

Guest of Honour, Excellency Ambassador Khaled Farah;

Excellences Ambassadors;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

A very warm welcome to the Guest of Honour, H.E Ambassador Khaled Farah, the DG for the Department of Africa at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Thank you for gracing this event albeit your busy schedule. Thanks to their Excellences, members of the Diplomatic Corps, friends of Rwanda and own Rwandan nationals for joining us for Kwibuka27 or the 27th Commemoration of the 1994 Genocide against Tutsi. Thank you all for being here as we remember and grieve for over a million of our compatriots butchered by a sitting government of the time only for how these innocent souls were created by Allah.

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Today, marks twenty seven (27) years since the 1994 genocide against Tutsi whose seeds of disunity were planted by colonialists in 1930s. This disunity unfortunately got entrenched by the two post-independence Rwandan regimes. The theme for this year's commemoration is: **"Remember-Unite-Renew"**. Indeed, remembrance of what caused the genocide, working hard at uniting our people and being resolute in ensuring social justice for all as we fervently guard our country from any such a risk into the future.

I wish to remind here that through UNSC Resolution **A/RES/58/234** which got modified on 26th January 2018 by Resolution 58/243, the UN designated 7th April **as an International Day of Reflection on the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda**. Relatedly and equally important is **UNSC Resolution 2150(2014) of 16th April 2014** on prevention and fight against Genocide and other serious crimes under international law. This UNSC Resolution recalls conclusions of the final report (**S/1994/1405**) of the Commission of Experts established pursuant to **UNSC Resolution 935 (1994)**.

This referenced report among others attests to the fact that: **“there exists overwhelming evidence to prove that acts of genocide against the Tutsi group were perpetrated”**. Further it: “recalls that the appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) issued on 16th June 2006 a Judicial notice (ICTR – 98-44-AR73(C) concluding that it: (i) underscores the importance of taking into account of lessons learned from the 1994 genocide against Tutsi in Rwanda; (ii) condemns without reservation any denial of this genocide and urges Member States to develop educational programs that will teach future generations with lessons of the genocide in order to help prevent future Genocides”; (iii) Welcomes efforts by Member States to investigate and prosecute those accused of this Genocide; and (iv) Calls upon States to investigate, arrest, prosecute or extradite in accordance with applicable international obligations, all other fugitives accused of Genocide residing on their territories, including those who are FDLR leaders”.

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Pre-colonial Rwanda was a nation-state and as the case today had a homogenous culture with one language. With the divide and rule policy practiced by the Colonial Masters however, dynamics of social relations were turned upside down. In 1932, colonialists carried out a demeaning social research involving measuring lengths and width of peoples' noses following which they in 1933 issued discriminatory ethnic-based National IDs to all Rwandans. Consequently, what used to be social classes of Twa, Tutsi and Hutu got transformed into ethnic identities and intra-ethnic relations were from then on poisoned.

A Hutu Manifesto was drafted with help of the Catholic Clergy in 1957 and ten Hutu Commandments adopted in 1959. These and the ethnic-based IDs were among first seeds of what was to produce the 1994 genocide against Tutsi. An example of these commandments is that: **“there can never be relations between Hutu & Tutsi** (and they compared such a relationship to a septic wound in one's leg).

Hutu extremist parties were created and the ruling party from Independence in 1962 to 1973 was called **PARMEHUTU**, translated as **Party for Hutus**. MRND, the ruling party of 1973 up to the genocide in 1994, carried on with the same Hutu extremist ideology.

As early as 1959 ethnic-based killings targeting Tutsi notoriously produced mass movement of refugees into neighbouring Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi and DRC. Ethnic-based Identity cards were used to identify Tutsi during cyclic killings of 1959; 1960; 1962; 1973; 1980; 1992 and at climax, during the 1994 genocide against Tutsi. A genocide that lasted for 100 days, from 7th April to 4th July 1994 and decimated over a million innocent lives. The fastest mass murder in human history.

A genocide planned and executed by Government of the time and paradoxically against a part of their own citizens. This very efficient killing machinery was enabled by: **(i)** meticulous planning; **(ii)** Ethnic-based IDs to identify Tutsi at security roadblocks; **(iii)** Mass indoctrination through media; and **(iv)** Use of modern weapons by security forces as well as traditional weapons by a recruited and trained Militia (Interahamwe).

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The International Community failed in their mission of preventing the Genocide. This is despite early warning including by General Romeo Dallaire, the Canadian Commander of the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (**MINUAR**). Unfortunately, a part of this UN force that was deployed in Rwanda withdrew back to their home countries when genocide begun on 7th April 1994.

As we remember this man-made calamity and pay tribute to its victims, we are cognisant of the fact that remnants among perpetrators are still roaming the globe. Together with their support networks, they with impunity violate **UNSC Resolution 2150(2014) of 16 April 2014** by propagating denial and revisionism of the 1994 genocide against Tutsi.

This not only breeds genocide related impunity but also has a very negative effect on the healing process and reconciliation efforts in Rwanda.

We thank countries especially in the West that have lately increased arrests of these genocide fugitives. These fugitives are either tried in the jurisdictions of their current countries of abode or are extradited to Rwanda for trial. The most recent case is the infamous genocide financier, Felicien Kabuga who was arrested in France and is now facing trial in Hague. There is need for a coordinated global action in fighting genocide related impunity which is nourished by inaction on genocide fugitives and their support networks that aggressively engage in denial and revisionist propaganda of the 1994 genocide against Tutsi. The International community should act now to avoid ever having another genocide anywhere.

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Undeniably, Rwanda is a manifestation of both the worst and best of us as human beings. In general Rwanda's tragic past is a stubborn reminder of dangers of bad governance to the human race. A lesson that should be unforgettable to all of us especially the youths who are our future leaders. Despite her terrible past which represent the worst of Rwandans and humanity in general, the country has impressively pulled together as a united purpose-driven nation after its near-failed status of 1994.

We thank the Rwanda Patriotic Front (**RPF**) for their heroism in moving very quickly and against many odds ably stopping the 1994 genocide against Tutsi. The RPF led government has since the end of the genocide, commendably worked hard in uniting and reconciling Rwandans. This is despite a very hostile environment that had been occasioned by the genocide where, as an example survivors had to co-exist with some of their yester-year tormentors.

With this unique context, related challenges and the general aspirations of Rwandese to get the best of and for themselves, hard lessons were learnt and tough choices made. This context has to a great extent informed some policies that today guide Rwanda's transformative journey. Rwandese chose consensual as opposed to confrontational politics and current Constitution provides for power-sharing instead of winner takes it all. It is by initiating some strategic home grown solutions, establishing institutions of accountability, prioritising human capital as well as initiating appropriate and relevant policies and laws that Rwanda's fortunes have ably been turned around.

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I wish to note here that Rwanda and the Republic of the Sudan enjoy good diplomatic relations that are supported by a number of already signed MoUs. Following the opening of Rwanda's Diplomatic Mission in Sudan in 2006, the Republic of the Sudan reciprocally opened an Embassy in Kigali in September of 2011. In March of 2013, a Bilateral Air Services Agreement (**BASA**) was signed between both countries and Rwanda has since ratified it. Once operationalized in the near future, this agreement should help in growing the needed people-to-people interactions as well as business between both countries. A MoU on Political Consultations and Cooperation was also signed in 2017. Moreover, we are beginning to see growing interest in business and investment between both countries. Rwanda Defence Forces and Rwanda National Police have given their contribution to peace through their participation in the United Nations-African Union Hybrid Mission in Darfur (**UNAMID**). This is not only through the traditional peacekeeping mandate but also by supporting some socio-economic initiatives during their entire stay in the Sudan.

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Twenty seven years after the extremely low base Rwanda sunk to in 1994, it is now a dignified country among the global family of nations. Rwandans now live in unity and are working hard at achieving the progress and future they deserve. **To use the words of H.E. President Paul Kagame** in his address during the 25th Commemoration of genocide against Tutsi, I quote:

“Rwanda became a family, once again. The arms of our people, intertwined, constitute the pillars of our nation. We hold each other up. Our bodies and minds bear amputations and scars but none of us is alone. Together we have woven the tattered threads of our unity into a new tapestry,” End Quote.

Indeed just as the phoenix rose from the ashes, Rwanda is rising. Of course COVID19 has lately had its toll, like it has globally. A country whose economy in the immediate aftermath of the 1994 genocide grew by negative (-) 11.4% had for 15 years until 2018 grown her economy by an average of 7 to 8%. It also grew by 8.6% in 2019 and was expected to grow by over 10% in 2020 had it not been for the effects of COVID19. It is also worth noting that this growth is inclusive as it continues to lift many out of poverty.

Unity and reconciliation has taken root; more than 90% of Rwandans now enjoy universal insurance health cover which coupled with a general improvement in living standards has resulted in life expectancy rising to 67 years. Gender parity has been made a reality with as example, 61% women representation in Parliament and 53% in Cabinet.

Impressively, Rwanda was among a few countries that met all the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) before we transitioned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The economy is being diversified and value addition prioritised both in agriculture and other sectors.

Equally, industrialisation as well as science and technology have been prioritised. To highlight a few examples, Rwanda has laid 4,000 Km optic fibre across the country and is providing fast 4G LTE internet. It has so far launched two satellites from the international Space Station

which are: **(i)** Rwasat-1; and **(ii)** Icyerekezo. It was the first country to produce smart phones (Mara X and Mara Y) on the Continent; opened a VW Assembly plant in Kigali and is lately producing various types of apparel (shoe wear and garments) both for local and export markets. This is to mention but a few areas that are seeing attention and commendable progress.

To mitigate the economic impact of COVID19, two major interventions that may also be of interest to business people here with us have been initiated. These are: **(i)** An Economic Recovery Fund (**ERF**) worth 350 USD Million (targeting Tourism & hospitality, manufacturing, education, transport & logistics as well as SMEs linked to domestic and global supply chains); and **(ii)** Manufacture and Build to Recover Program (**MBRP**) with incentives mainly consisting of tax exemption on imported construction materials and reduced Pay-as-You-Earn (**PAYE**). Industries that meet minimum threshold and that get established in Rwanda within three years are to benefit from this intervention.

As I conclude, commemoration of the 1994 genocide against Tutsi isn't just for Rwanda and Rwandese but rather for an entire well-intentioned human race. This event reminds us of the tough lessons that history has taught us. It reminds us of the real consequences of bad governance and responsibilities of the International Community. We however also get to learn and see evidence for the hope, opportunity and tangible results that come with a resilient people, good governance ethos as well as an effective and focused leadership.

Thank you;

God Bless;

Allah Yubarik.