



# USAID | RWANDA

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## GOVERNING JUSTLY AND DEMOCRATICALLY

### OVERVIEW

#### PROFILE

Date of Independence: 1962  
Population: 10.2 million (2008)  
Languages: Kinyarwanda,  
French, English, Swahili  
GDP per capita: \$260 (yr)  
Source: U.S. State Department and IMF

#### MISSION DIRECTOR

Dennis Weller  
2657 Ave. de la  
Gendarmerie, Kacyiru  
Kigali, Rwanda  
Tel: +250 252 596-800

#### DESK OFFICER

Benita Trina Gunn  
Tel: 1-202-712-0393  
Email: bgunn@usaid.gov  
Web: <http://www.usaid.gov/rw/>

### BACKGROUND

Much has changed in Rwanda since the 1994 genocide that left more than 800,000 people dead. Today, the Government of Rwanda is committed to development, recovery, and reconciliation, and major milestones have already been reached, notably in security and health. Internal and external security must, however, always be weighed against the gradual democratization and decentralization that the country requires for development.



### PROGRAMS

USAID supports the establishment of legal aid centers for the poor, helps Rwanda's government improve the quality of legislation through a stronger legislative drafting process, and supports reconciliation through a program that promotes increased dialogue and debate on important and sensitive national topics. Moreover, to help build a political system that offers meaningful political choices to its citizens while maintaining a spirit of national unity, USAID supports a political party strengthening project. The project assists and reinforces mechanisms to boost interparty dialogue and builds political parties' capacity to organize, communicate, and reach out to grassroots constituents.

USAID is currently implementing a Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Threshold program, which focuses on strengthening the capacity and independence of the judiciary, expanding opportunities for civic participation, and promoting civil rights and liberties.

### RULE OF LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Land pressure has been frequently cited as a contributing factor to the 1994 genocide, and continues to be a concern across Rwanda. More than 90 percent of disputes recorded by the Government of Rwanda's ombudsman are land-related, particularly among women and youth. U.S.-funded activities support improving access to justice for Rwandans, especially women, youth, and other vulnerable people. USAID also supports the establishment of a public platform for Rwandans to discuss how land issues affect them. The project trains *abunzi* (community mediators) in mediation and land rights and clarifies the *abunzi*'s role in the overall land reform process.

### GOOD GOVERNANCE

Government capacity for analyzing and addressing large-scale, systemic issues is limited. Many ministries are understaffed and overstretched, and do not possess the tools, resources, or information necessary to perform their work effectively. In response, U.S.-funded activities support the Rwandan government's efforts to build its human and institutional capacities, improve land management, address local land disputes, and improve the transparent and accountable delivery of healthcare services. These programs are designed to complement MCC activities, which focus on strengthening good governance and democracy in Rwanda.

On behalf of the American people, the U.S. government has provided humanitarian assistance and economic development to those in need around the world since the Marshall Plan.



# USAID | RWANDA

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## CIVIL SOCIETY

The United States supports educating and mobilizing civil society around health and land issues so that they can advocate for improved land reform, land management, and related issues. USAID activities coordinate with the MCC to address indicators of voice and accountability, civil liberties, and political rights in the areas of judicial independence, media freedom, police accountability, civic participation in local government decision-making, and civil society strengthening. These activities also work to build the capacity of local and national civil society organizations to educate citizens on key policy issues and provide input into local and national government decision-making.

## FUNDING

