

## Innovating Progress, Redefining Prosperity

**UNDP RWANDA** 

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

2023



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#### **FOREWORD**

# Innovating Progress, Redefining Prosperity

It is with immense pride that we present the 2023 Annual Report of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Rwanda.



"In Rwanda, as elsewhere, prosperity is deeply rooted in the richness of our natural assets: verdant forests, fertile soils, clean water and pure air. This is the GDP of the Poor."

Maxwell Gomera, Resident Representative, UNDP Rwanda.

"Innovating Progress, Redefining Prosperity," is not only a look back but also a call to action that resonates with the dynamic spirit of Rwanda. It is that dynamism that has led to the country's multiyear economic growth and fed the energy of its young entrepreneurs.

Yet, even as we celebrate these achievements, we are compelled to confront a harsh reality: the benefits of growth have not been distributed equally. Rising inequality and poverty have accompanied the growth of Rwanda's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

This dichotomy challenges us to question traditional metrics of progress and to forge a new understanding of prosperity that prioritizes the well-being of people and nature over mere economic output.

In Rwanda, as elsewhere, prosperity is deeply rooted in the richness of our natural assets: verdant forests, fertile soils, clean water and pure air. This natural capital is the "GDP of the Poor," supporting the livelihood of millions. True prosperity, therefore, depends on the vigilant protection and restoration of these assets, which are being degraded by human activities, including the impacts of climate change.

At UNDP, we prize innovation that values the GDP of the Poor and fosters sustainable, equitable development. This is the focus of all our efforts and of our partnership with the Government of Rwanda as well as funding partners, civil society and the private sector.

Our work in 2023 spanned the promotion of clean energy and green growth; co-creation of a national Carbon Trading Facility; introduction of e-Courts and alternative dispute resolution; and support for young entrepreneurs. Our proactive policy work has helped shape national policies that address issues from climate change to gender equity.

Our dedication to innovation extends within our own walls, where it strengthens the sense of purpose that drives each member of our team. Our achievements extend beyond routine expectations. We've not only excelled in *five critical external reviews* but have also earned a "Gold Seal" rating for gender responsiveness. Further, in December, we were honoured by the visit of the head of the UNDP, Administrator Achim Steiner.

All this sets new benchmarks for integrity and excellence within UNDP.

2023 resonated with me for another, more personal, reason. In early 2024, I will be ending my tour as the Resident Representative of UNDP Rwanda to move on to new challenges in South Africa. My greatest wish is to convey my gratitude to every member of UNDP Rwanda and to our esteemed partners, from the Government of Rwanda to organizations the world over.

I leave with a full heart, knowing that UNDP Rwanda will move forward as a steadfast ally of the government and advocate for the Rwandan people, innovating progress and redefining prosperity to build a better future for all.

#### Maxwell Gomera,

Resident Representative, UNDP Rwanda

"At UNDP, we prize innovation that fosters sustainable, equitable development. This is the focus of all our efforts and of our partnership with the Government of Rwanda as well as funding partners, civil society and the private sector."



# SHAPING NATIONAL POLICIES

In collaboration with the Government of Rwanda and other partners, UNDP Rwanda has helped formulate and update policies that support the realization of Rwanda's development priorities. In 2023, these included:

- Alignment of disability laws and policies with UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy
- Carbon Market Framework
- Criminal Justice Policy
- Integrated National Financing Framework
- National Youth Policy
- Operationalization of the National Disability Inclusion Policy
- Revised Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy
- Start-up Act Implementation Policy



# **Innovating for Inclusive Economic Growth**

We are innovating to close the wealth gap in Rwanda, with programmes tailored to empower the country's most important demographics: **youth**, **women**, and **rural communities**.



H.E. President Kigali (centre) and UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner (left) with a packed audience at the Hanga PitchFest.

### **Today's Innovation, Tomorrow's Leaders**

The rise of youth-driven innovation propels Rwanda toward the forefront of the global knowledge economy and technology revolution. UNDP, in partnership with the Government of Rwanda, is playing a pivotal role in this transformation.

#### Hanga Pitchfest:

25 tech start-ups enrolled in the bootcamp of the third edition of Hanga Pitchfest, and five social business finalists showcased their solutions on December 8, competing for cash prizes and mentorship opportunities. Speaking to a packed arena, H.E. President Kagame and UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner awarded the first prize of Rwf50 million to the climate tech startup, *Loopa*. It harnesses Internet of Things to convert food waste and agricultural by-products into nutrient-rich organic fertilizer. Connecting start-ups with early-stage investors, Hanga Pitchfest is organized by the Ministry of ICT and Innovation, Rwanda Development Board and UNDP.

### Aguka--Empowering Youth-led Businesses: The Ministry of Youth and Arts LINDR and the

The Ministry of Youth and Arts, UNDP and the European Union joined efforts to launch Aguka, a four-year programme of comprehensive support to young entrepreneurs, from ideation to business expansion. It aims to directly impact 6,600 youth led businesses and create more than 100,000 jobs for their peers.



Aguka, a 4-year programme providing comprehensive support to young entrepreneurs, from ideation to business expansion. Pictured alongisde, the 2023 winner **GreenCare Rwanda**, with second place awarded to **SmartClass Ltd**, third place awarded to **Johnson the Baker Ltd** and fourth place going to **Bookly Africa Ltd**.



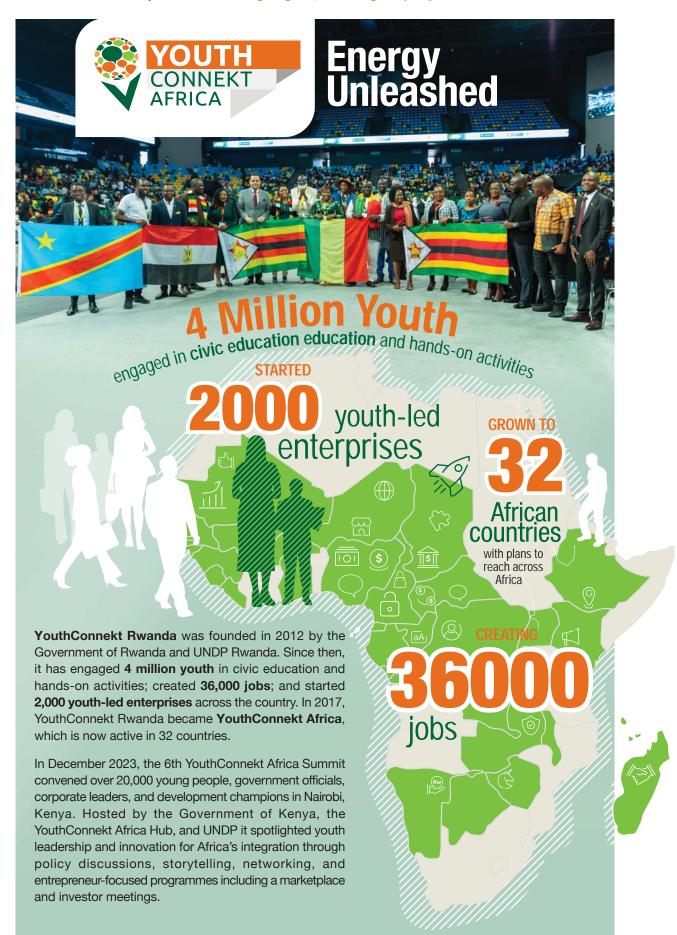
University of Rwanda College of Science and Technology students in the design lab during the launch of the UniPod in Rwanda.

#### UniPod Launches:

UniPod burst onto the innovation scene, opening in November at the University of Rwanda's College of Science and Technology. It bridges a gap between academic research and practical community solutions by providing a "maker's space" for collaboration and access to tools and equipment, alongside. Initiatives include creation of a unified digital market across the African Continental Free Trade Area.

"We are creating a growing community of young African leaders equipped to tackle the challenges of the digital age, designing solutions for Africa."

Maxwell Gomera, Resident Representative, UNDP Rwanda.



### Innovation that Boosts the Power of Women

To overcome discriminatory gender norms, UNDP Rwanda invests in women: through policy development, investments in technology that increase her productivity and free up her time, and investments in training and education.

- **New National Gender Standards Policy:** UNDP was instrumental in the development and launch of the first National Gender Standards in Africa, Launched in Rwanda in March 2023, it guides employers on workplace policies and practices that promote equity and inclusivity. Speaking at the launch, Jeanne Mubiligi, the Acting Chairperson of the Private Sector Federation (PSF), noted that the country cannot achieve its socialeconomic goals by solely having a maledominated private sector. The PSF, the Rwanda Standards Board (RSB) and the government Gender Monitoring Office (GMO) were lead partners in the launch.
- Farmer Co-operative Invests in Milk Processing: On Rwanda's border with the Democratic Republic of Congo, the majority female *Agira Gitereka* cooperative in Rubavu district launched into production of pasteurized, fermented, and packaged milk. UNDP's support enabled the 150+coop members to go from selling raw milk to utilizing modern milk fermentation equipment and increasing the quantity and quality of milk sold.



Hydroponics opens new opportunities

### **STORY**

# **Marie Josée: Redefining Prosperity**



Marie Josée began with just two low-yielding dairy cows and struggled to feed her children. But with the help of a donated biogas system and hydroponic farming system funded by UNDP Rwanda, Marie Josée changed her life.

Biogas, a renewable energy source created from cow dung and water, provides up to five hours of daily cooking energy, an eco-friendly and laboursaving alternative to firewood. When UNDP first introduced biogas to 500 households in the Eastern Province, it knew that benefits would follow. Now the full impacts on nutrition, income and selfagency are evident, as seen with Marie Josée.

She quickly harnessed the potential of the biogas system, particularly its by-product: liquid fertilizer. It proved perfect for growing vegetables in her soil-less hydroponic farming system. The fertilizer also improved the quality of her fodder, which in turn boosted milk production of her cows.

Before long, improved nutrition led to better health for her and her children. And soon she was selling more milk, more fresh vegetables, and more fertilizer. Marie Josée is now a respected businesswoman and role model in her community.



# **Green Action for a Prosperous Future**

UNDP Rwanda's green initiatives combine environmental sustainability and economic growth. In support of government programs, they encompass: support for model green rural villages, development of green growth policies, promotion of renewable energy and recycling, and disaster risk management.



Building green through recycling and a circular economy

#### Model Green Rural Villages:

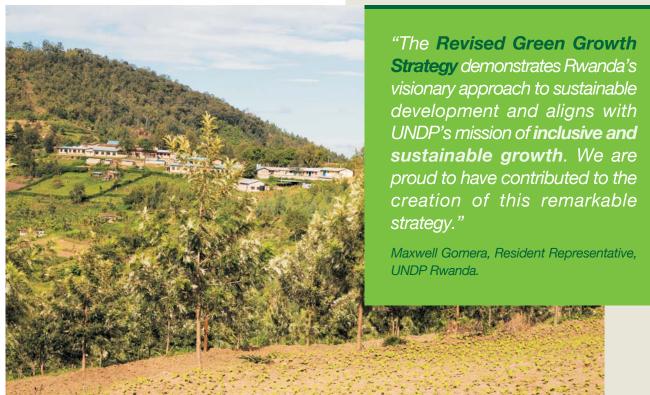
Rwanda's green village initiative combines economic growth with environmental protection to improve rural lives. In 2023, UNDP aided the Government initiative by adding green features to Kivugiza IDP Model Village homes in Nyaruguru District. This project aided 136 families, including 46 female-led and 90 male-led households; provided a 100m³ rainwater tank; a 152.6 sq. meter compost pit; financial assistance for 10 cows and 40 pigs; and building livestock sheds.

#### Promoting Access To Renewable Energy:

To promote sustainable access to renewable energy, UNDP supported the acquisition of solar water heaters by 12 local enterprises, reducing their dependence on fuelwood for industrial processes. UNDP also supported 327 rural households to acquire solar PVs for lighting and charging of phones, radios and TV sets.

- Sustainable Management of Natural Resources:
   UNDP bolstered the Government of Rwanda's
   capacity to sustainably manage environmental and
   natural resources in several ways. This included
   financing digitalization of land registration by the
   National Land Authority and facilitating the use of
   drones to fight environmental crimes in partnership
   with the Ministry of Environment and Rwanda
   Investigation Bureau.
- Strengthening Disaster Risk Management and Early Warning: UNDP worked with the governmental agencies MINEMA, METEO Rwanda and local authorities to build the resilience of communities to disasters and enhance weather and climate information services. UNDP supported 298 households to recover from disaster impacts and maintained 200 land stations for improved climate information and early warning services.







"As we embark on this transformative journey, we recognise the importance of collaboration, innovation, and shared responsibility in shaping a low-carbon economy. Together, we have the opportunity to... foster green growth and build a resilient environment."

Dr. Jeanne d'Arc Mujawamariya, Minister of Environment on the launch of Rwanda's Carbon Market Framework

### Policies and Development Strategies in the Era of Climate Change

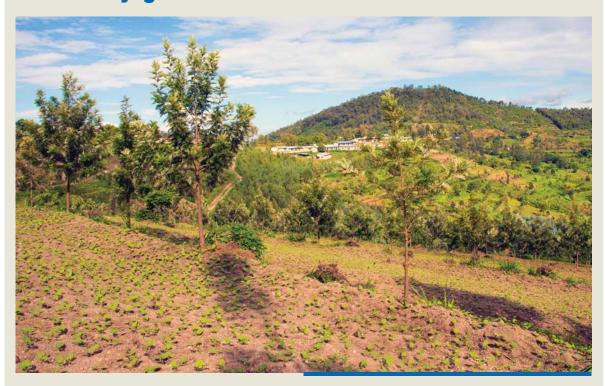
Rwanda's development plans are increasingly climate sensitive, and UNDP has been pivotal in shaping those plans, spearheading initiatives like the **Green Growth** and **Climate Resilience Strategy** and unveiling the nation's carbon market to the global community. On the ground, a suite of dynamic innovations brings these strategies to life.

Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy, developed through close collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and UNDP Rwanda, updates the 2011 strategy to address the faster-than-expected impacts of climate change and the country's new socio-economic goals. Strategic objectives include ensuring a low-carbon energy supply for green industry, promoting sustainable land use and water resource management, and prioritising social protection, health improvement, and disaster risk reduction.

Launch of Rwanda's Carbon Market Framework: Launched on the side lines of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai, UAE, the framework is a milestone towards meeting Rwanda's 38 percent greenhouse gas reduction target for 2030 and its goal of being carbon neutral by 2050. The framework sets rules for the trading of carbon credits, encouraging businesses and industries to adopt cleaner practices and to invest in sustainable technologies. Given that Africa's carbon market currently accounts for just two percent of the trading activity on global carbon markets worth more than \$2 billion, Rwanda's framework provides a model for other African nations.

### **STORY**

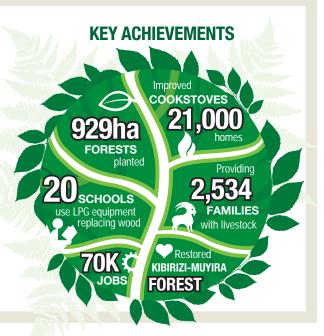
### **Green Amayaga at the Centreline**



The Rwanda Environment Management Authority, the Rwanda Forestry Authority, and the Districts of Kamonyi, Nyanza, Ruhango and Gisagara are working with local residents to green Amayaga, with funding through UNDP from the Global Environment Facility.

2023 was a year of action for Green Amayaga - including on the football field. Twenty football teams from across the project region competed in a tournament in July and August-providing an opportunity to widely inform and engage thousands of community members who came to cheer.

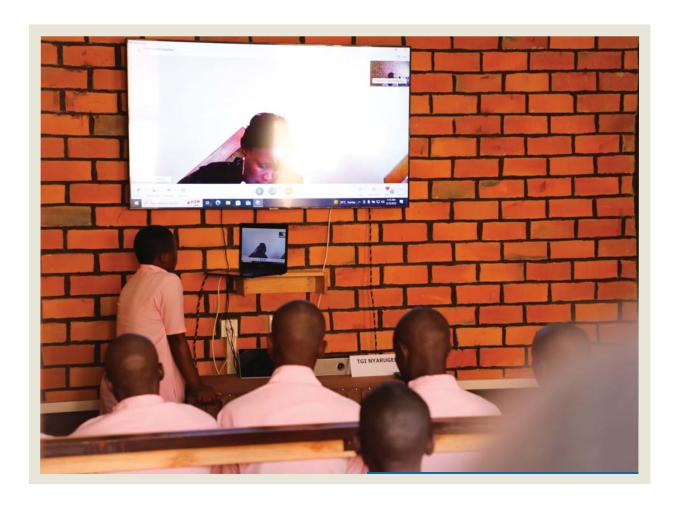
Midway through its six-year timeline, Green Amayaga continues to restore the region's landscape which has suffered deforestation and soil erosion and faces increased vulnerability to climate change. To counter that vulnerability, the project promotes biodiversity, ecosystem services, and agricultural productivity.





# Justice Reimagined: Innovating Paths to Prosperity

Along with the Minister of Justice, UNDP Rwanda co-chairs the working group of the Justice, Reconciliation, Law and Order sector. Although unusual for an UNDP office, it fits right in with UNDP Rwanda's commitment to improving access to justice as part of building a fair and prosperous society.



UNDP has been a key partner in developing initiatives like e-Courts and the **Alternative Dispute Resolution** (ADR) and Criminal Justice policies. They bring justice

closer to those most in need and ease the pressure on a justice system burdened by case backlogs, prolonged trials and overcrowded prisons.



New Justice Policies Launched: UNDP Rwanda was pivotal in the development of the Alternative Dispute Resolution and Criminal Justice Policies, passed early in 2023. They encourage use of mechanisms outside of the formal court system and the reconciliation and rehabilitation of offenders. Both policies recognize that Rwandan citizens have long resolved conflicts of all kinds in families, in communities, and at different levels of governance in ways that safeguard peace, rebuild relationships, and strengthen social cohesion.

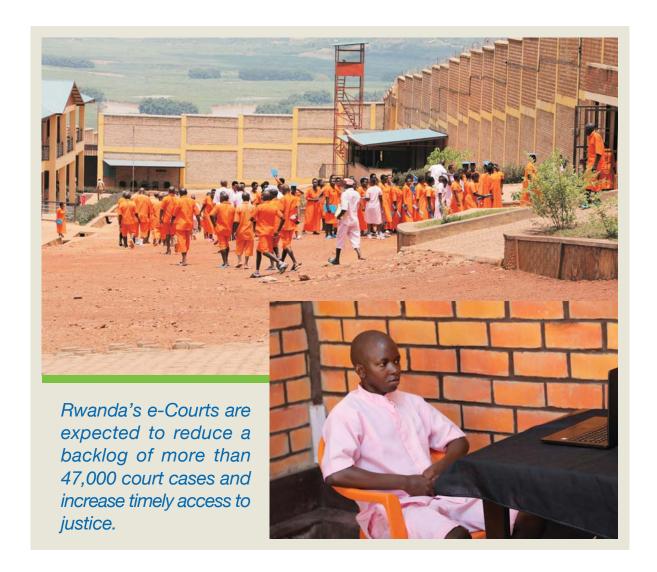
After passage of the policies, the Ministry of Justice with UNDP Rwanda and other partners conducted a national awareness campaign. It has reached more than 1.8 million people. It held awareness-raising sessions in over 30 communities, spoke on more than ten radio and TV shows, conducted five sessions for the media and the private sector, and made extensive use of social media to inform the public about the new policies.

The construction of an ADR centre in Kigali is underway and will serve to connect public and private ADR initiatives and service providers.

### Harmonizing Home: Mediation Success in Ruhango District

Deogratius Sinzabakwira resolved a conflict with his wife over financial issues through Rwanda's national mediation program. Misunderstandings arose about the use of their modest income from farming and Sinzabakwira's banana juice side business.

With the help of the local volunteer mediators, *Inshuti z'Umuryango*, the couple learned to communicate better, make joint decisions on finances, and resolve conflicts. This eased tension anxiety in their household, especially for their children and enabled them to earn more and even build a new house. Sinzabakwira praises the program for offering a peaceful resolution method over costly and disruptive court proceedings.



 e-Courts Improving Access To Justice: The country's e-Court system, developed with the support of UNDP Rwanda, launched in February 2023. It is expected to reduce a backlog of more than 47,000 court cases (at last count) and to increase timely access to justice.

Among the many people who have already benefitted from e-Courts is Emmanuel. Arrested in 2020 for alleged criminal ties, Emmanuel maintained his innocence but spent two years in detention without trial. When his trial was finally held-conducted via e-Court (video connection), he was acquitted.

As of December 2023, 1,816 cases (207 women and 1,609 men) had been tried through e-Courts, providing a streamlined legal process, cost savings, and convenience for all involved parties.

About 45,000 inmates are expected to benefit from the new system, which began in Nyarugenge, Rwamagana and Rubavu districts and soon will be expanded to new districts.

### **STORY**

## **Visit from the Chief**



Achim Steiner met with H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda at the Kigali Convention Centre on the sidelines of the Hanga Pitchfest.

# UNDP Rwanda was honoured in 2023 to host the UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner.

His visit underscored the United Nations' commitment to Rwanda's sustainable development goals and initiatives and appreciation for the remarkable progress Rwanda has made. During his visit, Mr. Steiner engaged in high-level meetings with Minsters, government officials, company CEOs, civil society leaders, and young entrepreneurs.

He delivered a keynote address at the Hanga Pitchfest and visited key project sites including Norrsken, Ampersand and Zipline to witness first-hand the impact of different initiatives in the creative and entertainment industry as well as in innovation and youth entrepreneurship.



Achim Steiner visited a number of arts- and youth-focused UNDP projects during his Rwanda visit



Achim Steiner visited the 'NEST' - home to zipline Rwanda - where 400 drone flights take off every day to supply lifesaving and emergency medical supplies to hospitals and health centres



# Operations: A Purpose-driven Office

From achieving the highest "Fully Satisfactory" rating in its financial audit review to high ratings for the Independent Country Program Evaluation, from retaining a "Gold Seal" rating for gender responsiveness to receiving the People for 2030 awards in UNDP's global Career Catalyst category, the accolades received by UNDP Rwanda have reflected the exceptional hard work, expertise and commitment of its staff.



UNDP Rwanda staff and Achim Steiner (centre front) stand shoulder-to-shoulder during his December visit.

Internally, the office has been transformed into more than just a workspace: it's become a home and a sanctuary that offers safety, dignity, and the liberty to dream and aspire. The "Ikawa (coffee) Junction" and "Friendship Benches" symbolize a defining sense of camaraderie and collective spirit. A room for breastfeeding mothers and a changing room for those who go for sports during the day support work-life balance.

UNDP Rwanda has also invested in its staff to amplify their voices and thought leadership.

Training in opinion writing and public speaking led to the publication of more than a dozen opinion pieces and presentations at TedX, influencing important conversations on Rwanda and global development.

### **Published opinion pieces:**

Threatened creativity in the rise of AI, by Stella Tushabe, 23 November 2023

Umuganda: Rwanda's audacity of hope to end plastic pollution, by Sulan Chen and Varsha Redkar-Palepu, 15 November 2023

Empowering gorilla conservation and communities through NFTs, by Irene Iradukunda, 24 October 2023

The power of social media in fostering change, by **Immy Mulekatete**, 27 September 2023

Embracing the Unexpected: A surprising journey, by Felicite Dusabe, 6 September 2023

The Silent Ecological Tragedy: Artisanal Mining and Ecosystem Degradation, by Bernardin Uzayisaba, 15 September 2023

Empower women with clean, affordable cooking energy, by Bernardin Uzayisaba, 31 July 2023

Bridging the gender divide: Rwanda's pursuit of inclusive prosperity in the private sector, by Clement Kirenga 17 July 2023

How can Al Even the Climate Playing Field, by Maxwell Gomera, 8 June 2023

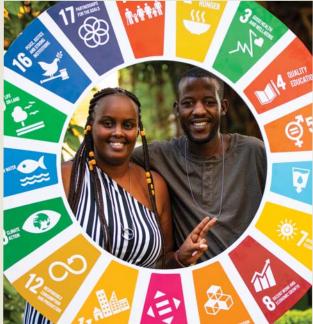
Rwanda's remarkable journey: inspiring solutions to the global plastic pollution crisis, by **Bernardin Uzayisaba**, 8 June 2023

Churches should invest in mental health support for their members, by Alice Kayibanda, 5 June 2023

Tackling poverty can start with embracing the GDP of the Poor, by Max Gomera, 28 May 2023

The power of local communities in shaping Rwanda's biodiversity future, by Mireille Uwera, 22 May 2023









## **Framing the Future**

This year has been a remarkable chapter for UNDP Rwanda, characterized by innovative initiatives that redefine prosperity by shifting the focus from traditional economic benchmarks to a holistic vision of wealth that encompasses the well-being of our people and the health of our planet.



In the realm of sustainability, our investments in the GDP of the Poor – our natural capital – are generating returns in improved livelihoods and restored ecosystems.

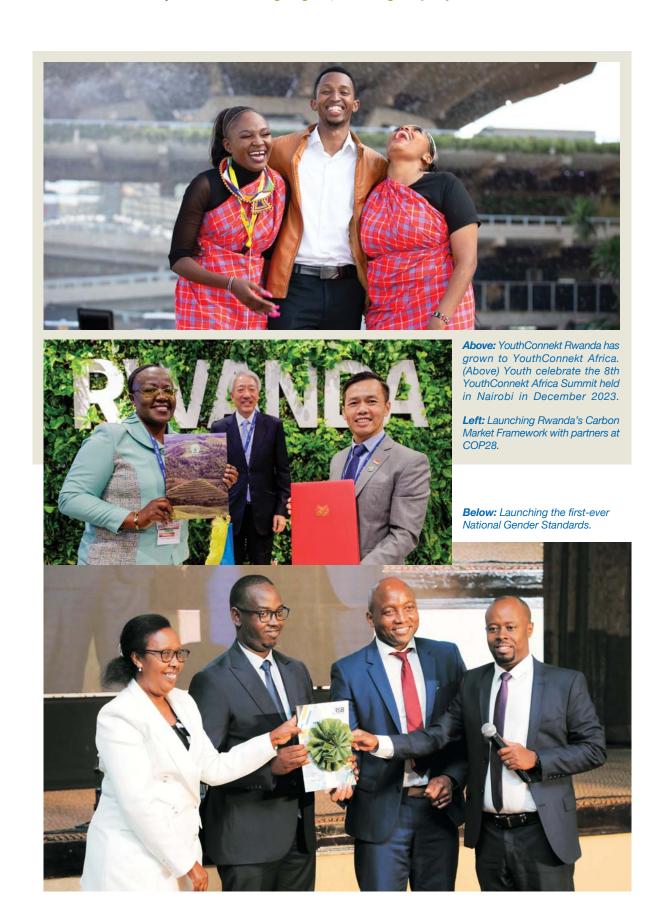
Varsha Redkar-Palepu, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Rwanda In the realm of sustainability, our investments in the GDP of the Poor-our natural capital-are generating returns in improved livelihoods and restored ecosystems.

- The Carbon Market Framework is a keystone initiative, promising to significantly bolster Rwanda's green growth. This ground-breaking framework is not just a stride towards meeting ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets; it's a blueprint for the future of environmental sustainability and economic resilience.
- The launch of UniPod stands as an inspiring example of harnessing the talents and energies of youth to address real-world challenges. UniPod is cultivating a new generation of problem-solvers and thought-leaders and bridging the gap between academic research and practical solutions.
- The strides made in governance-through e-Courts and alternative dispute resolution-set a precedent for transparency and equity, vital for a prosperous Rwanda.

2024 promises to be an exciting year, as UNDP develops its new Country Programme Document in support of Rwanda's next National Strategy for Transformation.

2024 is also *Kwibuka 30*, marking 30 years since the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, and 30 years since the Liberation of Rwanda. The accomplishments of the Rwandan government and people over the past 30 years are a model for the change that is possible as nations continuously strive to be resilient, inclusive and green.

As we look to the future, it is this broader, more inclusive understanding of prosperity that will guide our actions and measure our success.





### **Partners**

#### **Government of Rwanda & Civil Society Partners**

African Management institute

City of Kigali

**Environment and Climate Change Investment** 

Fund/FONERWA

Gender Monitoring Office

Kigali International Financial Centre/KIFC

Meteorology Agency

Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources

Ministry in Charge of EMERGENCY Management

Ministry of Environment

Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning

Ministry of ICT and Innovation National Institute of Statistics

Ministry of Justice

Ministry of Local Government

Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement

Ministry of Trade and Industry

Ministry of Youth and Arts

National Bank of Rwanda/BNR

National Consultative Forum of Political Organizations

National Council for Persons with Disabilities

Norrsken

Prison Fellowship Rwanda

Private Sector Federation/PSF

Rwanda Bar Association

Rwanda Broadcasting Agency

Rwanda Civil Society Platform

Rwanda Cooperation Initiative

Rwanda Correctional Service

Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration

Commission

Rwanda Development Bank/BRD

Rwanda Development Board

Rwanda Environment Management Authority

Rwanda Governance Board

Rwanda Forestry Authority

Rwanda Governance Board

Rwanda Investigation Bureau

Rwanda Media Commission

Rwanda National Police

Rwanda Peace Academy

Rwanda Revenue Authority

Rwanda Standards Board

Tony Elumelu Foundation

University of Rwanda

### **Development Partners**











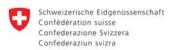






























### **Partners at core**

Flexible (core) funding from our partners provides the backbone of UNDP's work.

See the list here: https://www.undp.org/funding/regular-resources-contributors





## **Financial Performance**

### **Income vs Expenditures 2023**





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