



GOVERNMENT-CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE REPORT



Strengthening Partnerships for Effective Implementation of NST2 and Vision 2050

“From Policy to Prosperity: Strengthening the collaboration between Government and Civil Society for sustainable NST2 and Vision 2050 outcomes”

Co-organized by
Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP),
Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) and Rwanda Governance Board (RGB)
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Full meaning
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
RGB	Rwanda Governance Board
RCSP	Rwanda Civil Society Platform
RCCDN	Rwanda Climate Change and Development Network
MINALOC	Ministry of Local Government
MINECOFIN	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
DPs	Development Partners
NST	National Strategy for Transformation
EAC	East African Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
JADF	Joint Action Development Forum
PPCP	Public-Private-Civil Society Partnership
PSF	Private Sector Federation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Government–Civil Society Dialogue convened Government institutions, civil society, development partners, academia, the private sector, and media to strengthen strategic collaboration for effective implementation of NST2 and Vision 2050. Discussions confirmed that Civil Society Organizations remain essential partners in service delivery, citizen engagement, accountability, localization, and evidence-based planning, while also highlighting the need for clearer coordination, predictable financing, stronger compliance, and more systematic documentation of impact.

Key priorities emerging from the dialogue include institutionalizing an annual Government–CSO review mechanism, strengthening JADF and sector working group participation, advancing Localization through measurable indicators, expanding evidence generation and digital documentation, and establishing Public–Private–Civil Society Partnership mechanisms to mobilize domestic and partner resources for community transformation.

The report’s central implication is that Rwanda’s transformation agenda will be stronger where Government, civil society, development partners, and the private sector move from event-based dialogue to structured partnership, shared accountability, and jointly monitored commitments.

Priority Actions

1. Institutionalize annual Government–CSO dialogue and review mechanisms linked to NST2 priorities, district planning, and localization indicators.
2. Develop a comprehensive CSO contribution and impact reporting system that captures evidence from a wider range of registered CSOs and informs national planning.
3. Establish an accountability matrix for dialogue commitments, with responsible actors, timelines, indicators, and follow-up mechanisms.
4. Strengthen Public–Private–Civil Society Partnership arrangements to mobilize predictable resources for locally led development and sustainable community transformation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP) is a dynamic forum of 13 national umbrella Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) with 317 affiliated sector-specific Civil Society Organizations. As the leading voice of civil society in Rwanda, RCSP plays a critical role in promoting good governance, social justice, and sustainable development. The Forum is recognized as a champion in advancing the Rwanda's Localization agenda aimed at empowering local actors to take the lead in development processes and decision-making that directly affect their communities. In doing so, RCSP has recently developed a localization strategy and a related index which will be instrumental in shaping how equitable partnerships would look like in Rwanda.

Rwanda has set an ambitious agenda through its Vision 2050¹, aiming to transition into a high-income country by leveraging inclusive and sustainable development. The second National Strategy for Transformation (NST2, 2025–2029)² operationalizes this vision by focusing on three key pillars: Economic Transformation, Social Transformation, and Transformational Governance. Achieving these objectives requires a whole-of-society approach, where Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) play a pivotal role.

Historically, CSOs in Rwanda have been instrumental in-service delivery, citizen engagement, advocacy, and capacity building. Their contribution to the implementation of NST1 (2017–2024)³ was critical in supporting vulnerable populations, promoting accountability, and complementing government efforts in health, education, agriculture, environment, and gender equality. To deepen this impact, the Government of Rwanda seeks to engage CSOs more strategically in NST2 2025–2029 and Vision 2050.

Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP), in collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) and the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) organized a one-day Government - Civil Society Dialogue bringing together representatives from Government institutions, civil society, academia, private sector and media to strengthen collaboration and partnership and review mechanisms for a more coordinated implementation of national priorities.

Objectives

The overall objective is to strengthen strategic collaboration between the government of Rwanda and civil society organizations for the effective implementation of Rwanda's National Strategy for transformation (NST2) and Vision 2050.

Specific objectives include:

1. To showcase CSO contributions to NST1 2017–2024 and present commitments and strategic perspectives for NST2 2025–2029.
2. To clarify the complementary roles and responsibilities of CSOs, Government, and the private sector in implementing NST2 and Vision 2050.
3. To strengthen joint mechanisms of coordination, monitoring, information sharing, transparency and accountability practices through constructive compliance and partnership commitments.
4. To launch and disseminate the Localization Strategy 2026 – 2030

2. OPENING REMARKS:

The Chairperson of Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP), Mr. Murangira Theoneste, in his welcome speech expressed profound appreciation to the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) and the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) for their invaluable support and partnership in co-organizing this dialogue. *“The very fact that we are successfully convening this meeting today is a powerful testament to that partnership. However, as with every human endeavor, our collaboration is perfectible, and that is precisely why we are gathered here”* he emphasized.

The RCSP Chairperson requested stakeholders to embrace Rwanda’s localization strategy and agenda to ensure local actors are empowered to take the lead in the development processes that directly affect their communities through joint problem definition, co-design of scalable interventions, and shared accountability. The chairperson further said that in specific domains where civil society has demonstrated undeniable expertise and community trust, it would be highly cost-effective for the Government to directly fund CSOs in the implementation of NST2 programs.

Mr. Murangira Theoneste implored partners and stakeholders to equally recognize the profound value of ‘soft’ interventions focused on trust-building, civic participation, peacebuilding, and social inclusion that are the bedrock of our society. *“They ensure the success, resilience, and long-term sustainability of our “hard” infrastructure and economic programs”* he said.

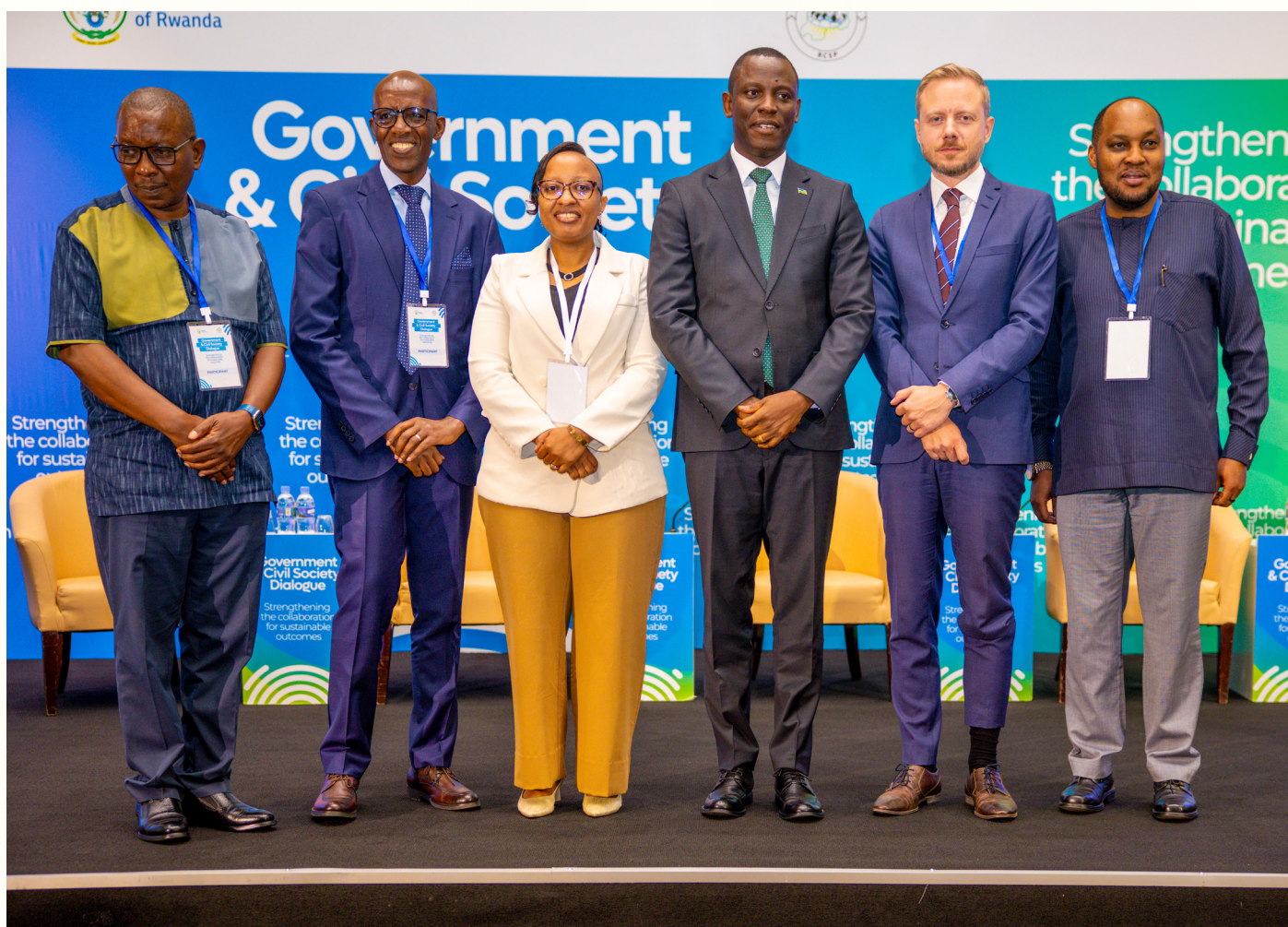
On behalf of the Government of Rwanda, the Government – Civil Society Dialogue was officially opened by the Honorable Minister HABIMANA Dominique, Minister of Local Government where he emphasized on the collective responsibility of all national partners and stakeholders in national development and prosperity. He further thanked the President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul Kagame, for the space and value offered to every actor. The Minister hailed Civil Society contribution to ensure national priorities are translated into practical results where they are needed most at the community grassroots level.



The Honorable Minister further said the Government – Civil Society Dialogue provides an opportunity to take stock, strengthen alignment, and renew our commitment and move into a truly transformative partnership. *“The answer lies in deepening what works, strengthening trust, improving coordination, and directing our collective efforts towards the communities and citizens”* – He said.

Moreover, Hon. Minister Habimana Dominique called on CSOs to build the partnership architecture that strengthens joint planning aligned with district and national priorities, making better use of platforms such as JADF for shared accountability, and generating evidence that informs decisions and demonstrates impact.

The opening ceremony was graced by the presence, among others, of His Excellency Casper Stenger Jensen – the Ambassador of Denmark in Rwanda. Below is His excellency the ambassadors' picture with the Minister of local government and prominent leaders from Civil society organizations and Development partners.



The ceremony was followed by presentations and panel discussions from experienced facilitators, moderators and panelists as well as plenary discussions.

3. KEY PRESENTATIONS

The key highlights of CSOs' contributions on the NSTI and future commitments from direct survey findings <https://rcsprwanda.org/rcsp-csos-contribution-to-nst1/>,¹ presented by **Mrs. Uwantege Liliane, Executive Director, RCSP.**

This CSO contribution report to NSTI 2017–2024 and Strategic perspectives for NST2 2025–2029 and Vision 2050 highlights Evidence, Impact, Partnerships as detailed below:

3.1. Contribution to NSTI 2017–2024:

- Fiscally traceable contributions include: **92.6 Billion** Rwanda francs from taxes paid by 429 sample CSOs. And **15.85 Billion** Rwanda francs for the RSSB social security contributions.
- Economic transformation (jobs and Livelihoods): 70 responding CSOs generated **389, 505** decent jobs: **1.43 million** vulnerable individuals served; and **409,788** workforce trainees supported.
- Social transformation: 70 responding CSOs played a fundamental role in human capital development supporting over 1.4 million education beneficiaries and 2, 256 healthcare facilities.
- Governance and Social cohesion (Space and inclusion): 70 responding CSOs supported over 1.3 million citizens engaged in civic participation and empowered over 3 million women and girls.

3.2. Strategic perspectives for NST2 and Vision 2050

- Transitioning into strategic co-creation: An institutionalized partnership model where state led planning and citizen centered feedback operate in alignment. Scale up **Public-Private-Civil Society partnership (PPCP); Aligning with green growth & youth Innovation, deepening evidence-based advocacy.**
- Building structured and predictable pathways: Formalize co-convening and planning arrangements for RCSP in Sector Working Groups, moving from responsive consultation to institutionalized participation; Co-establish a standardized database linking CSO sector outputs directly with MINALOC and RGB, ensuring grassroots impacts are reflected in national planning databases; Publish an annual Government-CSO dialogue calendar at national and district levels to ensure proactive policy alignment before final strategy rollouts.
- Strengthen Public-Private-Civil Society partnership (PPCP) to transition from project- based to multi-year sustainable program funding.

4. PANEL PRESENTATIONS AND KEY OBSERVATIONS FROM PLENARY DISCUSSIONS

Participants to the Government – Civil Society Dialogue were engaged in plenary discussions and made key concerns that need redress. The panel discussions were followed by a plenary session in which delegates reflected on practical issues affecting Government–CSO collaboration and proposed areas requiring follow-up. The key observations below consolidate the main concerns and recommendations raised during that exchange.

4.1. Panel presentation I. From NST1 CSO Impact Harvesting to NST2 and Vision 2050 Commitments

The panel, moderated by Ms. Maya Musenga, Strategic Partnership Officer at Never Again Rwanda, brought together speakers with expertise in CSO contribution in social-economic transformation and community engagement for development. The panelists includes the Director General for Planning (MINECOFIN), Executive Director of Never Again Rwanda, The Gatsibo District Mayor and the University of Rwanda Academician and Researcher.

The first panel reflected on the contribution of Civil Society Organizations to Rwanda’s development agenda during NST1 and considered how those contributions should inform implementation of NST2 and Vision 2050. Panelists recognized CSOs as essential partners in service delivery, citizen participation, accountability, governance, research, social cohesion, community mobilization, and inclusion. They welcomed the evidence presented by RCSP on CSO contributions, while emphasizing that future impact harvesting should cover a wider and more representative number of registered CSOs so that national planning captures the full scale and value of civil society engagement.



The picture above shows the moderator on the left and the panelists on the right.

The discussion highlighted the need for stronger and more predictable Government–CSO coordination mechanisms, particularly through JADF, sector working groups, district planning processes, and regular dialogue platforms.

RGB emphasized the importance of compliance with registration and reporting requirements, while also acknowledging the proximity of CSOs to communities and their contribution to citizen participation and transformational governance. Local government perspectives underscored the need for CSOs to align interventions with District Development Strategies and Imihigo priorities, while also recognizing both hard and soft interventions as important for sustainable community transformation.

Panelists also stressed that soft interventions such as advocacy, accountability, civic engagement, reconciliation, trust-building, and community mobilization should be documented and valued because they create the social foundations required for long-term development outcomes. Academia called for stronger collaboration between CSOs and research institutions to improve evidence generation, policy learning, and data use. The panel concluded with a shared commitment to strengthen coordination, information sharing, citizen engagement, accountability, and evidence-based partnerships for NST2 and Vision 2050 implementation.

4.2. Panel presentation II: Advancing the Localization Agenda among Development Actors in Rwanda

Before the second panel discussion, Rwanda's Localization Strategy and related MEAL Framework 2026–2030 were officially launched, marking the start of nationwide dissemination and implementation. presentation, panel discussion, and remarks distinguished officials, participants reviewed process behind the strategy, key objectives, and its implementation roadmap.

The second panel focused on Advancing Localization agenda in Rwanda, moderated by Rene-Christian Umukunzi, Localisation and Partnership Manager at TROCAIRE Rwanda with panelists from Head of Service Delivery, Good governance and JADF Department (RGB), ADRA Country Director and NINGO Chairperson, RCCDN Executive Director and MTN Rwanda Corporate Social Responsibility Manager and Nyarugenge JADF Chairperson.

The discussions emphasized that localization requires shifting greater decision-making power, resources, implementation responsibility, and accountability to national and local actors who are closest to communities. Panelists agreed that Rwanda has made progress in promoting locally led development but noted that more effort is needed to ensure that development partners and INGOs translate localization commitments into practical financing, partnership, and capacity-strengthening arrangements.



The above picture shows the moderator on your left and panelists on your right.

INGO and CSO representatives highlighted persistent barriers to localization, including donor conditions that limit direct access to large funds, assumptions about limited local absorption capacity, short-term project cycles, and inadequate coverage of indirect costs. The discussion called for more equitable partnerships, increased direct funding to national CSOs, stronger organizational systems, and clearer guidance for development actors to comply with the localization agenda in line with Rwanda's NST2, Vision 2050, and wider global commitments on locally led development.

The panel further emphasized that localization should remain aligned with Rwanda's national planning frameworks, including NST2, Vision 2050, the EAC 2050 agenda, AU Agenda 2063, and the Sustainable Development Goals. MINECOFIN underscored the importance of avoiding duplication and ensuring that all actors align with national priorities. The private sector perspective pointed to the need for a clear coordination structure through which the Private Sector Federation and local businesses can engage with civil society and contribute resources to community-level interventions. Overall, the panel called for a practical, measurable, and accountable localization approach that strengthens local ownership, builds sustainable partnerships, and mobilizes domestic and international resources for community transformation.

Below, the following are the key takeaways from the discussions:

1. Future CSO contribution reporting for NST2 should cover a wider and more representative range of registered CSOs beyond the 70 responding organizations cited in the presentation.
2. District collaboration letters should be issued in a timely and predictable manner to enable CSOs to implement approved interventions and maintain effective relationships with Government and development partners.

3. Soft interventions such as citizen engagement, accountability, advocacy, and social cohesion should be recognized alongside infrastructure and service delivery because they help sustain long-term community transformation.
4. Future reforms of laws and policies should provide structured opportunities for CSOs to contribute their views and receive feedback on how those inputs are considered.
5. CSOs that have not yet submitted applications under Law No. 058/2024 of 20/06/2024 should complete registration requirements before the applicable deadline.
6. Development partners and INGOs should increase direct and predictable support to national CSOs while tracking progress against Rwanda's localization strategy and related indicators.
7. CSOs should strengthen evidence generation, digital documentation, and information sharing to improve planning, visibility, and accountability for community interventions.
8. Government, the private sector, and civil society should establish a practical Public– Private– Civil Society Partnership framework to mobilize resources for community-level interventions.

5. KEY RESOLUTIONS AND COMMITMENTS

Following delegates' deliberations on outstanding issues of collaboration between CSOs and the public sector that need improvement, stakeholders suggested undertaking the following Commitments:

5.1. Government

- 5.1.1. To institutionalize an annual Government –CSO dialogue to co-design and review progress on the National Strategy for transformation (NST2) priorities and partnership commitments.
- 5.1.2. To strengthen existing JADF and sector working groups to include structured CSO participation and feedback mechanisms.
- 5.1.3. To proactively consider civil society views and opinions throughout policies and laws development processes.
- 5.1.4. To integrate Rwanda's localization strategy indicators into coordination and planning mechanisms to ensure effective locally led development.
- 5.1.5. To allocate funding from the national budget to Civil Society organization interventions to avoid over-reliance on foreign funding which is often unpredictable.

5.2. Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP) and National CSOs

- 5.2.1. To comprehensively document and publish a detailed impact report on CSO contribution to the national transformation journey for enhanced accountability and recognition.
- 5.2.2. To strengthen governance and financial systems to ensure compliance, optimize resource utilization to sustain of CSO interventions.
- 5.2.3. To convene an annual Government-CSO review of the national localization progress to fast-track results of locally led engagement in the development agenda.

5.3. Development partners and International NGOs:

- 5.3.1. Ensure increased local partner participation in program design, decision-making and resource mobilization.
- 5.3.2. Support national CSOs transition from project-based interventions to multi-year program for sustainable long term systematic change.
- 5.3.3. To transfer ownership of skills and resources to national civil society organizations that are closer to the communities that need support.

5.4. The Private Sector

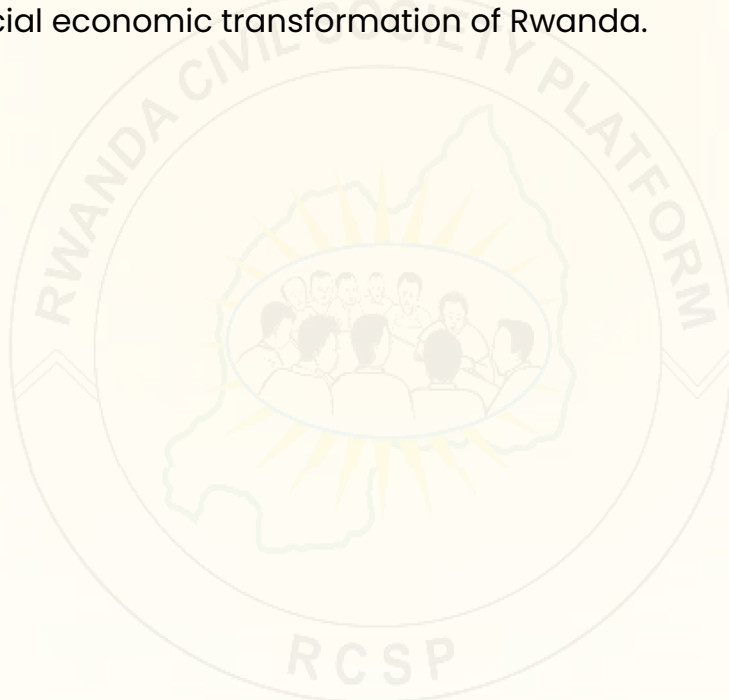
- 5.4.1. To establish a partnership framework between the Private Sector and Civil Society through which funding can be channeled to support national CSO interventions in line with the localization agenda and local resource mobilization.

6. ACCOUNTABILITY MATRIX FOR PRIORITY COMMITMENTS

Priority commitment	Responsible actors	Indicative timeline	Follow-up indicator
Institutionalize annual Government–CSO dialogue and review mechanisms linked to NST2 priorities.	MINALOC, RGB, RCSP, sector institutions, districts	Annually	Annual dialogue calendar approved and review report produced.
Strengthen JADF and sector working group participation for structured CSO engagement.	RGB, MINALOC, districts, RCSP, CSO umbrella organizations	Within 12 months	CSO participation mechanisms included in JADF and sector planning processes.
Document and publish comprehensive CSO contribution reports for NST2 implementation.	RCSP, national CSOs, academia, development partners	Annually	CSO impact report published with wider coverage, evidence, and sector-level data.
Advance localization through measurable indicators and locally led financing practices.	RCSP, development partners, INGOs, MINECOFIN, MINALOC	2026–2030	Localization indicators integrated into reporting and reviewed annually.
Establish Public–Private–Civil Society Partnership mechanisms for resource mobilization.	Private Sector Federation, RCSP, CSOs, districts, development partners	Within 12–18 months	Partnership framework developed and priority initiatives identified for support.

7. WAY FORWARD TO IMPROVE COLLABORATION AMONG STAKEHOLDERS.

- 7.1.1. To conduct annual national joint reviews on community priorities and partnership commitments in line with the implementation of the National Strategy for Transformation (NST2).
- 7.1.2. To collaborate and share researched data regularly for evidence-based programming and planning.
- 7.1.3. To emphasize on citizen participation and engagement in planning and implementing community interventions.
- 7.1.4. To strengthen mutual accountability and transparency and mutual trust between civil society and the public sector during interventions to contribute to the national and district priorities.
- 7.1.5. To boost CSOs digital technology in documentation and communication of CSOs' impact in the community and increased public engagement with stakeholders.
- 7.1.6. To participate in setting the agenda, fast-track and report on localization indicators.
- 7.1.7. To ensure a well-coordinated framework for Public-Private Civil Society Partnership (PPCP) for social economic transformation of Rwanda.



8. CONCLUDING REMARKS:

This Government – CSO Dialogue brought together 203 participants (64 Female and 139 Male) from Public institutions, Development partners, INGO, Local CSOs and Private Sector members.



The chairperson RCSP-Mr. Murangira Theoneste thanked the co-organizers especially the Ministry of Local Government and the Rwanda Governance Board for the time and resources invested in organizing a successful Government – Civil Society Dialogue. He further thanked stakeholders who committed their time to the event including facilitators, moderators and all the RCSP staff that never rested for days organizing the Government – Civil Society Dialogue. He also thanked delegates for their contribution to the debates and spending their valuable time the whole day until closure. He then invited the Deputy CEO of Rwanda Governance Board to officially close the Government – Civil Society Dialogue.

The Deputy CEO of RGB- Dr Felicien USENGUMUKIZA, who officially closed the meeting, appreciated the participation of delegates in the Government – Civil Society Dialogue and advised to always have an inclusive dialogue where women and people living with disabilities take part in leading the discussions.

He thanked RCSP for co-organizing the Government – Civil Society Dialogue. “*Sustainable development requires collective responsibility*” he said. He further said that CSOs are a key partner in realization of NST2 and Vision 2050 outcomes.

He promised Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) support to Civil society organizations in their commitments to contribute towards social and economic transformation of the country.

Endnotes

Rwanda’s Vision 2050

The 2nd National Strategy for Transformation (NST2)

The 1st National Strategy for Transformation (NST1)

1 RCSP documentation of CSO Contribution to (NST1 2017-2024)





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