OPENING SPEECH by Minister James Musoni

2nd International Conference on Democratic Governance in Africa, Asia, and Middle East:
Accountability and Youth Engagement for Sustainable Development

Kigali, Rwanda
June 30 - July 03, 2014

Serena Hotel, June 30, 2014

- Honourable Ministers,
- Members of Parliament present,
- Mayor of Kigali City,
- CEO, Rwanda Governance Board the host and the Deputy to the President of Cheney University, USA
- One-UN/UNDP Resident Coordinator, ICGLR, and Partners
- Diplomatic Corps, High Commissioners and Ambassadors
- Distinguished scholars and policy makers from around the globe,
- All protocol observed,

ladies and gentlemen,

Key Partners:
LRMC/ICGLR
We are greatly honored and pleased to welcome you to the second International Conference on democratic governance in Africa, Asia and Middle East with focus on Accountability and Youth Engagement for Sustainable Development

I would like first and foremost to congratulate Rwanda Governance Board, and other partnering institutions; Cheyney University from USA, One-UN, ICGLR among others, for organising such a landmark dialogue, which is a strong measuring platform of the renaissance of especially developing states,

I wish to extend my appreciation and gratitude to Prof. SHYAKA, the CEO of Rwanda Governance Board, and his team for spear heading research and dialogue on issues of governance

The fruitful cooperation to advance democracy, through such an International Conference comprising of such an open-minded and diverse audience to dialogue on democratic governance in Africa, and beyond is testimony that we are moving in the right direction

I have noticed that one of the main objectives of this conference is take stock of lessons learnt from Home Grown Initiatives, you could not have got a better place for discussing innovations as Rwanda is a country of 1000 hills, 1000 smiles, and 1000 innovations. You are in the right place. You have as well found the right partner in this; RGB as it is mandated document and assess the impact of our very many Home grown solutions in various sectors for our societal transformation

Key Partners:

LRMC/ICGLR
So, congratulations to the American friends from Cheyney University, the ICGLR Regional Centre and the One-UN /UNDP for this joint successful event.

Distinguished guests,

It is my firm belief that the tradition of bringing together academics, policy makers, journalists, civil society organisations and interested public here in Kigali under the theme of 'Promotion of Democratic Governance' has now been established.

Hosting this conference in Rwanda is highly symbolic. It is generally accepted that 'Democratic Governance' comes as a pre-requisite to the broad socio-economic development of a society. However, in order to translate a principle into tangible results, two conditions must come into play;

First, strong political will for ‘good, inclusive and accountable governance’ stemming from the very top, is a key ingredient for establishment of effective and citizen-responsive institutions. H E, President Paul Kagame leadership has pursued this particular school of thought and implemented it.

And I will quote him, “the difference lies in building institutions, people and leaders who will make these institutions work. It is about implementing the policies identified by people. We chose to push hard to get results and use these results to show more can be done for everyone’s benefits because no one will come from far away to do it for us.”

Key Partners:

LRMC/ICGLR
Secondly, **practical and locally accepted instruments** for instilling the principles of ‘good governance’ into the public administration but also into the hearts and minds of people must be developed and pursued. By this, home grown initiatives have closed up a gap, which we may not have hitherto imagined to close.

I hope through your deliberations, you will reflect and analyze how best we can utilize the Home-Grown Solutions as a unique policy-making approach based on a common vision and philosophy inspired by a country’s values, cultural heritage, history and successful local practices.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my hope that the experience of Rwanda and her trajectory of development since the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi will add important perspectives into the discussion. Especially as you deliberate the important theme of *Accountability and Youth engagement for sustainable development*, with reference to critical factors of Democratic Governance in the 21st century in Africa and beyond.

**Accountability within Democratic Governance** has been a hotly discussed topic for decades. However, new realities and changing societal dynamics require new approaches and tools, which should be made available to the policy makers and explained to the public. Different forms of accountability such as leadership accountability, horizontal and vertical accountability, societal accountability, accountability of leaders to citizens, will surely be examined from different angles and within different contexts.
Youth Engagement is connected with Governance more than ever before. The increasing role of youth in the national, regional but even global political order. Around 85% of people aged between 15 and 24 live in developing countries today mostly in Asia and Africa (UN, Department of Economic & social Affairs report). Young people demonstrate that they possess powers of innovation and an ambition to perform. In return, they demand and are the driving force behind holding their governments accountable for providing decent and fulfilling life.

So connecting good governance and the youth to sustainable development is the right thing to do, democracy and a good governance system should lead to effective participation of citizens put the youth towards development.

Dear participants,

All fundamentals have been put in place to enable us move to the next stage of development, I believe we need to devise practical measures for mind set change, innovation, democracy which suits all realities. This is what the 21st century research should do, what Erwin Rommel “Sweat saves blood, blood saves lives, brains save both.”

Because it is not possible to parachute foreign models of governance or democracy in to other cultures, Political cultures have to be considered - the mind; the mind set does not change as fast as administrative institutions do, and a passive consumption of information hindering critical thought can hold back democratic development.
This is the genesis of the whole debate, what lessons do we draw from political democratization, good governance journey in Africa, Asia and Middle East?

How do improve service delivery to the citizenry? How do we navigate the global challenges? How can we catch up with the fast-paced world? And how do we benefit more from your research findings?

With these remarks it is an opportune time for me to declare the “second International Conference on Democratic Governance in Africa, Asia, and Middle East: Accountability and Youth Engagement for Sustainable Development” officially open.

And I wish you all fruitful time of discussions and with a pleasant stay in Kigali.

MURAKOZE!!! Thank you very much!! Merci beaucoup!