

# **REPUBLIC OF RWANDA**



## **Ministry of Public Service and Labour**

### **Closing Remarks by Hon. RWANYINDO KAYIRANGWA Fanfan, Minister of Public Service and Labour, at the Official Closing of the National Symposium on Mental Health in the Workplace**

**Milles Collines Hotel, 10.10.2017**

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- **Director General of RBC;**
- **Distinguished Development Partners;**
- **Human Resource Managers;**
- **Distinguished Delegates;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

**1. Good Afternoon.**

**2. It is my great honor and pleasure to preside over the closing session of the National Symposium on Mental Health in the Workplace, marking the World Mental Health Day under the Theme of “Mental Health in the Workplace”.**

**3. I would like to thank the Ministry of Health and Rwanda Biomedical Center and Distinguished Partners for excellent preparation of this Day.**

**4. Allow me also to thank each and everyone here present for your participation and contribution.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

- 5. As you have noted, according to the World Mental Health Day Report 2017, one in five people in the workplace experience a mental health condition, and around 80% of individuals with serious mental illnesses are unemployed while 70% want to work.**
- 6. We also must note that some workers who have mental problems may seek to hide them, fearing discrimination.**
- 7. Therefore, our workplace policies must be positive about cases of mental health and assure a worker with mental health that he/she can be assisted and receive medical assistance, without fear of losing a job.**
- 8. This calls for managing our human resources with a human face.**
- 9. Already in our laws, where it becomes necessary, an employee may be off for some time that is sufficient for him/her to recover from an illness which may be related, among others, to mental health.**

**10. We already have in place a legal and policy framework on health and safety at the workplace.**

**11. The National Policy on Occupational Safety and Health is one of the many guiding tools in this regard.**

**12. Our commitment to promoting sports for workers also aims at contributing to good mental health for workers.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**13. You also have noted that the Government has invested considerable efforts in building a robust national mental health system.**

**14. All these efforts are supporting building healthy workplaces which are pillars for high productivity, sustainable national development and economic growth.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

- 15. There is big loss in workplace productivity when workers experience problems that affect negatively their mental health.**
- 16. Some workplace accidents and diseases may be due to mental health related conditions. The consequences may be serious including death, illness and incapacity.**
- 17. All these challenges are a call and reminder to all of us that we have to join our efforts towards addressing them.**
- 18. There is no doubt that this National Symposium has offered all of us a unique opportunity to devise together mechanisms aimed at addressing existing challenges on Workplace Safety and Health in general and Mental Health in the workplace, in particular.**
- 19. This is well confirmed by the recommendations that you have made on how to improve mental health in the workplace in Rwanda.**

**20. This Symposium has helped share experiences, good practices, lessons, and information on benefits and opportunities of Promoting Occupational Safety and Health generally and mental health specifically.**

**21. In line with the outcomes of this Symposium, I want to urge you to:**

- Pay specific attention to the aspects of mental health in the workplace;**
- Handle manifestations of mental health problems with diligence and great care;**
- Promote human resource management practices that can help prevent problems related to mental health in the workplace.**

**Distinguished Delegates;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

**22. With our joint high commitment to promoting Occupational Safety and Health, we will continuously rethink our policies, laws and regulations to ensure that they respond to the existing and arising challenges in occupational health and safety, including the aspects of mental health.**

**Distinguished Delegates;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

**23. As I conclude, I want to emphasize on the paramount role of all us keeping working together, ensuring close and effective follow up of the recommendations made during this Symposium.**

**24. Let us maintain this created momentum and build on the groundwork we have done here.**

**25. I thank you once again for your participation.**

**26. With these few remarks, I declare this National Symposium on “Mental Health in the workplace”, officially closed.**

- 27. Thank You, Everyone.**
- 28. Safe journey back to your work places.**
- 29. God Bless You All.**