



REPUBLIKA Y'U RWANDA



KOMISIYO Y'IGIHUGU Y'UBUMWE N'UBWIYUNGE

COMMISSION NATIONALE POUR L'UNITE ET LA RECONCILIATION

NATIONAL UNITY AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

THE NATIONAL POLICY ON UNITY AND RECONCILIATION

SEPTEMBER 2007

CONTENTS

1. PREAMBLE

The definition of unity and reconciliation

The nature of the problem

Challenges

2. UNDERLYING REASONS FOR PUTTING IN PLACE A NATIONAL POLICY ON
UNITY AND RECONCILIATION

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON WHICH UNITY AND RECONCILIATION ARE
FOUNDED.

4. MAIN OBJECTIVES FOR THE POLICY ON UNITY AND RECONCILIATION.

Global objective

Specific objectives

5. STRATEGIES

5.1 Policy Programs for fostering Unity and Reconciliation.

5.1.1 Civic Education

5.1.2 Community Education

5.1.3 Advocacy

5.1.4 Research

5.1.5 Community Consultations

5.1.6 Partnership with various institutions

5.1.7 Combating poverty and ignorance

5.1.8 Monitoring and Evaluation

6. NATIONAL UNITY AND RECONCILIATION POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 The role of various partners and stakeholders in implementing

the policy on unity and reconciliation.

6.1.1 Role played by grassroots leadership

6.1.2 Role played by various ministries, government institutions and
Para-statal Organisations

6.1.3 Role played by Civil Society

6.1.4 Role played by Private Sector

6.1.5 Role played by legal political parties in Rwanda

6.1.6 Role played by Donors

6.1.7 Role played by Rwandan population

6.2 The role of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission in relation to her mandate.

7.CONCLUSION.

1. PREAMBLE

This National Policy on Unity and Reconciliation is mainly based on principles of Good Governance that Rwanda has undertaken to follow, the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda promulgated on 4th June 2003 as amended to this day, particularly in its chapter of the Fundamental Principles: **Article 9 and Article 178**. This policy is also based on ideas taken from Vision 2020, the Government programs, and those taken from law n° 03/99 of 12th March 1999 which establishes the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission and law n°35/2002 of 14th November 2002 as amended to this day.

The content of this policy relate closely to The Arusha Peace Accord (1993), The Urugwiro Consultations (1998-1999) and various community consultations and researches that the Commission undertook between 1999 and 2006.

This document comprises underlying reasons for establishing a National Policy on Unity and Reconciliation, the nature and origin of the socio-political problems

in Rwanda, the guiding principles, objectives and the policy's implementation strategy.

The policy acknowledges the wanton destruction of the national unity and that its reconstruction is an inevitable obligation of all of us. It emphasizes that unity and reconciliation is the only option that Rwanda has chosen.

It is the responsibility of every Rwandan to strive for these values and to ensure that they are attained and jealously safeguarded. The policy underscores the importance of the synergy derived from participation of every individual as a must for the attainment of unity and reconciliation.

Finally, this Policy particularly defines the role played by every individual and every institution.

1.1. THE DEFINITION OF UNITY AND RECONCILIATION

Unity and Reconciliation of Rwandans is defined as a consensus practice of citizens who have common nationality, who share the same culture and have equal rights; citizens characterized by trust, tolerance, mutual respect, equality, complementary roles/interdependence, truth, and healing of one another's wounds inflicted by our history, with the objectives of laying a foundation for sustainable development.¹

To attain this, it requires a radical change on the part of the Rwandan society and willingness to transform Rwanda into a reconciled and united nation in which all citizens have equal freedoms and a country that has a common vision for a better future.

1.2. THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Rwanda has gone through various historical eras of bad governance characterized by divisions and discriminations based on ethnicity, religion, region of origin and nepotism which have had devastating effects on the social relations of her people.

Some of those effects include divisions, discrimination of all kinds, persecutions, killings, exile of some Rwandans and wars; all these culminating in the 1994 genocide.

Genocide ideology and other divisive ideologies propagated by a section of disgruntled Rwandans continue to manifest even after the 1994 genocide; this pause serious impediment to the process of unity and reconciliation.

¹ Definition; by the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission.

1.3 Effects of genocide that weigh heavily on Rwandan society.

Some of those effects include:

- Serious levels of Trauma,
 - Child Headed Families, orphans,
 - Widows and Widowers of genocide,
 - Single aged persons,
 - Issue of compensation and reparation
-
- Having large numbers of genocide suspects in prisons has serious impact on justice process, on national economy and the survival of their own families.
 - Sorrow and psychological wounds.
-
- Prejudices emanating from existing divisions, genocide ideology and personal socio-political gains while analyzing the country's problems;
 - Different interpretations of Rwandan history;
 - Failure to reveal the truth during Gacaca proceedings;
 - Skepticism and lack of trust observed among the Rwandan society due to their past bad experience;
 - Loss of some of ethical and cultural values that used to guide harmonious inter-personal relations of Rwandans and to seal their unity;
 - Poor living conditions still visible among some Rwandans neglected through history.
 - Continued manifestation of poverty and ignorance among Rwandans.

2. UNDERLYING REASONS FOR A NATIONAL POLICY ON UNITY AND RECONCILIATION.

After a long history of bad governance that culminated in the genocide of 1994, the Rwanda government believes unity and reconciliation of the people of Rwanda is the cornerstone in reconstructing a nation characterized by the rule of law and a nation with a clear vision for sustainable development. This fact is emphasized in the Fundamental Principles of the National Constitution, in its article 9, and in Article 178 which institutes the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission as an independent organ responsible for executing these same principles.

Rwanda is determined to attain unity and reconciliation of her people. This is clearly stated in the country's vision 2020. The achievement of this objective will be determined by emphasis on good governance, the rule of law, human rights and improvement of her citizens' welfare.

This National Policy on unity and reconciliation therefore, will serve as a monitoring and evaluation tool designed to measure achievements made, challenges encountered and strategies put in place by various organs in fostering unity and reconciliation and facilitating change of mind-set.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON WHICH UNITY AND RECONCILIATION ARE FOUNDED.

- To promote the spirit of Rwandan identity and put national interests first instead of favors based on ethnicity, blood relations, gender, religions, region of origin, etc;
- To combat genocide and its ideology
- To strive at creating a nation governed by the rule of law and respect for human rights.
- To combat any form of divisionism and discrimination.
- Promotion of interdependence and synergy in nation building.
- To mutually strive to heal one another's physical and psychological wounds while building future interpersonal trust based on truth telling, repentance and forgiveness.
- To commemorate the 1994 genocide with the aim of making "Never Again" a reality.
- To strive for self-determination and have passion for work.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THIS NATIONAL POLICY ON UNITY AND RECONCILIATION

4.1. The global objective of the National Policy on Unity and Reconciliation

The global objective of this National Policy on Unity and Reconciliation is to build a united Rwanda in which all citizens have equal rights and they are free to corporately participate in the governance and development of their country.

4.2. Specific objectives of the National Policy on Unity and Reconciliation

The following are specific objectives of this National Policy on Unity and Reconciliation:

- To fight any form of divisionism and discrimination;
- To fight against genocide ideology;
- To sensitize Rwandans at all levels, to strive and value their unity
- To empower Rwandans with the capacity to analyze their problems and find adequate solutions to them.
- To promote a culture of peace based on trust, tolerance and respect for human rights;
- To mentor Rwandans on patriotic values and on actively playing part in the governance of their country.
- To promote values existing in the Rwandan culture that are capable of contributing to development and national unity.

5. STRATEGIC TOOLS

In order to achieve the above objectives, the following strategic tools will be used:

- Civic Education
- Community Sensitization
- Advocacy
- Research
- Consultative Discussions
- Partnership with community and various institutions
- Combating poverty in the Rwandan society.

5.1 Programs of the National Policy on Unity and Reconciliation:

5.1.1 Civic Education

- To sensitize every Rwandans on his/her rights, the rights of others and need to always fight for and defend those rights.
- To inculcate the culture of peace; beginning with the family set up, and then the youth, focusing particularly on schools.
- To entrench peace education exchanges, as a means of reinforcing the culture of peace and good governance.
- To educate Rwandans on the importance of respecting and defending the Constitution of the republic of Rwanda.
- To instill among the people of Rwanda, the principles embedded in the nation's Vision 2020.
- To ensure that the History of Rwanda is taught at all levels of the community;

- To explain to the people of Rwanda the meaning of the symbols embedded in the national emblems and values the country attaches to them;
- To empower people in various positions of leadership to become exemplary servant leaders;
- To ensure that unity and reconciliation become part and parcel of the school curriculum at all levels of education in Rwanda;
- To request the establishment of a Faculty of Unity and Reconciliation in all universities in the country;
- To establish specific unity and reconciliation programs targeting Rwandan Diaspora;

5.1.2. Community Sensitization

- Sensitize Rwandans to understand that a family should be the foundation of unity and reconciliation and to mentor their children on the values of inter-dependability/ trustworthiness/fidelity, integrity, unity and patriotism;
- To sensitize parents on the choice of names given to their children, avoiding particularly those names that reflect hatred and divisionism;
- To fight divisionism and genocide ideology.
- To educate the Rwandan society on the Policy of Unity and Reconciliation and to ensure it becomes community owned;
- To sensitize Rwandans on establishing renewed relationship based on mutual trust;

- To sensitize Rwandans on working together, healing one another's wounds caused by our history (refugee status, discrimination, effects of genocide, effects of wars, etc) so as to improve their day- to-day relations.
- To sensitize Rwandans to respond positively to government programs.
- To sensitize Rwandans to learn the importance of analyzing issues;
- To promote values found in our culture that enhance the unity of the people of Rwanda;
- To sensitize the Civil Society, particularly religious institutions and media people on their role in promoting unity and reconciliation among the citizens of Rwanda;
- To clarify, to both Rwandans and foreigners, what the genocide ideology is and that there is law punishing it;

5.1.3. ADVOCACY:

- To support activities that promoting unity and reconciliation of Rwandans;
- To monitor whether the laws and government's programs conform to the principle of unity and reconciliation;
- To fight against all forms of injustice and to eradicate the culture of impunity by ensuring functional rule of law;
- To support initiatives that assist those affected by genocide and its effects;
- To improve living conditions and promote socio-economic development of categories of Rwandans neglected on account of our history;
- To establish, at a national level, an annual week of unity and reconciliation;
- To support activities which promote commemoration of genocide.

5.1.4. Research Work:

- To carry out research on uniting values found in our culture with the aim of using them as catalyst for promotion of unity, reconciliation and sustainable peace;
- To carry out research on prevailing obstacles to unity and reconciliation of Rwandans and to put in place strategies for mitigating conflicts;
- To disseminate ideas and publications that promote peace, unity and reconciliation;
- To carry out research on the History of Rwanda with the intent of availing well researched and credible history of our country so that Rwandans may know their past, understand their present and decide on their future;

5.1.5. Community Consultations:

- To provide Rwandans with a safe forum in which Rwandans can contribute ideas that promote their social cohesion;
- To promote the culture of constructive exchanges and respect for other people's ideas despite differences of opinion;

5.1.6. Promotion of Partnership:

- To have consultative forums between organizations that have initiatives that promote unity and reconciliation;
- To establish and support unity and reconciliation focal points in every institution in the country;

- To promote programs of unity and reconciliation initiated by various institutions in the country;

5.1.7. Fight against Poverty and Ignorance:

- Sensitize parents on fighting poverty and ignorance by sending their children to school;
- Sensitize Rwandans to join profit making Associations and Cooperatives;
- Impress upon Rwandans on promoting the culture of creating jobs rather than always looking for employment;
- Sensitize the private sector and Rwandans in general to invest in rural areas;
- Sensitize the Rwandan Diaspora to actively participate in economic development of their country.

5.1.8. Monitoring and Evaluation:

- To monitor whether all government organs, Civil Society, Religious Institutions, media and political parties diligently implement the national policy on unity and reconciliation.
- To put in place basic indicators which various relevant institutions and Rwandan community in general could use to evaluate the progress of unity and reconciliation;
- Put in place efficient mechanisms to follow up what happens in and outside Rwanda, which could have adverse consequences on unity and reconciliation. This would serve to mitigate any attempt to recreate divisionism in the Rwandan society.

- To denounce and fight any divisive activities, publications and/or utterances.
- To monitor implementation of any resolutions taken in relation to unity and reconciliation.
- To build capacity of all partners operating in the area of unity and reconciliation at various levels of the community.

6. REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS POLICY ON UNITY AND RECONCILIATION.

Unity and reconciliation concerns every aspect of national mainstay. It is in this respect that the principle of unity and reconciliation must be considered in the planning, formulation of policies, planning of performance contracts, in budgeting and in law making process of any institution working in the country.

6.1. The role of various institutions in the implementation of this National Policy on Unity and Reconciliation:

This policy on unity and reconciliation concerns every Rwandan and every institution operating in the country since unity and reconciliation is designed for them. It is a state instrument and it must be followed by every Government and Non-Governmental Organizations.

6.1.1. Decentralized Entities;

- To educate on and popularize this policy till every citizen owns and follows it.
- Grassroots and Local Administration must consider this policy on unity and reconciliation while planning their **performance contracts**.
- Grassroots leaders must sensitize every citizen on this policy.
- To always sensitize their community on unity and reconciliation in their day-to-day work.
- To evaluate unity and reconciliation process in their villages.
- To publicly appreciate and where possible award exemplary community initiatives of unity and reconciliation nature, and any other initiative relating to national program.
- To support and closely monitor community initiatives that promote unity and reconciliation in Imidugudu (Family cluster administrative structure) and Utugari (cellular structure) levels.
- To work together with Abakangurambaga (Volunteer Agents of unity and reconciliation) in promoting unity and reconciliation initiatives.
- To use indicators of unity and reconciliation to gauge its progress.
- To motivate the community in the fight against poverty and ignorance as these constitute challenges/obstacles to unity and reconciliation.

6.1.2. Central Government, Government Institutions and Para-statal organizations.

- To mainstream unity and reconciliation policy in their strategic plan;
- Establish and build capacity of unity and reconciliation forums in every institution;

- To ensure that, new laws and /or amended ones, decisions taken, and various national programs respect the principle of unity and reconciliation;
- The Ministry of Justice in particular, has the responsibility of educating Rwandans and foreigners on laws punishing discrimination and genocide ideology;
- To ensure that internal/particular regulations of each institution respect the police of unity and reconciliation;

6.1.3. CIVIL SOCIETY (Religious Institutions, media, International Organizations and independent Non-profit Organizations).

- To play their part in bringing about people's healing process, truth telling, repentance, forgiveness and to help build trust and hope for the future;
- To play their part in popularizing national programs designed for unity and social welfare of the citizens;
- To show significant role in combating poverty and ignorance especially among the rural community, since poverty and ignorance are major obstacles to unity and reconciliation;

6.1.4. Private Sector

- To avoid and indeed fight any form of discrimination in employment with the aim of promoting unity, reconciliation and gender;
- To show active participation in combating poverty and promoting investment especially in rural area.
- To create investment that are labor intensive;

6.1.5. Political Parties Recognized in Rwanda

- To avoid working practices that divide people along ethnic line, blood-relations, religion, region of origin, sex and other divisive tendencies.
- To sensitize their members, to promote unity and reconciliation and to denounce any manifestation of discrimination and genocide ideology.
- To inculcate the culture of tolerance and mutual respect among the Rwandan society;
- To work within the democratic framework as it gives people appropriation/ownership of their own choice of action;
- To support justice and eradication of the culture of impunity;

6.1.6. Donor Community;

- To support unity and reconciliation programs;
- To support community initiatives that promote unity and reconciliation.
- To mainstream unity and reconciliation in all community based programs/activities they fund;

6.1.7. Rwandan Society in General;

- To strive for unity and reconciliation in their day-to-day life.

- To avoid and combat any form of divisionism and genocide ideology;
- To aim at telling the truth at all times;
- To be patriotic;
- To promote education that instills peaceful coexistence;
- To cooperate and defend one another;
- To develop mutual trust and tolerance;
- To participate in the implementation of government programs;
- To aim at personal and national development.

6.2. The Role of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission.

The National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, as an institution put in place to promote unity and reconciliation, has the obligation of ensuring proper implementation of this National Policy, to coordinate and closely monitor how all stakeholders and partner institutions implement this policy.

In order to have the same understanding of this policy, the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission will work out its implementation program and organize capacity building workshops for all stakeholders and partners.

In conformity with her mandate², the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission will focus on the following activities:

- To prepare and coordinate the national program for the promotion of national unity and reconciliation;

² The National Constitution, Article 178

- To put in place and develop ways and means to restore and consolidate unity and reconciliation among Rwandans;
- To educate and mobilize the population on matters relating to national unity and reconciliation;
- To carry out research, organize debates, disseminate ideas and make publications relating to peace, national unity and reconciliation.
- To make proposals on measures that can eradicate divisions among Rwandans and to reinforce national unity and reconciliation;
- To denounce and fight acts, writings and utterances which are intended to promote any kind of discrimination, intolerance or xenophobia;
- To make annual report and such other reports as may be necessary on the situation of national unity and reconciliation.
- To support programs of Unity and Reconciliation;

CONCLUSION

Unity and Reconciliation is the responsibility of every Rwandan and every institution. It is the only option for peace that Rwanda chose to undertake after the discriminatory and divisive politics that plunged the country into wars that culminated in the 1994 Genocide. Though there is a mandated Commission for National Unity and Reconciliation, this policy provides guideline for all institutions and Rwandans in general, to fulfill this obligation.

It is important, therefore, to create a synergy and complement one another if we have to promote Rwandan nationalism rather than ethnicity, and have a nation where every citizen has equal rights.