

Education

It is the key to opportunity, social emancipation and transforming lives. The present education system is elitist and therefore opens opportunity for the few. Over half of young people are not in any kind of education, employment, or training. We will open up avenues of aspiration for the next generation by investing more in building technical skills and community learning to improve skills and employability. We will put more resources to pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. The present system is an unacceptable waste of human resources.

We will promote compulsory education to the age of 19 years of age and adult community learning and literacy campaign. We shall provide professional and technical training to at least 70% of 18 year olds.

Health Sector

Health is not a commercial product. We want a health service that is more accessible to the majority of the population through the building of more health centres and a plan to provide free medical care to the destitute. It is not acceptable that someone is denied medical care because he/she is too poor to afford it.

External Relations

The image of Rwanda has been badly tarnished by its military adventures in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This has caused a lot of mistrust of neighbouring countries. We will deploy all the necessary efforts to normalise relations with the neighbouring countries and deal with issues that underlie the mistrust. Resolving the refugee problem will be at the top of agenda.

Political and economic integration in a bigger cultural and economic space will be one of the strong pillars of our foreign policy.



Why the Decision to participate in the soon coming presidential elections

We have decided to take part in the coming presidential elections as a part of our core values to access to power through a peaceful democratic process. We want to win by the power of our vision and the clarity of our political programme thus making a turning point in the political development of Rwanda where the use of violence to access power has marked "modern" Rwanda.

The stakes are high and call for collective as well as individual action. ***It would be irresponsible and inhumane to wait for the situation to get worse before acting. It is a challenge that we must rise to and win.***

We count on all of you.

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FORCES DEMOCRATIQUES
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POLITICAL PROGRAMM SUMMARY



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United Democratic Forces



We offer something different:

a new vision of a Rwandan society in which human difference is valued and celebrated, underpinned by the rule of law, democracy and equal opportunity.

UDF is a political party made up of people with a common vision and a political programme to make the vision a reality by creating a conducive environment for economic development and social transformation. We will build a country where power, wealth and opportunity are open to all the citizens and not in the hands of the few. In this regard we will introduce measures to restore public trust in the political system and to increase public engagement in the decision-making process in order to unlock the energies of Rwandans for economic development.

We will give a voice to the voiceless, made up mainly of rural and semi urban population as well as those made jobless by an improvised introduction of the English as the official language. This group makes up 90% of the population and sustains the country economically and therefore should be involved in the decision making process.

We have a strong man in Rwanda, the President. Our political organisation stands for strong institutions i.e. independent Parliament and Judiciary, a vibrant and independent civil society including a free press, a functioning multiparty system, a professional public service, security services accountable to people's representatives.



Our core values:

Human rights, accountability, rule of Law, democracy, equal opportunity and social justice, sanctity of human life, political participation and duty of memory.

Our position on genocide

Genocide, crimes against humanity committed between 1990 and 1996, have left wounds that are hard to heal. We must draw lessons without fear, taboos or false excuses. We must name wrongs as wrongs and bring those responsible to account irrespective of ethnic identities. We reject the appropriation and manipulation of the collective memory of the Rwandan tragedy for political ends. The true Rwandan culture calls us to honour the dead. We remain true to our culture and values shared by every civilised society.

Reconciliation

National reconciliation cannot be legislated in politically motivated laws that exacerbate ethnic tensions. We are convinced that the problem of Rwanda is not caused by the existence of ethnic groups but by the absence of the rule of law, democracy and equal opportunity. True reconciliation comes from the acknowledgement by each one of the reality of the pain of the other and agreeing on way forward.

We will put in place an institutional framework which would protect, like the pupil of our eye, the right to life and individual security and end the fear and mistrust between the major groups in our society that each group could be planning to annihilate the other. The institutional and constitutional arrangements will be agreed upon through an Inter-Rwandan Dialogue Highly Inclusive (DIRHI) composed of various representatives of civil society and political parties inside and outside Rwanda. The DIRHI is the only framework for the building of trust between ethnic groups and essential to genuine reconciliation, durable peace and sustainable development in the Great Lakes.

Justice

Justice must be equitable and fair to all the citizens. Gacaca courts have turned into government tools and do not help bring out truth, facilitate collective memory and reconciliation. We are for the scraping of emergency tribunals without any further delay and asking normal courts of Law to take on pending cases. Arbitrary laws, such as the press law, on political parties and on NGOs should be abrogated to be in line with our democratic values.

Political system

We will make sure that institutions have the trust of the people and reflect national solidarity through the installation of consensual democracy. We will make the empowerment of communities a central part of our policies through a policy of decentralisation of power, political participation of the grassroots and promoting the emergence of a vibrant independent civil society.



Security Forces

The security forces will be modernized to guarantee national sovereignty. We will ensure that they are apolitical and professional and not at the hands of an individual or political organisation. This will give them the pride of serving the country and guarantee security of office.

The Economic Policy

It must be based on the real assets and economic advantage of the country. It must use its knowledge base, its location at the crossroads between francophone and Anglophone countries and the ability to speak both languages. We will invest both internally and externally in sectors that offer economic comparative advantage: communication, civil engineering, agricultural engineering, renewable energy, bank assurance, tourism niches and health.

Agricultural Policy

The Agricultural policy will be based on the promotion of family farming and food security. Agricultural reforms should be convincingly presented to farmers as viable alternative to what they are used to and on imposition of directives from the Centre. We shall give the sector its rightful place in the allocation of investment resources.

Policy on environment and biodiversity

Our political decisions on in this sector will be based on the long term impact on future generations and all licences to business interests will be informed by the effects on the environment. We will make sure that future generations are protected from the catastrophe of bad policies on environment and biodiversity. Each local authority, with full participation of the youth, will be invited to plant as many trees as children born each year.

