

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



THE PRIME MINISTER

Remarks by the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister

Dr. Ngirente Edouard

At the 2020 Concordia Africa Initiative

Kigali, November 17th, 2020

Thank you Mr. Nicholas, Co-founder and Chairman of the Board of Concordia,

- **Concordia's Leadership Council,**
- **Concordia Members,**
- **Distinguished participants,**

1. It is a pleasure to welcome you to this second day of the 2020 Concordia Africa Initiative. I would like to extend my appreciation to the Concordia team, for partnering with Rwanda, through the Rwanda Development Board, in organising this important event.
2. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global economy has been deep. No region or sector has been spared the effects of the pandemic. Rwanda, like the rest of the world, was negatively impacted by this global crisis.
3. COVID-19 came at a time when Rwanda was sustaining a high economic growth rate. Rwanda's GDP increased by 9.4 per cent in 2019. This is one of the highest growth rates not just on the continent but also globally. Despite the setback, we expect with confidence that Rwanda's economy will bounce back.

Distinguished guests,

4. What we have learned from the crisis, is that it is important for countries like Rwanda to structure our recovery agenda around three key pillars of resilience, partnerships and innovation.

- 5.** In terms of promoting economic resilience, our primary objective was to attract more investments in the manufacturing sector. These investments not only aimed at producing products that are most needed in our domestic market, but also for export in order to reduce our existing trade deficit.
- 6.** With the pandemic, most national borders have been closed and critical global supply chains disrupted. However, this presented an unseen opportunity for Rwanda.
- 7.** We realized that many of the imported products such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), could actually be made in Rwanda. This was done by repurposing existing manufacturing facilities towards COVID-related products.
- 8.** We were able to produce different types of masks, face-shields as well as hand sanitizers. This clearly revealed the huge untapped opportunity in our domestic manufacturing.
- 9.** It has also paved the way to develop targeted strategic interventions. These have been key in producing quality Made in Rwanda products for both the domestic and export markets. This will no doubt lay the foundations for a stronger and more resilient development model.
- 10.** On partnerships, during COVID-19 crisis, the Government of Rwanda was able to quickly mobilise the population for a decisive and effective public health response. Citizens adhered to the health and safety measures. This was mostly due to an existing strong social trust between the Government and the citizens.

- 11.** This trust has been built over time, with a governance model under the leadership of H.E Paul Kagame, the President of the Republic of Rwanda, that put emphasis on accountability, inclusiveness and results-based performance.
- 12.** In the fight against the pandemic, we have also greatly benefitted from strong global partnerships such as from multilateral organisations and also from different friends of Rwanda. Through these partnerships, much needed resources were provided to fight the pandemic, support the private sector and fund much needed growth to lift the country out of the economic recession.
- 13.** The private sector has been a key partner in the response to the pandemic as well as in charting the path towards recovery. We have indeed experienced the critical importance of building a conducive business environment.
- 14.** This was evident especially with business-friendly and efficient regulations and institutions. In this regard, Rwanda was able to rapidly adapt to the new normal and continue to serve the needs of business.
- 15.** To give an example, the investments made in automating most Government services resulted in minimal disruptions for businesses seeking government services during the pandemic.
- 16.** The Government also mobilised resources towards an economic recovery plan. This plan includes a recovery fund which will lessen the negative impact on businesses, enabling them to preserve jobs and drive economic recovery.

17. Building strong institutions, maintaining strong partnerships between Government and the Private Sector, as well as continuously enhancing the business environment, will remain a key priority for the Government. This will be done as we focus on attracting private investment to drive growth and economic resilience.

Distinguished guests,

18. There are several opportunities to invest in Rwanda, across all sectors from infrastructure, Agriculture, ICT to Finance, just to name a few. In this regard, conducive conditions were set to facilitate those who are interested to invest in Rwanda.

19. As far as innovation is concerned, prior to the pandemic, Rwanda was already positioning itself as the leading innovation and technology hub in the region. Therefore, the pandemic has further pushed us to rapidly adapt and fast-track our plans to become a leading innovation hub in the region.

20. We have been able to leverage on several existing technologies and rapidly scaled them up. As a result, we have seen a rapid increase in innovative technologies such as in e-commerce, cashless payment solutions, digital health, drone technology and robotics.

Distinguished guests,

21. As I conclude, allow me to thank the organising team of this year's Concordia Africa Initiative. As you are aware, it was supposed to take place in Rwanda but due to the pandemic, it went virtual.

- 22.** However, I strongly believe that this is the time for African countries to come together to lead discussions and initiatives such as these that boost economic transformation and development.
- 23.** It is my hope that we make the most out of these discussions in order to continue advancing partnership-driven solutions to the continent's challenges.
- 24.** Once again, I thank you for having chosen Rwanda to co-host this year's summit. I look forward to welcoming you when you visit Rwanda soon.

Thank you so much.