efforts have had an impact as Rwanda had achieved all the Millennium Development Goals but one.

In relation to economic rights, Rwanda has moved from times when the gross domestic product (GDP) growth was -7.4 when government revenues could only sustain less than 20 per cent of the National Budget and most Rwandans lived in poverty.

The transformation

However, over the past few years, GDP

growth has risen to about 7 per cent and government revenue sustains 66 per cent of the national budget with poverty reduced substantially.

Prior to the appearance before the UN Human Rights Working Group, the minister tabled a national report on the periodic review that outlined progress in the recommendations.

Among the work put in by the government, was the establishment of institutions such as National Commission for Human Rights, Office of the Ombudsman, National Commission for Children, the Gender Monitoring Office, National Commission for the fight against Genocide and Rwanda Governance Board, among others.

Among the mechanisms put in place to safeguard the rights was to safeguard the independence of the judiciary by ensuring financial and administrative autonomy as well as independence in the management of judges, including their appointment, promotion, removal and discipline by the High Council of the Judiciary.

The report further notes that in the implementation of the recommendations, there had been reforms to ensure that even inmates under correctional services were guaranteed rights.

"Several reforms in the prison system have been carried out in line with the UN standards of Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners so as to guarantee the fundamental rights of persons in detention. New prisons such as Rubavu, Nyanza and Nyagatare were constructed as well as Mageragere which is still under construction," the report reads in part.

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Innenpolitik

- The New Times, 03.11.2015 (<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2015-11-03/194055/>)

Legislators want organic laws translated into Swahili

By Rodrigue Rwirahira

LEGISLATORS have proposed that organic laws be translated into Swahili, the most widely spoken language in East African Community.

Explaining the proposals, Speaker Donatille Mukabalisa said Article 8 of the revised Constitution provides that a law may add or remove an official language to suit a certain reason.

"While working on the law, and in an effort to make it flexible, we realised that it might be in our interest to add a Swahili translation to our organic laws for integration purposes now that we are in the EAC," she said.

Kiswahili will be a subject in the new skills-centred education curricula due for rollout in January.

However, according to Blaise Rwigamba, a practicing lawyer, translating the law into Swahili might be a bit tricky if the language is not one of the official languages of the country.

"There will be a need to have the language (Swahili) first recognised as one of the official medium of communication in the country's supreme law before such a drastic change can be effected," he said.

Of late, MPs had made their concerns known about delays in the drafting of legislation due to issues of language that they believe sometimes fail to contextualise realities on the ground.

MPs have suggested that they need to liaise with experts in linguistic in order to make the laws they enact easily un-

derstandable, a move that, according to lawyers, will help them in supporting their clients.

General changes

Meanwhile, lawyers have hailed the proposed constitutional amendments that were passed by the Lower Chamber of Parliament, saying the timely changes will make the Constitution more accommodative and compatible with other laws.

Other than the proposed changes in the presidential term limit, the other amendments, if passed by referendum, will see members of the Senate, the Chief Justice and Deputy Chief Justice serve a five-year term, renewable only once.

The change would come into effect after they serve their current terms that end in 2018.

However, according to the proposed amendments, senators who are former heads of state will not be subject to term limits.

Cecile Karakure, a lawyer, said the proposed changes are timely and encouraged reform in the way the Supreme Court handled cases, saying that the court is inundated with cases.

"There is also a need to reduce the amount of work done by the Supreme Court. We would have to decide which competent institution would handle the authentic interpretation of the supreme law," Karakure said.

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- The New Times, 03.11.2015 (<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2015-11-03/194046/>)

Minister Gasinzigwa urges women to exploit full potential

Eddie Nsabimana

WOMEN SHOULD take advantage of the prevailing friendly policies to contribute more towards the country's development.

Oda Gasinzigwa, the Minister for Gender and Family Promotion made the remarks on Friday, while addressing the 14th General Assembly of the National Women Council held in Kigali.

Gasinzigwa hailed the role of Rwandan women in the country's development but urged them to exploit their full potential.

"We can now commend ourselves for the progress and great role played in our country's development but there is still much we can do with the favourable policies which many of our previous generations missed," she said.

She called on women to look to the future with

renewed focus, determination and act as role models in society.

The assembly reviewed previous achievements and discussed activities set out in next year's agenda.

Over 84,000 women have joined small co-operatives and 740 women street vendors have been allocated permanent stalls in various market places in Kigali to continue their businesses, according to a report presented to the meeting.

"It is obvious women have opened up their mind to business and we are ready to help them. Once the problem of women street vendors is solved we shall be happy. It is among our priorities," Beatrice Mukasine, the Chairperson of the National Women Council (NCC) told The New Times.

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- The New Times, 04.11.2015 (<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2015-11-04/194081/>)

Senators push for upcoming polls to be held simultaneously

By Rodrigue Rwirahira

THE SENATE is discussing the possibility of holding upcoming elections simultaneously to save money as the government presented a new electoral Bill.

The revised Bill, tabled by the Ministry of Local Government through National Electoral Commission, seeks to regulate the referendum on constitutional amendments, next year's local government election, 2017 presidential election and the 2018 parliamentary election in all chambers.

However, members of the senatorial Standing Committee for Social Affairs, Human Rights and Petitions that is scrutinising the Bill, on Monday, asked the government to explain modalities of carrying out simultaneous elections to save time and money.

According to Senator Jean Damascene Ntawukuriryayo, should the government decide to merge all upcoming elections, more money and time would be saved and channelled into other areas such as development programmes.

"We will have mayors and local leaders elections, which will lead to presidential elections before embarking on the legislature. Is there a way this can be done in a single event?" Ntawukuriryayo asked.

Down to Constitution

According to Local Government minister Francis Kaboneka, it would depend on the outcome of the Constitution, currently being revised by Parliament ahead of a referendum.

"At this juncture, it is a bit difficult since terms of such leaders are not harmonised, unless it is addressed by the ongoing debates on constitutional

amendments, otherwise we will stick to the normal routine and observe the electoral law in place," he said.

Although Rwanda has matured in conducting fair and transparent elections, Kaboneka said conducting elections in a single round would make polls easier and cost effective.

The current revised Constitution, which has just been adopted by the Lower House, if passed in its status, would see both the President of the Republic and senators hold offices for a period of five years renewable once.

Members of the Lower House currently are elected for a five-year term which might be prolonged for five more years. The current term of service ends mid-2018.

The local leaders polls are conducted by an electoral college, composed of councils' representatives, and are indirect as opposed to legislative and presidential elections which are directly conducted.

According to the draft versions of the same electoral code, in its Article 15, to start indirect elections, the electoral college should at least reach a half of its members.

"If the half is not reached, elections will be postponed for the period not exceeding five days," reads part of the modified law.

The law that has been in place since 2010 was amended to comply with the current political realities at the same time easing the election registration process.

Once in place, it will see voters now register, update their details on the voters' register or conducting electoral campaigns using available Information Technology Systems.

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- The New Times, 05.11.2015 (<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2015-11-05/194123/>)

Researchers urged to utilise indigenous knowledge

By Théogène Nsengimana

RESEARCHERS in the country have been urged to draw on indigenous knowledge in specific disaster response mechanisms.

Dr Christine Gasingirwa, the director-general of science, research and innovation at the Ministry of Education, made the remarks while speaking at a national conference on disaster risk reduction in Kigali on Monday.

The conference brought together researchers, scientists and members of civil society organisations.

The conference capped the Disaster Reduction Week that has been running since October 27 to raise community awareness on disaster prevention.

The week was marked under the theme, "promoting local and indigenous knowledge for resilience."

Gasingirwa said there are several cases to illustrate how indigenous knowledge can be useful in disaster management response.

"Research should draw into African indigenous knowledge to solve specific issues. For instance, in this country people can tell you that when clouds form from a certain direction it does not rain in their area. If you check you will

realise that those people are right even if they do not know the reason. This indigenous knowledge should provide entry points for researchers to come up with empirical reasons for such facts," Gasingirwa challenged researchers.

"In case of injuries, our ancestors used some herbs for curing. Why don't we start with these herbs to make new products? We need to have deep analysis on such practices and knowledge and scale them up?" she wondered.

Seraphine Mukantabana, the Minister for Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs (MIDIMAR), said indigenous knowledge is essential for early prevention of disasters.

She said, "disasters occurred even before the contemporary technologies we use to forecast them. However, despite the absence of those sophisticated tools, our ancestors had different ways to forecast. Those practices and knowledge could not be upheld and complemented with the current technologies for better prevention."

Mukantabana said a pilot study on essential indigenous knowledge and practices is being undertaken in Rubavu and Rutsiro districts, with 44 bearers whose

documented knowledge would be spread in the community.

Dr Jean Ngamije, the rector of the Independent Institute of Lay Adventists of Kigali (INILAK), said the community should reject the wrong perception of associating indigenous knowledge to witchcraft.

He said, "indigenous knowledge and practices have been essential in local weather forecasting and other practices but people take it as a kind of witchcraft. There is a need for more campaigns to change the mindset so that people can value such knowledge and practices."

Some of the measures undertaken by the ministry to respond to disasters include a research being conducted on deploying high capacity lightning rods to protect households and setting up a team with rescue materials such as temporary shelters in areas most prone to disasters, according to the ministry.

Since January this year, disasters caused deaths of 68 people and destroyed 1,147 houses, 652 hectares of crops, killed 32 animals, while 48 bridges were damaged. The cost of the damage was estimated at over Rwf4bn, according to the ministry.

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- The New Times, 05.11.2015 (<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2015-11-05/194122/>)

‘Never Again Rwanda in drive to heal Genocide wounds through dialogue

By Eugene Kwibuka

A LOCAL PEACE-BUILDING and human rights organisation, Never Again Rwanda (NAR), is set to address healing needs of Rwandans and enable them participate in governance of their communities.

Through a four-year programme that the organisation launched on Tuesday, members of selected communities from eighteen districts in the country will be facilitated to discuss their wounds related to their experience in the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, and work to overcome them.

The programme, titled 'Societal Healing and Participatory Governance for Peace in Rwanda (SHPG)', is funded by the Embassy of Sweden in Rwanda and is being implemented by Never Again Rwanda with support from Interpeace, NAR's partner organisation in peace building activities.

"The programme seeks to contribute to the consolidation of a peaceful and inclusive Rwandan society, heal the wounds of the past and to peacefully manage conflicts and diversity, as well as empower them to influence programmes and policies responsive to citizen priorities," NAR said in a release about the initiative.

The Societal Healing aspect of the programme seeks to en-

able Rwandans to overcome the wounds of the past and to peacefully manage conflicts and diversity through participant-driven dialogue groups for people aged 15-35 (Youth Peace Dialogues), as well as for adults (Spaces for Peace for adults).

The Participatory Governance aspect of the programme also uses participant-driven dialogue groups, called Citizen Forums, to empower Rwandans to influence policy and programmes responsive to citizen priorities and to minimise the space between citizens and the decision-makers who represent them.

Prof. Naasson Munyandamutsa, the Country Director of Never Again Rwanda, said at the launch of the programme that it will respond to the biggest and continuing challenge of managing Rwanda's post-Genocide society.

Though the programme launched yesterday will not cover the whole country, Munyandamutsa said that its implementation will serve as an example of some of the efforts that people can make in helping others to overcome wounds related to the Genocide.

"We want to show that healing is a need, a very important need, and we want to show that it links to different phenomenon in the society – notably peace and stability," he said.

A recent study that NAR conducted as part of the SHPG programme has revealed that there is a need for more initiatives to address psychological wounds that resulted from the 1994 Genocide against Tutsi.

The wounds also derive from consequences of the Genocide as well as discriminatory government policies and structural violence in Rwanda prior to 1994, the study said.

Munyandamutsa, who is a seasoned psychiatrist, says that because genocide is a crime that affects the society as a whole, it is very important for Rwandan society to examine how it will continue to fulfil its social responsibility to tend to its invisible wounds.

"All societies that have emerged from extreme violence have no choice but to find adequate strategies to tend to both the visible and invisible wounds caused by atrocities," he said.

Based in Kigali, NAR is a peace-building and human rights organisation that was founded in response to the 1994 Genocide against Tutsi.

The organisation works to build a nation where citizens are agents of positive change and work together towards sustainable peace and development.

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- The New Times, 06.11.2015 (<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2015-11-06/194155/>)

By Eugene Kwibuka

SENATORS have unanimously approved the relevance of a draft law proposing amendments to the current Constitution of the country, a step that marks the start of the Senate's own assessment of the proposed amendments.

The approval of the constitutional bill's relevance, which is the first step in the process to assess any law in Parliament, was reached yesterday during the senators' plenary session.

Deputy Speaker of Parliament in charge of administration, Abbas Mukama, presented the draft law on constitutional amendments because it is the Chamber of Deputies that has drafted the changes on the request of millions of Rwandans.

While expressing their support for the relevance of the bill, most senators indicated that the proposed draft is in line with people's wishes that include enabling President Paul Kagame to continue steering Rwanda beyond 2017.

"I support this proposal because it responds to people's will of changing article 101 of the Constitution and it has also reduced the Head of State's

Senate scrutinises Bill on constitutional reforms

term to five years renewable once, which is similar to terms in other East African Community (EAC) countries," said Senator Evariste Bizimana.

Senator Marie Claire Mukasine concurred, saying she supported the proposal because "it has considered the wishes of Rwandans."

More than 3.8 million Rwandans petitioned Parliament to review the Constitution to allow President Kagame to stand again in 2017 when his term expires.

Following countrywide consultations on the issue by Members of Parliament, the House's Chamber of Deputies has made amendments to the Constitution that have to be endorsed by senators to be passed.

In response to people's requests, lawmakers in the Lower House of Parliament have unanimously voted to reduce presidential term limits from seven to five years renewable once.

But the change will be preceded by one transitional presidential term of seven years for

which any presidential candidates, including President Paul Kagame, should he choose to run, will be eligible.

"The proposal responds to people's wishes in a sustainable way," said Senator Chrysologue Karangwa.

A number of other changes were also made in the Constitution, ranging from vetting process of the Senate, senators' term in office, and modalities at which a former president vies for a senatorial position, among others.

Following yesterday's approval of the relevance of the Constitutional amendments by the Senate, the bill will be discussed further in the Senate's standing committee on political affairs and good governance.

After the committee's deeper examination of the bill, it will be referred back to the Senate's plenary session for passing by all the senators before it is sent back to the Chamber of Deputies to integrate senators' wishes in the bill.

Wirtschaft

- The New Times, 03.11.2015 (<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2015-11-03/194042/>)

Livestock farmers in Eastern Province decry long drought

By Stephen Rwembeho

ALL DISTRICTS in Eastern Province, except Rwamagana and Ngoma, face possible shortage of food and animal feeds due to the ongoing drought spell.

In separate interviews, last week, district mayors expressed concern that some livestock farmers in the province were taking their cattle to the neighbouring districts in search of pasture.

John Mugabo, the Kayonza District mayor, said, with the drought in vast parts of the region, there was possibility of hunger among local communities.

"One more month without rain and most villages will be doomed. The sectors of Gahini, Mwiri and Murundi are the worst hit, yet they have the biggest population of cattle in our district. Crops are drying up...Several households could soon face food shortages," he said.

Nyagatare mayor Fred Sabiti Atuhe also said the district was experiencing its worst drought in years with little pasture and water for livestock.

He said the drought had virtually depleted vegetation and dried up most water dams, causing fears among farmers who are now left with little feeds and water for their animals.

"A part from the northern sectors of the district, in other sectors there hasn't been a single drop of rain for the last five months," he said.

Peter Buhigiro, a farmer in Buhabwa in Kayonza District, said more than 20,000 heads of cattle were at risk.

"The prices of cattle have gone down. The animals are too weak to be transported to areas where they offer good prices like Kigali. Some farmers sell their cows for Rwf100,000 each, down from Rwf200,000. It is catastrophic," he said.

Dr Justin Zimurinda, the representative of Rwanda Animal Resources Development Authority in Nyagatare, acknowledged that drought was affecting farmers.

"The losses are obvious and dependence on rain is our undoing as usual," he said.

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Bildung

- The New Times, 02.11.2015 (<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2015-11-02/194034/>)

New resource centre to support disabled children

By Emmanuel Ntirenganya

A NEW RESOURCE centre has been opened at Munège Primary School in Kibeho Sector, Nyaruguru District, to support children with disabilities at the community level.

The centre, which opened last week, will help increase equitable access to education for children with special needs within mainstream schools.

It will provide information to teachers, parents, caregivers, health practitioners and National Council for People with Disabilities representatives on how to improve teaching, care, support and attitudes towards children with special needs.

The centre is one component of a special education programme "L3 Plus," under the US Agency for International Development's Literacy, Language, and Learning (L3) Initiative, implemented by Education Development Centre (EDC).

Félicité Mukagahima, a teacher at Munège Primary School, said she has a child with a yet-to-be diagnosed mental disability who is struggling with learning.

"The child is in Primary Six but cannot write an entire word unless someone guides him by spelling the characters making up the word, nor can he make some mathematical calculations on his own," she said.

Mukagahima said there is need

for special classes for students with disabilities because a teacher cannot offer particular learning support to a child with disabilities in a class of, say, 50 students.

"There is need for a particular teacher or school designed to cater for the education of special needs children," she said.

Antoine Niyitegeka, L3 Plus project manager, said there will be a skilled worker in charge of helping building capacities of special needs education teachers and providing a database about those children.

He said the project will help change the mentality of people toward children with disabilities.

"We plan to reach all families having children with disabilities in the area of our operations," Niyitegeka said, adding that they will be working with volunteers and other partners.

Nyamagabe vice mayor for economic development, Fabien Niyitegeka, said the centre will help change perception about children with disabilities.

The centre will serve as a source of information about children with disabilities for Kibeho, Rusenge and Mata sectors.

It will also provide educators with training and ongoing access to resources and teaching strategies aligned with the L3 programme.

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Gesundheit

- The New Times, 06.11.2015 (<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2015-11-06/194159/>)

More research on local Hepatitis medicine needed– Minisante

By Théogène Nsengimana

MORE RESEARCH needs to be done on the ability of traditional medicine to cure Hepatitis B and C.

Dr Amiable Ndituyumuremyi, the official in charge of prevention of liver diseases at Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC), said this while addressing a national conference of traditional healers.

"Up to now research has shown that traditional medicines can heal various diseases, but in our country there has been no research conducted on the ability of traditional medicine to treat Hepatitis B and C," he said.

"We cannot therefore, confirm whether our traditional healers have come up with ways to treat the disease. Anything that relates to peoples' lives should base on empirical facts. However, this can be

an entry point for further research."

Currently, figures from the World Health Organisation show that Hepatitis B kills between 500,000 and 700,000 persons each year while Hepatitis C kills over 350,000 persons every year.

Some local traditional healers have claimed that they have cured the two killer diseases.

Joachim Nsengimana, a traditional healer in Ruhango District, claimed he had successfully treated over ten cases of liver disease, mainly Hepatitis B and cirrhosis.

He said, "I have until now treated several cases of hepatitis and cirrhosis. I only treat those who have been diagnosed from health facilities. After treating them, I also request them to go back to the hospital to check the progress of the disease. Over ten of my patients have been found cured."

Daniel Gafaranga, the presi-

dent of AGA Rwanda Network (the traditional healers body in Rwanda) said traditional healers should work with health centres and hospitals to ensure their clients have been diagnosed properly.

"We have neither the means nor knowledge to scientifically diagnose those diseases. We then have to work closely with health facilities to ensure we know that the patient is Hepatitis positive. If not we can give them medicines that can harm their lives instead of curing them," Gafaranga said.

Meanwhile, Florence Umubano, in charge of traditional healers at the Ministry of Health, said the ministry planned to work with the Huye-based research body, Institut des Recherches Scientifiques et Technologiques (IRST), to see how feasible testing the traditional medicine would be.

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