

**REPUBLIC OF RWANDA**



**THE PRIME MINISTER**

**Keynote address by the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister**

**Dr. Edouard Ngirente**

**At the 2021 Concordia Annual Summit**

**Kigali, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021**

- **Concordia's Leadership,**
- **Concordia Members,**
- **Distinguished participants all protocol observed,**

1. I am pleased to address this gathering, at the 2021 Concordia Annual Summit, representing His Excellency Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda. He had wished to participate, but could not due to other commitments.

2. I thank the Concordia Co-Founders for the kind invitation extended to Him. This is a testimony of your trust in his visionary leadership.

3. The Concordia Annual Summit presents a commendable opportunity to reflect on the state of global challenges.

4. It is also an occasion to bring together Concordia community to share best practices, and explore new opportunities for strategic partnerships.

- **Distinguished participants,**

5. The challenges that Africa faces today require a new mindset. The pandemic has made clear Africa's need for more self-reliance in strategic sectors such as manufacturing and infrastructure.

6. To kick-start this important conversation, I would like to share with you some lessons from the Rwandan experience, in our journey towards more self-reliance in infrastructure and manufacturing.

7. These key lessons revolve around 3 topics, namely: (a) leveraging private sector led- development with a conducive environment and reforms for long-term growth,

(b) Promoting innovation and going digital, as well as (c) supporting recovery through manufacturing and other targeted actions.

▪ **Distinguished participants,**

8. In the context of Private-sector led growth based on strategic structural policies, Rwanda's business climate remains favourable to investments, offering stability and transparency.

9. Reforms follow a holistic approach covering good governance, macroeconomic stability and business climate.

10. In 2016, the Government of Rwanda enacted a Public-Private Partnerships law. This was part of a broad regulatory and institutional framework for Public-Private Partnerships to provide clarity, transparency and efficiency to investors.

11. Partnerships with the private sector are at the core of Rwanda's trade readiness. For example, Rwanda is implementing the Electronic World Trade Platform (e-WTP) project.

12. The Government of Rwanda also established an inland cargo handling facility called Kigali Logistics Platform.

13. This facility launched in October 2019, is now operational and works are ongoing for its expansion.

▪ **Distinguished participants,**

- 14.** Rwanda, in its National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) is committed to scale up IT infrastructure. This has made Rwanda one of the most ICT ready countries in Africa.
- 15.** Currently, Rwanda counts several miles (7,000km) of fiber optic cable network, over 98% 4G LTE coverage as well as mobile phone penetration that exceeds 84% of the population.
- 16.** In addition, institutional openness to innovations has brought in new connectivity solutions such as Zipline.
- 17.** This is the first company to deliver lifesaving medical supplies by drone in the world. The project was launched as a proof of concept in Rwanda, and has since expanded into other African countries.
- 18.** We believe that the manufacturing sector will play a significant role in economic development of African continent.
- 19.** In this regard, since 2018, manufacturing has started reemerging with a 12% share of GDP in 2020.
- 20.** This is a clear indication that manufacturing is re-taking shape, and it holds potential as Africa navigates the path to the post-pandemic recovery.
- 21.** There is also a great expectation with the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). This is a single market of 1.3 billion people for goods and services in Africa.

22. It is expected to unlock manufacturing potential and facilitate industrialization, driving sustainable growth and creating jobs.
23. The challenges of accessing sufficient vaccine supplies came as a wake-up call for Africa to scale up production of crucial medical products, such as vaccines.
24. In this regard, Rwanda is one of the African countries planning to set up a plant for vaccine manufacturing.

▪ **Distinguished participants,**

25. The Government of Rwanda put in place an Economic Recovery Fund which was established to support various businesses starting with the most hit by the pandemic so that they can survive, resume production and safeguard employment.
26. The fund also aims at expanding domestic production of essential products, beyond the pandemic.
27. In a bid to speed up recovery and economic resilience, the Government of Rwanda started the Manufacture and Build to Recover Program (MBRP) in December 2020.
28. This was also after realizing that more incentives were needed to lower production costs, and thereby stimulate investments in the economy.
29. This program offers taxes and import duty exemptions to investors. It is expected to increase investments in real estate and manufacturing and therefore provide thousands of new decent jobs to our citizens.

**30.** Today, we are glad that all those initiatives are delivering tangible results. Projections show that our economy is expected to grow by 5.1% in 2021.

▪ **Distinguished participants,**

**31.** As I conclude, I would like to emphasize that now, more than ever, it is important to join forces to support private sector development, and improve our African economic growth.

**32.** Let's make the most out of the discussions today with this remarkable panel that includes the private sector and public sector actors. I am confident that this will bring to the table innovative partnership-driven solutions.

**33.** On behalf of President Paul Kagame, I once again thank Concordia's leadership for the invitation to take part in this conversation.

**34.** I wish you fruitful deliberations at this year's Concordia Annual Summit.

**Thank you.**