

**SPEECH OF THE GUEST OF HONOUR, HON. ANASTASE
MUREKEZI, MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND LABOUR
AT THE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT INTERNATIONAL
WORKSHOP – KIGALI, NOVOTEL, 29 MAY, 2009**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests from Foreign Countries,
Project Officials from the World Bank and IDRC,
Representatives of Rwanda Development Partners
Government Officials,
Academicians,
Members of the Civil Society,
Ladies and Gentlemen;

It gives me great pleasure to officiate this august International Workshop on Peace and Development here in Kigali Rwanda. Let me use this opportunity to welcome our Foreign Guests to our beautiful Country and to this workshop. I hope you will have time to interact and exchange ideas with your Rwanda counterparts and have a look at the safe and clean Kigali City and Rwanda Countryside.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank McGill University in Canada and the Sponsors, “IDRC and the World Bank”, to have accepted to hold this important workshop in our Country with the good partnership of Rwanda Governance Advisory Council and the National University of Rwanda (NUR). This does not only please Rwanda; it also gives courage and hope to continue looking for durable solution to peace building in our Country and beyond. We look forward to sharing our experience with our friends from Bosnia, Colombia, Lebanon, Mozambique, Sri Lanka and Sudan.

The focus of the project is peace and development. It is my belief and that of the Government of Rwanda that there is no sustainable development without durable peace. We in Rwanda have put exactly that in practice. The Tutsi Genocide of 1994 demonstrated that lack of peace and governance is very costly to development of any Country. The costs were human, economic, political and social that are most of the often not quantifiable. This is the reason why I am confident with the theme you have chosen for this workshop. “**Democratization, Poverty reduction and Risk mitigation in**

Fragile and Post conflict States” is very close to what we in Rwanda have attempted to do in the last 15 years of first of emergence , reconstruction and now development.

The conflict in Rwanda that culminated in genocide was caused mainly by a colonial legacy built on divisionism-ethnism, and then fuelled by bad governance in post independence decades. From the post conflict period, Rwanda has been observing democratic principles as well as policies to reduce poverty and to improve welfare of our people without any kind of discrimination. Rule of law, good governance and ruling simply justly, are foundations of a lasting peace. But peace can be easily eroded if there is no improvement in citizen’s welfare. Building self-confidence and commitment to development for all is the best way of mitigating risk. This is what we are doing in Rwanda.

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You will be aware that the genocide is the most abominable experience a country can undergo. In only 100 days, close to 10% of our population perished, one in three was displaced; infrastructure and the social fabric destroyed. The economy dropped by a half and levels of vulnerability and poverty reached unmentionable proportions. In 1995 more than 77% of Rwandans were classified as pors. Child headed households, Female headed households and Thousands in prison in connection with the genocide. All this left Rwanda, Country of ‘a thousand hills’ in connection to its beauty, with a thousand challenges’ in relation to the conflict.

The first thing that Countries may need to learn from Rwanda is hope. From the high poverty line and conflict destructions, Rwanda set on to rehabilitate its economy with national determination and international aid support. Rwandans were repatriated and settled, the economy was refurbished and souls mended. In 15 years Rwanda has virtually caught up with the pre-genocide levels; and is one of the promising Countries in Sub- Saharan Region.

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This should not suggest a miracle. Another lesson that may be drawn from Rwanda is that of focus and vision. Since 1995, Rwanda has undertaken several policy reforms and institutions building deliberately to address the post conflict shocks, to ensure genocide will not happen again; and to build a sound foundation for a safer future.

You will have time in this workshop to learn more and get details about these. What I would like to point out is that it is not safe, as the concept of the workshop posits, to assume that every good deed mutually reinforces another. Rwanda has defined its priorities in Vision 2020 inspired by His Excellency the President Paul Kagame. We have to use our resources and support aid to meet competing needs through mainly Poverty Reduction Strategy and programs.

But there is no panacea for post conflict development path; and to Rwanda there is still a long way to fulfill our vision. We hope this international gathering provide more inputs from experiences and research findings elsewhere in the world to make our common efforts yield results faster and surely.

Indeed, one of the important qualities of this workshop, and the Peace and Development Project more generally, is that it offers a forum for Southern Countries to learn from each other's experiences in a structured and comparative fashion. Sadly, Countries around the world continue to suffer unacceptably high levels of conflict whereas at the same time a number of Countries have made varying levels of good progress toward a lasting peace.

The seven cases to be explored here today —Bosnia, Colombia, Lebanon, Mozambique, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Rwanda— represent a range of successes in dealing with the challenges of civil strife. Moreover, each case study is being written by teams of researchers from those Countries. Even though the precise decisions making process in each Country may differ, as do the national priorities and policies associated with them, the experiences of individual Countries can offer important new insights that will help other Countries to deal with similar challenges.

Equally important, the project has helped start a dialogue among researchers in Southern Countries that offers the promise of creating Southern perspective that can influence Northern Countries perspective.

Part of the dialogue that this project has begun is deliberately intended to allow Southern based research to challenge, in a constructive way, the predominant ways in which Northern Countries view the challenges of peace and development.

Ultimately, the project seeks to use the research that it will generate to improve foreign aid policies as well as to inform the policies of national Governments as they attempt to tackle the challenge of achieving peace and development. In this way, it seeks to contribute to more successful efforts at conflict resolution, peacebuilding and development.

Finally, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank the IDRC and the World Bank once again and all those who have made this workshop possible. I would like to wish the best to all of you and good deliberations in this workshop.

People build durable peace for sustainable development if they live together, they recognize their diversity, they clearly work and participate actively for common interests with fair access to public services, to education and health services. Actually, people build durable peace for sustainable development if they share everything, especially the democratic power; and if they benefit from the good fruits of labour productivity translated into economic growth for all.

With humility and dedication, I officially declare this workshop open.

Thank you and God bless all of you.
