

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



PERMANENT MISSION OF RWANDA

GENEVA

**17th SESSION OF THE UN COMMITTEE ON THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS
OF ALL MIGRANT WORKERS AND MEMBERS OF THEIR FAMILIES**

Presentation of the Initial National Report of Rwanda

***Statement by H.E. Mrs. Soline NYIRAHABIMANA, Ambassador, Permanent
representative of the Republic of Rwanda in Geneva,***

Head of the Rwandan Delegation

Geneva, 10 September 2012

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Presentation of the Initial National Report of Rwanda

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Honourable Chairperson of the CMW

Honourable Members of the CMW

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Allow me first of all to thank the United Nations Committee on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, for having given the Rwandan delegation that I am heading, the opportunity to present the initial national report on the implementation of the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

2. Secondly, It is my great pleasure to present you the composition of the official delegation of Rwanda:
 - a. Mr. MUTABAZI Theodore, director of Immigration in General Directorate of Emigration and Immigration,
 - b. Mr. RUSANGANWA Eugene, Principal States Attorney in Charge of Human Rights and Legal aid in the Ministry of Justice,
 - c. Mr. NKERABIGWI Etienne, Legal Advisor and Coordinator of treaty reporting in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation,

And Myself, Ambassador of Rwanda accredited to Switzerland and Permanent Representative to the UN and to the International Organizations, former Minister in the Office of the President who used to have under my portfolio emigration and immigration issues among other assignments.

Honourable Chairperson of the CMW

Honourable Members of the CMW

3. The process of preparation of the Rwandan initial national report which is going to be presented now, involved all stakeholders including public institutions, civil society organisations, trade unions, One UN and the Rwanda National Commission for Human Rights.

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4. Rwanda has ratified almost all the core international human rights instruments and is committed to cooperate with all human rights mechanisms for the full enjoyment of human rights across the World. It is in this context that last year Rwanda was successfully reviewed under UPR and presented its seventeenth periodic report on the implementation of the International convention on elimination of all forms of racial discrimination. In May this year also, the Government of Rwanda presented its initial report on the implementation of the Convention against Torture.

Rwanda has already submitted and is ready to present to the concerned committees the report on the International covenant on economic, social and cultural rights, the report on the convention on the rights of children and reports on its two protocols.

5. In addition, Rwanda invited openly all UN Mandate Holders (*special Rapporteurs and Independent Experts*) to visit Rwanda and to discover by themselves the achievements of Government in the promotion and protection of human rights.

In 2011, the Special Rapporteur on Minority issues visited Rwanda.

Recently, in July 2012, the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing also visited Rwanda and recognized the efforts of the Government of Rwanda to ensure adequate housing to her people. In few months, Rwanda is expecting to receive an official visit of the Special rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association.

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6. I will not explain in full details the Rwandan achievements in the field of human rights, as they are explicitly recorded in the initial report under consideration; however, allow me to highlight the following achievements:

7. At national level, in line with the **legal framework**, the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 4th June 2003 as amended to date, the 2009 Labour Code, the 2011 immigration law and the 2011 Ministerial Orders implementing the immigration law, are the main legal binding instruments to ensure the protection and promotion of the rights of Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

8. At regional and international level, Rwanda is party to the Protocol on Common Market for East African Community as well as to on free Movement of Persons and goods in the Great Lakes Community (Congo, Burundi and Rwanda). Main ILO Conventions were ratified by Rwanda and steps have been taken for accession of the remaining ILO Conventions including the ILO Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers.

9. The Government of Rwanda has adopted various policies on the protection and promotion of human rights and different mechanisms were put in place to implement those legal binding texts. In this framework, some Ministries such as

Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Public Service and Labour, the Ministry in charge of East African Community and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation are in charge of formulating policies to safeguard the human rights of migrant workers among other assignments. In 2008, Rwanda adopted the first ever Rwanda migration policy that has a chapter on labour migration programme.

10. It is important further to mention that the Directorate General of Emigration and Immigration, the Directorate General of Rwandan community abroad as well as Embassies and Consulates abroad are devoted at technical level to implement the national policies to protect migrant workers and their families' rights.

11. Also to be recognized is the role played by the Rwanda National Commission for Human Rights and civil society organisations which are actively involved in monitoring the implementation of all international human rights instruments including the Convention on the migrant workers. They are also contributing in the reporting process of all those above-mentioned legal texts.

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12. It is important to note that in education sector, Rwanda has successfully implemented the 9 Years Basic Education without any discrimination. The goal on which the country has already embarked on is now the attainment of 12 Years Basic Education, which must be free for all young boys and girls. This means that children of migrant workers living in Rwanda enjoy these facilities provided by the education system.

13. Similarly Rwandan health community insurance (mutuelle de santé) in which majority of Rwandans are affiliated is now opening up to migrant workers.

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At this stage, allow me to comment on some issues raised by Members of the Committee on Migrant Workers:

13.1. The number of regular and irregular migrant workers in Rwanda is estimated at 16.997 majority of whom are from the East African Community -EAC - due to the political integration mechanisms as emphasised in the Common Market Protocol. In line the letter, Rwanda has taken up a step further to waiving of entry visas, work/resident permit fees for EAC citizens to decrease by half entry fees for other migrants by 80% work permit fees as well as insure , equal treatment as nationals in employment, remunerations to other migrant workers.

13.2. Regarding the human trafficking/smuggling, Rwanda is mobilizing the public through the media against this transnational crimes. The recently published Rwanda Penal Code incriminates this offence. Rwanda has also set in place various mechanisms to prevent this crimes and track their perpetrators through regional and international fora (Interpol, East African Police Cooperation Organisation (EAPCO)).

13.3 On the issue related to the mandate of NCHR, the main activities , I would like to inform you that the Law organizing and determining the functioning of NCHR is being reviewed and adjusted to clarify issues raised by our partners.

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14. Rwanda ratified the Convention on Migrant Workers 4 years ago. A lot has been already done to implement this Convention; however, the way ahead is still long.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate that the team of experts that I am leading and myself are ready to provide further information during this two day interactive dialogue and we are eager to learn from your expertise; to eventually hear from you about best practices from other State Parties. The Government of Rwanda reiterates her willingness and commitment to promote and protect all human rights for not only Rwandan citizens, but also all human beings staying in Rwanda, including migrant workers and their families.

I thank for your attention.