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# **Policy Framework for Social Cohesion**

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## **Acronyms and Abbreviations**

9YBE:	Nine Years Basic Education
AIDS:	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
EICV:	Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey
FARG:	National Foundation for the Assistance of the Victims of the Genocide
FRW:	Rwandan Franc
HIV:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICRP:	Integrated Child Rights policy
MDG:	Millennium Development Goals
NISR:	National Institute of Statistics – Rwanda
NURC:	National Unity and Reconciliation Commission
PLWHA:	People Living With HIV/AIDS
RDHS:	Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey
UN:	United Nations
VUP:	Vision 2020 Umurenge Program
WFP:	World Food Program

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This report is the responsibility of the author alone. Any omissions or errors can only be attributed to him.

## **Introduction**

The Government of Rwanda has had as one of its main policy objectives the creation of a stable, cohesive society. This effort has been focused largely around the elimination of extreme poverty and fostering a sense of national unity and integration. The challenge is considerable given that Rwanda is a poor, post-conflict society. However, since the adoption of the Rwandan Constitution in 2003 by referendum, the government has been constitutionally bound to promote social welfare.

There have been several programs, laws and policies that have been implemented to increase social cohesion. As Rwanda has evolved as a successful post-conflict society, so have the government policies evolved and adapted to remain relevant. The government's strategy is built generally within the framework of two larger goals: Vision 2020 Umurenge Program (VUP) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

VUP was established to accelerate the reduction of extreme poverty in Rwanda by enabling poor people to share in the growth Rwanda has experienced. It is expected that by reducing depravity in its population, that Rwanda will become a more cohesive society. There are three core components of VUP: direct transfers, public works and financial services. These elements will be explored more detail in the following chapters. The preliminary findings, however, are showing that these programs are working. Results from the latest Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey (EICV3) carried out in 2010/11 and the Rwandan Demographic and Health Survey (RDHS) in 2010 show that significant progress has been made in reducing extreme poverty and inequality. Poverty has declined from 57 per cent in 2005/6 to 45 per cent in 2010/11 and extreme poverty has fallen from 36 per cent to 24 per cent (Abbott, Rwirahira, et. al 2012).

In 2000, the United Nations (UN) established the Millennium Development Goals during its Millennium Summit. These goals sought to relieve the burden of poverty, disease, inequality and other obstacles to development in the world's poorest countries. Rwanda, along with all UN countries, was signatory to these goals. It has used the MDGs to inform its other policies and the goals that Rwanda has set have been in line with MDG targets. Rwanda is performing well with MDGs. It has already reached some of its targets and is on track to achieve most of the other MDGs by 2015.

Within this context, the Government of Rwanda has enacted various laws, policies and programs that aim to create a cohesive society. They fall into three main categories: poverty and depravity reduction; empowerment; and social cohesion and inclusion. This report serves to create a resource for information on the Rwandan Government's policy efforts to increase social integration and cohesion.



# 1. International and Constitutional Framework

Since its independence in 1962, Rwanda has been signatory to numerous international conventions and treaties. These treaties and agreements have informed the policies that Rwanda has implemented. Rwanda has also taken care to include the principles of these international conventions in its constitution. Rwanda's constitution and overall vision is the product of its national values and its international obligations. In this chapter, the treaties that are relevant to social cohesion and protection are laid out as well as the articles of the constitution which address these issues.

## 1.1 International Treaties and Conventions

Treaty	Date
Geneva Convention	5 May 1964
Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity	6 Jan 1969
Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa	10 Sep 1969
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	16 Apr 1975
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	16 Apr 1975
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination	16 Apr 1975
Abolition of Forced Labour Convention	18 Sep 1976
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees	3 Jan 1980
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	1 May 1980
Equal Remuneration Convention	2 Dec 1980
Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention	2 Feb 1981
Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights	11 Nov 1981
Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention	8 Nov 1988
Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention	8 Nov 1988
Convention on the Rights of the Child	26 Jan 1990
African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child	2 Oct 1991
African [Banjul] Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights	9 Jun 1998
Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour	23 May 2000
Convention against Discrimination in Education	28 Dec 2000
Convention concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour	23 May 2001
Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others	26 Sep 2003
Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa	19 Dec 2003
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families	15 Dec 2008
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	15 Dec 2008

## 1.2 Rwandan Constitution

In 2003, Rwanda's constitution was adopted by its citizens. In addition to laying out the basic form of government, the constitution seeks to "eradicate ethnic, regional, and other divisions and promote national unity" (Constitution of Rwanda Article 9). The Constitution of Rwanda serves the purpose of protecting minorities and the disenfranchised from the tyranny of majority rule. It does this by recognizing all citizens first as Rwandans. The Government uses the structure given in the constitution to create programs and policies that aim to reduce social divisions.

The constitution of Rwanda has numerous elements to protect human rights, promote social cohesion, equity and social protection:

- Preamble – reaffirms Rwanda's commitment to international treaties to which it is signatory.
- Article 9 – provisions 30 per cent of posts in decision making bodies for women.
- Article 11 – criminalizes discrimination of any kind.
- Article 19 – establishes that all are equal before the law.
- Article 28 – recognizes that children are granted special protection under law by family, society and the State.
- Article 33 – criminalizes the propagation of any kind of discrimination or divisionism.
- Article 40 – grants the right to education, establishes compulsory fee-free primary education and grants the government to take special measures for the disabled.
- Article 54 – prohibits political organizations from basing themselves in a division of society which may give rise to discrimination.
- Article 76 – allocates 24 of 80 parliamentary seats to be elected from among the National Women's Council, two seats to be elected from the National Youth Council, and one seat to be elected from the Federation of the Associations of the Disabled.
- Article 82 – stipulates that at least 30 per cent of senate seats must be filled by women. Eight of the 26 members of the senate are appointed by the president to ensure representation of historically marginalized communities. It also stipulates that appointed positions must take into account national unity and equal representation of both sexes.

## **2. National Policy Framework**

Rwanda has implemented policies to integrate its society at a national level. The unique nature of Rwanda's programs, often being created within the framework of Rwanda's culture and values, ensures their effectiveness. For example, Umuganda, or community service, has been used to carry out small-scale public works programs. Umuganda has been instrumental in Rwanda achieving its MDGs at a local level and it is a concept that comes from within the context of Rwandan cultural values rather than being imposed from outside. The policies the Government of Rwanda has implemented to create an integrated society can be divided into three general categories: policies meant to empower the population; policies to address extreme poverty and deprivation; and, policies to build social cohesion and inclusion.

### **2.1 Policies to Empower**

#### *2.1.1 Integrated Child Rights Policy*

Responsibility for safeguarding different elements of children's rights is distributed to the relevant ministries (Health, Education, Labour, Protections, etc.), therefore, a multi-sectorial approach was necessary. The Integrated Child Rights Policy (ICRP) creates a framework for children's rights and streamlines laws, policies, and strategic plans under one national policy. The objectives of ICRP are to ensure that every child's rights are protected, to serve as a guide for any government plan which will affect children and to establish mechanisms by which data and information regarding children's issues will be collected (Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion 2011). ICRP provides all children (persons from the time of birth until they complete 18 years) with the following:

- The right to Rwandan nationality and identity to children born in Rwanda to at least one Rwandan parent or to children who are in Rwanda without parents and without a known nationality.
- The right to family care by parents or extended family members. In cases where this is not an option, the Government is responsible to provide care through: adoption, foster care, guardianship, kinship care, residential care or other community-based arrangements.
- The right to health and health care from pregnancy through childhood. Every child is guaranteed health care and coverage under Mutual Health Insurance. In cases where the family cannot pay for services or coverage, these fees are waived for children less than five years, lactating mothers and pregnant women. Beyond five years, the government will explore other options under the Health Insurance Scheme. Children from poor families will receive free food supplements, medication and tests if their parents are unwilling or unable to provide for their nutrition. This

program includes school feeding in accordance with 9YBE as well as feeding programmes for children not yet in school.

- The right to fee-free and compulsory education for nine years of basic education. For families that cannot provide supplies (e.g. books, uniforms, supplies) because of poverty, the Government will provide them. Vulnerable children are eligible for cash transfers to help them stay in school. The government will support children with disabilities and learning challenges.
- The right to protection from military service, unlawful labour, trafficking and abuse. The legal age for consent to marriage is 21. Refugee children not of Rwandan identity are granted these same protections.
- The right to justice and recognition of the legal age of criminal responsibility. Children will be treated appropriately and respectfully with the goal of reintegration with society if they are in conflict with the law.
- The right to participation in society.

This policy will be implemented over a five year period from 2011-16.

### *2.1.2 Mutual Health Insurance Policy*

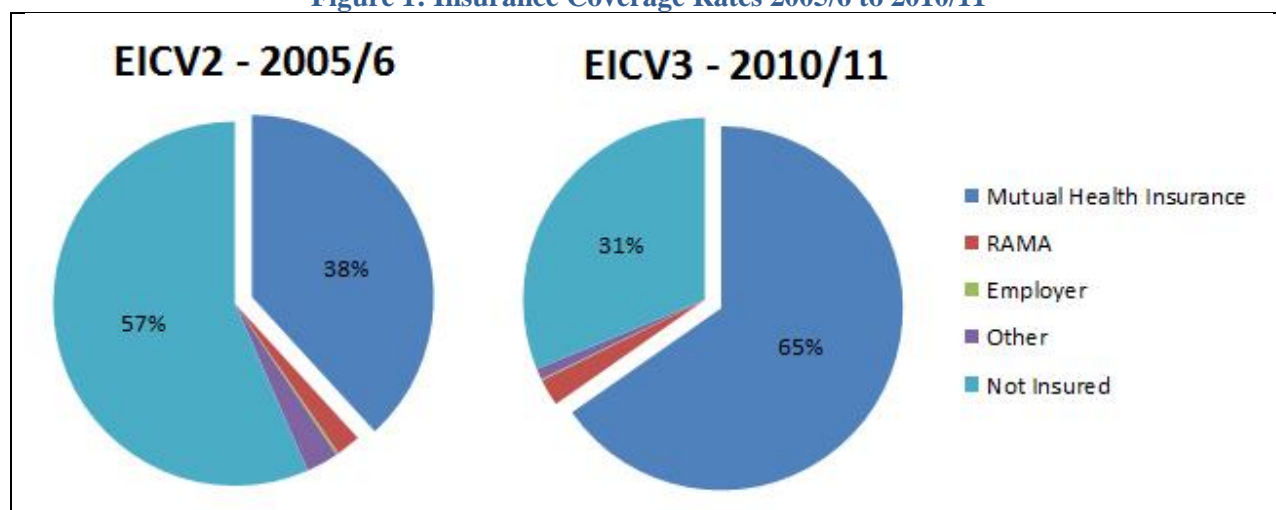
In 1999, Rwanda began its transition to nation-wide health coverage. The Government's first phase of this policy sought to improve access to health care by the population while maintaining the financial viability of the health services sector. The 1999 policy did this through community funding and risk pooling. The 2004 policy sought to expand this program to meet increasing demand and provide equitable access to health services by those in rural communities and those in the informal sector. The 2007 Mutual Health Insurance Scheme Law codified the national health insurance policy. It lays out the role of the national health insurance system, defines who is eligible and what type of care is covered.

Any Rwandan who pays their annual premium (FRW 3,000) is eligible for Mutual Health Insurance. This covers most types of medical care, the notable exception of occupational accidents, with the member providing a co-payment of FRW 100-250 for primary care and 10 per cent of hospital care expenses (Ministry of Health, World Health Organization 2008).

This policy not only provides basic health care, but it empowers individuals to have control over their lives. For example, policy holders are able to receive contraceptives and participate in family planning. When a woman then makes the choice to have a child, she is given proper antenatal and postnatal care. This gives women power over their bodies and their children are able to receive the best chance of survival and long-term health.

The latest data regarding health coverage come from the 2010/11 Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey (EICV3). According to the survey, 68.76 per cent of the population has some sort of health coverage; nearly 95 per cent of those with coverage get it from Mutual Health Insurance (NISR 2012). Insurance coverage rates have nearly doubled since 2005 when the last EICV survey took place (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Insurance Coverage Rates 2005/6 to 2010/11**



(Source: NISR 2007, NISR 2012)

### 2.1.3 National Nutrition Policy

As Rwanda moves towards its goals of becoming a food-secure country and a net exporter of food, it is also grappling with the problems of malnutrition of the population. Indicators are mixed in key areas of nutrition such as stunting, chronic malnutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and the percentage of the population that is underweight. It is in this context that the Government of Rwanda implemented the National Nutrition Policy in 2005 with the following goals:

- Promote practices favorable to the improvement of the nutritional status;
- Reduce the prevalence of diseases linked to nutritional deficiencies and excesses;
- Prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV through appropriate breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding practices;
- Assure adequate treatment of malnutrition due to nutritional deficiencies and excesses;
- Provide nutritional care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS.

To achieve these goals sets forth several strategies; key strategies are found in Table 1.

**Table 1: Strategies for Nutritional Improvement**

Reinforcement of Political Commitment	Re-establishment of training programs at the graduate and undergraduate level in Rwanda's institutions of higher education. Integration of nutrition into basic education curricula. Develop national standards for food fortification.
Promotion of Infant and Young Child Feeding	Promotion and protection for exclusive breastfeeding for infants from birth to six months and continuing breastfeeding through 24 months or more. Adoption of a national code for the marketing of breast milk substitutes. Integration of guidelines to prevent mother to child transmission of HIV/AIDS. Protect breastfeeding in the public and private sectors by modifying laws regarding breastfeeding (i.e., maternity leaves).
Scaling Up of Community-Based Nutrition Programs	Train community health workers to instruct community members about nutrition. Monitor the growth of children under five. Organization of community nutrition week with micronutrient distribution, deworming, and preventative health activities. Promote access to safe water, personal and environmental hygiene, use of mosquito nets, family planning, HIV/AIDS prevention, and Mutual Health Insurance. Establish school feeding programs.
Food Fortification	Fortify local foods that have been identified as being feasible. Develop national standards for food fortification. Promotion of iodized salt.
Promotion of Household Food Security	Promote production and consumption of foods rich in micronutrients. Further implement the Imidugudu policy of settlement clusters to free land for agricultural use.
Prevention and Management of Malnutrition and Related Diseases	Regular growth monitoring for children under five. Monitor weight gain of pregnant women.
Nutritional Support to People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs) and Their Families	Provide minimum food packages for PLWHAs. Development of long-term strategies to sustain nutrition care and support for PLWHAs. Implement policies at Community Health Centers specifically targeting PLWHAs.

(Source: Ministry of Health 2005)

#### 2.1.4 National Policy for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children

The Government of Rwanda is committed to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable children through the provision of appropriate services and protection from harm. In 2003, the Government enacted this policy to identify and define its policy towards orphans and other vulnerable children. This policy defines vulnerable children as a person under 18 years exposed to conditions that do not permit him/her to fulfil his/her fundamental rights for his/her harmonious development; it defines an orphan as a child who has lost one or both parents. It continues to identify 15 categories of vulnerable children including: children

in very poor households, disabled children, street children, sexually exploited children, refugee children among others (Ministry of Local Government 2003). If a child qualifies as an orphan or vulnerable child they are entitled to the following:

- Protection from all forms of abuse and exploitation;
- Assurance of access to health services;
- Assurance of access to free primary education and access to education beyond primary education;
- Psychosocial support;
- Socio-economic support through income-generating activities, access to credit and improved agricultural production.

#### 2.1.5 *National Women’s Council and National Youth Council*

These organizations were established title IX of the Constitution of Rwanda, although National Women’s Council has been operating since 1996. These groups are national organizations with leaders elected starting at the local level up to national representation. They were created as a forum for youth and women to pool their ideas in order to solve their own problems and participate in the development of Rwanda.

In article nine of the constitution, women are guaranteed and least 30 per cent of positions in decision making organs of the government. In article 76, women and youth are guaranteed positions in parliament (Constitution of Rwanda). These positions are filled from the National Women’s Council and the National Youth Council.

#### 2.1.6 *Nine Years Basic Education (9YBE)*

Basic education was made a major focus by the Kagame administration starting in 2003 and in 2009 the policy of providing 9 years of fee-free education was implemented (Ministry of Education 2008b). In 2010, the program was fast-tracked for nation-wide implementation. It has widely been viewed as successful resulting in one of the highest primary enrolment rates in Africa. There are various statistics; however, all of them show an upward trend. The official statistics from the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda confirm the positive trends from the Ministry of Education (Table 2).

**Table 2: Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey (EICV) Net Primary Enrolment Rates**

Year	Net Enrolment Rate, %
2000/1	72.6
2005/6	86.6
2010/11	91.7

The policy aims to:

- Ensure that children start and complete primary education within the specified period; starting school at aged seven and completing within six years;
- Rapidly increase the number of children enrolling in Tronc Commun to ensure that each child has the opportunity to complete nine years of basic education;
- Reduce repetition and dropout rates to six per cent and five per cent, respectively by 2015;
- Reduce class size and pupil-teacher ratio to 45 by 2015;
- Abolish school fees for primary education and the first three years of secondary education.

Problems that have surfaced with the 9YBE policy (e.g. although the education is “fee-free”, in practice parents have had to purchase supplies and uniforms, presenting a barrier for those in extreme poverty) have begun to be addressed under the Ministry of Education’s 2008-2012 and 2010-2015 Education Sector Strategic Plans. These, however, fall short of addressing all issues because they do not allocate specific funding for those below the poverty line. They only disburse funds for vulnerable groups “where funds are available” (Ministry of Education 2008a).

## **2.2 Policies to Address Poverty and Deprivation**

### *2.2.1 Crop Intensification Strategy*

Being one of the most densely populated countries in the world, one of Rwanda’s biggest constraints is land. The population continues to grow rapidly and the Government has recognized the need to increase productivity of Rwanda’s limited land resources. It has identified four inputs in which improvement is needed in order to transition from subsistence agriculture to surplus production: seeds, fertilizer, water and machinery. It also has elements of land consolidation to coordinate planting and harvesting among farmers to increase productivity. This program is expected to help Rwanda achieve its long-term goal of becoming a food-secure country and its medium-term MDGs and Vision 2020 (Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources 2011).

The Government is focused on six priority crops: maize, wheat, rice, Irish potatoes, beans, and cassava. It is importing improved seeds and it has started a voucher program in which farmers are able to purchase these seeds, and other agricultural inputs, at subsidized rates.



As part of the land consolidation program, farmers are resettled from agriculturally productive lands and the land is synchronized to improve productivity and environmental sustainability. There has been no increase in total land under production; however, since 2007, maize and wheat production has increased by six fold, Irish potato and cassava production has tripled and rice and bean production has increased by 30 per cent. All these gains were made through greater efficiency.

### 2.2.2 *Girinka*

Girinka is a program meant to provide poor families with cattle. The intention is to reduce poverty and malnutrition (through milk production) among the poorest in the nation. Areas that were determined at the beginning of the program to be most in need of support were included in the first phase of this program with all eligible families expected to have benefitted from this program by 2017 (Ministry of Agriculture 2006). Cows are distributed using two different methodologies.

The first method of distribution is for farmers without the means to purchase the animals themselves. Farmers will be organized into groups where they receive training and then one person in the group receives a pregnant cow. That person is expected to give the first female calf to another person in the group and the process continues until the entire group has benefitted. It is expected that 85% of the cows will be distributed this way.

Alternatively, if farmers have the means to buy the animals themselves but lack the initial capital, partnerships are in place with micro-finance institutions to provide funds to eligible farmers using favourable lending terms. It is expected that the remaining 15% of eligible individuals will receive their cows using this method.

To be eligible for this program the candidate must:

- Not already own a cow;
- Own land that is not bigger than 0.75 hectares;
- Have controlled soil erosion on her land or show that anti-erosion measures will be put in place;
- Either alone, or in co-operation with neighbours have 20 acres of pasture land planted;
- Have constructed a shade house for the animal;
- Have mechanisms for water harvesting and conservation for the animal;
- Have at least two pits near the homestead and show good care for the environment;
- Be growing and have a reasonable yield of one crop that is suitable for the particular area;

- Be of exemplary character and should participate in development and other activities related to good governance and poverty reduction.

### 2.2.3 National Social Protection Strategy

Government spending on social protection programs has increased dramatically since 2005 growing from just over FRW one billion in 2005 to over FRW 13 billion in 2010. Rwanda’s Social Protection Strategy builds off of and streamlines previously implemented social protection programs. There are two primary strategies outlined in the National Social Protection Strategy. First, build off of the current social protection floor of cash transfers ensuring a minimum income and extend it; also, ensure access by poor people to essential services such as health, education, water, sanitation and housing. Second, increase participation by those in the informal sector in the contributory social security system so they are secure later in life (Ministry of Local Government 2011).

The social protection floor aims to ensure a minimum income for the very poor. Currently, there are several smaller, often overlapping, programs that provide cash transfers and other support programs including: VUP direct support program, FARG cash payments, disability payments for ex-combatants, WFP Food for Work program and VUP public works program. Over the next ten years, these would be streamlined into four social protection floor programs: Old Age Grant, Disability Grant, Child Grant and Public Works Program. Table 3 shows where each of the current social protection floor programs would work into a future, streamlined program.

**Table 3: Existing Support Programs and Future Social Protection Floor**

Current Social Protection Floor Programs	Potential Future Social Protection Floor Programs
VUP Direct Support Program FARG Cash Payments for Genocide Survivors	Old Age Grant
VUP Direct Support Program FARG Cash Payments for Genocide Survivors Disability Payments for ex-Combatants	Disability Grant
Payments to Children under VUP Direct Support	Child Grant
VUP Public Works Program WFP Food for Work Programs	Public Works Program

(Source: Ministry of Local Government 2011)

Under the current system, the following programs for support and cash transfers are in place:

- VUP Public Works – this program provides employment extremely poor households that have labour capacity. It is intended to pay wages to give a short-term boost to household income and help the household escape poverty. Eligible persons are: adult women and men, including lactating women after 10 months of giving birth and female heads of households. It excludes sick

or mentally challenged people unable to undertake even light work; pregnant women in their final trimester of pregnancy; lactating women in the first 10 months after child birth.

- VUP Credit Packages – this is intended to extend credit to the extremely poor for the creation of enterprise through VUP-insured micro-loans. Eligible adults (including lactating or pregnant women and female heads of households) must not be sick or mentally challenged and unable to undertake even light work. Landless individuals who cannot generate income to repay the loan are also excluded.
- VUP Direct Support – eligible people are those who are unable to participate in VUP public works and are ineligible for VUP credit packages. Also included are: some disabled persons, child-headed households, marginalized persons, elders, nursing mothers in their first 10 months after birth, pregnant women in their last trimester, genocide survivors, persons living with HIV/AIDS, street children, widow-headed households, refugees, returnees and those who do not have sufficient reliable support from relatives in the form of remittances. It is intended to act as a safety for households in crisis as well as providing more long-term support to Rwanda's poorest and most vulnerable households. It is expected to benefit approximately 345,000 people in 5% of households nationwide.

Grants for other vulnerable groups – there are several categorical programs in which cash payments are made to various groups. Some of these programs overlap with each other as well as with VUP direct support (under the National Social Protection Policy these programs would eventually be streamlined and better coordinated). The National Foundation for the Assistance of the Victims of the Genocide has a grant element (FARG) in which cash transfers of RWF 5,000 are distributed monthly to vulnerable genocide survivors. The Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission issues grants of FRW 120,000 to ex-combatants three months after their demobilization.

#### *2.2.4 National Social Security Policy*

In compliance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Labour Organization, Rwanda is in a transition period toward a national social security policy. The social security scheme in Rwanda is fragmented and covers only a small minority of the country (i.e. those who are employed in the formal sector and contribute to their employer's program). The National Social Security Policy, set out in 2009, identifies the following targets to be achieved (in line with VUP) by 2020 (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning 2009):

- Establishment a pension system that covers every resident of Rwanda. This will consist of three branches: public pension, provident fund and private pension. The public pension program will

remain mandatory for the entire formal sector and provide 100 per cent coverage. The provident fund will also be mandatory for the formal sector and will complement the public pension program. The provident fund will handle pre-retirement benefits such as housing and education. Private pension funds will also be managed for the rest of the population. Those who are not in the formal sector may choose whether they will contribute to a private or public pension fund.

- The creation of an “occupational hazards” branch which will continue to be mandatory and provide 100 per cent coverage for the formal sector. Under the National Social Security Policy, this will be opened up to organized groups from the informal sector (e.g. cooperatives) with the goal of achieving 70 per cent coverage.
- Provide universal health coverage through the National Mutual Health Insurance Policy (see the detailed description in this chapter).
- Expand the current maternity and sickness branches to include 100 per cent, mandatory coverage in the formal sector. Also, this will be expanded to the informal sector through organized groups and will achieve 70 per cent coverage.
- Establish unemployment benefits as soon as economic conditions permit.

#### 2.2.5 *Ubudehe*

Ubudehe is rooted in Rwanda’s culture of mutual assistance. In Ubudehe, communities gather to plan and implement anti-poverty measures either conceived of locally or in conjunction with the central government and its local counterparts. It was piloted in the poorest, Southern Province and was eventually implemented across the country.

In Ubudehe, each village selects two poor families from among themselves and, with the assistance of two trained volunteers, develop strategies with the families and the larger community to help to lift the family out of poverty. The Government of Rwanda, in its 2002 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, identified six economic categories to help communities identify the poor who need assistance. These categories are outlined in Table 4. The categories that are eligible for assistance under Ubudehe are the bottom two: “Umutindi Nyakujya” and “Umutindi”. Ubudehe categories are also used in other social protection programs. The bottom two categories are eligible for assistance with Mutual Health Insurance, school assistance, and basic entitlements under the National Policy for Orphans and Vulnerable Children.

The primary goals of Ubudehe are to allow the community to work together to address poverty reduction and to foster a culture of mutual help and assistance. Ubudehe also has the auxiliary goal of increasing social cohesion by creating social capital among groups and that they will therefore be more likely to settle disputes with dialogue than with violence.

**Table 4: The Characteristics of Households in Rwanda**

Category of Household	Characteristics
<i>Umutindi Nyakujya</i> (those in abject poverty)	Those who need to beg to survive. They have no land or livestock and lack shelter, adequate clothing and food. They fall sick often and have no access to medical care. Their children are malnourished and they cannot afford to send them to school.
<i>Umutindi</i> (the very poor)	The main difference between the <i>umutindi</i> and the <i>umutindi nyakujya</i> is that this group is physically capable of working on land owned by others, although they themselves have either no land or very small landholdings, and no livestock.
<i>Umukene</i> (the poor)	These households have some land and housing. They live on their own labour and produce, and though they have no savings, they can eat, even if the food is not very nutritious. However they do not have a surplus to sell in the market, their children do not always go to school and they often have no access to health care.
<i>Umukene wifashije</i> (the resourceful poor)	This group shares many of the characteristics of the <i>umukene</i> but, in addition, they have small ruminants and their children go to primary school.
<i>Umukungu</i> (the food rich)	This group has larger landholdings with fertile soil and enough to eat. They have livestock, often have paid jobs, and can access health care.
<i>Umukire</i> (the money rich)	This group has land and livestock, and often has salaried jobs. They have good housing, often own a vehicle, and have enough money to lend and to get credit from the bank. Many migrate to urban centres.

Source: The Government of Rwanda Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2002

Some of the plans devised through the Ubudehe process have included replacing livestock lost during the genocide, provision of healthcare, and increasing access to water. These programs are carried out in cooperation with the government and to date the Ubudehe initiative claims thousands of examples of active citizen action (Sahinguvu, F. 2010).

## **2.3 Policies to Build Social Cohesion and Inclusion**

### *2.3.1 Abunzi*

Abunzi is a system of committees that act as community mediators. These traditional mediators were institutionalized in 2006 under organic law n° 31/2006 of 14/08/2006 and was amended by organic law n° 02/2010 of 09/06/2010. They were revived to help mediate minor civil and criminal cases, especially those involving land disputes, and to increase social cohesion and stability. These mediations are mandatory before filing a case in court and help to effectively and efficiently settle disputes.

There are two levels of mediating committees consisting of 12 members. The first level is at the cell level and the second, functioning as an appeal, at the sector level. These committees are elected by the cell and sector councils for five year terms.

If a person has a claim, they report it to the executive secretary of the committee and an appointment is set for the parties to gather for mediation. Three mediators are selected by the disputing parties. If one of the parties is dissatisfied with the decision made by the Abunzi they may appeal to the sector level. If they are dissatisfied with the decision at the sector level, they may appeal to the primary courts. At this point they enter the judicial system.

There was a survey of Abunzi performance conducted in 2011 with largely positive results. The mediation committees' performance was ranked highly (77.2%) by citizens included in the survey (Rwanda Governance Board 2012).

### *2.3.2 Forum for Political Parties*

After a political party registers in Rwanda they become part of the Forum for Political Parties. This forum functions as a platform for dialogue and exchange among political organizations. The main functions of the forum are:

- Consultation and political contribution to good governance of the country;
- Party leadership development;
- Information, evaluation, and political mediation.

Within the forum parties collaborate to consolidate national unity. The forum also mediates in conflicts that arise among political parties.

### *2.3.3 Gacaca Courts*

In the wake of the 1990-1994 civil war and genocide, Rwanda was faced with the problem of processing the hundreds of thousands of genocide suspects. This challenge was compounded by the fact that there were very few lawyers and judges left in the country and justice needed to be administered on a very limited budget.

Gacaca was born as a way to work through these challenges in June 2002. The two general objectives of gacaca were to prosecute every individual genocide suspect and to begin the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Rwandan society. The prosecution was carried out by respected individuals elected

from among the local population. These elected officials were then trained in general legal principles and gacaca procedures.

The gacaca courts closed in June of 2012 and during the decade-long process the system processed as many as one million cases. By contrast, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha, Tanzania, a court set up to process the worst offenders of the genocide, has completed 69 trials (Clark, P. 2012)

#### 2.3.4 *Imidugudu*

Following the genocide in 1994, the Government had to deal simultaneously with the reintegration of millions of returning refugees and reconciliation between groups that historically harboured animosity. One of the programs implemented to address these issues was Imidugudu – meaning “villages”. It was originally conceived during the Arusha protocol signed June 1993, before the genocide, to create a framework for dealing with returning refugees. Under the Imidugudu policy, returning refugees would not claim back their property if they had been gone more than 10 years. Instead, these people would be settled in villages on land provided by the government. However, following the genocide, Imidugudu became an emergency relief program meant to provide housing for returning refugees as well as for those left homeless after the genocide. It evolved even further from a policy meant to target returning refugees and the homeless into a resettlement program of the entire country. It was meant to group people into villages, thus freeing up land for more efficient use in agriculture. The integration of different ethnic groups was also meant to relax relations between the two groups: “When everybody is living together they share their work, their problems, their beer” (Hilhorst and van Leeuwen 1999).

Under Imidugudu, people were encouraged through economic incentives to settle in determined areas. This was done to attempt to avoid the problems witnessed in rural development and resettlement programs of other countries that failed because resettlement was involuntary. *Umuganda* (see detailed description in this chapter), or community work, was used to build the houses and infrastructure for these villages. The villages were composed of 100-200 houses on plots of land from 10-20 hectares.

The overall goals of the Imidugudu policy are to:

- Find a long-term solution to the problems of resettling refugees after 1994.
- Make it easier for authorities to provide basic facilities and services.
- Enhance the security of the people in rural areas.
- Settle people of different ethnic origin and background together so as to enhance peace and reconciliation (RISD 1999).

### 2.3.5 *Imihigo*

Imihigo is at the heart of local governance in Rwanda. It is a performance contract between the president and each district's mayor. It has also been expanded to include each strata of government. Each leader makes a reciprocal contract with the entities above and below them all the way to individual citizens. It is a participatory planning process designed to make it possible for every Rwandan to be involved in local development and to enable them to hold their leaders accountable for this progress.

Planning begins with individual households reporting to their villages, villages to cells, cells to sectors, and so on to the district level. The district development plan reflects the priorities of the central government and this contract is signed by both district leaders and the president. It is viewed as a way for Rwanda to decentralize policymaking while maintaining accountability. Leaders are held accountable at yearly reviews of Imihigo contracts where the outcomes are published and widely disseminated. The contracts themselves are also transparent and made available to the public (Peace Building 2009).

### 2.3.6 *Itorero and Ingando*

The national education institution of Itorero was created for instruction of the population in matters of national interest. It is active at the cell and sector level and it is intended to be rolled out across the country in the future. These education centres bring together various groups and educate them in positive values and norms of Rwandan society. Itorero also aims to promote a culture of patriotism by outlining the positive achievements of Rwanda (National Unity and Reconciliation Commission 2009).

Ingando was originally established to assist in the reintegration of ex-combatants. It was eventually expanded to include school-age youths and then to other adult groups. These groups are brought together in camps for periods lasting from three weeks to two months where they are instructed by the government of Rwanda in: analysis of Rwanda's problems; history of Rwanda; political and socioeconomic issues in Rwanda and Africa; and the rights, obligations and duties of Rwandans.

### 2.3.7 *National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC)*

NURC is an institution created under the 2003 constitution. The primary objective of NURC is to foster unity and reconciliation among Rwandans who had, for much of their history, been subject to bad governance characterized by human rights abuses, violence, and discrimination. NURC has two main divisions: civic education and peace building & conflict management.

NURC's civic education arm informs Rwandans of their rights and duties as they relate to government institutions. The peace building & conflict management arm monitors whether various laws and policies



conform to national unity and reconciliation policy. It does this by reviewing laws passed by the government, proposing reforms to existing laws, monitoring injustice and discrimination, generating reports about the extent to which government organs adhere to unity and reconciliation guidelines, and mediating conflicts pertaining to unity and reconciliation.

### 2.3.8 *Umuganda*

As part of its Vision 2020 development programme, the government implemented a community service policy: Umuganda. It was created to help supplement the national budget spent in construction and the repair of basic infrastructure. The work done is organized by community members and is done voluntarily and without pay.

The projects completed through Umuganda include, but are not limited to, the construction of schools, feeder roads, road repair, terracing, reforestation, home construction for vulnerable people, erosion control, water canals, etc.

The goals of this policy are:

- Supplement national resources by executing specific activities;
- Instil a culture of collective effort in the population;
- Resolve problems faced by the population by the use of locally available resources;
- Restore the dignity of manual labour.

Planning for Umuganda is done at council meetings at the cell level. It is the responsibility of local leaders as well as national leaders to mobilise the population to participate in Umuganda. Community members meet and they plan the date (usually a weekend) and the activity. Participation in Umuganda is compulsory for all able-bodied citizens. It is expected that this policy will result in a more cohesive society as all members of a community come together to complete a project that benefits the community. Reports are prepared monthly to account for the value and quantity of work done (Ministry of Local Government 2007).

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