

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Rwanda Women Parliamentary Forum (RWPF), which was created in 1996, is a consultative mechanism for facilitating gender integration within the Parliament. It is an organizational form of the Rwandan Parliamentarians specifically bringing together the parliamentary women (9 Senators and 39 Deputies). Such organizations (forums or networks of Parliamentarians) are provided for in the Internal Rules and Regulations of both chambers of Parliament.

RWPF Vision

- The RWPF Vision is to have **“a society characterized by equality and equity between men and women, the parity at all levels as well as policies, programs and laws taking gender into account”**

RWPF Mission

- The RWPF mission is **“to contribute to the building of an egalitarian, equitable, inclusive and participatory society, playing the influential role in gender matters taking into account the Parliament mission”**

RWPF general objective

Contribute to the capacity building of Parliamentary women in the framework of their parliamentary role in general and their position of advocacy for the consideration of gender dimension within the Parliamentary mission, structure and axe strategies.

RWPF is built on a solidarity spirit, women empowerment with a view to gender equality. The RWPF strategic plan is a gender instrument of the Parliament.

Strategic Axes

Activities envisaged by this plan are structured round four strategic axes as follows:

- RWPF institutional and organizational capacity building
- Speeding up the implementation of gender approach in the Parliament mission and structure
- Initiation of gender sensitive laws
- Gender-based control of Government Action and Budget

Each axe illustrates Parliamentary gender strategies in terms of sensitization on gender dimension with a view to equality and equity, Parliamentary women empowerment and the consideration of equality and equity in the budgets in general and budgets for positive actions to meet the gender challenge of which women have been traditionally victim.

This executive summary is a digest of logic and activity framework of this plan for the next five years

Axe 1: RWPF Institutional and Organizational Capacity Building

This axe aims at internal and external capacity building for RWPF so that it improves its performance in terms of effectiveness and efficiency in its axes. This capacity building encompasses 6 interventions, which are:

- The capacity building for members in terms of legislation, advocacy and control, namely through trainings for parliamentary women, study tours and sharing experiences with other institutions and organizations at the national, regional and even international levels, as well as meetings, seminars, workshops and conferences which would be organized at the national, regional and international levels. Opportunities offered by ICT will be utilized in order to enable RWPF to make exchanges through new technologies.
- Human, material and financial resources of RWPF will be increased to meet expectations of the population that is more and more growing. To achieve this purpose, RWPF will resort to expert consultants to carry out gender analysis of laws, policies and even media so as to conduct advocacy aiming at the promotion of the woman's positive image. In order to increase its financial capacities, RWPF, through its executive secretariat, will draw up projects, which are in line with this strategic plan to be presented to donors for funds mobilization. A consultation and support commitment workshop to RWPF strategic plan will be organized for key stakeholders. The stakeholders will also receive the copy of this strategic plan in order to mobilize endogenous and exogenous funds with a view to achieve development priorities in an equitable way.
- The updating of legal instruments and RWPF procedure manuals, namely the revision of statutes and the drafting of the internal rules and regulations aims at acquiring useful instruments for the regular conduct of office, committee, commissions, and general assemblies' meetings of RWPF. This RWPF strategic plan is part and parcel of the Parliament Strategic Plan in respect of gender integration.
- The partnership between RWPF and other actors at the local, national, regional and international levels will be developed through thematic meetings in respect of critical fields of gender within the framework of local, regional and international networking. A database will be constituted on the resolutions of meetings to which RWPF is invited.

RWPF will take initiative to do an analytical study of coordination of axes in favor and promotion of gender with a view to document the control of the Government action.

RWPF will participate on a regular basis in parliamentary regional forum and in local networks for gender integration. It will also organize seminars, conferences on strategic fields and on topical themes such as gender in the Constitution, Gacaca, elections and sex-based violence, etc...

- The improvement of communication with grass-root authorities and the representation of the population through a communication desk with grass-root authorities, civil society and the private sector, will be supported by the acquisition of a hotline and the elaboration and implementation of a project meant for facilitating communication between the elected and the electorate. Advocacy campaigns will be organized on a regular basis to meet gender challenges and reduce/eliminate their consequences on women.

Other forms of communication will be put at work; these are morning news or days for exchange between Parliamentarians, workshops and other exchange frameworks with stakeholders, the production of the assessment memorandum on gender and Parliament, the utilization of the Parliament Website, as well as the organization of the advocacy podium/video conference in favor of gender thematic strategies. Rural women will also benefit from study trips in the framework of follow-up of recommendations of the "NEPAD and poverty" conference.

- The consideration of RWPF by the Parliament as a gender mechanism, which is technically efficient, is based on the specific tasks of dealing with partnership in respect of gender, which will be entrusted to her by the Parliament. These include among other things a research bringing out gender discrepancies and disparities in laws and the initiation of a law related to gender - based violence.
- A research will also be conducted on the legal framework of poverty reduction in general and feminization of poverty in particular and on different causes of gender-based violence. The participation and influence are privileged through RWPF commissions, debates in permanent commissions of the Parliament for advocacy in favor of provisions conducive to gender equality and equity.
- A mid-term and final evaluation of this strategic plan will be conducted with a view to measure respectively the realization degree of results and the strategic objective of planned change.

Axe 2: Speeding up the implementation of gender approach in the Parliament mission and structure

The process of integration of gender approach into the Parliament mission and structure will be speeded up for the next five years so as to play a model role for other institutions and organizations as well as for the population. The speeding up will be structured around the following four interventions:

- The improvement of gender sensitivity of Parliament strategies adapting the Parliament strategy to this gender strategy, supporting RWPF in the circulation of its gender strategic plan to stakeholders and donors in particular and producing business reports, financial statements and minutes of gender-sensitive commissions.
- The parity promotion within the Parliament structure by first putting in place a gender commission in Parliament endowed with a sufficient budget, carrying out positive actions of enhancing parity in decision making positions in Parliament such as lobbying and advocacy in the next legislature, in other elections and in possible appointments for the parity between man and woman. The establishment of mechanisms of interaction between the Parliament gender Commission and RWPF will contribute to the synergy in axes, as well as the promotion of planning and budgeting for the commissions taking gender into account.
- The setting up of Parliament systems and leadership sensitive to gender will be focused on analysis of gender actions for the Parliament internal rules and regulations, the development of strategies of changing systems in favor of the gender dimension, such as the parity delegation (man and

woman), heads of mission or ad hoc commissions etc..., the establishment of a communication system between parliamentarians and local authorities and the population. Gender aspects will be among key indicators of the evaluation of effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the Parliament strategic plan.

- The promotion of parliamentary gender sensitive culture will be supported by the organization of a consultative seminar on masculine and feminine norms and values conducive to gender in the Parliament and in its internal and external environment. The Parliamentarians will collaborate on the evaluation of the implementation of gender strategic plan initiated by RWPF so as to realize changes resulting from the gender integration process within the Parliament.

Axe 3: Initiation of gender sensitive laws

This axe aims at the Parliament contribution to gender integration in all laws with a view to fight against any form of discrimination and promote gender equality and equity for the equitable development. In fact, discriminatory laws have been sorted out and questioned in a seminar. These laws must be revised with gender perspective. The initiated laws must also be analyzed with gender perspective before being adopted. The elaboration of gender sensitive laws will be structured around three interventions:

- The development of parliamentary competences in legal analysis with gender perspective, organizing training on legal analysis in respect of gender for parliamentarians, as well as seminars of sharing experiences with parliamentarians of other countries on legal analysis and policies with gender perspective.
- The adoption of gender sensitive laws through stages of initiating laws in the Parliament taking gender into account, especially basing on recommendations from mission reports adopted by the Parliament and on the basis of analysis of draft laws initiated by the Government with a gender perspective.
- The revision of Rwandan laws in force with a gender perspective will be focused on analysis actions of gender- based laws in force using experts in gender analysis and legislation. The adoption of law on gender observatory constitutes a priority in order to speed up the gender integration process in all Rwandan laws.

Comparative studies of effect and impact of penal laws and civil code on men and women in the community will be conducted.

Axe 4: Gender-based control of Government Action and Budget

This axe aims at improvement of the Parliament tasks, the one relating to the control of Government action in respect of gender integration. This improvement will be focused on the following four interventions:

- The development of competences for the parliamentarians as regards the control of Government action and budget examination in respect of gender will be focused on the training of

parliamentarians on gender analysis in the budget examination, budgetary control and Government action control, mastery and application of gender analysis tools in the budgetary examination and the Government action control.

- The permanent control of the implementation of fundamental principles based on the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda, in its article 9, paragraph 4, which provides for the principle of "building a state governed by the rule of law, a pluralistic democratic government, equality of all Rwandans and between women and men reflected by ensuring that women are granted at least thirty per cent (30%) of posts in decision making organs."

The respect of this article requires the control of the effective implementation of the CEDAW convention and the control of gender respect in the application of constitutional provisions. The control results will bring out lessons drawn from each individual case and past experiences will be taken into account in the Parliament decision-making.

- The control of policies, MTEF, programs/projects and structures with a gender perspective will be carried out by analyzing the gender state of different reports tabled in the Parliament and by conducting a study on rural transformation due to gender sensitive budgets.
- The regular monitoring and the control of the application of gender sensitive laws will be based on the elaboration of a monitoring plan of the application of gender sensitive laws, the application of the monitoring plan in the speeding up of the implementation process of gender - based laws and close collaboration of the Parliament and RWPF on advocacy with a view to establish a strong gender academic training in Rwanda.

The implementation of these axes aims at the strategic objective of change in respect of gender.

The strategic objective of change of the strategic plan 2005-2009

The strategic objective of change as defined by participants in the planning workshop (RWPF members and partners) is formulated as follows:

Control of the application of fundamental principles based on the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda, in its article 9, paragraph 4, which provides for the principle of "building a state governed by the rule of law, a pluralistic democratic government, equality of all Rwandans and between women and men reflected by ensuring that women are granted at least thirty per cent (30%) of posts in decision making organs."

Budget

The total budget of the plan amounts to **SIX HUNDRED AND THIRTY MILLION, NINE HUNDRED AND FOUR THOUSAND AND SIX HUNDRED RWANDAN FRANCS (630.904.600 FRW)**, that is the equivalent of **ONE MILLION AND ONE HUNDRED TWENTY SIX AND SIX HUNDRED AND FIFTEEN AMERICAN DOLLARS (1,126,615 USD)** for the five years of activities of the Strategic Plan 2005-2009. This is about a budget proposal whose details bring out specific projects to be elaborated during the implementation of the plan.

Resources and support

Concerning necessary resources in relation with human, material and financial resources, certain activities are integrated into the Parliament gender activities.

There are activities being realized thanks to support from the Parliament, UNDP and other cooperation agencies namely: ACDI, UNIFEM, MIFOTRA, AWEPA, Women Waging Peace, ABA (American Bar Association), the Canadian Parliamentary Center and other institutions and individual volunteers.

Other donors are to be identified in a workshop on consultation and commitment to the support of RWPF strategic plan organized for that purpose (see page 27, Axe 2, Output 2, activity 3.1).