



# DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE



*USAID supports Rwanda's initiatives for decentralization, strengthens civil society and promotes reconciliation.*



## DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE IN RWANDA AT A GLANCE

- Government type: Republic
- Date of independence: July 1, 1962
- President: Paul Kagame
- Constitution: Adopted in 2003
- Literacy rate (ages 15+): 64.9 percent

*Source: United Nations Development Report 2007*

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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### DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE IN RWANDA

Since the genocide in 1994, Rwanda has made remarkable progress in developing national and local institutions of government, maintaining security, promoting reconciliation and strengthening the justice system. Reforms in democracy and governance continue, including efforts to strengthen civil society, increase the capacity and freedom of the media, increase political space, advance reconciliation and improve the technical capacity of government officials.

### RESPONSE AND RESULTS

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provided nearly \$2.7 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 to support the Government of Rwanda's initiatives for local government and decentralization, strengthen civil society organizations and promote reconciliation and conflict mitigation.

In November 2006, the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) announced that Rwanda was eligible for assistance through the threshold program. Threshold countries must demonstrate a commitment to reforming specific policy weaknesses. Under the Ruling Justly category Rwanda fails the political rights, civil liberties and voice and accountability indicators. USAID is working closely with the Government of Rwanda to finalize a threshold plan.

USAID supports Rwanda's decentralization and redistricting process through the Twubakane Decentralization and Health Program. Twubakane builds the financial and management capacity of local governments in 12 of the country's 30 districts in order to increase access to and improve the quality of health services. In FY 2007, each targeted district directly received \$100,000 to provide better health care in local communities.

National unity and reconciliation remains an issue in Rwanda. Annual opinion surveys conducted in collaboration with Rwanda's National Unity and Reconciliation Commission allow the Government of Rwanda to measure the country's progress in reconciliation, justice, land reform and decentralization. The surveys show that trust in the government remains high, but trust between citizens is decreasing.

USAID trains community mediators to resolve land disputes peacefully. Rwanda is one of the most densely populated countries in the world and land rights will continue to be a source of conflict.

In order to promote peace and dialogue between youth, USAID supports a radio program called Generation Great Lakes. The call-in radio show broadcasts live once a week in Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda. The program attracts a large number of listeners and enables youth to actively contribute to peace and reconciliation in their communities. A new Kinyarwanda-version of the radio program will start this year as part of the project. Young women (ages 15-23) will report and broadcast the show to Rwandan youth.

Building civil society and reducing gender disparities requires an educated population. USAID provides scholarships to disadvantaged, but academically talented, girls and boys. Scholarship recipients are often orphans of war or HIV/AIDS and have limited financial means. In Rwanda, the program grew from 67 beneficiaries in 1999 to nearly 2200 in 2008 of which 77 percent are girls.

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