

Rwanda – 2023 Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report Main Messages

Vision 2050 aims at high quality of life for Rwandans and becoming a developed country by 2050 which reflects the ambitions of the SDGs, adding to domestication efforts made through the National Strategy for Transformation (2017 – 2024) and related sector strategies.

The preparation process brought together various stakeholders including: government, private sector, civil society and development partners. Discussions centred on progress, challenges, lessons learned and mechanisms for recovery from the Covid19 effects with focus on below SDGs. The process was enhanced by data from the 5th Population and Housing Census (2022¹).

1. Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6): Access to water from improved sources at national level is at 82%. Progress was made countrywide more especially in rural areas from 22.6% (2005) to 76.7% compared to urban areas from 55.4% to 95.7%. Access to sanitation is at 72.2% with rural access higher at 78.5% compared to urban at 56.4%. This reflects investments made in the sector over the last decade to improve on hygiene, health and nutrition.

2. Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7): The proportion of households with access to electricity increased from 21.5% in 2014 to 61% (47% on-grid and 14% off-grid). The gains in access to electricity are attributed to: off-grid subsidy to poor households, rapid expansion of the grid and private sector engagement. The use of firewood for cooking remains high at 76% hampered by relatively high cost of cleaner alternatives.

3. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9):

Industrial development is promoted with a strong focus on ‘*Made in Rwanda*’ policy that has enabled strong participation of the private sector in unlocking new industries during the covid19 outbreak (e.g. hygiene products, health & pharmaceutical products, etc.), for example, a first ever vaccine manufacturing plant is being constructed in Rwanda.

Innovation is facilitated by roll out of internet across the country with 62.86% of households using internet. A number of initiatives are being undertaken to enhance innovation start-ups including setting up of: innovation hubs across the country, innovation fund and *Kigali Innovation City* designed to create an ecosystem that supports a thriving tech and innovation industry.

A network of trade infrastructure has been developed across the country including: scaling up of airline (RwandAir) capacity and destinations, setting up modern logistics platforms, cross border markets, one stop border points, development of regional, national and feeder roads, among others.

4. Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11): The Population living in urban areas increased from 18.4% in 2016/17 to 27.90% and Rwanda is one of the most rapidly urbanizing countries in the world. This emphasizes the need to provide climate resilient urban services such as: transport and housing. The *National Land Use Master Plan* revised in 2020 provides a long term roadmap aligned to the Vision 2050 for the development of a hierarchy of sustainable cities, towns and urban areas.

¹ Reference period for all data unless indicated otherwise are 2022

5. Partnerships to achieve the Goal (SDG 17). Rwanda actively participates in South-South Cooperation through the *Rwanda Cooperation Initiative* an agency set up to coordinate the sharing of experiences between Rwanda and other countries. Other initiatives include Rwanda Green Fund, enhancing PPPs and domestic resource mobilization.

Leaving no one behind: The constitution provides for the participation of all groups in the governance structures of the country. The social protection policy revised in 2020 emphasizes: social security, social assistance, livelihood and employment support aimed at protection, promotion, prevention and transformation of citizens. In this regard, government supported households affected by Covid19 and disasters.

Building Back Better: Covid19 affected SDGs implementation by: reprioritization of resources, slowing implementation, increasing vulnerability and reducing mobilization of resources. To accelerate recovery, a *Recovery Plan* and *Economic Recovery Fund* were established. Vaccination of the population was also accelerated.

Key lessons learned:

1. Although the pandemic brought setbacks to SDG implementation, recovery is underway due to swift and concrete policy measures coupled with good leadership.
2. The pandemic highlighted the need for a stronger and resilient local economy to minimize exposure to external shocks.
3. More efforts are needed to mobilize resources to support the private sector and achieve the SDGs at national and global level.