

Succinct information on the implementation of the agreed conclusions on 'Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work' (CSW)

1. Strengthening normative and legal frameworks (paragraphs 40 (a) to (j))

The government of Rwanda views Promoting Gender equality and Women Empowerment not only as human rights but also as a development issue. Due to high level political will of the government, the economic empowerment of women in all aspects of life in Rwanda has been made possible. In line with protecting women and girls' rights and ensuring gender equality, a conducive legal framework has been established; the below specific actions have holistically contributed to:

a) Specific actions that have been taken to enact, strengthen and enforce laws and regulatory frameworks that ensure gender equality and prohibit discrimination against women in the world of work?

b) Specific actions that have been taken to enact, strengthen and enforce laws and regulations that uphold the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value in both the public and private sector)

c) Measures that have been taken to enact, strengthen and enforce laws and policies to eliminate all forms of violence and harassment against women in the world of work and provide means of effective redress in cases of noncompliance?

As a matter of fact;

- The constitution of the Republic of Rwanda, of 2003 revised in 2015, provides for equality between men and women without discrimination of any kind.
- Law regulating Labor in Rwanda and provides for equal opportunities and equal pay for women and men, and prohibits sexual harassment in the workplace
- Existence of Gender equality Seal Certification Program to support companies to establish standards that promote gender equality in the workplace
- Law establishing and governing maternity leave benefits scheme, this guarantees security of women employment and protection of a child.
- *Law N° 43/2013 of 16/06/2013 governing land in Rwanda:* This law guarantees equal rights for men and women on land access, ownership and utilization.
- *Law N° 27/2016 of 08/07/2016 governing matrimonial regimes, donations and successions:* This law provides equal treatment of legitimate children in succession without any discrimination between male and female children and right of the surviving spouse to take part in succession
- *The GoR through MIGEPROF and MINICT/RISA contributed in putting together the A.C. blueprint aimed at guiding commitment makers for tangible and measurable pledges for the next 5 years (2021-2026), and Rwanda made its specific commitments aimed at bridging gender gaps*
- *Development of a women's empowerment through digital technologies*

2. Strengthening education, training, and skills development (paragraphs 40 (k) to (n))

a) What measures have been taken to mainstream a gender perspective into education and training programs in order to facilitate the effective transition from education or unemployment to work?

In Rwanda, Girls' education is a central component of strategies to ensure that there is inclusive basic education for all, and beyond basic schooling to ensure that girls are appropriately skilled to contribute positively to economic and social development of the country.

The Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) and the National Girls Education Policy (2008) under review emphasize the commitment of the Government of Rwanda to ensuring equal access to quality education for girls and boys at all levels.

There has been a solid legal and policy framework aimed at protecting and promoting the rights to education of the child, in particular the girl child. In this respect the law n° 71/2018 of 31/08/2018 relating to the protection of the child guarantees equal rights to girls and boys and prohibits any form of child exploitation.

The law n°. 36/2018 of 29/06/2018 determining the organization of education in Rwanda eliminates all grounds and obstacles that hinder the development of girls and women's education and any other groups that need special attention. This is consistent with regional and international legal instruments and national policies related to child protection.

The initiatives to promote girls' education are largely being employed and these are for instance; role model approaches, Boys for Change campaign, as well use the male gender champions to mobilize communities on embracing positive masculinity.

In order to increase women's employment opportunities and diversified skills from unemployment or school to the world of work, Rwanda has continued to strengthen demand driven Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) programs to close the skills gap as stated in HeForShe Rwanda's impact commitments. Female enrollment in TVET level has increased from 39.2% (2017) to 41.1% (2019).

Employment programs such as National Employment Program (NEP) and National Skills Development and Employment Promotion Strategy (NSDEPS) that support and foster job creation with special focus for youth and women have been put in place. The programs had interventions such as hands-on skills interventions aiming at empowering youth and women with employable skills/capacity in order to be employed or self-employed. These interventions include Rapid Response Training (training for job), Industrial based training (on job training), Massive vocational training, reconversion training (targeting university graduates), Recognition of Prior Learning, Professional Internship Program (for university graduates). All these interventions prepare women to enter the world of work

Initiatives like "*Inkubito z'Icyeza*" (awarding the best performing girls and scholarship schemes for girls) under Imbuto Foundation that support girls from vulnerable families to access school and pursue their dreams and participate in

traditionally male dominated science fields like Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Information Communication Technology (ICT) for increased levels of employability.

3. Implementing economic and social policies for women's economic empowerment (paragraphs 40 (o) to (mm))

What actions and investments have been made to support gender-responsive social protection and care infrastructure and services?

Rwanda has made important strides in improving access to reproductive health services especially those related to child, maternal and reproductive health. However, the percentage of women using any modern contraceptive methods of family planning has gradually increased up to 48% in 2014/2015 from 45% in 2010.

Rwanda has also made significant progress in reducing poverty amongst both men and women. regarding to social protection, women are the majority under the direct support program (58.3% against 41.7% of men on average for the period between 2013/14 and 2017/18) implying that women constitute the majority benefiting from VUP-Direct support.

The overall access rate to improved sanitation facilities is high among Rwandan population. The proportion of female HHs with access to improved sanitation facilities is (80.6%) compared to that of male HHs (88.0%).

Rwanda has made tangible progress in the scale up of Isange One Stop Centres (IOSCs) across the country and this has played an important role in addressing GBV in general and improving service delivery to victims of GBV. Government efforts to extend IOSC services to health Centres will increase the reach out to GBV victims and contribute to improve prevention and response in this area. The existence of 44 IOSC in district hospitals coupled with community awareness on GBV have continuously increasing GBV cases by both male and female.

Similarly, the Government of Rwanda and partners have also invested more in men engagement through men and boys centred approaches such as Men engage campaign and HeforShe movement, Gender Equality Seal Program for public and private enterprises and the establishment of Rwanda Men's Resource Centre (RWAMREC), a civil society organisation promoting men's engagement in promoting gender equality and equity.

What specific measures have been implemented to promote women's entry, reentry and advancement in the labour market?

Targeted labour market interventions and programs that target to benefit majority of women and youth have been implemented by different government institutions private sector as well as civil society. The following are the programs but not limited to;

National employment program (NEP), is a government program established in 2014 designed to serve the following objectives; *creating sufficient jobs that are adequately remunerative and sustainable across the economy, equipping the workforce with vital skills and attitude for increased productivity that are needed for the private sector growth, and providing a national framework for coordinating all employment and related initiatives and activities in the public, private sector and civil society.* The program has made progress towards facilitating and supporting job creation with special focus for youth and women especially in its TVET window

National Skills Development and Employment Promotion Strategy (NSDEPS) takes a more holistic and integrated approach to skills development and employment promotion. It also clearly brings out the element of the feedback loop between the two, through introducing a dedicated pillar on “Matching”. In this, it will build on previous programs of NEP, as well as introduce additional programs building on the lessons learnt

Internship program: A program that supports young women and girls fresh graduates in building their capacities in leadership by providing them with a core foundation of critical knowledge and practical skills for their personal future and professional development, and for the development of their country as dynamic, confident and successful women in leadership. This exposure gives them an easy entry in the labour market

4. Addressing the growing informality of work and mobility of women workers (paragraphs 40 (nn) to (qq))

What measures have been implemented to promote the transition from informal to formal paid employment for women?

- ✓ Existence of the Financial Sector Development Strategic Plan (FSD SP) that aims at ensuring that, 90% of the population has access to formal financial services by 2020 and 95% by 2024.
- ✓ Existence of Women and Youth Access to Finance Program that target to increase women and youth formal access to finance
- ✓ Existence of National Employment Program/National Skills Development and Employment Promotion Strategy that promotes employment and access to finance for both men and women
- ✓ Existence of Micro finance policy and National financial literacy education strategy
- ✓ The existence of Umurenge Saving and Credit Cooperatives (Umurenge SACCO) operational in the totality of 416 Sectors across the entire country, and from which a significant number of men and women are accessing finance.
- ✓ Existence of the special guarantee funds for Women in some commercial banks and Business Development Fund as well as special products for women that promote formal access to finance.
- ✓ Existence of pro-poor programs such as VUP and Ubudehe that provide among other things financial services such as loans to the most vulnerable population mainly women and youth

- ✓ Business Development Advisors (BDAs) have been trained and appointed at each local administrative level. They play a role of supporting and advising women and youth to prepare bankable projects.

5. Managing technological and digital change for women's economic empowerment (paragraphs 40 (rr) to (ss))

What specific actions have been taken to support women's access to skills development and decent work in emerging fields, including science, technology, engineering, and mathematics?

The government of Rwanda has put in place different policy, strategic, legal and regulatory frameworks that create a conducive environment for women and girls to attain digital parity and contribute equally to the country development. Closing the digital technology gap means helping girls' access training and educational opportunities in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) and IT (information technology). The initiatives include but not limited to;

The Rwanda vision 2020: Requires that gender be integrated as a crosscutting issue in all development policies and strategies. It prioritizes the use of internet and penetration of telephone especially in rural areas.

National Gender Policy (2021) considers the great importance of ICT Infrastructure with aim to facilitate access to ICT facilities in both rural and urban areas while increasing ICT literacy rate for both men and women, to ensure effective use of ICT devices and access to related services without prejudice to their daily responsibilities.

National Digital Talent Policy aiming at transforming Rwanda into a digitally savvy national by engaging all available talent including women, men, youth and persons with special needs to critically mitigate the talent shortage by bridging ICT skills gap and educate Rwanda's active population in digital literacy to create more jobs and export ICT skills globally.

National Strategy for Transformation (NST1): considers to support and empowerment of women to create business through entrepreneurship and access to finance, the same strategy recognizes ICT as an enabler to fast track socio-economic development of the country.

Women Empowerment through Digital Technologies (WEM-TECH) strategy as a "roadmap towards closing the gender digital divide while ensuring that the digital gap in access and use of digital technologies is closed. Digital Technologies are key factor in improving access to knowledge, increasing economic power and independence

SMART Rwanda Master Plan; is Rwanda's national ICT Strategy developed in 2015, it recognizes Women and Youth Empowerment through Technology as one of the seven pillars of the National Digital Transformation Agenda towards a knowledge-based society. Through this SRMP, the GoR committed to facilitate Women and Girls in ICT capacity building and facilitate projects related to increasing women and girls in ICT related business.

ICT Sector Strategic Plan (2018-2024) with mission to address national priorities for Rwandan society and modernizing the economy using ICT as an engine for accelerated development and economic growth, national prosperity and global competitiveness.

Code and Design for girls is an annual program started by Rwanda Information Society Authority (RISA), about 40 girls have been trained so far. The girls are predominantly in 1st and 2nd year of University.

Ms Geek Competition: This is an annual competition designed to inspire female university/TVET students to think critically and design solutions to issues faced by Rwandans today. In this competition, young women compete based on the innovative ideas as well as their ability to develop a certain technology or develop a business idea

We Code: Initiated by the ICT chamber of Rwanda Private Sector Federation and the University of Rwanda. "250 Startup" is an incubation program that has graduated about 30 startups so far, the startups include girls founded and led startups. To date, 108 women graduated with software and soft skills development in the first two cohorts and as results, 91.5% of all graduates from the first and second cohorts are employed

Girls in ICT: Girls in ICT Rwanda is a group of women, young and old – professionals and students, who are passionate about STEM and have come together to inspire more girls to join these exciting fields. It was founded in December 2011 when Rwanda decided to join the rest of the world in celebrating the international ITU Girls in ICT Day which happens every last week of April and it has mentored 233 young girls from August 2019 – March 2021

Tech Kobwa Boot Camp: This is a one-week boot camp gathering high school girls especially from remote high schools where the access to technology and computer is very limited. For that week, the girls have the chance to learn basic

programming, internet and other computer skills. They also have access to mentors from various sectors who help them discover benefits about technology. Tech Kobwa is an initiative of Peace Corps with Girls in ICT in partnership with Klab and other stakeholders.

Women in ICT awareness campaign: An annual campaign involving women in rural areas, with the objective to interact with other women to understand their different contexts and actual needs. Some of the activities involve training of women and sensitization to attend more digital training centers around them in order to increase their digital skills and adopt usage of ICT devices (smart phones) in their daily activities and business.

Rwanda Coding Academy: model school, designed to be the center of excellence in coding training in Rwanda. It aims at producing local expertise in software development, cyber security, and embedded systems. By principle, each intake has 50/50 gender parity for student enrollment as one way to close on gender gaps in ICT workforce and tech-entrepreneurs

Innovate 4 women: an open competition to both men and women aiming at development of solutions tackling issues faced by women.

Connect Rwanda program was initiated aiming at increasing device penetration especially smartphones, 7073 out of 44,262 smartphones pledged have been distributed to dedicated citizens. Together with other device penetration platforms the national statistics has reached at 17% of smartphone ownership where 1,232,444 (58 %) owned by Males, and 893,243 (42%) owned by Females

Strengthening women's collective voice, leadership, and decision-making (paragraphs 40 (tt) to (aaa))

What specific efforts have been implemented to support women's participation and leadership in trade unions, workers' organizations and employers' organizations?

The Government of Rwanda is committed to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women at all levels and across all sectors. It has been demonstrated in setting enabling legal, policy and strategic frameworks that create conducive environment for women's participation in leadership and decision making. We can mention the following among others;

the constitution guarantees equal rights between Rwandans and between men and women as affirmed by a constitutional requirement to have a minimum of 30% of all decision-making positions reserved for women in public institutions/organs and it has increased representation of women in decision making and governance processes.

The Organic law N° 001/2019.OL of 29/07/2019 Organic Law governing elections was enacted as an additional legislation promoting gender parity in decision making structures of the government.

Law N° 13/2009 of 27/05/2009 regulating labor in Rwanda. This provides for protection of workers against gender-based violence and any kind of harassment at the workplace.

Law N°003/2016 of 30/03/2016 Establishing and Governing Maternity Leave benefits Scheme: The Law establishes and governs maternity leave benefits scheme. It guarantees security for women employment and the protection of the child.

Law N° 43/2013 of 16/06/2013 governing land in Rwanda: This law guarantees equal rights for men and women on land access, ownership and utilization.

Law N° 27/2016 of 08/07/2016 governing matrimonial regimes, donations and successions: This law provides equal treatment of legitimate children in succession without any discrimination between male and female children and right of the surviving spouse to take part in succession

Existence of strategies that promote inclusive education for all such as The Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) and the National Girls Education Policy (2008) under review emphasize the commitment of the Government of Rwanda to ensuring equal access to quality education for girls and boys at all levels. This has capacitated women and girls to participate and occupy leadership positions and decision making.

Existence of Gender equality Seal Certification Program to support private sector companies to establish standards that promote gender equality in the workplace. The program has a dimension of Increasing women's role in decision-making at middle and upper management positions.

The National Gender Machinery plays a major role of coordinating policy implementation, monitoring gender mainstreaming, driving the fight against GBV as well as the empowerment of women and girls for their active participation in the national development processes. Other responsibilities

include lobbying and advocating for gender responsive laws and accountability to gender equality principles within parliament and other government institutions.

The existence of the above mentioned legal, policy and institutional frameworks has resulted into tangible achievements in terms of representation in leadership. From 2018, women reached 61.3% in the Parliament, 55% of the Cabinet members are women, among the Judges 'women stand at 51% while women's share in the local government leadership has improved during 2016 - 2020 from 16.7% to 30 % as District Mayors.

Strengthening the role of the private sector in women's economic empowerment (paragraphs 40 (b) to (e))

What efforts have been undertaken to encourage private firms and institutions to mainstream gender equality considerations in policies and practices?

Existence of Gender mainstreaming strategy for the private sector which has been developed to promote gender equality in the sector and enhance inclusive and sustainable economic transformation. The strategy focuses to address the gaps and challenges in the key thematic areas of production, access to finance, access to information and market opportunities, skills and innovation, labour

relations and inclusiveness at the workplace, management and leadership, and policy and regulatory framework.

Existence of Gender equality Seal Certification Program to support private sector to establish standards that promote gender equality in the workplace. The program has a dimensions of Increasing women's role in decision-making at middle and upper management positions, detecting and eliminating gender based pay gaps, developing and implementing policies to improve work-life balance, increasing women's/men's presence in occupational areas that are traditionally male /female-dominated, Using inclusive and non-sexist communication inside and outside the company, promoting zero tolerance to sexual harassment and gender-based violence in the workplace.

What action has been taken to increase investment and support for women entrepreneurs?

The existence of Entrepreneurship Development Policy (EDP) supports private sector entrepreneurs and provides the necessary environment for private sector dynamism, innovation, and risk taking required for a modern, sophisticated, and rapidly growing economy. The policy focuses to ensure proper functioning of human capital and management, business support, financing, business enabling environment, markets and value chains, technology and infrastructure, and entrepreneurial culture. The policy interventions target both men and women

Existence of National Employment program/National skills Development and employment Promotion strategy under it's critical pillar of entrepreneurship and business development, a number of interventions are implemented facilitating MSMEs to access finance and these include; Business advisory services, SME guarantee scheme, agribusiness investment facility, start-up toolkit loan facility and the majority of beneficiaries are women and youth.

Existence of Women and Youth Access to Finance Strategy that promotes women's access to finance through the provision of incentives such as guarantees and grants for women and youth led medium and small enterprises in order to promote the culture of entrepreneurship especially for women and youth.

Existence of Women Empowerment through Digital Technologies (WEM-TECH) strategy as a "roadmap towards closing the gender digital divide while ensuring that the digital gap in access and use of digital technologies is closed. The strategy also targets to empower women entrepreneurs with digital technologies

Existence of Business Development Fund which compels financial inclusion and access to financial services of individual Rwandans, Association, cooperatives and companies by encouraging banks, Micro Finance Institution (MFIs) and Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOs) to grant MSMEs highly needed Credit by applying different credit guarantee mechanism, matching grants, direct lending to SMEs, Sacco refinancing and Advisory Services. In addition, Business Development Fund has special products for women entrepreneurs.

Existence of 50 Million Women Speak Networking Platform (50MWS) that creates a dynamic Digital Networking Platform for women entrepreneurs. The Platform enables women to connect with one another in ways that will foster peer-to-peer learning, knowledge exchange/transfer, mentoring and the sharing of information and knowledge within communities, and provide them with access to trade finance and market opportunities between urban and rural areas, and across borders and between countries

Existence of Chamber of Women Entrepreneurs (RCWE) which is an umbrella organization of women entrepreneurs in Rwanda with the mandate to empower women in business through capacity building, advocacy, networking, support services, social corporate responsibility and forging partnerships with key stakeholders, as well as inspiring girls and young women entrepreneurs.

Existence of Business clinic program whose objective is to strengthen the capacity of women led businesses for them to keep running and remain viable during the economic slowdown caused by Covid-19 through provision of strategic guidance and business advisory services, mentorship, as well as psycho social support to women entrepreneurs

