

Rwanda Success Story

*How Rwanda is about to become a Middle Income Country by 2020,
End Poverty by 2030 and become a High Income Country by 2050*

**Applying the Formula for Accelerated Change, A Tool for Visionary
Leaders to achieve Success and Sustainable Development**

$$V \times P^2 \times A \times T = C.$$

“Visionary People 2gether in Action over Time make Change”

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Introduction

Rwanda is probably known for the worst and for the best. On one hand, the country is remembered by many for its tragic past of the genocide against the Tutsi in 1994 when more than one million of Rwandans were murdered just because of who they are or what they thought; and on the other hand, after two decades of its tragic history, Rwanda has seen an unprecedented resurgence becoming one of the emerging countries with the highest economic growth rates and best socio-economic indicators in the world. The question in the minds of many is how this rapid positive change has happened. Against all odds, Rwanda, a country which had been literally doomed to fail as a state has surprisingly witnessed a rapid unprecedented transformation to become a success story in the whole world.

The answer to this question is found in the *Formula for the Accelerated Change: (C=VxP²xAxP)* – “**Visionary People Together in Action Make Change over Time**”. The rapid national change is a product of a combination of four key ingredients (Vision, People, Action and Time) all working together for positive results. In the past two decades, the people of Rwanda have adhered to the principles and pattern of this Formula using its four ingredients effectively and efficiently.

1.1. Vision (V)

After the devastating 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, Rwanda has been governed by a visionary leadership. That leadership created a vision shared and captured by the majority of the people. Between 1997 and 2000, the Government of Rwanda with the participation of the citizenry rallied behind the vision to make the country a knowledge-driven, middle-income country by 2020, known as “Rwanda Vision 2020”. Vision 2020 is a reflection and determination of Rwandans, to construct a united, democratic and inclusive Rwandan identity; to transform Rwanda from a low-income agriculture-based economy into a knowledge-based, service-oriented economy with a middle-income status, making Rwandans healthier, more educated and generally more prosperous. A GDP of \$1,240 per capita is the projected indicator for Vision 2020 based on new international criteria for middle income countries. Achieving this target will require 11.5 % overall economic growth, and with agriculture growing at over 8.5%.

Vision 2020 has thus, become the most important factor for the change in Rwanda; it has galvanized the people to pool resources and build synergy towards achieving a common purpose. Like light that chases away darkness, Rwandans have demonstrated that shared vision destroys division and builds unity. A shared vision dismantles differences, transforms diversity into opportunities, empowers the people, creates a single identity and restores a common purpose of building a nation and creating a bright future for all. This is how Vision 2020 is bringing the people of Rwanda together to shape the common future they desire and deserve.

“**Ndi Umunyarwanda**” is a concept initiated in 2013 with the goal of building national cohesion, and fostering a Rwanda community based on trust and unity. Most importantly, “Ndi Umunyarwanda” is about Rwandan **core values** of **integrity, self-reliance, respect,**

honesty, hard work, dignity, unity, patriotism, solidarity, equity, excellence and accountability. It is also about beliefs and principles of the Rwandan people. It defines who Rwandans really are about and what other people should know about them, not as different but a principled, disciplined, united and good people. Ultimately, it allows Rwandans to shape their future by building synergy and fostering a common vision of shared prosperity.

The people of Rwanda have chosen a vision approach to development at all levels and in all sectors. Each individual, family, group, community association, cooperative, village, cell, sector, district and province, strives for their vision and mission statements with deliberate efforts to achieve their goals, especially in the socio-economic sectors. By living their vision, the people of Rwanda are creating a new mindset of a “Rwandan Dream”. They believe that they are not who they are now, but who they want to become in future. In this way, Rwandans are creating now the future of their dream. This is a future where they all expect to be healthy, self-reliant and a prosperous people living in dignity and greatness.

President Paul Kagame emphasises that: “Vision 2020 was about what we had to do in order to survive and regain our dignity. [But] Vision 2050 has to be about the future we choose, because we can, and because we deserve it.”

1.2. People Together (P²)

Rwanda is a high density populated country with more than 12 million inhabitants. The leadership considers the people of Rwanda as the main resource for development and building a prosperous country. Indeed, President Kagame has emphasised that “Our number one asset [is] the people of Rwanda”. The key strategy for the transformation of Rwanda is therefore, investing in its people by improving health and education services, and building capacity of people, systems and institutions. The Rwandan leadership has made a choice to make high investment in human capacity.

Consolidating unity among all Rwandans has been a priority towards bringing the people to work together and achieve a shared vision. President Kagame says: “You will see that all is possible if we all put our efforts together. You will see that it’s possible to change people’s lives and the fate of the country in general.” Working together builds synergy, translates unity into actions that accelerate change and give “squared” outcomes.

At national and local levels, the people come together to work to implement collective programmes, projects and initiatives that are impacting the social and economic lives of the great majority, quickly and at the same time. The spirit of working together has enhanced the cooperative and associative movements in the country. Almost every active Rwandan is a member of a social and/or an economic group, a cooperative, a saving and credit association, etc. At the grass roots level, many people have been able to meet their basic needs and exit poverty with the collective support of other members of the groups/communities in which they belong.

In the private sector, manufacturers, producers, service providers and local business operators have come together and mobilised domestic and foreign investments. They contribute

individual funds to collective investment projects. Initiatives which were previously considered impossible to individuals are made possible collectively when the people come together.

Those who make change happen are visionary leaders. Unfortunately, where things don't work, most of the people are inactive, reactive or are just followers and never take initiatives. The critical objective of change is to transform ordinary people into visionary leaders who do extraordinary things and make change happen. In Rwanda, through many governance and capacity building initiatives, many leaders are emerging at all levels and in all sectors. The critical mass of visionary leaders is being built thereby creating a chain reaction of sustainable positive change, not only in Rwanda but also beyond the country's borders.

1.3. Action (A)

With effective policies, strategies, plans and programmes, Rwandans are translating Vision 2020 into reality. To ensure a smooth implementation of Vision 2020, the long-term aspirations of the vision have been translated into medium-term programmes of the National Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) and the National Investment Strategies (NIS).

The PRS have been operationalised through medium-term sector strategies that have informed provincial and district development plans. The sector strategies and the decentralised development plans have been implemented through the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF); three-year fully integrated budgets mainstreamed the Public Investment Programmes (PIP) of agencies and translated into concrete action plans costed through annual budgets.

In order to achieve the long-term development goals, the Government of Rwanda has formulated successive medium-term strategies: the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP: 2002-2006), the first Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS I: 2008-2012), and the second Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS II: 2013-2018).

Under EDPRS I (2008-2012), more than one million Rwandans moved out of poverty, particularly through emphasis on job-creation and equal distribution of social services such as healthcare. These achievements are expected to be consolidated under EDPRS II (2013-2018) in which the Government seeks to raise the GDP per capita from \$644 in 2014 to \$1,200, reduce poverty levels from 44 per cent to below 30 per cent and extreme poverty from 24 per cent to below 10 per cent. It also targets to create over 200,000 new off-farm jobs and increase private sector investments to 15.4 per cent of the GDP.

As part of efforts to reconstruct Rwanda and nurture a shared national identity, the Government drew on aspects of Rwandan culture and traditional practices to enrich and adapt its development programmes to the country's needs and context. The result is a set of Home Grown Solutions - culturally owned practices translated into sustainable development programmes. The Home Grown Solutions, namely Umushyikirano, Umwihereho, Ingando,

Ubudehe, Umuganda, Imihigo, Itorero and Girinka, etc. are defined by Rwandapedia.rw as follows:

Umushyikirano

The word Umushyikirano translates to a meeting where participants are able to exchange ideas, share experiences and question each other. Today, Umushyikirano is known as the National Dialogue Council.

Governed by the Rwandan Constitution (Article 168), Umushyikirano is a forum where participants debate issues relating to the state of the nation, the state of local government and national unity. The Office of the Prime Minister is responsible for the overall co-ordination of Umushyikirano.

Umushyikirano is an annual event chaired by the President of Rwanda. It provides Rwandans from all walks of life the opportunity to interact and pose questions directly to their leaders. The event is attended by members of the Cabinet and Parliament, representatives of the Rwandan community abroad, local government officials, the media, diplomatic community and other invited by the President. Those unable to attend the event in person at Rwanda's parliament building can participate via telephone, SMS, Twitter and Facebook as well as follow the debate live on television and radio. The first National Dialogue Council took place on 28 June 2003 and has been held each year since.

Umushyikirano aims to be a leading example of participatory and inclusive governance. By directly engaging with their leaders, Rwandans feel part of the decision making that affects their lives. It also serves as a forum for Rwandans to articulate their goals and for holding their leaders and government to account.

Umwiherero

Umwiherero refers to a "retreat." which under the Rwandan culture and tradition is convened by leaders/elders in a secluded place for reflection on issues affecting their communities and to identify solutions.

The Government of Rwanda draws on this tradition to reflect on, and address the challenges facing the country on an annual basis. Umwiherero, now known as National Leadership Retreat, is organised by the Office of the President in conjunction with the Office of the Prime Minister. The President chairs Umwiherero, which features presentations and discussions on a broad range of development challenges, including economics, politics, justice, infrastructure, health, education and others. The National Leadership Retreat, Umwiherero, was intended exclusively for senior public officials but has evolved to include leaders from the private sector as well as civil society.

Ingando

The word Ingando derives from the verb 'kugandika', which means going to stay in a place far from one's home, often with a group, for a specific purpose. Traditionally Ingando refers to a retreat during which elders, leaders and young people left their homes and assembled in an agreed venue to meditate and share ideas on how to solve problems affecting their communities or the nation. The attendees might have discussed the development of a strategy for war or for overcoming problems of food security.

The term Ingando has meanwhile, evolved to describe a place where a group of people gather to work towards a common goal. Ingando trainings served as think tanks for the sharing of ideas.. The trainings create a framework for the review - of divisive ideologies inherited from the colonial and post-colonial periods. Ingando is designed to provide a space for young people to prepare for a better future in which negative ideologies of the past would no longer influence them.

The other aim of Ingando is to reduce fear and suspicion and encourage reconciliation between genocide survivors and those whose family members perpetrated the genocide. Ingando trainings also serve to reduce the distance between some segments of the Rwandan population and the government. Through Ingando, participants also learn the t history, current development and reconciliation policies and are encouraged to play an active role in the rebuilding of their nation.

Ubudehe (Community effort in the fight of poverty)

Ubudehe refers to the long-standing Rwandan practice and culture of collective action and mutual support to solve problems within a community. The focus of traditional Ubudehe is mostly on cultivation. The Ubudehe Programme was launched in 2001 as part of partnership between the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning and the Ministry of Local Government.

Ubudehe seeks greater involvement of communities in their development through the use of participatory problem solving mechanisms. The programme was seen as a way to strengthen democratic processes and good governance through greater community involvement in decision-making. Ubudehe creates opportunities for people at all levels of society, especially the village level, to interact with one another, share ideas, create institutions and make decisions for their collective development.

It has since evolved as one of Rwanda's best known Home Grown Solution because of its participatory development approach to poverty reduction. And today Ubudehe is one of the country's core development programmes.

Umuganda (Community work)

The word Umuganda means ‘coming together with a common purpose to achieve a goal. »’. In traditional Rwandan culture, members of the community would call upon their family, friends and neighbours to help out in completing a difficult task.

In Rwanda, there is a mandatory community service day (8:00am to 11:00am), on the last Saturday of each month, which is now known as Umuganda « community service. » The day is called “umunsi w’umuganda”, meaning “contribution by citizens of the community towards building the country. ».

The benefits of Umuganda are not merely economic. The event is intended to build community involvement and strengthen cohesion between persons of different background and levels. One of such benefits is that people can access authorities to articulate their needs and voice opinions on various issues.

The labour cost from Umuganda contributes to national development programmes. By reaping the rewards of the volunteer labour and by having more capital to invest in the country, Umuganda has contributed to the growth and development of Rwanda.

Today, close to 80% of Rwandans take part in the monthly community work. Successful projects through this effort, include the building of schools, medical centres and hydro-electric plants as well as rehabilitating wetlands and creating highly productive agricultural plots. The value of Umuganda to the country’s development since 2007 has been estimated at more than US \$60 million annually.

Imihigo

Imihigo is the plural Kinyarwanda word for Umuhigo, which means to vow to deliver. Imihigo also includes the concept of Guhiganwa, which means to compete among one another. Imihigo describes the pre-colonial cultural practice in Rwanda where an individual sets targets or goals to be achieved within a specific period of time. The set targets are accomplished by following some guiding principles and with determination, to overcome any challenges that may arise.

In 2000, a shift in the responsibilities of all levels of government as a result of a decentralisation programme required a new approach to monitoring and evaluation. Local levels of government were now responsible for implementing development programmes which meant that the central government and people of Rwanda needed a way to ensure accountability. In 2006, Imihigo (known also as performance contracts) was introduced to address this need.

Since its introduction, Imihigo has been credited with improving accountability and quickening the pace of citizen-centred development activities and programmes. The practice of Imihigo has now been extended to ministries, embassies and public service staff.

Itorero

Traditional Itorero was a cultural school where Rwandans would learn language, patriotism, social relations, sports, dancing, songs and defence. This system was created to enable young people to grow with an understanding of their culture. Participants were encouraged to discuss and explore Rwandan cultural values. The tradition of Itorero also provided formative training for future leaders.

Itorero was reintroduced in 2009 as a way to rebuild the nation's social fabric and mobilise Rwandans to uphold important cultural values. The culture of an *intore* (a person who has received the teachings of Itorero) is regarded highly. Itorero creates opportunities for participants to enhance positive values, build a sense of responsibility through patriotism and gain professional knowledge.

The National Itorero Commission is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the programme and ensuring that Rwandans from all walks of life have the opportunity to take part. Between 2007 and 2012, *Itorero ry'Igihugu* (the National Itorero Commission) trained 284,207 *intore* including teachers, executive secretaries, farmers, community policing committees and Rwandan community abroad.

Girinka (One Cow for every poor family)

The word Girinka can be translated as 'may you have a cow' and it describes centuries-old cultural practice in Rwanda whereby a cow was given by one person to another, either as a sign of respect and gratitude or as a dowry.

Girinka was a response to the alarmingly high rate of childhood malnutrition and also to accelerate poverty reduction and integrate livestock and crop farming in agriculture. The programme is based on the premise that providing a dairy cow to poor households will help to improve their livelihood, through the provision of more nutritious and balanced diet from milk, increased agricultural output through better soil fertility and improved incomes from commercialised dairy products.

Since its introduction in 2006, more than 198,000 beneficiaries have received cows. Girinka has contributed to an increase in agricultural production in Rwanda - especially milk products which have helped to reduce malnutrition and increased incomes. The programme aims to provide 350,000 cows to poor families by 2017.

The implementation of these Home Grown Solutions constitutes an innovative and effective way of sharing the national vision, building a collective and visionary leadership, bringing the people to work together, nurturing change agents and visionary leaders at all levels, in all sectors and all places. With these Home Grown Solutions, the people of Rwanda are able to prioritize and carry out important and urgent actions for accelerated change that improves lives for all.

1.4. Time (T)

Understanding the notion and value of time is the most important element of an individual's life. Managing time effectively ensures success. Time is the most important resource for a people to accomplish goals in life. Time is a key factor of change. Without effective time management change will be difficult to achieve and with proper management of time change is achievable. Successful people make right choices, plan and do the right things at the right time. Targets or goals are set to be achieved within a specific time frame. So linking all actions/activities or tasks to time is crucial for success in those tasks and for change to be realised.

Rwanda's long-term development plans, Vision 2020 and Vision 2050 are expected to deliver results that will transform the country to a middle income nation by 2020; meet all UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 for Rwanda to become a high income country by 2050.

To achieve the desired change Rwanda has developed short, medium and long-term plans and set priorities that require immediate actions. Planning and setting targets and goals to be achieved in fixed time (Guhiga no kwesa imihigo) have become a culture for individuals and institutions in Rwanda. The short-, medium- and long-term plans are time-bound with clear goals or benchmarks and expected results within a given time. The PRSP (2002-2006); EDPRS I (2008-2012); EDPRS II (2013-2018); and subsequent District Development Plans are all time-bound, each with the set targets to be achieved within five years. Rwandan people are in "hurry" and want to achieve so much and succeed in the shortest time possible. The targets are so ambitious and require determination, high level commitment, sacrifice and a sense of urgency.

1.5. Change (C)

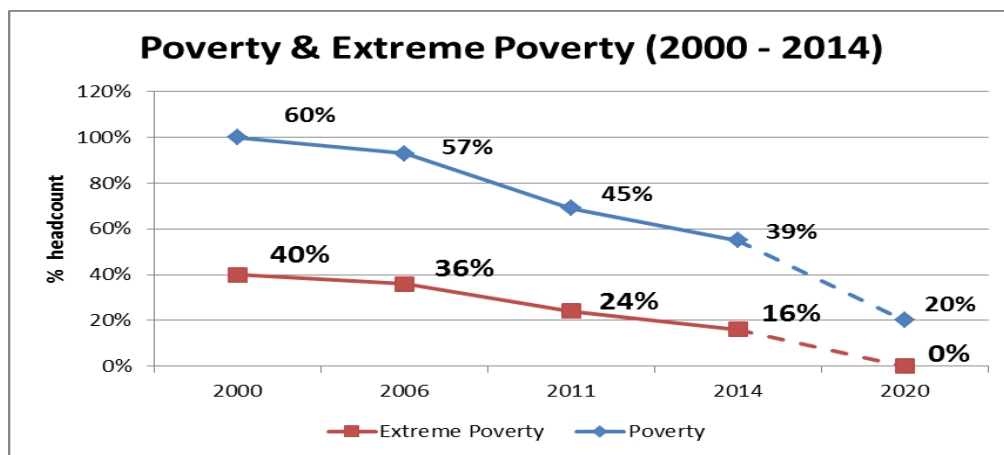
Accelerated change for the people requires the people's full participation, ownership and working together across board to improve their own lives. Sharing vision and working together will produce synergy with exponential effect in making change happen and the change will lead to improved lives for the people.. In the last two decades, Rwanda has experienced accelerated change as demonstrated by the following results (Source Minecofin):

- At least one million Rwandans have been lifted out of poverty in the five years period (2006-2011).
- The percentage of people living under the poverty line dropped from 57% in 2005 to 45% in 2010 and from 44.9% in 2011 to 39.1% in 2014. (See the Graph 1 below).
- Rwanda posted an average annual growth of real GDP of 8.4% between 2006 and 2011; and its economy expanded by close to 6.5 per cent on average between 2013 and 2015.
- Under-five children mortality rate dropped from 196.2 deaths per 1,000 in 2000 to 50 deaths per 1,000 in 2014.

- In 2014, 83.4% of the population enjoyed access to improved sanitation, 84.8% to safe drinking water and 19.8% had access to electricity.
- Primary education net enrolment increased from 72.6% in 2000 to 96.8% in 2014

Rwanda has also made big strides on the gender equality index – almost 64% of its parliamentarians are women, compared to just 22% worldwide – which has enhanced women empowerment and their economic advancement in the country. Rwandan women now own land and girls can inherit from their parents.

Graph 1: Poverty and Extreme Poverty in Rwanda



Source: Minecofin

But despite these tremendous achievements, Rwandans cannot afford to become complacent; they know that there is still so much to be done to achieve Vision 2020, the UN SDGs; the (2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development); and the forthcoming Rwanda Vision 2050. However, with a combination of government policies, strategies, plans and programmes, private investments and civil society initiatives there is the assurance of ending poverty in the country with no one left behind.

1.6. Calculating the results with the Formula of Accelerated Change

In applying the **Formula for the Accelerated Change: (C=VxP²xAxP)** – “**Visionary People Together in Action make Change over Time**”, the four elements (Vision, People, Action and Time) are calculated as follows:

- **Vision** is measured by the scope of people is targeting. A small vision, targeting individuals or small groups up to 1000 people, is given a value of 1. An average vision, targeting communities and nations of up to 100 million people, is given a value of 2. A big or global vision, targeting many nations with more than 100 million of people, has a value of 3. Because of the size of Rwanda population, Vision 2020 and Vision 2050 have both a value of 2.
- **People** in the formula, are people who have become visionary leaders, change agents and influencers, who are in strategic positions to influence others and make change happen.

When they work together to achieve the common vision, the impact is exponential (squared).

- Action is measured by a long-term strategic plan of action as a unit. In the case of Rwanda, from 2000, Vision 2020 is the first strategic plan of action one with a value of 1; and from 2020, Vision 2050 will be the second long term strategic plan of action with a value of 2.
- **Time** is measured in generations. Normally a generation is 30 years, but in the Rwandan context and for the purpose of this equation, we are using 20 years for the first generation. From 2000 to 2020 is the first time generation with a value of 1, and from 2020 to 2050 will be the second time generation with a value of 2.
- **Change** is measured by the number of people whose lives are improved.

Applying the Formula of Accelerated Change ($V \times P^2 \times A \times T = C$), Rwanda will have at least 8 million people ($2 \times 2000^2 \times 1 \times 1 = 8,000,000$) out of poverty by 2020 (see details in the Table 1 below). And by following the same pattern, it is projected that by 2050, Rwanda will have an estimated population of 22 million, all completely all out of poverty; and in addition, Rwanda will become a developed country, and impact positively more than 100 million people outside its borders, mainly in Africa. These figures are provided by the Formula of Accelerated Change ($V \times P^2 \times A \times T = C$) ($2 \times 5000^2 \times 2 \times 2 = 200,000,000$) (see details in the Table 1 below).

The results provided by the formula show that it is critical to have a shared vision and people who are visionary leaders; because they are change agents who make change happen.

Table 1: Projection of Poverty Eradication in Rwanda applying the Formula for Accelerated Change

Vision	People	Action	Time	Change (improved lives)
Vision 2020 – Middle income-country	People who are visionary leaders and change agents	Government plans and programmes, private sector investment, civil society initiatives, community and people’s initiatives.	2000-2020 20 years	GDP per capita: 1240 USD 12.7 million of population – Poverty reduced below 20% - Extreme poverty eliminated.
National Vision (2)	Visionary leaders (at least 2000)	First Strategic Plan (1)	First Generation (1)	Improved lives (8, 000,000)
Vision 2050- High Income Country (like Switzerland or Singapore)	People who are visionary leaders and change agents (at least 5000)	Government plans and programmes, private sector investment, civil society initiatives, community and people’s initiatives	2020-2050 30 years	GDP per capita 1,2476USD; 22 million - 0 % under poverty line - all Rwandans out of poverty – influence to more than 100 million of people outside Rwanda.
National Vision (2)	Visionary leaders (at least 5,000)	Second Strategic Plan (2)	Second Generation (2)	Improved lives (200, 000,000)

The socio-economic progress made by Rwanda since the launch of Vision 2020 in 2000 is following a pattern of the Formula for the Accelerated Change. In the line of this pattern where there are a shared **vision**, a visionary leadership, **people** working **together** to plan and implement strategic **actions** within specific **times**, Rwanda will not only eradicate extreme poverty by 2020, end all forms of poverty and achieve other SDGs by 2030 and become a high income country by 2050; but as well Rwandans will have impacted globally many more other people (about 200 million) outside its borders, mainly in Africa.

Moving from the GDP per capita of 720 USD in 2015 to 1,240 USD in 2020 and 12,476 USD in 2050 will require average economic growth of above 10%. Economically speaking, this seems impossible unless Rwanda discovers oil fields like Equatorial Guinea or diamond like Botswana. Looking at these GDP figures above, Rwanda is now at 6% of its journey to the “Vision 2050” destination. It is clear this transformation is just at its beginning and more is yet to be done. This is great challenge facing every single Rwandan.

According to the Formula for Accelerated Change, the Vision 2020 and Vision 2050 are achievable. Primarily, they will be possible because the people of Rwanda have discovered something more valuable than oil or diamond. They have discovered their core values, namely unity, patriotism and dignity. These core values fuel ordinary people to do extraordinary things, and make the impossible possible. The progress made by Rwanda in the last two decades proves that the impossible can be achieved when people know who they really are (core values) and what they want (vision). The core values are inexhaustible sources of wealth, freedom, peace and prosperity.

1.7. Conclusion

The most important lesson from the Rwanda success story is the evidence of how a visionary leadership is crucial in national sustainable transformation. Rwandan people recognise that the rapid transformation of Rwanda is primarily guided by the extraordinary and exceptional visionary leadership of the President Paul Kagame.

The achievements made by Rwanda so far and the projected outcomes by 2020, 2030 and 2050 demonstrate the ‘nuclear’ power of a vision, the effectiveness of a visionary leadership, the exponential effect of synergy, the efficiency of a “vision approach” to development, which flows from the efficiency of the Formula for the Accelerated Change as a tool for accelerated change and sustainable transformation.

This Formula is highly recommended to policy makers, national development planners, practitioners and programme implementers in the socio-economic governance sector in developing countries, especially in Africa, as well as development partners and the international donor community.

There could be adjustments in the implementation or adaptation, taking into account factors within the local environment, but this Formula has demonstrated its efficacy in Rwanda.

We all desire positive change in our lives; do let us remind us that it is the accumulation of positive changes we make in our lives as individuals that will add up to the positive changes

in our homes, society/community, corporate world, nation and the world at large. We must all play our parts as individuals in order to enjoy the spin off from our collective efforts.

Let us bring Vision into our individual leadership role, bring people work together to take Action/s over Time as Change Agents, to achieve the Positive Changes we all desire and deserve.

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