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# INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF BURUNDI DIASPORA

Burundi Diaspora at the heart of  
multilateral relations for development

Stavanger (Norway), 26th – 28th June 2009

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## Narrative Conference Report



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Dear friends from Burundi Diaspora,  
Dear Burundians Compatriots,  
Dear friends of Burundi,

The International Conference of Burundi Diaspora - ICBD » was held in Stavanger city in the Municipality of Hå in Norway from 26 to 28 June 2009. This conference was organised by three organisations and bodies: the first one is the Christian People for Humanitarian Action – CPHA, for which Japheth Legentil Ndayishimiye is the international coordinator. The second one is Bufnor – Organisation of Burundians of Norway and the last one is the Focal Conference Committee which was set up temporarily to support the organization. The International Conference was organized around the four major themes: "*Migration and development*", "*Women and development*", "*Good Governance*", "*Agriculture and Livestock*" (See attached program). Participants from Europe (Germany, Belgium, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Holland, Italy, Luxembourg, Switzerland, etc...), Canada, the United States and Australia took part in that event. A strong delegation from Burundi composed of Senators and Members of Parliament attended the Conference.



Dear reader, this report is sent to you so that it can be resourceful for those who attended the ICBD and especially so that they can remember the key commitments made throughout the long debates. Burundi Diaspora Members and all our compatriots living in Burundi, who could not take part in the conference, can live the highlights of the conference though not in the same way as those who were there. They will realize that Burundi Diaspora Communities around the world wake up and start working to make their contribution to the reconstruction and development of their motherland, Burundi.

The countries of origin of the participants show that the conference in Stavanger is the first international conference in its truest sense as practically all five continents were represented.

You are invited to utilize this report and raise questions to the facilitators and workshop resource persons on any particular issue addressed, knowing that, on the one hand, all participants made a solemn commitment to share all the achievements of this conference and, on the other hand, a blog [www.diasporaburundaiseblogspot.com](http://www.diasporaburundaiseblogspot.com) was created to ensure the follow-up, sharing and communication among members of the Burundi Diaspora wherever they are.

The great news is that the Burundi Diaspora communities will soon confederate to better work together. A website of the Diaspora will soon be launched and take advantage of this phenomenal resource that has overcome distances: the internet.

The following pages present the conference by highlighting its greatest moments as well as major findings and perspectives. The opening speeches, and the closure speeches, some communications, workshop reports and the names of participants are presented in the appendix to the report.

Happy reading to all

The Conference Organizing Committee

# I. The 26<sup>th</sup> June 2009

## A. Opening Speech

In presence of Burundi Senators and Members of Burundi Parliament, the Special Representative of the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Mayor of Hå Municipality, the Burundi Ambassador to Italy, the Vice-Chairperson of Awepa and other guests, the ceremonies were launched by Mister Japheth-Legentil Ndayishimiye in the evening of the 26<sup>th</sup> June 2009.



It was a good opportunity to welcome the participants to the ICBD, thank all those who contributed to the organisation of the conference, starting with the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Hå Municipality who have spared no efforts to contribute to this conference and its success. For the main organizer of the ICDB, "this attention is a sign, an unwavering commitment to the Diaspora and an abiding faith in its capacity to support development of Burundi". Note that this attention has been translated into the granting of the conference core funding, he said.

Mr. Japheth Legentil Ndayishimiye then welcomed the Senators and Members of Burundi Parliament before presenting the two major organizations which are responsible for the preparation of the conference. The first one is the Organisation of Burundians in Norway (Bufnor) whose primary mission is to contribute as Diaspora to Development in Burundi, and the second one is Christian People for Humanitarian Action - CPHA, an organization created at the height of the crisis in Burundi (1994 and 1996) and coordinated at international level by Mr. Japheth Ndayishimiye himself. The CPHA is responsible for several Burundi projects and in particular the twinning programme of the Municipality of Butaganzwa in Burundi and the Municipality of Hå in Norway, "he said.

Continuing his speech, he established the link between the initiatives undertaken at international level around the issues of "migration and development" and those of the Burundi Diaspora launched in Bujumbura on 17 to 18 July at the "Source du Nil" Hotel on the same theme reflecting the involvement of the Diaspora in the development of the country of origin. Burundi Diaspora members living in Belgium and other European countries were the first to benefit from this momentum with the support of the Belgian Government and the Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa -

AWEPA. Dialogue between elected representatives and members of Burundi Diaspora has been consolidated since then. After the European Conference of May 23 to 25 in 2008 held in Belgium for Burundi Diaspora living in Europe, the ICBD ensures continuity of these positive initiatives, this time with a will of the organizers to involve other members of the Burundi Diaspora from around the world.

Mr. Japheth Ndayishimiye ended his speech by outlining the objectives of the conference and panels' topics. They will be treated in detail in this report.

This first speech was followed by others:

- ✓ **Representative of the Mayor of Hå** recalling development projects conducted in the Municipality of Butaganzwa.
- ✓ **Burundi Ambassador to Italy:** reporting on Burundi community in Italy, Ambassador Leopold Ndayisaba made an appeal to Burundi Diaspora. Because if well organized, they can undoubtedly contribute to Burundi's development. He also called for setting up structures that help to channel ideas and projects of Burundi Diaspora towards our motherland.
- ✓ **Ms Lydia Maximus, Vice-Chairperson of AWEPA:** for her, democracy is not confined to Parliament. That is why her institution is also supporting civil society initiatives. However, she expressed regrets that AWEPA could not make a financial contribution for the implementation of the ICBD.
- ✓ **Representative of the Governor of Rogaland:** very short, he wished success to participants and delivered a present to the head of the delegation.
- ✓ **Representative of the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs:** punctuated with clear messages to the Burundian key players, his speech was remarkable. Familiar with the Burundi peace process as a former Ambassador of Norway to Burundi, Mr. Arild R. Øyen was able to establish complicity with the audience. Participants took the measure of his message when he revealed the risk taken by his Ministry to support Burundi even though the country did not meet the conditions for sustained cooperation with Norway. For him, the intensification of cooperation between his country and Burundi depends only on the latter. Having witnessed how some Diasporas are working against their country of origin, he did not fail to congratulate and encourage members of the Burundi Diaspora for their efforts towards their country. In commenting on the themes of the conference

and highlighting the commitment of the town of Ha for Burundi, he completed his eloquent speech.

- ✓ **Honourable Jérémie Ngendakumana**, Head of Burundi Delegation to the ICBD, called for a review of the commitments made at former meetings of the Burundi Diaspora to translate these initiatives into action. Because, according to him, "for the reconstruction, Burundi counts on all its sons and daughters both in Burundi and in the Diaspora." While focusing on the needs of local people, he pleaded for a ration of growth or else of convalescence for the post-conflict period: "Our dream is to see each Burundian child eating one's fill. Our shared ambition is that every child in Burundi has access to basic social needs. That is primarily, education and medical care. While quoting Rwagasore "*muzotumenyera kuvyo dukora - by our actions you will recognize us*", he opened the international conference of Burundi Diaspora.



## A. Dinner and Show



This essential moment – Burundian dances and festive meals – during which participants from everywhere and the official guests shared a friendship drink, is a good opportunity to get acquainted before beginning the work of the conference.

The objectives of the cultural evening were:

- Greet guests from Burundi and elsewhere in an atmosphere of joy and celebration;
- As is customary in all manifestations of the Burundi Diaspora, the Burundi Community in Norway wanted to show, through the parade of young people and traditional dances, that while learning about other cultures, Burundian culture remains the main and undeniable source of inspiration. It is instilled and preserved in families and communities.



## II. The 27<sup>th</sup> June 2009

### A. Plenary presentations

Chaired by Félix Kubwayo, activities of the second part of ICBD - after the opening session - has started by three presentations followed by a round of questions and answers.

Speakers:

- ✓ Honourable Léonce Ngendakumana - Burundi
- ✓ Honourable Jérémie Ngendakumana - Burundi
- ✓ M. Gatugu Joseph, Coordinator of the Group of Experts of Burundi Diaspora in Benelux

This session of the day had the following aims:

→ **Inform participants on the socio-political situation:**

The first speaker, the Hon Léonce Ngendakumana, has reassured the audience that failure of the 2010 elections is an impossible scenario for Burundi (See attached presentation). He was very reassuring about the post-conflict political and security situation of Burundi. He highlighted the achievements of democracy and the expectations of 2010 elections after the 2005 experience. Optimistically, this well-known political actor said that the worst was left behind. Emphasizing recent progress, including the appointment of an Independent National Election Committee, its independence, its neutrality and the framework for dialogue, Hon Léonce Ngendakumana said that Burundi was aware of the danger in the event of shortcomings in the organization of the upcoming elections: "Failing elections in 2010 would mean the end of the peace process, shelving all we have built for the last 15 years and this scenario is impossible for Burundi because the country has already proudly demonstrated that, by ending the armed conflict head up and getting engaged in a peace and reconciliation process. "

→ **Inform on the aspects of socio-economic development and regional integration in East Africa Community:**

Based on the state of general depravity of the most essential public services and infrastructures caused by more than 15 years of war, Honourable Jérémie Ngendakumana portrayed a promising future induced by political stability associated with major dates of 2003 and 2005. He argued that all hopes were now allowed, and that great achievements have been recorded in the sector of health, education, road construction. He pointed out that mentalities are changing and the

budget absorption capacity increases from year to year. Referring to the Strategic Poverty Reduction Framework [Cadre Stratégique de Lutte contre la Pauvreté - CSLP] and the figures, he concluded on a positive note about the improvement of the socioeconomic conditions of populations (e.g. increase in income per capita from \$ 102 in 2005 to \$ 144 in 2008). Honourable Ngendakumana Jérémie did not fail to encourage the Burundi Diaspora to return often to Burundi and invest there.

His presentation, available in the appendices, has generated many questions from participants. Some were publicly raised during the question period; others have been clarified during the discussions in workshops.

**→ Mr. Joseph Gatugu's presentation aimed to provide information on previous initiatives of the Group of Experts of Burundian Diaspora in the Benelux:**

For some participants, the meeting in Stavanger is the 3rd initiative of the Burundi Diaspora after the March 2007 meeting between a delegation of parliamentarians of Burundi and the Burundi Diaspora living in Belgium and neighbouring countries, initiated by Burundi Parliament with the support of the Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA) and the support of the Belgian Government, and the seminar organized by the Group of Experts of Burundian Diaspora in Benelux from 23 to 25 May 2008. For others, this conference in Norway is the first truly international Burundi Diaspora meeting. It will allow to launch genuine and conscientious dynamics among Burundi Diaspora in general, and will also harness the efforts of all Burundi Diaspora communities in Africa, Asia, Australia, Canada, Europe and the United States.

It is therefore appropriate to establish the link between the initiatives that took place in Belgium for Burundi Diaspora communities in European countries and the present initiative in which the principle of participation includes Burundian Diaspora communities beyond Europe. To capitalize on these previous experiences, the participants expressed a need to be informed better. This was even more important since MPs and Senators members of the Burundi delegation who had previously participated in such meetings in Belgium have expressed their wish to learn more about the progress made (implementation and difficulties of the conclusions adopted at the previous meetings).

Mr. Gatugu therefore has presented to participants a summary report of the seminar from 23 to 25 May 2008. This important seminar primarily funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium took place in Brussels and was attended by 270 participants. The report shows that the Burundi Communities in Belgium as well as in other European countries are mobilizing and organizing to rebuild the country. The report included a list of the short term and long term perspectives for members of the Burundi Diaspora (e.g., creating long-term insurance system to support the projects of the Diaspora - buy home, repatriation of the deceased) and the Burundian population. Several recommendations were made «for Burundi

authorities," "for Burundi Diaspora in Europe", "for Belgium and the partners of Burundi."

Mr. Gatugu has insisted on the results, a year later:

The aim being the mobilization of the Burundi Diaspora for the reconstruction of Burundi, the speech of Mr. Gatugu reported a number of development achievements in Burundi, in the sector of health and education. Noting the facilitating factors towards positive achievements, he also did not fail to highlight some major obstacles: the lack of means, and red tape in Burundi.

## B. Discussions

The general concerns were focused on:

### - Security in the country:

According to the number of questions, Hon Léonce Ngendakumana did not succeed to convey his optimism on stability and security in Burundi. For the members of the Burundi Diaspora who have taken the floor, there is neither peace nor security without development and there is no development without peace and security.

On this issue, the following topics were discussed:

- The forced repatriation of Burundian refugees from Tanzania ;
- Insecurity in the country does not favour the return or visit by members of Burundi Diaspora who are concerned about their tranquillity especially in their birth places. This phenomenon discourages those who would like to invest in their mother country. The person who raised this question wanted to draw attention to the close relationship between peace, security and socio-economic development. One cannot exist without the other.
- The use of gray matter in Burundi?
- The role of the National Intelligence Services in the killings in Burundi;
- Rumours on newly created militia.
- The causes of the resurgence of violence?
- The interference of foreign agencies in ongoing investigations in Burundi
- The impact of insecurity on the borders of Burundi: Can there be peace if our neighbours are not at peace? How can we ignore the problems of insecurity in neighbouring countries?

- **Regional integration of Burundi in East African Community:**

Raised under several forms, the issue of integration of Burundi in the East Africa Community proved to be a major concern of Burundi Diaspora members. Thus, they wanted to inquire about:

- The real status of this integration nowadays,
- The beneficial effects
- Burundi's leadership in this organization
- What are the advantages to ordinary people when basic consumer products (agriculture and livestock) from the sub-region flood Burundi markets?
- The interest of Burundi given the low participation in trade exchanges
- Will other key players not choke Burundi's already much weakened economy?

- **Good Governance and corruption**

In his presentation, Honourable Jérémie Ngendakumana had mentioned that the provisions established by the current regime to fight corruption were likely to reassure Burundi's partners. However, the issue of good governance was raised several times. One of the guests had previously noted that corruption and the problems of good governance undermined the fight against poverty in poor countries. And Burundi is no exception.

Noting the persistence of corruption, participants were puzzled about:

- The effectiveness of the anti-corruption Brigade
- Causes and solutions to corruption in Burundi
- Tools developed for working upstream and downstream in order to better fight corruption and insure good governance



- **The high population growth, and health issues**

Based on the increase of the Burundian population - 8 million in 2008, it will reach 15 million in 2020 - the free health care, etc., participants wanted to know:

- What is the State doing in view of the increasing population?
- The budget allocated to the health sector
- The management of the medical doctors' strike
- Steps taken by the State to improve the work of (the very few) medical doctors in Burundi

- **Agriculture**

Despite the promising economic situation that the Honourable Jérémie Ngendakumana wanted to convey to participants, the latter have sought clarification on:

- The nutritional situation;
- The recurrent famines due to low agricultural production;
- The high cost of living and increasing poverty

- **Living conditions and the current financial crisis**

Unconvinced by the figures referring to the increase in income per capita in Burundi, some participants wanted to explore the effects of the food and financial crises:

- How did the authorities manage the food crisis that has been sweeping very hard on the rural population since 2005?
- How can the Burundi Diaspora contribute to the fight against the effects of the financial crisis in Burundi?
- Do Burundi authorities recognize the Burundi Diaspora as developmental actors given the financial support they give to their families?

- **International Burundi Diaspora**

Reacting to the presentation of Mr. Joseph Gatugu, some participants wanted:

- A wide publication of the report of the European Meeting of Burundi Diaspora held in Brussels from 23 to 25 May 2008.
- A real consideration of all communities of Burundi Diaspora other than those of European countries to act together as International Burundi

Diaspora. This issue has subsequently fuelled the formal and informal discussions.

**- Other important issues :**

- Communication strategies of the current government: Does the government communicate enough with the population? Is the information being disseminated?
- The North / South competencies transfer;
- Indicators of the agriculture sector
- The problem of integration and harmonization of Burundi Diaspora
- The notable absence of the diplomatic representation of Burundi to Germany at the ICBD in Norway.

**Answers to questions:**

Due to time constraint, the answers were short, many questions remained unanswered, and other questions have been dealt with in discussions at the workshops.

**Answers of Hon. Léonce NGENDAKUMANA on security aspects in Burundi:**

- He said he never spoke about total peace and security. For him, in comparison to prior periods, there are significant peace and security improvements.
- Recognizing the need for training and supervision of Burundi police agents, he stressed the real improvement in Burundian politics even though it remains difficult to control all violence in a country which is recovering from 15 years of war. It is true that the problems of insecurity in the neighbouring countries still need attention. But Hon Léonce Ngendakumana argues that the political gains and security will be reinforced by economic development efforts. Thus, he said that, *"To control security well, we need fairness, because if there is injustice, resentment arises."*

**Answers from Hon. Jérémie NGENDAKUMANA :**

First, the return of refugees does not pose many problems because only 30,000 are remaining in Tanzania; "and even if they all came home, this would not cause many problems", he replied.

Secondly, regional integration can stabilize the region and we certainly benefit from the experience of others, he said. Economically, the East Africa Community is a large market. He however expressed concern about bad working habits of some Burundians, "a trader wishes to close his store at noon and returns back home only

to come back to his store at 2:00 and yet this is the very opportune time to make business. Elsewhere, people work around the clock." These ways of doing things do not predispose a Burundian trader to cope with competition. He advocated for a change of mentality, the culture of differences that enrich the people of Burundi to benefit from regional integration.

Thirdly, rapid population growth is not the problem. The problem is how we utilise human resources, he said, referring to the example of China where the high population growth is viewed and operated as an opportunity for development.

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Preliminary but essential, the second part of the conference was a rich starting point. From that moment onwards, participants were ready to address the major themes in a smooth and peaceful atmosphere. The work continued in workshops for the rest of the day:

### III. THEMATIC PANELS

#### Workshop 1: Capitalisation of migrant potential

##### Resource Persons:

- ✓ Resource Persons:
  - Mr. Louis RUZOVIYO: Burundian Diaspora at the heart of the multilateral development cooperation or mobilization for rural development,
  - Miss Elsa BOUSQUET: Burundi Diaspora: what remittances?
- ✓ Facilitator : Mr Joseph GATUGU
- ✓ Rapporteur : Mr. Jean-Marie SINDAYIGAYA

##### a. Presentations

In his presentation, Mr. RUZOVIYO noted that in each sector, migrant communities offer specific capabilities and potential. He asked participants whether there would be someone with experience to share with others in the framework of the Burundi Diaspora projects for Burundi. Finally he drew attention to the importance of solid structures including the availability of external financial audit, within the Diaspora organisations, as this is an important criterion for receiving funds from European institutions.

He wished to present concrete cases of migrant communities, both in different host countries and in different sectors. His presentation was rich with references and information. As an example, he cited the following cases:

- ✓ Moroccan Diaspora Communities : in France - in Italy
- ✓ Ghana Diaspora Communities: in the Netherlands
- ✓ Senegalese Diaspora Communities : in Italy for financial remittances
- ✓ MIDA Grands Lacs and Congo Diaspora Communities: in Belgium for sending Congolese medical doctors and nurses to DR Congo.

Louis Ruzoviyo then welcomed the presence of MIDA in the discussion panel, which is a concrete support for Burundi Diaspora, operational precisely in drawing back home the skills of migrants.

In her presentation Ms. Elsa BOUSQUET initially referred to the genesis of the concept of migration which finds its origins in the brain drain, a vicious circle because the skilled migrants leaving their (developing) home countries deprive them of skills needed for development. Thus, these countries remain poor and the

obsession to look for a better life elsewhere widens, once again giving rise to new brain drain.

She then recalled that MIDA Project and especially MIDA Great Lakes began in 2001. Its database has about 1300 migrants from the Great Lakes, with approximately 25% from Burundi. She then described the main areas of intervention and types of transfers carried out under the MIDA Project, namely physical transfers consisting of short-term missions conducted, in the new philosophy, by members relaying in a team of experts for every project, and virtual transfers. Under the new phase of the MIDA Great Lakes project Ms. Elsa BOUSQUET informed audience that for Burundi 15 projects have been selected.

### **b. Discussion and possible action**



A participant pointed out that the role of the beneficiaries must not be forgotten when talking about projects. Indeed, before starting a project, there should be an agreement with beneficiaries, an exploration of their needs with them. This implies, added another participant, a field visit. The participants mentioned the difficulty of implementing a viable project which can really improve the lot of beneficiaries without having starting

funds or prefinancing funds for feasibility studies and implementation, which are rarely available from donors.

Ms. Bousquet said that the new phase of the MIDA Great Lakes takes fully into account this concern: first a pre-selection of projects is made. Then, before the start of projects, there is a mission of finalization and audit to see not only if the partners speak the same language as the population, but also and especially to check if the proposed projects are feasible with the programmed activities. This procedure is particularly useful as many projects consist of activities that are too short to make adjustments during implementation.

### **Why does MIDA not support the funding of projects designed and implemented by migrants themselves?**

**Answer:** MIDA's funding agency, the Belgian Cooperation, has repeatedly rejected applications by MIDA to support pilot projects of migrants in which implementation is totally their responsibility.

Putting into question the Belgian cooperation, one participant mentioned a case where the Belgian Cooperation had funded projects of migrants but then stopped suddenly without communicating any reason.

At the end of the workshop, participants have learned the following lessons about MIDA:

- The scope of MIDA Great Lakes is limited.
- Only those projects meeting the priorities of the sector policies of the partner State can be selected.
- MIDA cannot fund projects developed and carried by migrants.

A workshop participant pointed out the need to be open to other ideas. Speaking of transfers to Burundi, he said that some people do not understand that only in the sense of financial transfers. But it is not only cash which is valuable, especially among migrants from Burundi. He recalled that it was not for lack of money in Burundi that the Diaspora has been disseminated around the world. Money is not the only aspect to set the balance when it comes to projects proposed by migrants.

Wanting to emphasize the specificity of the Burundi Diaspora and the projects of its members, another participant noted that the examples cited by the first presentation on experiences and initiatives of the Diaspora were mainly migrant communities of North African origin and West Africa. He pointed out that the causes of migration that created these communities in the West are very different from those which created the Burundi Diaspora.

### **In summary**

The participants reached the following main findings and identified the following tracks:

- a) MIDA Great Lakes Project may allow the involvement of migrants in the reconstruction and development in Burundi, but the fact that it can not finance projects designed entirely by migrants and executed by themselves is instructive: As recommended by the old saying, **one must first rely on one's self and then diversify the search for support;**
- b) Financial transfers are not the only possible and useful aspects of the involvement of Burundi Diaspora. Since it is different from Senegal Diaspora Ghana Diaspora, Morocco Diaspora and so on, it must find a unique and specific way to act.
- c) Taking into account the fact that Burundi is one of the poorest countries in the world, there are ways to negotiate with governments of host countries in order to conclude an agreement granting them facilities to arrange the necessary transfers, like some other communities have managed to do so. Thus, Burundi Diaspora could try to minimize the cost especially since the volumes of remittances are low compared to those of the communities given as examples - see case studies.

- d) With regards to the concrete projects already launched, one of the resource persons of this workshop, Mr. Ruzoviyo Louis, presented a draft project to Burundi Diaspora members residing in the United States of America, in order to deliver it to USAID, who launched a call for project proposals.
- e) To remember: calls for project proposals or announcements of projects can be published on the blog. Members of the Diaspora are expected to support the projects of their compatriots.

## **Workshop 2: Strategies for Reclaiming the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's)**

- ✓ Resource Person : Madame Ginette KARIREKINYANA
- ✓ Facilitator : Ambassador Léopold NDAYISABA
- ✓ Rapporteur : Mr Gervais NZIKORURIHO

### **a. Presentation and discussions**

In his introduction, the facilitator said that the President of Burundi has already made a statement on the MDGs and that Burundi has taken significant actions in this direction.

He then called on Ms. Ginette KARIREKINYANA who traced the history of the MDGs and their particular situation in African countries. She began by noting that the first and most important of these objectives is the one that set the reduction of extreme poverty to 50% by 2015. It is a commitment and several conferences were held on this subject in the North and South. During the 1<sup>st</sup> assessment in 2008 (MDG+8), the conclusion was that poverty is not diminishing and that much remains to be done especially in African countries. Each country should adopt ownership of the MDGs and translate them into national policy.

For the case of Burundi, Ms. Ginette Karirekinyana cited several reference texts and reports on the current situation of fight against poverty and projections of Burundi in 2025. Some passages of the report in March 2009 on the evaluation of the Strategic Framework for Poverty Reduction in Burundi have caught particular attention of participants:

- More than 66.9% of the Burundian population lives below the poverty line.
- The low food production affects the survival of the population.
- Several diseases such as AIDS, malaria, etc. affect people who are already malnourished.
- Food insecurity is a recurring problem.

Despite the palpable and measurable poverty, some good measures have been taken: free health care for young children, and free primary schooling.

**The question is: What can Burundi do to achieve the MDGs?**

Announcing the campaign to "Translate the MDGs into a model poverty reduction law," Ms. Karirekinyana suggested that such an initiative would be an opportunity for Burundi. Because the transformation of the model law into national law is based on commitment and accountability of national actors such as government, parliament, and civil society. The law also binds the international actors who support national priorities.

Poverty can not be reduced without strong institutional and legal measures. The poverty reduction law starts from the premise that poverty is unacceptable because it violates the most basic and elementary human rights. **Burundi should join the countries that support the campaign to "Translate the MDGs into a model poverty reduction law."**

The discussion then focused on other important goals:

- Education for all.

Some associations are involved because the fight against extreme poverty also involves education and Burundi has already provided free primary education. This has allowed schooling many children.

Note:

MDGs cannot be isolated one from another as all are basic socio-economic rights. For he who does not eat is certainly not able to attend school.

**Clarification:**

What is a model law? Is it applicable by international agreements?

The Model Law is a statement of guiding principles. To be effective, it must be adapted to national circumstances by national key players and adopted by Parliament to become law. Mrs. Ginette Karirekinyana mentioned the example of a model law on HIV / AIDS in Ndjamena, initiated by UNAIDS and adopted by some countries.

The process to formulate a model law for the reduction of poverty is undoubtedly interesting as the beneficiaries themselves have the opportunity to decide what the priority is for them and what is good for them.

**There are 8 MDGs and Burundi should make an assessment of what has been done so far and what remains to be done. Participants tried to make that assessment:**

- Alleviate extreme poverty and hunger: efforts have been made in this direction and the strategic poverty reduction framework for in Burundi is a sort of reclaiming of the MDGs. But, Burundi remains one of the poorest countries in the world. Therefore, a national poverty reduction law would be a good thing.
- Achieve universal primary education: many efforts are made. With free tuition, many children go to school and it is planned to build a primary school on every census hill and a secondary school for every 3 primary schools. Churches, NGOs, people themselves contribute to this ambitious program. It is hoped that this goal will be realized in a near future.
- Combat HIV / AIDS, malaria and other diseases: One well informed participant has reported an increase of AIDS among the rural population against a declining trend of the scourge in urban areas. Now there are provincial, municipal and local committees to fight against AIDS. The clinics are now equipped with kits for testing and there are people trained to distribute drugs. Special work should be done on prevention and there is still much to be done by mobilizing everyone given the seriousness of the pandemic. Tritherapy is now available and should be used carefully because mistakes would lead to disasters. As for malaria, mosquito nets are currently being distributed.
- Promote gender equality and empower women: Burundi is among the most advanced African countries on this issue (a good level of women representation in politics: 30% minimum). However, efforts must be maintained provided women themselves are actively involved in the issue. Being a woman does not give the right to hold office. She must also be competent.
- **What is the role of Burundian rural women in all this?** For rural women, there is still much work to be done. Women associations must be supported, particularly by strengthening the microcredit system to reduce their economic dependence. In general, women are increasingly taking initiatives. They need encouragement, guidance, etc.

- Reduce child mortality: Child mortality rates are gradually decreasing - probably because free health care is a favourable factor. Infant mortality is also related to agricultural productivity. A pharmacist among the participants found that traditional practices are vanishing. This also reduces mortality since children are taken care of quickly. He called for intensifying awareness against such traditional practices.
- Improve maternal health: commendable efforts have been made with free maternity care. In addition, children under 5 years receive free medical care.
- Consider the environment: planting trees in Burundi reverses desertification and protects the soil against erosion. We must maintain that momentum. However, soil degradation must be taken seriously. The introduction of agricultural inputs and their use without control is a factor of lots of concerns. The government needs to adopt clear and strong strategies in the agricultural sector.
- Develop a global partnership for development: it is up to the government to maintain its cooperation with worldwide partners. Burundi is a country that cannot currently survive without international aid; diplomatic missions should work accordingly to gain the attention of partners.

**b. Recommendation :**

Burundi should be a pilot country in translating the Millennium Development Goals into a poverty reduction law and establishing the framework needed to induce progress in this regard.



## Workshop 3: Adult literacy and vocational training

Resource person and rapporteur: Mr. Emmanuel Mpfayokurera

### Presentation, discussion and synthesis

The presentation of Mr. Emmanuel MPFAYOKURERA focused on the development of a Diaspora approach in a field in which the Government has taken the initiative of establishing a Ministry dedicated to adult literacy and vocational training. In raising the question, "Literacy for whom and why?", participants summarized the discussions conducted in the following points:



- Literacy is not an end in itself;
- Adult literacy should be functional and must take the form of a true professional education leading to non-agricultural employment generation so as to relieve the rural areas ;
- Intellectuals from each Burundian region and municipality should give attention to this sector of functional literacy to serve as a model and conduct an awareness campaign so that people widely adopt this activity.
- The Government must provide sufficient means to this Ministry to allow it to successfully fulfil its mission;
- An incentive policy is needed as well as financial incentives to participants in adult literacy programmes;
- Asked whether to give priority to literacy when the population suffers from hunger, the response is that any approach that leads to an increase of knowledge can create added value and contribute to the improvement of living conditions;
- Burundi Diaspora must build strong associations able to collaborate and develop projects to submit to partner countries to Burundi such as Norway for fundraising.
- A proposal has been made that Saturday's community work be replaced by literacy classes;
- In the same spirit, adult literacy should serve as a springboard for education of citizens in the exercise of democracy;
- For a nationwide initiative with increased efficiency and broader results, training of trainers should be enhanced.

## Workshop 4: Private sector in Burundi: Challenges and investment opportunities for Burundi Diaspora

- ✓ Resource person and facilitator : Honourable Jean MINANI
- ✓ Rapporteur : Mr. Zacharie BUKURU

### a. Introduction.



formulating recommendations.

Participants first listened to the presentation of the prevailing situation by Honourable Dr. Jean MINANI. They reviewed the list of opportunities presented by the private sector in Burundi. They then prepared a table that presents some challenges posed by the investment sector while outlining approaches to solutions to these challenges. Finally, they concluded by

### b. Presentation and discussion

- Prevailing situation

According to Dr. Jean MINANI, Burundi has a low level of investment in the private sector. "Private investors make some investments which are still insufficient," he said. Thus, Dr. MINANI appealed to all members of Burundi Diaspora to invest because he believes that the opportunities are real. Before proceeding to the listing of assets and investment opportunities in the private sector, he drew attention to the diversity of areas of investment: hotels, houses for short term renting, large trucks for transportation, agricultural production and so on.

- Opportunities

For Hon. Jean Minani, Burundi offers great opportunities. These include:

- ✓ The existence of a legal environment including the investment code,
- ✓ the Export Promotion Agency which is being created,
- ✓ Integration of Burundi in the East African Community (EAC).

Regarding this last point, he presented parallel benefits including safety because, he said, membership to the EAC can solve economic problems and even security in the region. The ethnic issue will no longer arise, as it will be drowned in this large

entity, until it will disappear. Membership to EAC also solves the problem of isolation of Burundi and will attract foreign companies to invest in Burundi. However, a series of problems that can slow down the enthusiasm for investing can be identified.

- The challenges in the sector
  - ✓ Reluctance and anxiety in the Diaspora because of persisting insecurity
  - ✓ Rising fear because of forthcoming elections
  - ✓ Lack of capital and therefore limited financial means of Burundi Diaspora members
  - ✓ Lack of bank collaterals
  - ✓ Lack of information on existing legal texts
  - ✓ Perverse effects of EAC membership for the farmers who will be forgotten once the State is focused on sectors other than agriculture
  - ✓ Corruption and misappropriation of funds likely to discourage new investors.

### **c. The recommendations of the workshop**

The following recommendations were formulated to promote and support investment in the private sector:

- Ensuring security in general
- Ensuring stability of institutions
- Large scale broadcasting of information on legal instruments (creation of an information agency )
- Make certain, bodies already in existence, more performing, such as:
  - ✓ Export Promotion Agency
  - ✓ FOSIP : Private Investment Fund
  - ✓ PIP : Private Investment Program
  - ✓ Revitalization of trading centres
  - ✓ Strengthening of organizational capacity building of Burundi Diaspora to initiate coordinated investment
  - ✓ Partnership Creation
  - ✓ Utilisation of macroeconomic instruments to facilitate investment, going through sector policies of the government to identify existing opportunities.

## **Workshops 5: Good governance: Popular consultations, the 2010 elections and Burundi Diaspora's citizen participation.**

### Resource Persons:

- ✓ Honourable Léonce NGENDAKUMANA
- ✓ Honourable Jérémie NGENDAKUMANA
- ✓ Facilitator : Mr. Emmanuel BAMENYEKANYE
- ✓ Rapporteur : Mr. Jean-Marie SINDAYIGAYA



### **a. Presentation**

Hon Léonce NGENDAKUMANA reminded workshop participants that there is, in Burundi, a debate on the electoral system itself. The debate also focuses on the electoral architecture in which ethnic and gender balances fit, all this within the framework of a free and fair vote that is likely to result in a coalition government. Hence, this calls for the establishment of a legal institutional framework:

- The Constitution ;
- The Elections Act;
- The Law on Political Parties;
- The Law on the Constitutional Court;
- The Law on Formation and organization of the INEC, Independent National Electoral Commission

He also informed participants that almost all key political players had agreed not to make any amendment to the Constitution while a large majority favoured a revision of the Elections Act. In his presentation, he continued and argued that a variety of approaches has been implemented. He informed participants that the Interior Minister said he would submit, as soon as possible, a text to the Government on the revision of the electoral law to be forwarded to Parliament for deliberation. Meanwhile, the Independent National Electoral Commission intends to organize a debate to explain its vision to political parties.

For him, the big question is the security of the electoral process. This raises another debate on the following terms:

- The sequence of elections ;
- The timing of elections;

Asked about popular consultations, Hon Léonce NGENDAKUMANA discussed the framework of consultations as it was included in the Arusha Peace Agreement containing a dual mechanism to prosecute the crimes committed in Burundi since independence. The first framework should be the reconciliation; the second should be incorporated into the court system of Burundi on crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity. According to Hon Léonce Ngendakumana, the Popular Consultations' Preparatory Commission announced that they would start soon but no timetable has been set.

Hon Léonce NGENDAKUMANA did not fail to question the appropriateness of these consultations, "Is this the time to start this debate when we should begin the electoral process?"

And he responded himself in the negative way: it is really not the time because it could lead to discussions on individuals when it is time to begin the debate on security and the framework of elections as major concerns.

Speaking in turn, Honourable Jérémie NGENDAKUMANA echoed the same opinion. For him also:

This is not the right time to initiate referendums, but rather to focus on what brings people together and reconciles them: Political parties are working on that in-house.

Reacting on the impact of the voting sequence on the poll results, one participant asked Honourable Jeremiah NGENDAKUMANA what is the prevailing consensus on the conduct of the electoral process. Honourable Jérémie NGENDAKUMANA replied that the Independent National Electoral Commission has made public that it can run simulations for the scenario assuming that the polls would have the same sequence and almost the same schedule as those of 2005 but that in other cases it could not venture in such an exercise.

### **b. Questions and discussion :**

Hon Léonce NGENDAKUMANA addressed the issue of mushrooming media and wondered whether journalists have sufficient professional skills, assuming that radio can become a very dangerous tool if it is placed in the hands of journalists who do not check the information sufficiently well before they broadcast it. Indeed most people take all that is heard on the radio as plain truth.

### **c. Summary and Recommendations**

The main ideas and proposals to be retained are the following ones:

- Participants were pleased to see that Honourable Léonce NGENDAKUMANA and Hon. Jérémie NGENDAKUMANA are confident on the performance of the dialogue framework. The prospect for a consensus is equally pleasing.
- Burundi Diaspora has recommended that every effort be made to ensure that the electoral timetable is in place timely ;
- Politicians and members of Burundi Diaspora have agreed on the need for the Diaspora to participate in election monitoring.
- On the question of Burundians living abroad exercising their right to vote, it was recommended to simplify the system to allow Burundi Diaspora members to fully enjoy their civic rights.
- As security of elections is a great concern to all, it was suggested that a special police contingent in charge of supervising the elections be organised and trained.

## **Workshop 6: Women and development: the role of migrant women in development of Burundi**

- ✓ Resource Person: Ms. Léoncie CIZA
- ✓ Facilitator : Honourable Monique NDAKOZE
- ✓ Rapporteur : Ms Marie NZIGAMYE

### **a. Exchange of experiences: projects.**

The workshop was intended to show that concrete achievements of Burundi Diaspora women for the development of Burundi are a reality. Women can empower themselves by concrete actions instead of speeches on gender claims.

- **"Carrefour de développement", an initiative of Ms. Léoncie CIZA**

Ms. Léoncie Ciza is a former member of Burundi Diaspora in Belgium who has just returned back to her mother country to serve it. In her hometown, she created a project called "Carrefour de Développement de Bukeye", i.e. "Bukeye Development Crossroads ". This project is a collective of mainly rural women's associations. It has funded the purchase of goats which are then distributed to associations that allow them to multiply and collect their waste as organic fertilizer. This manure is a real solution to the problems of hunger because the fields where it is used produce good harvests. Goats living in a stable do not constitute a danger to the flora as they eat Paspalum grass grown on poor land. These associations also benefit from training programmes related to the following topics:

- ✓ To be self-dependent;
- ✓ Work together
- ✓ Improve agriculture
- ✓ Maintain solidarity

Funding for this project amounts to more or less 4 000 Euro.

- **"Garukira iwacu", an educational programme initiated by Ms. Immaculée Nahimana**

In the framework of the programme "Garukira iwacu" in the municipality of Kiremba in Ngozi Province, Ms. Immaculée Nahimana of the Burundi Diaspora in Belgium has begun construction of a school with the cooperation of former school classmates and family members. Of course the building work has been done by the villagers but the association had to buy all the materials. Currently three classes have been built and the construction of a "home" for teachers and a library is underway.

- **The programme of Ms. Régine SINIREMERA and her husband both living in Norway**

Native of a very remote corner of Bururi, Ms. Régine Siniremera wanted to prevent that the children of her village would suffer as much as she did, when forced to walk tens of kilometres to reach a secondary school. She helped to build a school. She bought all the materials and the school has released its first class last year. It was a great joy for all the villagers. A teacher's home is under construction.

- **Drinking water programme by Ms. Léocadie MURRAY**

Without going into details, Ms. Murray Léocadie shared her experience on her drinking water programme in the town of Songa. It is a 15 km long water supply system with fountains.

- **The programmes of Ms. MBANZENDORE (The Netherlands) in the association Women for peace and development**

This association worked at first on integration of Burundian women refugees in Holland and on those who suffered from war trauma. Then, from 2004 onwards, the association has begun to educate Burundian women on the issue of "voting and being voted" and started claiming more respect for women. From 2005 onwards and taking her home province of Kirundo as a pilot zone, Ms. Mbanzendore initiated a project on "social cohesion" by training 10 women leaders per municipality. Known to their neighbours, these women are chosen for their qualities. The training also introduces methods of conflict resolution.

She then included men, whose numbers are limited to 30% for women to keep their upper hands on the programme.

Ms. Mbanzendore received the Peace Prize awarded by Belgium in 2008. She often works with the women of Congo, Rwanda, Kenya, etc.

#### **b. Wishes**

- All women would like to be involved in initiatives taken by their sisters in Burundi and exchange information with them.
- They requested to attend a conference to be held in Burundi for the women of Burundi Diaspora to raise awareness about the problems of development. Honourable Jérémie Ngendakumana promised to support the achievement of this conference.

### c. Recommendations

- Honourable NGENDAKUMANA Jérémie encourages women and men from Burundi Diaspora to continue to promote Burundian culture (folk songs, dances, variety shows), as a country's culture is an integral part of its development.
- The workshop participants asked that women of Burundi Diaspora monitor their actions and provide further information at the next meeting of Burundi Diaspora.
- Workshop participants recommended that women work together and talk about their future commitments and achievements.

### d. Conclusions

The purpose of all these examples is to show that development activities are possible with small budgets and that deeds speak louder than words.

Women have proven that they participate in development. They must therefore be regarded as key actors for development.

## **Workshop 7: Agriculture and Livestock: What strategies to combat food shortages? What could be the role of Burundi Diaspora?**

- ✓ Resource Person : Dr Angelo BARAMPAMA
- ✓ Facilitator : Honourable Catherine NZOYISABA
- ✓ Rapporteur : Dr. Mélanie NTAHORUTABA

### a. Presentation:

Currently 90% of the Burundi population is living in rural areas where agriculture and animal husbandry are the core of their livelihood. Arable land is very small with about 50 to 60 acres per family. This area is fragmented with each generation, which leads and will further lead in the long-term to increasing food insufficiency. According to official reports, 66.9% of Burundi population is undernourished. Burundi needs to improve food crops to feed the entire population. Taking the example of the cultivation of cassava, Dr. Angelo Barampama has been working for many years to prove that Burundi has an agricultural potential which could be efficiently



used to combat chronic deficiencies and food crises if well exploited, well controlled and well managed.

His presentation focused on artisanal cassava processing: "cassava for food and for development; valorisation of cassava in Burundi, opportunities to seize."

Perspectives on conservation and use of agricultural products and by-products: Artisanal (and / or industrial) processing means:

- Ensuring production in all seasons (dry seasons and rainy seasons)
- Reducing processing time (3 to 4 days against 14 to 21)
- Guaranteeing quality of finished products (elimination of toxic elements)
- Enriching nutritional content of cassava-based products
- Providing for long term preservation and storage
- Facilitating the conditions of transport and marketing

Dr. Barampama took time to go into the details of the benefits of each proposal. For example, setting up better conditions for transport and marketing allows to organize the supply of cassava to non-producing cassava areas in every season.

As a researcher but also a field worker, Dr. Barampama showed a variety of products made from cassava (tapioca, meal, pellets, etc.) and shared a delicious homemade cassava cake. This was a brilliant advocacy method for food diversification. Food diversification would result in improving human nutrition and also increase the income of different production chain participants (producers, artisans or industrialists, various intermediaries etc.)

## **b. Discussions**

Discussions have subsequently highlighted other aspects of agriculture and livestock such as:

- Production of forage for livestock;
- Increase and / or diversification of the production of noble protein (milk, meat and eggs);
- Production of manure / compost

For participants in the workshop, agriculture and livestock are suffering from several ailments and problems. Some were identified and discussed at length:

- ✓ Problems of seed ;
- ✓ Using archaic equipment such as hoes;

- ✓ Lack of fertilizers;
- ✓ Land degradation;
- ✓ Reduction of arable land;
- ✓ Lack of impact studies;
- ✓ Impoverishment of rural populations;
- ✓ Market issues for marketing of crops;
- ✓ Inappropriate trade systems;
- ✓ Lack of industry regulations;
- ✓ Etc.

Honourable Évariste Bayaga's remarkable intervention enlightened participants on the following facts:

- The consequences of war from 1993 to 2005 on agriculture and livestock production are numerous and Burundi struggles to implement all measures to increase productivity. Various actors take advantage of gaps in this area. The vulnerable and destitute people powerlessly face the following phenomena.
  - Premature marketing of cassava: before maturing, cassava is ripped from the field to be sold in Bujumbura and in Rwanda.
  - Low Prices of coffee that leave farmers without any profit and almost without income;
  - Privatization of some crops

Other comments:

Participants deplored the possible introduction of transgenic seeds under the guise of seeds resistant to diseases. These seeds do not generate new viable seeds, and can cause significant economic damage in the medium and long-term (dependence of farmers, etc.), as well as environmental damage (contamination of soil and other crops, use of uncontrolled agricultural inputs, etc.). The best known example which falls in this case is cassava.

Under cover of humanitarian aid, Burundi became a testing ground for multiplication of several cultures without proven benefit to the people.

The problem of chemical fertilizers has been raised: all these modified or hybrid plants require the use of fertilizers and agricultural inputs. Often no control is ever done. Moreover, these inputs are expensive.

If the farmers happen to have access to so-called performance seeds, they cannot buy those expensive inputs. This reduces productivity. Some farmers take loans to buy agricultural inputs but low harvests may not allow them to pay back the loans. Such situation leads to the impoverishment of rural people and to the phenomenon of

increased cost of living as the prices of agricultural produce increases steadily for the end consumers too.

Participants encourage the use of "green fertilizer" but also noted many farmers without cattle are not familiar with them.

Several members of the Burundi Diaspora have lamented the non-evolution of production methods: Burundian farmers use the same methods as those of 40 - 50 years ago: there hasn't been any change. How can we expect a better production?

### c. Recommendations to increase production

- Sector policy on rural food production:
  - ✓ Land reform
  - ✓ Creation of villages to create more space for agricultural activities to allow intensification of agriculture and thus increase the rhythm of production following the pace of demographic evolution;
- Appeal to experts for:
  - ✓ Learning the process of transformation and storage;
  - ✓ Developing crops for inter-harvest period production;
  - ✓ Focus on food crops for local consumption;
  - ✓ Focus on green fertilizers;
  - ✓ To study impacts on seeds and every product introduced into the agricultural system
- Improve information and training for farmers. This would lead to:
  - ✓ Diversification of crops and increased production;
  - ✓ A better understanding by the rural farmers of the need of healthy food
- Change methods of production and agricultural mechanization

We must increasingly encourage the abandonment of the hoe as a means of agricultural production and use machinery for cultivation instead. The Diaspora can help improving agricultural techniques - providing agricultural machinery.

- Foreign Aid

Foreign aid, whether multilateral, bilateral, whether from NGOs or research institutes must be controlled and directed by the Public Authority.

- Skills and expertise of Burundi Diaspora

From the discussions it was clear that members of Burundi Diaspora have knowledge and experience with potential benefits to the country. For example, Ms Kanyange Suavis learned in Italy simple methods of tomatoes' conservation. The Government of Burundi should learn to use the expertise of its Diaspora.

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## Conclusion

In a plenary session, participants completed discussions on the workshops on the four major themes namely "Migration and development", "Women and development", "Good governance, national consultation and citizen participation of Burundi Diaspora" and "Agriculture and animal husbandry" in order to identify the possible contribution of Burundi Diaspora in the reconstruction of Burundi.

Participants were fully satisfied about the thematic exchanges, positive findings, hope generated by programmes in progress and the will of Burundi Diaspora to be involved in the concrete reconstruction of the country. Nevertheless, several other issues are still pending: for example, many participants wondered how members of Burundi Diaspora would manage the follow up to this international conference, how would they organize themselves to harness the efforts of Burundi Diaspora? How to create genuine cooperation dynamics between national key players and Burundi Diaspora?

That is why the program provides for the following day, a meeting on major issues and debates before the end of the conference.



## IV. The day of the 28<sup>th</sup> June 2009

The last day of the conference was divided into three (3) highlights:

- A session for discussion: Comments and recommendations in plenary, conclusive results and prospects;
- Closing speeches;
- Visit of Stavanger, the biggest town of Hå Municipality

### A. Discussion session

#### 1. Comments in plenary session

- Training of trainers for adult literacy - training for entrepreneurship

With the measures taken by Burundi government, many children now go to school. Therefore in the future, many Burundians will do higher studies and will expect to find a job immediately after graduation. Therefore there should be projects assisting them to prepare themselves to be self-dependent through entrepreneurship, training of trainers. Burundians should consider actions that go in this direction to avoid the phenomenon of graduate unemployment.

The Burundi foundation for entrepreneurship training has developed a project. The promoter of the project - Mr. Emmanuel MPFAYOKURERA - is seeking for partners and funds.

- **Land use planning - the use of new technology and better organization of rapid population growth**

In reply to the issue of rapid population growth, one participant called for land use planning with the use of population as labour like in some Asian countries. An organization of the growing population, the use of new techniques such as irrigation of lands, rainwater harvesting and many other techniques are needed. People must get to work.

In addition, environmental issues and climate change effects deserve further attention. It would be better to discuss those issues at next conferences of Burundi Diaspora.

- **Invitation to Burundi Diaspora to get better organized: An appeal from a Burundi Member of Parliament**

The Burundi Diaspora would be more effective if it were well organized. Thus a Member of the Burundi Parliamentary Delegation invited members of Burundi Diaspora to come out of such conferences with feasible projects, resulting from discussions on relevant and well targeted topics. He brought to the attention of the Burundi Diaspora that it may send draft laws to Parliament.

For next time, he suggested, it would be better to send the conference themes early enough to enable guests to prepare for it and even to appeal to experts and technicians of public services.

- **Web Blog and forum for discussion among members of Burundi Diaspora**

Several participants expressed the need to create a forum on the Internet, ensure continuity and create links between members of Burundi Diaspora. It was decided on the spot to set up such a framework.

- **Framework for Kirundi Web-based learning**

The need for young people of Burundian descent to learn Kirundi is real, according to the adult generation. Burundians are found in all countries, speak several languages (dialects, French, English, national languages of host countries) while young people from Burundi Diaspora have little skill or none at all in the mother tongue of their parents. Therefore, it was proposed to set up a web-based Kirundi learning system.

- **Formal framework of partnership with Burundi Diaspora**

It is a fact that the Burundi Diaspora is only beginning to get organized. Relatively well established in host countries, Burundi Diaspora members can now undertake concrete projects in the direction of their home country. They have a lot of ideas, experiences and skills. However, at present, Burundi Diaspora complains of the lack of an official partner.

During the civil war and even now, Burundi Diaspora members sent material and financial help to their families and helped them cope with famine. They are contributing on an ever increasing scale. With peace restored, they can contribute even more to reconstruction. This requires, on the one hand, recognition of the Burundi Diaspora as a development key player by the Government of Burundi, and

on the other hand, as a result of this recognition, the setting up of a formal framework for collaboration between national actors and the Diaspora .

- Taking action against the marginalization of women and students from the Twa ethnic group



Commending the commitment of the Diaspora to their countries of origin, Senator Bayaga Évariste emphasized the role of animal husbandry in a country like Burundi where children lack of milk to grow well. He awakened consciousness of participants on the marginalization of the Batwa ethnic minority. This phenomenon, known to everyone, leads to several consequences and maintains the Batwa in forgotten poverty. This is the case of women Batwa whose plight is ignored, and children Batwa, who experience bullying and taunts from other children and are often forced to abandon school.

He called for support for the associations supporting the Batwa.

- **Transfer of skills**

Burundians should benefit from the presence of Burundi Diaspora in developed countries to learn how those countries managed to be developed. Burundi Government, its Embassies abroad and Burundi Diaspora should negotiate missions of skill transfers and capacity building on development strategies in sensitive sectors.

- **Development of export products**

The presence of the Burundi Diaspora in various countries should contribute to the development of exports from Burundi. Many Western countries ignore Burundi products. These include coffee, which can be exported to the Scandinavian countries.

- **Dissemination of the report of the European Meeting of Burundi Diaspora in Belgium from 23 to 25 May 2008**

The delegation of the Group of experts of the Burundi Diaspora in Benelux through its coordinator promised a wide dissemination of the European Meeting of Burundi Diaspora in Belgium from 23 to 25 May 2008 and its follow up as requested by several participants of the ICBD.

It was hoped that in the future, Burundi would take the initiative to bring together members of Burundi Diaspora.

- **Burundi diplomatic missions and the issue of forced repatriation of some Burundians abroad**

Through the Attaché of the Burundi Embassy to Belgium, a congratulations message has been sent to participants in the ICBD. However, participants have expressed regrets about the absence of ambassadors at the conference. It was suggested that Burundi Diplomats be more active, take initiative for Burundi and are graded according to their actions.

The Burundi Government is requested to seriously address the problem of forced repatriation of Burundians without papers from abroad. Participants from Norway were in favour of a Consulate in this country because they feel abandoned.

- **Reducing the number of MPs and senators in the next electoral term ; Burundi Diaspora election monitoring team**

Regarding the forthcoming elections, it was proposed to reduce the number of MPs and senators. As one of the world's poorest countries, Burundi has no means to sustain a large number of parliamentarians and senators as this leads to huge expenditure for the country.

The idea of the creation of a Burundi Diaspora election monitoring team for the next election was also reiterated.

- **“Messages from Burundi Diaspora are heard” - a Burundi MP**

Congratulating the participants at the ICBD and especially also the women who initiate a lot of worthwhile and salutary projects, a Burundi MP has promised to relay all the messages formulated by the Burundi Diaspora. The woman MP was particularly supportive of the idea of organizing an international conference of Burundi Diaspora in Burundi so that people hear and understand the views and ideas of Burundians abroad.

## **2. Conclusive results and prospects**

There once was a time when members of Burundi Diaspora were fighting whatever was happening in their home country and were denigrating the national key players. The work of the ICBD has demonstrated that new and positive dynamics are developing: Burundi Diaspora is actively involved in the reconstruction instead of denigrating the country.

Members of Burundi Diaspora are aware of important challenges to be faced to achieve their good intentions. Therefore, they wanted to close the ICBD with clear concrete follow-up agreements. The results and prospects which have emerged are:

- **Creation of an International Confederation of Burundi Diaspora - ICBUDI**

Recognizing the need to create an international framework of the Burundi Diaspora, some participants in the ICBUD submitted projects in this direction. These projects came from Burundi Diaspora in Belgium, the United States, Norway and Italy. After several formal and informal discussions, an ad hoc team addressed the issue and submitted the findings of its discussions in a statement to the plenary session for approval.

This is the project of the International Confederation of Burundi Diaspora that has been accepted. It will be matured and will be put on the agenda of the next international conference. Meanwhile, unstructured communities are requested to form strong organisations.

Participants were asked to render the results of the conference to their communities, associations but also to all members of Burundi Diaspora. It is understood that the report will be widely distributed among all Burundians and Friends of Burundi.

- **Burundi Diaspora's Programmes**

Several members and communities of Burundi Diaspora plan and implement development programmes for and in Burundi. Burundian Diaspora can support all programmes called common to the Diaspora. To do this, members of the Diaspora are invited to share their current projects and those to come.

Under the ICBUD, it was proposed that the draft programme on Adult Literacy be considered as a priority. This is a nice instrument for citizenship education with the aim of strengthening democracy. It was suggested that community work on Saturday is also dedicated to this goal. The project should be implemented.

- **Forum, blog and web site for Burundi Diaspora**

To ensure continuity and follow-up to the ICBUD, it was proposed to set up a forum for communication between members of Burundi Diaspora, a blog and a website. This will channel the reports of conferences of Burundi Diaspora and programmes. This will also channel concrete actions undertaken such as learning Kirundi among Burundi Diaspora Communities.

While waiting for the creation of a web site, a blog of Burundian Diaspora is already operational in French: [www.diasporaburundaise.blogspot.com](http://www.diasporaburundaise.blogspot.com)

This blog is open to all Burundians. It gives possibilities to express oneself in all languages spoken in Burundi, i.e. Kirundi, French, English and Swahili.

- **Creation of a Follow-up Committee of the ICBD**

Mr. Japheth Legentil NDAYISHIMIYE was assigned the role of coordinating the follow-up to the ICBD until the next conference. He is requested to set up a team of his choice - the ICBD Monitoring Committee - which will oversee progress in the implementation of recommendations.

- **Place for the next International Conference of Burundi Diaspora**

Participants from the Netherlands expressed the intention to organize the next conference in the Netherlands. Other participants expressed their wish to host this conference in their host countries. The date and venue of the next conference will be established no later than 31 December 2009.

### **Conclusion:**

The participants unanimously thanked the Government of Burundi for its willingness to facilitate Burundi Diaspora actions. The same gratitude goes to the Municipality of Hå for the warm welcome they gave. They also thanked the organizers, firstly BUFNOR and CPHA and the Focal Group members who participated in coordination, logistical support and the mobilisation of resource persons.

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## B. Closing Speech

In brief, the closing speeches were made in the following order:

- ✓ Mr. Japheth Legentil NDAYISHIMIYE
- ✓ Mr. Lars Kolnes, Mayor, Hå Municipality.
- ✓ Honourable Jérémie NGENDAKUMANA



On behalf of the organisers of the conference, Mr. NDAYISHIMIYE heartily thanked the participants, guests from Burundi and from all over the world. After that, he asked for their indulgence for some problems in logistics and organisation of the conference but promised the report as soon as possible. The Mayor of Hå Municipality expressed his entire satisfaction and revealed that he was eagerly waiting for the outcomes of the

conference to increase partnership between Norway and Burundi. He ended his speech by offering a valuable municipal badge as a gift to the Burundian Delegation.

On his side, Honourable Jérémie NGENDAKUMANA welcomed the general clear trend of all players - from Burundi and from the Diaspora - to contribute to the process of reconstruction. For him, these dynamics are a mark of the love of Burundians for their motherland Burundi. He pledged support to those who undertake projects and initiatives.

In his conclusion, he said that he has taken note of the concerns of members of Burundi Diaspora and that he was confident of success if each Burundian (from both the Diaspora and from Burundi) provides the appropriate stone for reconstruction.

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The conference ended with a moment of emotion raised by a poem on unity and hope declaimed by a young Burundian. Burundians are brothers and sisters; hatred and destruction have no place in a family. The young Burundian set up a festive atmosphere on the last evening by quoting a poem in which he calls on all Burundian adults to think of young people and the future of Burundi.



## C. Visit of Stavanger City and departure of participants

The Chief Executive Officer of Hå Municipality, Mr. Lars Kölnes took upon him the role of tour guide for participants in a sightseeing tour of the city in the Stavanger region. The participants, most of whom afterwards took the road to the airport for their return, have admired the beautiful agro-pastoral landscapes, beaches and Norwegian ingenuity in the development of this region.



Participants have certainly taken with them a happy memory of this three (3) days conference in the town of Stavanger in Norway, with perhaps a hidden hope to be invited again one day in this Scandinavian country, a friend of Burundi.

# Appendices

I. The program of the International Conference of Burundi Diaspora

II. Speeches of:

- ✓ Mr. Japheth Legentil NDAYISHIMIYE
- ✓ The Delegate of the Norwegian Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
- ✓ His Excellency the Ambassador of Burundi to Italy,
- ✓ The Vice-Chairperson of AWEPA,
- ✓ Mr. Mayor of Hå Municipality,
- ✓ Honourable Jérémie NGENDAKUMANA

III. The presentations of :

- ✓ Honourable Léonce NGENDAKUMANA
- ✓ Honourable Jérémie NGENDAKUMANA
- ✓ Mr. Gatugu Joseph

IV. The declaration for the creation of the International Confederation of Burundian Diaspora

V. The closing speeches

VI. The list of participants