



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
12 November 2025

Original: English

---

**Human Rights Council**  
**Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review**  
**Fifty-first session**  
Geneva, 19–30 January 2026

## **National report submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21\***

### **Rwanda**

---

\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



## Acronyms

CBHI	Community-Based Health Insurance
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRC	Citizen Report Card
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DMIS	Disability Management Information System
DPs	Development Partners
ERF	Economic Recovery Fund
EUDR	European Union Delegation to Rwanda
FDA	Food and Drug Agency
GMIS	Gender Management Information System
GMO	Gender Monitoring Office
GoR	Government of Rwanda
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ICT	Information and communications technology
IDP	Integrated Development Programme (Model Villages)
ILPD	Institute of Legal Practice and Development
LAF	Legal Aid Forum
LAIS	Land Administration Information System
LATIS	Land Administration Tracking Information System
MAJ	Maison d'Accès à la Justice (Justice bureaux)
MIFOTRA	Ministry of Public Service and Labour
MINALOC	Ministry of Local Government
MINECOFIN	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MINIJUST	Ministry of Justice and Office of the Attorney General
MINUBUMWE	Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement
MOE	Ministry of Environment
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOYA	Ministry of Youth and Arts
NAR	Never Again Rwanda
NCHR	National Commission for Human Rights
NCPD	National Council for Persons with Disabilities
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NLA	National Land Authority

NMIRF	National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up
NSDI	National Spatial Data Infrastructure
NST1	National Strategy for Transformation
NST2	National Strategy for Transformation 2
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
RBC	Rwanda Biomedical Center
RBJ	Rwanda Bridges to Justice
RCS	Rwanda Correctional Services
RGB	Rwanda Governance Board
RHA	Rwanda Housing Authority
RIB	Rwanda Investigation Bureau
RNP	Rwanda National Police
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
VUP	Vision Umurenge Program
WASAC	Water and Sanitation Corporation

## **I. Introduction**

1. Rwanda welcomes its fourth Universal Periodic Review (UPR) as part of its continued commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights. Since the last review, the Government of Rwanda (GoR) has sustained efforts to ensure that all citizens enjoy the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution and relevant international instruments.
2. Rwanda's development agenda integrates human rights principles across all sectors. Guided by the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1, 2017–2024) and the newly adopted NST2 (2024–2029), as well as Vision 2035 and Vision 2050, Rwanda has aligned its national priorities with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## **II. Methodology and consultation process**

3. Rwanda's fourth UPR report is based on extensive national consultations conducted since the third review in January 2021.
4. Following that review, Rwanda accepted 160 recommendations. The Ministry of Justice (MINIJUST), through a cross-institutional task force, developed an implementation roadmap finalized in March 2022 and disseminated to all responsible institutions.
5. The drafting process followed an open and inclusive approach, led by MINIJUST through the National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up (NMIRF), with contributions from government institutions, the National Commission for Human Rights, Parliament, Judiciary, Media, CSOs, the private sector, development partners, and UN agencies. The report was subsequently validated technically and nationally before submission for Cabinet approval.
6. This report complements Rwanda's periodic human rights reports since 2021 and focuses on key developments achieved following the third review.

## **III. Improvement of the normative and institutional framework for the protection of human rights**

### **A. Acceptance of international human rights norms**

7. Rwanda remains a State Party to eight core UN human rights treaties and continues to uphold its obligations under all ratified conventions and optional protocols.
8. Since the last review, Rwanda has submitted reports under CEDAW, ICCPR, and CERD, and at the regional level under the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. In 2023, it also presented its Voluntary National Review on the SDGs.

### **B. Legal framework for the protection and promotion of human rights**

9. Between 2021 and 2025, Rwanda advanced key policy and legal reforms to strengthen human rights protection. Peaceful and inclusive general elections were held on 15 July 2024 for the Presidency and Chamber of Deputies, with 98.2% voter turnout. The Senate renewed its mandate, and the Judiciary appointed a woman as Chief Justice – the second in Rwanda's modern history.
10. To enhance transparency, accountability, and access to justice, the Government launched the [www.amategeko.gov.rw](http://www.amategeko.gov.rw) portal on 25 November 2022, centralizing national laws, regulations, and legal instruments, including translations of ratified international treaties into Rwanda's three official languages.<sup>1</sup>
11. The 2023 constitutional revision retained all fundamental rights, reaffirmed the right to defy unlawful orders, and aligned presidential and parliamentary elections to improve

governance efficiency and reduce costs – further consolidating Rwanda’s framework for protecting and realizing human rights.

12. The World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2024 ranked Rwanda 1st among 34 Sub-Saharan African countries for the third consecutive year, with a score of 0.63 – leading in order and security (0.85), absence of corruption (0.68), and civil justice (0.66), and ranking second in criminal justice (0.56). The Chandler Good Government Index 2024 also placed Rwanda 2nd in Africa, affirming that effective institutions and disciplined governance drive national progress.

### **C. Institutional framework**

13. The Government of Rwanda continues to strengthen institutions to promote and protect human rights, improve service delivery, and enhance coordination and accountability. The National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) has received increased technical and financial support. The Gender Monitoring Office (GMO) and the National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) have expanded outreach and partnerships to address gender-based violence, promote disability inclusion, and advance socio-economic rights. In 2021, the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement (MINUBUMWE) was established.

14. Since 2021, Rwanda has strengthened its institutional framework by upgrading the Rwanda Forensic Laboratory to an Institute, establishing an Appeal Tribunal for refugees and asylum seekers, and creating the National Land Authority.

## **IV. Implementation of recommendations from the previous cycles**

### **A. Cross-cutting issues**

#### **International cooperation – Recommendations 134.1, 134.2**

15. The Government continues to submit periodic reports under its human rights treaties, demonstrating strong cooperation with the Human Rights Council and treaty bodies. In May 2025, Rwanda hosted the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights for his country visit. A permanent NMIRF is being established to further strengthen the coordination of reporting and implementation of recommendations.

#### **National human rights institutions and civil society organizations – Recommendations 134.4, 134.5, 134.64, 134.65**

16. To strengthen NCHR, the Government increased its annual budget by approximately 5% between the 2020/21 and 2021/22 fiscal years, and by 1.1% between 2022/23 and 2023/24.<sup>2</sup>

17. The Commission developed monitoring manuals and strengthened collaboration with the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture to improve oversight in places of deprivation of liberty.<sup>3</sup> In 2023, NCHR established a consultative forum with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), which contributed to the improvement of the UPR roadmap.

18. In June 2024, Law n° 058/2024 governing non-governmental organizations was adopted, replacing Laws n° 04/2012 and 05/2012. The Government considers this law a framework to enhance transparency, accountability, and operational efficiency of national and international NGOs, strengthening their contribution to sustainable development and human rights protection in Rwanda.

**Human rights education, national human rights action plan, national action plan to eradicate statelessness, and capacity building – Recommendations 134.10, 134.11, 134.12, 134.15, 134.18, 134.19, 134.30, 134.48, 134.160**

19. Rwanda promotes the rights of vulnerable groups through the National Older Persons Policy, the National Policy of Persons with Disabilities, and the National Strategy for Sustainable Graduation. Programmes such as the Vision Umurenge Programme (VUP) – comprising Safety Nets, Livelihood Development, and Sensitization and Community Mobilization – provide education, health, food, and shelter support. Other initiatives include the Integrated Development Programme (Model Villages) and Community-Based Health Insurance (CBHI), which covers about 93% of the population. The Health Sector Strategic Plan V (2024/25-2028/29) identifies CBHI as a key pillar of health financing.

20. The Ministry of Local Government coordinates support for older persons, persons with disabilities, low-income families, children, women, and youth through VUP, Girinka, skills development, productive assets, micro-loans, and CBHI, ensuring effective resource use.

21. The National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) continues to build capacity among justice and security actors. Between 2021 and 2024, it trained 1,402 Rwanda Correctional Service staff, 80 police officers, 125 justice-sector stakeholders, and 50 members of security organs on human rights, due process, and prevention of torture. In 2022-2023, NCHR monitored 14 correctional facilities and 100 RIB custodies, compared to 14 and 70 in 2021-2022 – an oversight activity conducted annually.

22. From 2021/22 to 2023/24, 22 training sessions reached 763 law-enforcement officials, judges, and lawyers. Since 2021, 9,328 vulnerable persons have received legal assistance – 1,309 through representation, 6,276 through legal advice, and 1,743 through mediation – while 7,452 GBV victims received legal aid through MAJ.

23. Over 100 awareness campaigns were held, including 90 provincial and district dialogues with local authorities, RIB, and RNP representatives, and sessions for employers, civil society, media, and youth councils on labour rights and child labour prevention.

24. Implementation of the National Action Plan to Eradicate Statelessness is ongoing. Of eight pledges made at the 2019 UNHCR High-Level Segment, five are fulfilled and three in progress, including granting nationality to stateless persons, assisting former Rwandan refugees with documentation, and contributing to the AU Draft Protocol on the Right to Nationality. The 2022 Population and Housing Census identified 550,000 persons without identification documents, up from 14,000 previously estimated. The Government, with local leaders, is issuing documents to eligible persons. Organic Law No. 002/2021.OL of 16 July 2021 governing Rwandan nationality allows stateless persons to acquire nationality, with UNHCR support being scaled up.

25. Institutional capacity has been strengthened through training, e-learning, and digital tools. The Rwanda TVET Board and Rwanda Polytechnics provide short courses, the Rwanda Management Institute operates six e-learning centres, and the Institute of Legal Practice and Development (ILPD) delivers continuing legal education for legal professionals and paralegals.

26. Rwanda has expanded digital governance, increasing Irembo services from 89 to 220 and acceding to the e-Apostille Convention to simplify document legalization. Citizen satisfaction with decentralized services rose from 76.2% in 2023 to 89.6% in 2024. Public servants submitted 16,191 asset declarations in 2021/22 and 17,687 in 2022/23. MIFOTRA integrated civil-service management into Imihigo performance contracts, supported by audits, while the Office of the Ombudsman trained 36,422 civil servants in 2021/22 and 45,496 in 2022/23 on anti-corruption. Labour audits increased from 3 institutions (2021/22) to 14 (2022/23).

27. Since 2021, Rwanda has enhanced accountability and transparency in public service delivery. In 2023, the Public Accounts Committee's mandate was expanded to include private entities receiving public funds. Anti-corruption committees operate in 287 institutions, and internal disciplinary committees enforce ethics under Presidential Order No. 21/2021. Recruitment transparency improved through MIFOTRA's online management system.

## B. Civil and political rights

**Freedoms – Recommendations 134.13, 134.49, 134.50, 134.51, 134.52, 134.53, 134.54, 134.55, 134.56, 134.57, 134.58, 134.59, 134.60, 134.61, 134.62, 134.63**

*Civil and political rights (Recommendations 134.13)*

28. To advance civil and political rights, the Government, in collaboration with stakeholders such as Rwanda Bridges to Justice, the Legal Aid Forum, and Coalition *Umwana ku Isonga*, conducted 42 awareness sessions. Together with the Association of Rwandan Journalists, they also organized 33 radio talk shows, 12 television programmes, and 4 public debates.

*Freedom of opinion, expression, assembly, association (Recommendations 134.49, 134.52, 134.53, 134.54, 134.55, 134.58, 134.59, 134.60, 134.63)*

29. The Constitution guarantees freedoms of opinion, expression, press, association, and peaceful assembly (Articles 38–40), with Article 43 providing general protection of rights. Since 2021, twenty-two awareness campaigns on Law No. 04/2013 on Access to Information and political-party regulations reached 3,040 people, while consultative dialogues engaged 840 participants and 15 radio and television programmes reached about 4 million viewers.

30. The Government expanded communication channels with authorities, including toll-free numbers, email, and suggestion boxes, and strengthened community platforms such as parents' forums and citizen assemblies. Growing access to ICT and social media has widened the public sphere and enhanced diversity of information.

31. Revision of Law No. 02/2013 of 08/02/2013 regulating the media is underway through consultations with journalists' associations, civil society organizations, and legal professionals to ensure alignment with human rights standards.

32. Rwanda has expanded internet access and affordability to promote free expression and media development. Presidential Order No. 020/01 of 26 January 2024 formalized accession to the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime (2001) and its Additional Protocol (2003) on combating racist and xenophobic acts online. Restrictions on expression are applied only in accordance with the law.

33. In December 2023, Law No. 059/2023 of 04/12/2023 amended Law No. 68/2018 of 30/08/2018, repealing Article 218 and thereby decriminalizing insults against foreign officials under Article 217. Ongoing revisions of the Media Law, Access to Information Law, and the national media policy aim to further strengthen freedom of expression and access to information.

34. The Rwanda Media Barometer 2024 recorded an overall score of 76.7%, with strongest performance in the legal and policy framework (90.0%) and media's role in governance and democracy (81.3%), and lowest in media development and professional capacity (60.7%). The report highlights citizen trust and a robust regulatory environment while noting challenges in profitability and working conditions.

35. Authorities hold open days and public hearings to engage citizens directly. The President conducts regular press conferences with local and international media, while official social-media platforms facilitate public interaction. Political organizations operate freely in line with the Constitution, allowing all citizens aged 18 and above to participate in national affairs.

36. Article 39 of the Constitution guarantees freedom of association without prior authorization. Rwanda, as a State Party to the ICCPR, upholds Article 22, which guarantees the right to form and join trade unions.

*Freedom of the press (Recommendations 134.50, 134.51, 134.56, 134.57, 134.61, 134.62)*

37. Revision of the Media Law, Access to Information Law, and the national media policy is underway to strengthen protections for journalists and ensure alignment with international standards. Since 2021, 992 journalists have received training, 25 radio and TV programmes

promoted journalists' rights, and 1,231 journalists and 528 human rights defenders participated in 30 sessions on preventing injustice and promoting self-advocacy, including 100 trained specifically on the right to information and freedom of expression.

38. During the reporting period, 39 public awareness campaigns on media freedom were organized by the Rwanda Media Commission, National Commission for Human Rights, Rwanda Governance Board, Legal Aid Forum, and the Association of Rwandan Journalists. These efforts, complemented by citizen engagement through radio and TV, online publication of official documents, reduced mobile data costs, and the development of a draft sign-language dictionary, have advanced media freedoms and fostered an inclusive, citizen-centred communication environment. Civil-society organizations continue to generate evidence-based recommendations that inform policymaking and promote participatory governance.

39. These efforts reflect Rwanda's commitment to upholding ICCPR Article 19 and SDG 16.10 on public access to information.

**Justice – Recommendations 134.6, 134.7, 134.8, 134.28, 134.29, 134.31, 134.32, 134.33, 134.34, 134.35, 134.36, 134.37, 134.38, 134.40, 134.41, 134.42, 134.43, 134.44, 134.39, 134.45, 134.46, 134.66, 134.67, 134.68, 134.69, 134.70, 134.71, 134.72**

*Prevention of genocide and promotion of unity and national reconciliation  
(Recommendations 134.6, 134.7, 134.8)*

40. On 14 July 2021, the Cabinet established the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement (MINUBUMWE) to consolidate the mandates of the former National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, the National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide, the Genocide Survivors Support Fund, and the National Itorero Commission. MINUBUMWE preserves the memory of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, promotes unity and reconciliation, combats genocide ideology and denial, and strengthens civic education. Through Itorero programmes, 128,282 citizens have been trained to instill cultural and patriotic values.

41. Rwanda implements the National Policy of Unity and Reconciliation (2020) to foster equal rights, social cohesion, and inclusiveness while combating divisionism and genocide ideology. The policy also promotes patriotism, peace, and traditional Rwandan values that reinforce unity and collective well-being.

42. To support evidence-based policymaking, MINUBUMWE is developing the Rwanda National Unity Barometer, building on the 2010 and 2020 editions. The survey updates indicators on trust, fairness, inclusiveness, and social cohesion to guide future strategies and monitor implementation of the National Policy of Unity and Reconciliation.

43. Rwanda continues to use the Kwibuka website ([www.kwibuka.rw](http://www.kwibuka.rw)) as a central platform for remembrance of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. The site honors victims, preserves memory, educates the public, and promotes unity and reconciliation, while social media campaigns extend its reach globally.

44. The MINUBUMWE website serves as a civic education tool, providing free access to materials on Rwanda's history, unity, reconciliation, and patriotism. Annual district talks educate youth to combat genocide ideology, while commemoration activities during the 100 days of remembrance and the international conference on genocide prevention foster awareness and knowledge exchange.

45. In 2023, UNESCO's World Heritage Committee inscribed four genocide memorial sites – Nyamata, Murambi, Biseseo, and Kigali – on the World Heritage List. This milestone affirms their universal value, enhances historical preservation, and strengthens global recognition of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

*Access to justice (Recommendations 134.41, 134.42, 134.43, 134.44)*

46. Rwanda strengthened access to justice with the National Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Policy and the Criminal Justice Policy, approved by Cabinet on 8 September 2022. The policies institutionalize mediation, conciliation, plea bargaining, and

arbitration, and mandate pre-filing mediation for civil and administrative disputes to promote amicable and efficient resolution.

47. On 28 August 2024, Rwanda inaugurated an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Centre in Kigali for civil, commercial, labour, and administrative cases. In 2023/24, the Centre resolved over 12,000 cases, saving Rwf 7.5 billion and reducing court backlogs. Capacity-building workshops in 2024–2025 trained legal advisors and other stakeholders, further institutionalizing ADR. In 2024/25, 3,166 cases were resolved through mediation (saving Rwf 7.8 billion) and 11,846 criminal cases concluded via plea bargaining.

48. To expand access to affordable justice, nationwide awareness initiatives, including mobile legal aid clinics, reached 147,829 people in rural and vulnerable communities. Legal education and outreach through these clinics benefited 2,174,279 people. Key stakeholders including the Rwanda Bar Association and civil society organizations continue to provide pro-bono legal services to indigent persons.

49. To strengthen accountability, the Office of the Ombudsman trained 10 investigators and conducted anti-injustice campaigns in 25 districts between 2021 and 2023, reaching 150,887 people. Public awareness included 23 pre-recorded radio programmes, 10 community dramas, 7 television shows, 5 radio adverts, 5 TV adverts, 12 live ADR talk shows, and 20 online news articles. School campaigns reached 34,379 students in 62 schools (2021–2022) and 42,263 students in 73 schools (2022–2023), with messaging also displayed on billboards at national borders and airports.

*Independence of the judiciary (Recommendations 134.39, 134.40, 134.45)*

50. In line with Article 151 of the Constitution affirming judicial independence, the Judiciary adopted its Strategic Plan (2024–2029) to enhance efficiency, case management, digitalization, training, and staff retention. The strategy allocates over Rwf 141 billion to reduce the case backlog from 59% in 2023/24 to 30% by 2029, shorten case waiting times, and improve working conditions.

51. In August 2022, Transparency International Rwanda and the Legal Aid Forum, in collaboration with justice institutions, conducted a study on alternatives to imprisonment – bail, mediation, community service, and plea bargaining – to reduce prison congestion and strengthen access to justice. Findings showed that pre-trial detainees constituted 18% of the prison population as of May 2022 and underscored underuse of such alternatives. Implementation of the Alternative Dispute Resolution and Criminal Justice Policies and the issuance of Practice Directions No. 001/2025 (03/05/2025) on plea bargaining and No. 002/2025 (03/09/2025) on victim-offender mediation demonstrate progress in addressing these challenges.

52. Rwanda’s performance in global and national rankings reflects these reforms. The World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2024 ranked Rwanda 40th of 142 countries globally and 1st in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Chandler Good Government Index 2025 placed Rwanda 2nd in Africa for overall governance and 29th globally for judicial independence. Domestically, the Rwanda Governance Scorecard reported overall judicial performance between 77.9% and 79.5% (2021–2024), with court-independence scores consistently high at 94.3%–96%, confirming strong institutional autonomy and credibility.

*Human trafficking (Recommendations 134.66, 134.67, 134.68, 134.69, 134.70, 134.71, 134.72)*

53. Since 2021, Rwanda has strengthened its response to human trafficking through legislative and operational reforms. A National Counter Trafficking Policy, its implementation strategy, and a standardized training and awareness manual are pending formal adoption. Prime Minister’s Order No. 019 of 29 August 2021 authorizes the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to cover repatriation costs for victims identified abroad, while Ministerial Order No. 013/MOJ/AG/21 provides a framework for domestic support services. Victim assistance is delivered through Isange One Stop Centres, integrating medical, psychosocial, legal, and shelter support, and coordinated among MIGEPROF, MINIJUST, RIB, and health institutions.

54. The Anti-Human Trafficking and People Smuggling Unit of RIB, established under Law No. 51/2018 of 13/08/2018, continues to investigate and prosecute trafficking offences. In early 2024, nationwide awareness campaigns reached over 50,000 people in border districts, while law-enforcement officials received specialized training, including at the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Gaborone. From 14–16 May 2025, MINIJUST trained 31 participants from MAJ, Isange One Stop Centres, RIB, NPPA, and DGIE to strengthen inter-agency capacity in victim identification, investigation, and referral.

*Detention (Recommendations 134.31, 134.32, 134.33, 134.34, 134.35, 134.36, 134.37, 134.38, 134.46)*

55. To strengthen legal safeguards for detainees and prevent ill-treatment, arbitrary detention, and torture, Rwanda adopted Law No. 058/2023 of 04/12/2023 amending Law No. 027/2019 on Criminal Procedure; Law No. 059/2023 of 04/12/2023 amending Law No. 68/2018 determining offences and penalties in general; and Law No. 062/2024 of 20/06/2024 governing evidence. A Ministerial Order regulating judicial police custody facilities is under review. These reforms reinforce procedural guarantees and safeguards against abuse. Training on the Istanbul Protocol was provided to police officers, investigators, prosecutors, civil society organizations, and NCHR staff to strengthen capacity in detecting and preventing torture.

56. In 2025, the first Halfway Social Reintegration Centre began operations in Rwamagana District with an initial capacity of 250 female inmates nearing release. Planned to host 2,500 inmates (500 men and 2,000 women) in three phases, it offers vocational workshops, health services, and family visitation areas, supporting reintegration through one-month training cycles. To date, 961 inmates have benefited from MINUBUMWE training programmes conducted in partnership with RCS.

57. Between 2021 and 2024, 9,387 inmates were released on parole, and 434 received presidential pardon. Implementation of the Criminal Justice and Alternative Dispute Resolution Policies (2022) enabled 22,999 cases to be resolved through plea bargaining and 6,837 through court-annexed mediation by June 2025, improving efficiency, access to justice, and easing overcrowding in correctional facilities.

58. RCS developed and validated a rehabilitation and reintegration curriculum with eight modules and eight Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes. In line with the UN Nelson Mandela Rules, Law No. 022/2022 of 29/09/2022 governing correctional services guarantees detainees' rights to food, healthcare, communication, and legal recourse. RCS has strengthened its staffing with legal officers, social workers, and medical personnel to uphold these rights.

59. These measures align with Rwanda's obligations under CAT and SDG 16.3 on access to justice.

*Enforced disappearance and national preventive mechanism (Recommendation 134.28, 134.29)*

60. To investigate cases of missing persons, a dedicated desk has been established within the Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB) specifically tasked with receiving and promptly investigating such claims.

61. As the National Preventive Mechanism, NCHR conducts unannounced visits to all places of detention, issues recommendations, receives complaints, follows up on implementation, and submits policy advice to Parliament, aiming to prevent torture and ill-treatment.

62. On 16–17 January 2025, NCHR and EUDR trained 74 senior Justice Sector officers at ILPD Nyanza – including District Police Commanders, Chief Investigators, and Correctional Facility Directors, on safeguarding suspects, detainees, and witness's rights, emphasizing humane treatment, due process, and prohibition of cruel interrogation.

## C. Economic, social and cultural rights

### Access to work (Recommendation 134.14)

63. Between 2021 and 2024, Rwanda created 936,633 new jobs, including 146,189 in 2021, 196,548 in 2022, 235,332 in 2023, and 358,564 in 2024. To support employment, specialized training courses and the Skills Development Fund trained 4,027 and 23,296 people, respectively, with a focus on youth.

### Access to land (Recommendation 134.16)

64. In June 2021, Law No. 27/2021 of 10/06/2021 replaced Law No. 43/2013 of 16/06/2013 governing land. The law recognizes land as a common heritage, guarantees equal rights to rural and urban land, grants citizens freehold rights, and allows foreigners access primarily through emphyteutic leases for investment. Landholders may fully use and develop their land, while natural resources remain state-owned. Land use is guided by the National Land Use and Development Master Plan and District plans, ensuring sustainable and organized management.

65. The reform reinforces gender equality, environmental sustainability, and decentralized land dispute resolution. To improve access to land services, including in rural areas, the law authorizes private providers to deliver services such as land surveying, notary services, and land valuation. Implementation included restructuring land management through Presidential Order No. 030/01 of 6 May 2022, establishing the National Land Authority (NLA) to oversee land-use planning, cadastral registration, boundary dispute resolution, and land-related conflicts. Ministerial Orders No. 004/MOE/22 and No. 005/22 further strengthen decentralized dispute resolution and regulate land-use changes.

66. Digital tools have been introduced to enhance accessible and transparent land services, including the Land Administration Information System (LAIS), the Land Administration Tracking Information System (LATIS), and the Rwanda Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI, geodata.rw). According to the Rwanda Land Management and Use Authority, 59.9% of married couples jointly own land, while 24.6% of women and 14.3% of men report individual ownership. Among farmers, 75.4% of women and 77% of men have the right to sell land or use it as collateral.<sup>4</sup>

### Right to health, food, water and sanitation – Recommendations 134.77, 134. 84, 134.86, 134.87, 134.88, 134.89, 134.91, 134.92, 134.93, 134.94

*Maternal health, antenatal care, health workers, healthcare, integrated networks of health services (Recommendations 134. 84, 134.86, 134.87, 134.88, 134.89, 134.91, 134.92, 134.93)*

67. The Stunting Prevention and Reduction Project launched in 2022 with World Bank support reduced chronic malnutrition among children under five to 33.1% by the end of NST1 and HSSP4 (2023–2024), down from 38%, achieving 25.8% of the national target. In February 2023, Rwanda received an African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA) award for progress in malaria control and maternal and child health. Since the March 2020 COVID-19 outbreak, 133,172 cases and 1,468 deaths were recorded by early 2023.

68. In 2023, Law No. 012/2023 of 13/03/2023 regulating the use of human organs, tissues, and cells expanded access to specialized services, including organ transplants previously provided abroad. The Law No. 026/2025 of 17/09/2025 regulating healthcare services strengthens patients' rights and mental-health care. A Workplace Wellness Programme launched during the 2023 World Occupational Safety and Health Day promotes employee health and NCD prevention.

69. Rwanda signed a Host Agreement with the African Union on 10 June 2023 for the African Medicines Agency (AMA) and maintained its polio-free status through national vaccination campaigns. The 4×4 Health Workforce Reform (2023) aims to quadruple healthcare professionals in four years, aligned with the National Strategy for Health

Professionals Development (2020–2030). The Kigali Referral Mental Health Centre, opened in September 2023, expands specialized mental-health services.

70. In October 2023, Rwanda hosted a high-level forum marking the opening of the BioNTech Africa Manufacturing Facility to advance local vaccine production. By FY 2023/24, 27 of 54 hospitals achieved Level II accreditation. The Rwanda Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) reached WHO Maturity Level 3 in December 2024 – one of only eight in Africa – affirming its strong regulatory capacity. Rwanda successfully contained the Marburg Virus Disease outbreak by end 2024 in line with WHO guidance.

71. In 2025, Rwanda hosted the Pan-African Surgical Conference (PASC 2025) and launched the Accelerated Plan for the Elimination of Cervical Cancer 2024–2027 (Mission 2027) and Health Sector Strategic Plan V (HSSP V). The Health Intelligence Center (HIC), launched in April 2025, consolidates real-time national health data to guide evidence-based decision-making and policy formulation. These efforts advance Rwanda’s obligations under ICESCR Article 12 and contribute to the attainment of SDG 3 on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all.

*Right to food, water and sanitation (Recommendations 134.77, 134.94)*

72. Rwanda has made sustained progress in ensuring access to food, safe drinking water, and adequate sanitation. The right to food improved during the reporting period, with food security increasing to 83% in 2024, up from 79% in 2017. Households in single-dwelling units with access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation are estimated at 88.8%. In 2024, 89.7% of households had access to an improved source of drinking water, while 94% used improved sanitation facilities. Among these, 72% of all households used sanitation facilities that were not shared with other households.<sup>5</sup>

73. By the 2022/2023 fiscal year, 72.5% of nursery schools (2,938), 69.0% of primary schools (2,714), 86.7% of secondary schools (1,714), and 75.7% of TVET schools (356) had access to safe drinking water. In total, the number of schools with safe water increased to 3,238 nursery schools, 3,147 primary schools, 1,705 secondary schools, and 422 TVET institutions. In addition, awareness sessions on the use of safe water are regularly conducted at the school level.

**Climate change, labor, poverty and social development – Recommendations 134.24, 134.25, 134.26, 134.73, 134.74, 134.75, 134.78, 134.79, 134.81, 134.82, 134.83, 134.141**

*Climate change (Recommendations 134.25, 134.26)*

74. Rwanda integrates climate adaptation and mitigation into its legal frameworks, including Ministerial Order No. 005/2021 of 08/04/2021 on national climate reporting and the Water Use Permitting Guidelines 2021, which guide sustainable water and dam management and catchment-level oversight.

75. At COP28 in December 2023, Rwanda launched its national carbon market framework under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement and introduced the Rwanda Green Taxonomy to define sustainable investment criteria and prevent greenwashing. Its implementation roadmap, including digital tools, was launched in 2025.

76. Climate change education has been integrated into school curricula to build awareness and resilience among young people. The implementation of the Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy (2023) continues to advance Rwanda’s vision of a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy by 2050 through measures such as climate-smart agriculture, flood-resilient infrastructure, erosion control, afforestation, and landscape restoration. The Rwanda Meteorology Agency has been further strengthened to enhance forecasting accuracy and early-warning systems. Rwanda also continues to implement its nationwide tree-planting initiatives and to promote electric mobility through the increasing adoption of electric vehicles and motorcycles as part of the country’s broader transition toward sustainable transport.

77. Through its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), Rwanda promotes drought-resistant crops, irrigation expansion, mechanization, rainwater harvesting, and crop/livestock

insurance. Micro-Catchment Action Planning (500–800 ha units) and solar-powered irrigation systems enhance community resilience. Achievements include 28,266 ha of land restored, 1,593 rainwater harvesting systems installed, and 23,360 fruit trees planted.

78. The National Program for Soil Erosion Control (NAPROSEC) protects water resources and farmland. Agronomists from 24 sectors in Rutsiro and Rubavu were trained on digital erosion-control tools. Over the past decade, the Rwanda Green Fund mobilized USD 247 million, supported 46 projects, created 176,000 green jobs, and enabled 120,000 people to adapt to climate change.

*Vulnerable people included in development process (Recommendation 134.24)*

79. In November 2022, Rwanda adopted the National Strategy for Sustainable Graduation out of Poverty. In 2023/24, over 315,327 poor households received tailored livelihood support through a multi-sectoral approach. Community priorities are integrated into planning and budgeting, with monthly engagements by local authorities ensuring participation of all citizens, including vulnerable and special groups.

*Poverty reduction (Recommendations 134.73, 134.74, 134.78, 134.79, 134.81, 134.82, 134.83, 134.141)*

80. Rwanda reduced the national poverty rate from 39.8% in 2017 to 27.4% in 2024, lifting about 1.5 million people out of poverty – an average of 214,000 annually. Extreme poverty fell from 11.3% to 5.4% during the same period. Poverty declined from 18.8% to 12.7% in urban areas and from 44.0% to 31.6% in rural areas, reflecting nationwide improvement in livelihoods.<sup>6</sup>

81. In partnership with development partners and the private sector, the Government expanded youth employment through training, entrepreneurship, and skills development. In 2023/24, 11,056 youths received specialized training and 23,296 benefited from the Skills Development Fund. The Workplace Learning Programme links education to labour needs, while Integrated Craft Production Centres in all districts improve youth access to markets. Guided by the National Skills Development and Employment Promotion Strategy (2019–2024), SMEs are supported and TVET schools increased from 470 (2022/23) to 542 (2023/24), targeting at least one per sector.

82. Social protection is central to poverty eradication. Classic Public Works (CPW) created 407 projects (2021–2022) and 428 (2022–2023) across 350 sectors, while Expanded Public Works (EPW) supported 100,136 and 94,555 extremely poor households, respectively. The National Graduation Strategy targets 315,327 households for sustainable exit from poverty within two years.

83. The National Decentralization Policy (2021) promotes equitable local development, fiscal autonomy, and job creation, while the 2022 National Strategy for Sustainable Graduation strengthens household resilience and reduces reliance on social protection.

84. Under the Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (VUP), 1,244,545 beneficiaries, including vulnerable households, pregnant and lactating women, caregivers at risk of malnutrition, and persons with disabilities, received direct support. The Disability Management Information System (DMIS) enhances data-driven planning.

85. Between 2017 and 2024, 14,547 vulnerable families received furnished houses, up from 3,048 in 2017, and 124 model villages were established.

86. In May 2025, Rwanda hosted the *UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights*, reaffirming openness to cooperation in strengthening social protection.

87. These initiatives reflect Rwanda's commitment to its obligations under the ICESCR, notably Articles 6, 9, and 11 – by advancing decent work, social protection, and an adequate standard of living through inclusive, accountable, and equitable development. These efforts have also been complemented by the contribution of defence and security institutions through community outreach programmes.

88. Defence and security institutions have complemented social protection and community development initiatives through nationwide citizens' outreach programmes.

These efforts provided free medical care to over 130,000 patients, constructed 101 houses and 25 early childhood development centres, built 26 bridges, and supplied clean water, solar power, and furniture to vulnerable families. They also organized anti-drug and youth empowerment campaigns, distributed livestock and reflector jackets, and supported local cooperatives, further advancing human security, social inclusion, and community resilience.

**Right to quality education – Recommendations 134.96, 134.97, 134.98, 134.99, 134.100, 134.101, 134.102, 134.103, 134.104, 134.105, 134.106, 134.107, 134.108**

*Infrastructure and budget (Recommendations 134.96, 134.106, 134.107)*

89. The Government has expanded infrastructure, budget, and human resources to ensure free, universal, quality, and inclusive education. Since 2021, 20,781 classrooms, 29,514 latrines, and 3,295 kitchens have been constructed, including facilities in 650 new schools to reduce overcrowding and long distances to school. School staff increased from 138,038 in FY 2022/23 to 142,031 in FY 2023/24. The education budget rose from Rwf 521.5 billion in FY 2021/22 to Rwf 725.3 billion in FY 2022/23 (39% increase), and to Rwf 832.6 billion in FY 2023/24 (15% increase). Schools offering pre-primary education increased from 4,051 in 2022/23 to 4,168 in 2023/24; primary schools from 3,932 to 4,041; general and professional secondary schools from 1,977 to 1,982; and TVET schools from 470 to 542 over the same period. The number of trained teachers in basic education and TVET increased from 71,185 in 2020/21 to 76,443 in 2022/23.

90. Rwanda has also advanced inclusive education. Staff trained in special needs and inclusive education increased from 16,412 in 2022/23 to 17,164 in 2023/24, while children benefiting grew from 40,342 to 42,476 over the same period. Special needs and inclusive education are integrated into Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs), and the University of Rwanda's College of Education has established a Special Needs and Inclusive Education school to ensure graduates are equipped to teach children with special education needs.

*School enrolment (Recommendation 134.97)*

91. The national gross school enrolment rate increased from 79.6% in 2022/23 to 92.1% in 2023/24, while the net enrolment rate rose from 53.3% to 59.6% over the same period.

*Capacity building (Recommendations 134.98, 134.99)*

92. A total of 2,545 secondary school teachers received English proficiency training in 2023. The 9- and 12-Year Basic Education (YBE) programmes have significantly increased secondary enrolment, from 288,036 students in 2008 to 912,035 in 2023/24. To reduce dropout rates, a ministerial instruction on harmonized school fees capped parental contributions at Rwf 19,500 per term for day secondary schools and Rwf 85,000 for boarding schools. Enrolment in teacher training colleges in 2023/24 was estimated at 3.8%.

93. NCPD, completed the production of a comprehensive Rwandan Sign Language Dictionary. Implementation of the Special Needs and Inclusive Education Policy (2019) continues to ensure equitable access to quality education for all children, including those with disabilities.

*Equal access and quality education (Recommendations 134.100, 134.101, 134.102, 134.103, 134.104, 134.105)*

94. Rwanda continues to promote equal access to education, particularly for girls. Female enrolment in general and professional boarding schools rose from 67,219 (54.5%) in 2020/21 to 91,518 (57.9%) in 2023/24, and in STEM subjects at upper secondary from 66,553 (46.2%) to 97,213 (48.6%). Schools with dedicated girls' rooms increased from 2,998 to 3,406 over the same period. These gains are supported by the *Re-Entry Policy* for pregnant girls and complementary measures such as school feeding, scholarships, mentorship, and gender-responsive pedagogy.

95. School fees were abolished for public day schools and reduced for boarding schools. By 2023/24, 8,184 trainers were recruited, and teacher development strengthened: 783 received technical training, 4,898 pedagogical training, 1,756 ICT training, and 3,997 TVET

teachers trained in Competency-Based Training and Assessment (CBT/CBA). Additionally, 23,036 teachers were trained in digital literacy. The construction of *TVET Wings* improved local access to vocational training, and partner-supported scholarships expanded opportunities for low-income students.

96. Human rights education has been integrated into the national curriculum. All 4,898 TVET trainers received instruction in human rights education, while human rights modules were incorporated into Kinyarwanda, English, French, Kiswahili, social studies, and religious education. A 2022 NCHR assessment confirmed systematic integration as both a cross-cutting theme and a stand-alone topic.

97. The school feeding programme now covers all students in public and government-aided schools, contributing to increased enrolment, from 3,614,004 in 2017 to 4,766,125 in 2024 (a 24.2% rise), and a reduced dropout rate from 9.4% (2020) to 4.7% (2024). Remedial programmes support learners at risk of falling behind. These initiatives reflect Rwanda's commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 4 and to fulfilling its obligations under ICESCR Article 13 on the right to education.

## D. Rights of specific persons or groups

### **Rights of children – Recommendations 134.20, 134.90, 134.142, 134.143, 134.145, 134.146, 134.147, 134.148, 134.149)**

#### *Child protection (Recommendations 134.42, 134.43, 134.145, 134.149)*

98. Through MIGEPROF, Rwanda continues to implement the Strategic Plan (2019–2024) for the Integrated Child Rights Policy, addressing identity and nationality, care, health, education, justice, and participation. The Tubarerere Mu Muryango (TMM) programme, operational since 2013, continues to transition children from institutions to family-based care in line with Law No. 71/2018 of 31 August 2018 on the Protection of the Child. Between 2021 and 2024, over 900 children were placed in families under TMM's II phase. The National Child Development Agency (NCDA), established by Presidential Order No. 083/01 of 28 August 2020, coordinates implementation through Child Protection Officers and 30,000 Inshuti z'Umuryango. The Ministerial Order No. 001/MIGEPROF/2023 of 12 January 2023 defines modalities for temporary foster placement and standards for social welfare institutions.

99. Awareness and training initiatives promote positive parenting and prevention of GBV through dialogues, clinics for teen mothers, campaigns, and community outreach via Inteko z'abaturage, Umuganda, markets, other public spaces and social media. Child protection messages are disseminated nationwide through radio, schools, and civic education.

100. Capacity-building emphasizes the best interests of the child. From 2021–2024, 24 training sessions on child rights benefited 820 officials from RIB, NPPA, RCS, RNP, RBA, NCDA, NCHR, the Judiciary, RLRC, NRS, and MAJ. In addition, 288 judges, prosecutors, and legal officers were trained in Justice for Children, and 75 district child-rights professionals, 90 ECD officers, and 19 security officers (RDF and RNP) completed child protection courses with the Dallaire Institute and Rwanda Peace Academy. The ILPD introduced a postgraduate diploma in Child Justice to strengthen professional capacity across justice and CSO personnel.

101. In partnership with UNICEF, NCDA launched the National Child Protection Case-Management Framework (2023) to enhance coordination across education, health, social welfare, and justice sectors. Complementary instruments include SOPs for Isange One Stop Centres, guidelines for reintegration of GBV victims, online safety guidelines, and national parenting guides aligned with the school curriculum.

102. The Rwanda Education Board integrated safeguarding and child protection into continuous professional development materials for teachers, with Unit Five focusing on inclusive education and peer coaching. Law No. 71/2018 criminalizes child abandonment and neglect, prescribing 3–7 years' imprisonment and life sentences where resulting in disability or death.

103. Child participation is promoted through committees from village to district level, culminating in the National Children’s Summit. The National Rehabilitation Service continues to reunite street children with families or provide rehabilitation and life-skills training, reducing vulnerability to exploitation, crime, and substance abuse, and promoting reintegration and social inclusion.

*Child labour (Recommendations 134.146, 134.147)*

104. Rwanda continues to prevent and eliminate child labour through awareness, enforcement, and coordination measures. Children benefit from free legal aid provided by the Rwanda Bar Association under child-friendly justice initiatives. Awareness campaigns included 36 radio and TV programmes on parenting, child safety, and family-based care, notably the weekly “Itetero” programme on national media.

105. In 2023/24, 36 community dialogues and a year-long national campaign on child-labour prevention were conducted by the Rwanda Broadcasting Agency. Child Labour Steering Committees, established from national to village levels under Ministerial Instructions of 9 December 2021, receive annual training and monitor implementation.

106. Child-labour prevention has been integrated into district Imihigo performance contracts with quarterly reporting. The National Strategy on the Elimination of Child Labour (2023) and the National Child Labour Case Management Framework (2024) strengthen coordination. Labour inspections enforce Article 117 of Law No. 027/2023 of 18 May 2023 amending Law No. 66/2018 regulating labour, which criminalizes child labour. Between July 2022 and June 2023, 86 cases were identified (39 referred to RIB), declining to 31 cases (19 referred) in 2023/24, demonstrating improved prevention and enforcement.

*Sexual and reproductive health (Recommendations 134.90, 134.144)*

107. Rwanda continues to strengthen measures to prevent teenage pregnancy and promote sexual and reproductive health (SRH). Community Health Workers and Inshuti z’Umuryango lead sensitization through 36 community dialogues, 6 national talk shows, and 120 school health clubs established or equipped since 2021. Sexual and Reproductive Health Education (SRHE) is integrated into the competence-based curriculum in primary and secondary schools and reinforced through school health clubs.

108. Youth-friendly health services have expanded to all 499 health centres and 33 youth centres (two each in Rubavu and Nyarugenge districts), providing confidential SRHR, STI, and GBV-prevention services. Between 2020 and 2022, 5,891 GBV victims received emergency contraception within 72 hours. Programmes for teen mothers combine GBV prevention, parental engagement, and income-generation support to facilitate reintegration and early childhood care.

109. Inclusive education for learners with disabilities advanced, with trained teachers increasing from 13,879 to 14,675 (2022–2023) and 3,344 schools equipped with appropriate infrastructure. The Rwanda Sign Language Dictionary was adopted for integration into the national curriculum.

110. In August 2025, Parliament enacted a Law on Reproductive Health Rights, lowering the age of consent for SRH services from 18 to 15 years, enabling adolescents aged 15 and above to access contraception, HIV prevention, and other SRH services without parental consent. The law also establishes standards for assisted reproductive technologies, including in vitro fertilization (IVF), modernizing Rwanda’s reproductive-health legal framework.

*Sale of children, child prostitution & child pornography (Recommendation 134.20)*

111. In 2023, two national Child Online Protection campaigns were conducted, on the Day of the African Child under the theme “*The Rights of the Child in the Digital Environment*” and during the December school holidays. Rwanda enforces Law No. 71/2018 of 31/08/2018 on the Protection of the Child, Law No. 60/2018 of 22/08/2018 on Cybercrime, which criminalizes the production, distribution, and access to child pornography, and Law No. 51/2018 of 13/08/2018 on the Prevention, Suppression, and Punishment of Trafficking in

Persons and Exploitation of Others, whose Articles 18–19 address trafficking and Article 23 covers exploitation.

112. These legal and preventive measures reinforce protection of children from sale, sexual exploitation, and online abuse, in line with Rwanda’s obligations under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

**Rights of persons with disabilities – Recommendations 134.3, 134.155, 134.113, 134.150, 134.151, 134.152, 134.153, 134.154, 134.156**

*National laws and policies (Recommendations 134.3, 134.113, 134.155)*

113. Article 16 of the Constitution guarantees equality for all Rwandans and prohibits discrimination based on ethnicity, sex, economic status, or disability, with such acts punishable by law. Law No. 059/2023 of 04/12/2023 on Offences and Penalties further criminalizes discrimination under Article 163.

114. To align national legislation with the UNCRPD, Law No. 01/2007 of 20/01/2007 on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities and related Ministerial Orders are under revision. Rwanda’s 2025 Global Disability Summit commitments focus on removing systemic barriers and ensuring full participation of persons with disabilities across education, health, employment, social protection, accessibility, justice, public life, and climate action.

115. Empowerment of women and girls with disabilities is advanced through legislative reforms, inclusive education, and economic programmes. Under the Special Needs and Inclusive Education Policy and its Strategic Plan (2018–2024), 49% of teachers have received inclusive-education training and 3,392 schools are equipped with accessible infrastructure. The National Gender Policy (2021) promotes women’s economic inclusion and leadership. In May–June 2022, the Ministry of Education, with World Bank support, held provincial dialogues on implementation of inclusive education, reviewing progress and stakeholder coordination.

*Protection of the rights of PWDs (Recommendations 134.150, 134.151, 134.152, 134.153, 134.154, 134.156)*

116. The integrity and dignity of persons with disabilities are protected under Article 14 of the Constitution, which prohibits torture and inhuman or degrading treatment. Law No. 026/2025 of 17/09/2025 regulating healthcare services guarantees the right to informed consent (Article 62), the right to refuse or withdraw consent (Article 63), and restricts treatment without consent to life-threatening situations or public interest (Article 64).

117. Rwanda Inclusion of persons with disabilities is promoted through the National Policy of Persons with Disabilities and its Four-Year Strategic Plan (2021–2024), coordinated by MINALOC. The policy prioritizes Community-Based Rehabilitation, particularly in rural areas, and mainstreams disability inclusion into national and local development programmes.

118. The rights and well-being of persons with albinism are promoted under Law No. 01/2007 of 20/01/2007 on the protection of persons with disabilities and the National Policy on Disability (2021). Accessibility measures include provision of sun-protection creams through Mutual Health Insurance, district pharmacies, and Zipline drones. The 2022 Census recorded over 1,800 persons with albinism, and a national study is underway to update data for planning and resource allocation.

119. Implementation of the Rwanda Building Control Regulations (2012) and the Building Code (2019) ensures accessibility in the design and construction of public buildings, hotels, dormitories, and other communal facilities. By 2024, 78% of public buildings, including sports and entertainment facilities, were fully accessible. All new public buildings were inspected for compliance with accessibility standards before receiving occupation permits, while the Rwanda Housing Authority conducts annual inspections to ensure continued adherence to building requirements, including accessibility for persons with disabilities.

120. These measures reflect Rwanda's continued fulfilment of its obligations under the UNCRPDs and Article 2 ICESCR, ensuring equality, accessibility, and participation for all persons with disabilities in line with human-rights-based development principles.

**Rights of women – Recommendations 134.21, 134.22, 134.109, 134.110, 134.111, 134.112, 134.114, 134.115, 134.116, 134.117, 134.118, 134.119, 134.120, 134.121, 134.122, 134.123, 134.124, 134.125, 134.126, 134.127, 134.128, 134.129, 134.130, 134.131, 134.132, 134.133, 134.134, 134.135, 134.137, 134.136, 134.138, 134.139, 134.140**

*National policies and legislation (Recommendations 134.21, 134.134, 134.135, 134.137)*

121. Rwanda's commitment to eliminating Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is anchored in a strong constitutional and legislative framework. The Constitution guarantees the right to physical and mental integrity (Article 15), prohibits sex-based discrimination (Article 11), and upholds gender equality (Article 16). These provisions are reinforced by Law No. 059/2023 of 04/12/2023 amending Law No. 68/2018 of 30/08/2018 to criminalize GBV-related offences, including rape (Article 134), child defilement (Article 133), indecent assault (Article 135), sexual violence against a spouse (Article 137), concubinage (Article 138), and desertion of the marital home (Article 139). Complementary laws – Law No. 27/2021 on Land Rights, Organic Law No. 002/2021 on Nationality, and Law No. 71/2024 of 26/06/2024 governing Persons and Family – remove discriminatory clauses and advance gender equality in family and property matters.

122. Legal guarantees are implemented through national protection mechanisms. The number of Isange One Stop Centres (IOSCs) increased from 44 in 2021 to 48, providing medical, psychosocial, legal, and investigative support to GBV victims. Incidents can be reported via the toll-free line 3512, and the Rwanda Forensic Institute now supports DNA testing in GBV cases. Rwanda's coordinated response is guided by the National Gender Policy (2021), the National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325, and the National Gender Policy Strategic Plan (2018–2024), ensuring prevention, effective response, and promotion of gender equality.

*Gender equality and women empowerment (Recommendations 134.22, 134.109, 134.110, 134.111, 134.112, 134.114, 134.115, 134.116, 134.117, 134.118, 134.119, 134.120)*

123. Rwanda continues to advance gender equality through community engagement, data-driven policymaking, and institutional reforms. Initiatives such as Umugoroba w'Imiryango (Families' Evening Forum) and the Family Campaign Month promote parenting, welfare, and gender equality at village level, while the Mutimawurugo Performance Contract encourages women in model villages to champion community development through digital literacy, financial inclusion, hygiene, and prevention of teenage pregnancies.

124. The Gender Management Information System and the Gender Data Lab Initiative (2024) institutionalize gender statistics and evidence-based policymaking. The 6th National Gender Statistics Report (2024) shows that women constitute 51.5% of the population; 68.9% of households rely on agriculture, with 94.8% of women farmers having land access (93.7% men). Women's formal non-bank savings increased from 44% (2020) to 53% (2024), and bank-loan access rose from 7% to 8% (10–13% men).

125. Women-headed households report 71.1% dwelling ownership and 81.4% access to improved drinking water; electricity access reached 41.1% for women and 49.6% for men. Women's labour-force participation stood at 52.2% in 2023 (men 67.5%), and they comprise 69.2% of informal cross-border traders. Women occupy 63.3% of seats in the Chamber of Deputies, 53.8% in the Senate, 52% of primary-court judgeships, and 48% of national-prosecutor posts, with senior leadership extending to the National Bank, NPPA, PSF, DGIE, Office of the Ombudsman, NCHR, RLRC, RCS, RNP, and RIB.

126. Rwanda ranked 6<sup>th</sup> globally and 2<sup>nd</sup> in Africa in the 2022 Global Gender Gap Index, 12<sup>th</sup> in 2023 (79.4%), and 39<sup>th</sup> in 2024 – remaining among Africa's top performers. Women own 24% of land, men 14%, and married couples jointly 58.3%; this has facilitated access to finance, with 38% of women's credit secured through collateralized loans.

127. Gender accountability is being strengthened through the Gender Seal Certification launched in 2024 for the Rwanda Revenue Authority in partnership with PSF, UNDP, and UN Women. Under the Economic Recovery Fund, 31% of Phase I and 37% of Phase II resources supported women-owned businesses, while over 9,600 women received training in financial literacy and business planning through SIYB and BDF programmes.

128. Through the Generation Equality Forum (2021–2026), Rwanda advances results for women and girls across six themes – GBV, economic justice, SRHR, climate justice, technology and innovation, and feminist leadership – supported by digital-finance initiatives and e-commerce training. The *Bandebereho* Programme scaled up male engagement in five districts, training 1,005 community health workers and facilitators, 60 district leaders, and 36 supervisors to promote positive masculinities and maternal, newborn, and child rights. In the Southern Province, an additional 480 community activists, 480 opinion leaders, and 240 religious leaders were trained to reinforce gender equality and positive masculinities at the community level.

*Gender based violence (Recommendations 134.121, 134.122, 134.123, 134.124, 134.125, 134.126, 134.127, 134.128, 134.129, 134.130, 134.131, 134.132, 134.133, 134.136, 134.138, 134.139, 134.140)*

129. Rwanda’s legal framework for addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is anchored in 2008 GBV Law No. 59/2008 of 10 September 2008 on the Prevention and Punishment of GBV. To further strengthen protection, Rwanda ratified the International Labour Organization’s Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) in 2023. Enforcement is supported by Isange One Stop Centres, gender desks within security institutions, and community-based protection committees. Between January 2021 and June 2025, the National Public Prosecution Authority received 37,403 GBV cases, of which 19,242 were filed in court, 17,742 closed, and 349 pending, a 98.8% case-resolution rate. During the same period, 14,815 perpetrators were convicted and sentenced.

### **Rights of older persons – Recommendation 134.23**

*Protection of the rights of older persons during COVID (Recommendation 134.23)*

130. Rwanda continues to implement the National Older Persons Policy (2021), ensuring coordinated development and delivery of services for older persons across government agencies. All health centres now provide routine screening for non-communicable diseases – such as hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular conditions, and cancers – with referrals for follow-up care.

131. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government prioritized older persons’ rights through access to vaccination, healthcare, social and financial assistance, and protection in care facilities, while enforcing safeguards against discrimination. The Direct Support Programme under the Vision Umurenge Programme (VUP) provided food and financial aid, and a categorical old-age grant—effective FY 2024/25—will extend regular income support to vulnerable older persons. Rwanda’s ratification of the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Older Persons in January 2022 further reinforces legal protection and commitment to their well-being.

### **Rights of Asylum seekers and refugees – Recommendations 134.157, 134.158, 134.159**

132. Rwanda enacted Law No. 042/2024 of 19/04/2024 governing refugees and asylum seekers. Refugee status entitles individuals, their spouses, and children or dependents under 18 years of age to identity cards and shelter until recognition. Refugees are required to comply with national laws and public security measures while enjoying rights guaranteed under ratified international refugee instruments, including access to travel documents, employment, education, and justice.

133. The Government has further advanced its commitments to the socio-economic inclusion of refugees through the integration of refugee students into the national education system, implementation of a Strategic Plan for Refugee Inclusion, expansion of access to national health insurance, and operation of the Emergency Transit Mechanism from Libya to

Rwanda. Although financial resources for camp-based refugees remain limited, alternative measures promote self-reliance through livelihood projects, cash-based food transfers, and clean water provision monitored by WASAC. From 2021 to 2024, 257 asylum seekers were granted refugee status, and refugee students are now fully integrated into national schools, ensuring equal access to education. These efforts align with Rwanda's Human Rights 75 pledge to contribute to global efforts addressing migration and asylum challenges.

## V. Challenges and constraints

134. Despite the progress achieved, advancing human rights continues to face contextual and structural challenges that affect the pace of implementing UPR recommendations. The enduring legacy of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi and evolving regional dynamics – amplified by digital technology – have fueled online hate speech, including genocide denial and minimization. The COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath disrupted service delivery and slowed economic growth as recovery was prioritized. The growing impact of climate change, compounded by Rwanda's terrain, has resulted in loss of lives, property, and livelihoods. Persistent social challenges, such as teenage pregnancy and overcrowding in correctional facilities, continue to demand sustained and coordinated interventions.

## VI. Conclusion

135. Rwanda reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights and to continued cooperation with the Human Rights Council and other international and regional mechanisms. The Government remains dedicated to implementing the recommendations it supports under the UPR mechanism in close collaboration with all stakeholders and partners.

### *Notes*

- <sup>1</sup> English, French, and Kinyarwanda.
  - <sup>2</sup> MINECOFIN Annual Reports 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024.
  - <sup>3</sup> Initiative was supported by the European Union.
  - <sup>4</sup> NISR, Agricultural Household Survey.
  - <sup>5</sup> NISR, EICV7.
  - <sup>6</sup> NISR, EICV7.
-