

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY

July 2008

Foreword

Higher education is a primary tool for our development. We intend to build a strong vibrant higher education system that will be internationally competitive, meet the demands of the Rwandan and regional economy for skilled and educated workers, and deliver research, innovation, and knowledge transfer to support social and economic development. Higher education is fundamental and indispensable to the social and economic transformation of our country – the successful implementation of all our development policies are dependent on higher education playing its key roles of human capital development, and providing research and innovation to support the transformation process. The National Higher Education Policy gives higher education its due importance in social and economic development and gives recognition to the importance of human capital in the transformation process. We have bold ambitions for the development of higher education and the role it must play in the realisation of Vision 2020.

Investing in higher education is not an option for Rwanda, it is essential. Our future success depends upon using the imagination, creativity and talents of our most able citizens, and on the way that we use knowledge and understanding to build economic strength and social harmony. Since 1994 we have invested in building the quantity of higher education. Much has been achieved but now we have to focus on establishing quality within our education system. We must produce graduates that are fit for purpose and internationally credible. We must invest in research and knowledge transfer that will support Rwanda in achieving sustainable economic growth. Our higher education institutions have to meet these challenges if we are to realize Vision 2020.

This Higher Education Policy guides the transformation of higher education. It points us in the direction of establishing a stable, underlying structure that will enable institutions to develop their strategies for supporting the realization of our ambitions for higher education. It sets out the Government's vision, mission and policy objectives for higher education that will provide the anchor and the route map for the strategic planning of the higher education sector as a whole and for individual institutions.

In developing our Higher Education policy, we have taken into account the external as well as the internal environment. Higher Education systems, around the world, have to respond to six key challenges. These are the shift to the 'knowledge society', globalisation, under resourcing, increased competition amongst providers, the diverse needs of society and learners, and to serve as an engine for social and economic development.

This Policy declares the Government's intention to make appropriate decisions that will enable us to build on the institutional structure we have put in place and create a higher education system that will provide the foundation for our country's social and economic development. To do so will require a stronger partnership between students and higher education institutions, government, the private sector, communities and international donors.

Support Ministry of Education to develop higher education system that Rwanda deserves.

Dr GAHAKWA Daphrose
Minister of Education

TABLE OF CONTENT

FOREWORD.....	2
1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	4
2.0. BACKGROUND & CONTEXT	4
3.0. OVERALL GUIDELINES	8
3.1. VISION 2020	8
3.2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY 2008-2012.....	9
3.3. RELEVANT NATIONAL POLICIES.....	10
3.3.1 <i>The Integrated ICT-led Socio-Economic Development Policy and Plan</i>	10
3.3.2 <i>The National Science, Technology, Scientific Research and Innovation</i>	10
3.3.3 <i>National Investment Strategy</i>	11
3.4. INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS	11
4.0. INTRODUCTION TO THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR.....	12
4.1. THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT	12
4.2. STRENGTHS OF THE HIGH EDUCATION SECTOR.....	12
4.3. CHALLENGES/CONSTRAINTS FACING THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR.....	13
4.4. PRINCIPLES AND VALUES OF HIGHER EDUCATION	15
4.5. VISION FOR THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR	16
4.6. MISSION FOR THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR.....	17
5.0. KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES FOR THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR.....	17
5.1. GENERAL OBJECTIVES.....	17
5.2. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	17
6.0. POLICY OBJECTIVES AND CORRESPONDING MAJOR STRATEGIES.....	18
6.1 POLICY OBJECTIVE 1: WIDENING PARTICIPATION AND FAIR ACCESS	18
6.2 POLICY OBJECTIVE 2: EDUCATING GRADUATES THAT ARE FIT FOR PURPOSE AND INTERNATIONALLY CREDIBLE AND THEREBY SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF RWANDA.....	18
6.3 POLICY OBJECTIVE 3: SUPPORTING RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	19
6.4 POLICY OBJECTIVE 4: BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION STAFF.....	20
6.5 POLICY OBJECTIVE 5: DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE APPROACHES TO FUNDING	20
6.6 POLICY OBJECTIVE 6: PLANNING HIGHER EDUCATION TO MAXIMIZE THE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT USE OF SCARCE RESOURCES	21
6.7 POLICY OBJECTIVE 7: COMBATING GENOCIDE IDEOLOGY AND CONCRETISING THE "NEVER AGAIN" COMMITMENT	21
6.8 POLICY OBJECTIVE 8: AUTONOMY, ACCOUNTABILITY, LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT	22
7.0. PROGRAMMES OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR.....	22
8.0. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION	22
8.1. PLANNING AND POLICY IMPLEMENTATION	23
8.2. NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION.....	23
8.3. STUDENT FINANCING AGENCY RWANDA	23
8.4. HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS	23
8.5 THE PRIVATE SECTOR	24
9.0. CONCLUSION	24

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Relevant high quality, higher education¹ that delivers internationally recognised qualifications has a critical role to play in enabling us to realise our ambitions for sustainable development and economic growth, as well as preparing students for employment and citizenship. Recognising that it is dependent on its human resource, Rwanda is determined to build knowledge based economy, an ambition that is clearly dependent on the building of a higher education system. Beyond its vital role in supporting social and economic development higher education is a force that develops well rounded and engaged citizens, and builds more cohesive and participatory societies.

This document sets out the policy that will guide the development, reform and strategic planning of the higher education sector to enable it to play its essential role in supporting the realisation of our Vision 2020. It spells out specific objectives higher education has to achieve and major corresponding strategies to adopt.

The role of the Government is to develop a policy to deliver a rational system of higher education, to ensure that the sector operates to promote excellence and to advance the public interest in higher education. Higher education involves a partnership between the Government and the higher education institutions, public and private. The Ministry of Education is the lead Ministry, but the Ministries of Finance, Public Service, Health as well as the Minister in the Presidents Office in Charge of Science, Technology, Scientific Research and ICT all play important roles.

Two key agencies, the National Council for Higher Education and the Student Financing Agency for Rwanda play key roles in supporting the Government in implementing its Higher Education Policy. Higher education is delivered by the 25 higher education institutions, thirteen public (6 university sector, 5 colleges of higher education and 2 specialist postgraduate) and twelve private who between them are providing higher education for around 44,000 students, as well as engaging in research, innovation and knowledge transfer to support social and economic development.

Higher education institutions are responsible for the creation, absorption and transmission of knowledge. They play a fundamental role in generating new knowledge through research and innovation and transferring this knowledge to support social and economic development. They also build human capacity by education and training students for skilled employment.

2.0. BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

2.1. Background

Higher education is an important component of the Rwanda education system. The major role that it has to play in enabling the country to realise its ambitions for sustainable development and economic growth as well as preparing students for employment and citizenship is now recognised. However, higher education was not given due consideration in the post colonial period with less than 2000 students graduating between 1963, when the National University of Rwanda was founded, and 1994.

¹ Higher education institutions are responsible for delivering education that leads to qualification in the *Higher Education Qualification Framework for Rwanda* as well as short courses that may, but do not have to, lead to certificates that are credited at higher education level. They also carry out research and innovation and offer knowledge transfer and community service.

In recognition of the essential role that higher education can play in enabling the country to overcome poverty and avoid social and political crisis, the building of higher education has been a priority for the post-Genocide Governments and much progress has been made with significant investment in developing higher education being made by both the Government and the private-sector. Since 1994 the Government, with the support of development partners, has invested in a considerable expansion of the National University, founded four specialist institutes, two colleges of education, two colleges of technology and five colleges of nursing. It has also founded the Institute of Legal Practice and Development, and the Institute for Administration and Management. In the same period 12 new private higher education institutions have been opened.

Rwanda has been characterised of higher level of poverty, social and political crisis leading to 1994 genocide of which unfortunately higher education did nothing to rectify. This is where the fundamental change in higher education lies.

Higher education provision is mainly undergraduate, with the public sector generally catering for full time students who mainly enter higher education on completing secondary school and the private sector mainly for those in employment who wish to study in the evenings and/or at weekends. Postgraduate provision and research, innovation and knowledge transfer remain as yet underdeveloped.

The rapid expansion of higher education has put a significant strain on the available resources. The sector needs significant investment in physical, human and learning resources to enable the delivery of quality higher education. There is a shortage of qualified Rwandans to work in higher education a reliance on expatriate staff in the more senior posts and an urgent need to build human capacity.

The legal framework for higher education has now been put in place with the implementation of the *2005 Law Governing the Organisation and Functioning of Higher Education* which defines the operating environment for all higher education institutions, public and private as well as specifying the roles, responsibilities and duties of all institutions. The Law mandates the establishment of two semi-autonomous agencies, the National Council for Higher Education and the Student Financing Agency for Rwanda, both of which have been established by their own Laws. These laws are not built on stone, they shall be amended as necessary to accommodate new realities such as the need to harmonise our system with that of the other member states of the East African Community and the contribution of the private sector in higher education.

The limited resources that are available for higher education must be invested wisely if the challenging goals are to be achieved with maximum returns on investment. Rwanda needs a higher education system that produces well trained, competent people, and delivers research and knowledge transfer to underpin the move to sustained economic and social development.

2.2 Context

Higher Education in Rwanda does not operate in a vacuum. It is subject to numerous influences and tensions. These come from a variety of sources at a number of levels: National, regional and international. The Government of Rwanda recognises the major international and regional trends and pressures that impact upon the design and delivery of higher education. It is in the context of these that the specific policy objectives of Rwanda for higher education need to be viewed and the challenges it faces in realising them to be considered.

i) The National Context

The national social and economic context largely determines the type and function of higher education needed to support national development and reconstruction, and long-term prosperity and stability. Rwanda, one of the least developed countries in the world with limited natural resources; it is the most densely populated and least urban country in Africa and has an estimated population of just fewer than ten million. Its *economic* and social base was devastated by the 1994 Genocide and it is still recovering from the aftermath. It is ranked 185 on the UN Human Development Index, just under 90 percent of the population are dependent on subsistence agriculture, with 57 percent of the population living on less than one\$ a day and 84 percent on less than two \$s a day (UN 2007).

Fourteen years after the Genocide, which had catastrophic consequences on the human as well as the economic fronts, the Government continues to strive for economic reconstruction and development in order to address the biggest challenges facing the country – demographic pressure, decreasing productivity of the soil and arable land, the landlocked nature of the country, the exorbitant cost of production factors, a narrow economic base and an inadequate infrastructure (roads, schools, health centres, water and sanitation, electrification etc). The Government of National Unity and the Rwandese people, with some support from the International community, have registered progress in the difficult process of moving from emergency to long-term development. The present Government, elected in 2003, has brought stability and economic growth.

The economic objectives of the Government will be a major determinant of the type of knowledge and skills expected of graduates. Government macroeconomic policy has three main goals:

1. To ensure macroeconomic stability;
2. To promote economic growth;
3. To eradicate poverty and achieve middle income country status.

Lacking natural resources, Rwanda has set out to build a knowledge-based and technological society with the aim of becoming a regional service and information centre by 2020. Rwanda's development consequently relies on a solid base of human resources, qualified in science and technology with a special emphasis on ICT. This necessitates high levels of education, including higher education and building the human capacity to deliver this education

ii) Regional context

The regional context provides both opportunities and challenges to the development and delivery of higher education in Rwanda. Membership of the East African Community in particular opens up new opportunities for collaboration and partnerships, but also for competition for staff and students. It also opens up the possibility of Rwanda establishing herself as a regional hub for ICT.

Higher Education has as an important role in African countries as in other regions of the world, but it is beset by numerous problems. Amongst the more significant of these are:

- Low participation rates, particularly of girls;
- Poor economic performance;
- Questionable quality of teaching and learning;
- Severe shortage of adequate and appropriate teaching aids and equipment;
- Lack of interest in and commitment to research;
- Ineffective management and control systems;

- Shortage of well trained and qualified teachers, particularly in Maths and Sciences;
- Weak link between supply of higher education and labour market demands.

Historically, higher education in Africa grew out of a colonial or more accurately Euro-centric model. That was essentially elitist and politically directed, with an exclusively theoretical focus. More recently, however, a specifically African dimension to higher education has emerged which the Government of Rwanda supports. This is being reinforced through regional exchanges and collaboration, and supported through networks such as the Association of African Universities and the Inter University Council for East Africa. Rwanda's recent accession to the East African Community gives her opportunities to work with the higher education sectors in the other countries of the community and opens up new opportunities for collaboration and partnerships as we harmonise our higher education system with that of the other partners.

These issues are relevant to the context of Rwanda where historically higher education was provided for only a few students at undergraduate level and there was little investment in research, innovation or knowledge transfer. It is against this background that the specific policy objectives of Rwanda for higher education need to be viewed and the challenges it faces in realising them to be considered.

iii) International context

In the last twenty years higher education around the world has witnessed a radical transformation in its design and delivery as well as its governance, organisation, management and funding. This transformation has been driven partly by certain pressures:

- A recognition of the importance of knowledge and research to continued economic prosperity. Indeed modern economies are now widely recognized and defined as 'Knowledge Economies'. That is economies in which the pursuit, production and use of knowledge has replaced the exchange of goods as the key factor in economic competitiveness;
- A growing recognition of the need to train and retrain populations in high-level skills and processes. Knowledge is no longer fixed. It is transient. That is, it constantly changes and transforms itself. It is in this context that learning becomes a life long endeavour;
- The importance of access to and the participation of women. In higher education, Women now expect equal treatment and opportunities. All economies must enlist the productive capacity of all its working age population. Gender can no longer be accepted as a barrier to all types of education and meaningful employment;
- Economic globalisation forcing companies and countries to compete in international markets. Companies operating through the global economy are able to integrate finances, production, sales, and marketing on an international scale. In short, they will locate these functions in those countries that are the most cost effective and give the best economies of scale. Every country and every company must now do trade within the global economy;
- ICT is revolutionising the ability to create, store, transmit, manipulate and utilise information in a more orderly manner. Information is now readily transmitted and accessible at great speed from any location with access to the internet;

- Higher Education must use its limited resources efficiently and effectively. The large and ever increasing investment required to develop higher education means that Governments are demanding greater returns on their investment;
- An interest in exploring creative funding models for the provision of Higher Education: The need to provide access for ever increasing numbers of people into higher education Governments alone can no longer meet the full burden of the cost of this education.

The changing global nature of higher education in a constantly changing world has a direct impact on the education policies of every country. It is now essential to integrate the global context at the policy level with proactive solutions and innovations to meet local needs. More importantly, in order to make an overall contribution to social, political, economic and environmental processes, education policy must be framed within a clear vision. This vision in the Rwandan context must cater for the needs of a growing population and the challenges posed by both human and scientific development.

From an analysis of the international context, higher education in Rwanda needs to acknowledge some fundamental realities:

- With the advent of scientific sophistication and technological breakthrough in frontier sciences, knowledge can be created, used and transferred with greater ease. However, it quickly becomes redundant and exhausted. The value of higher education is in the development of generic competences such as problem solving, learning to learn and communications. This requires an outcome-based curriculum. In this way, knowledge can be transformed and used to meet local conditions and needs;
- Economic competitiveness and prosperity requires access to higher education for a large portion of the population. This requires the provision of diverse learning and training opportunities, a variety of appropriate courses and curricula, modes and patterns of attendance and qualification structures;
- Study can no longer be time limited and restricted. It is, instead, a continuous process to be replaced by the practice of lifelong learning;
- Technology makes distance irrelevant. Students can now study their chosen course from anywhere in the world, particularly by the extensive use of Internet media.

3.0. OVERALL GUIDELINES

3.1. Vision 2020

Vision 2020 offers a vision of Rwanda as a nation founded on core human values within a knowledge-based and technology led economy.

The Government's Vision is to fundamentally transform Rwanda into a middle-income economy by the year 2020 through the:

- Promotion of macroeconomic stability and wealth creation;
- Transforming from an agrarian to a knowledge-based and technology led economy;
- Creating a productive middle class and fostering entrepreneurship.

The Rwandan Vision 2020 targets science and technology and especially, information and communication technology, as the engine that will accelerate this economic growth and development. Specifically, over the next 14 years, Rwanda intends to position itself as the key regional service and information centre in the realisation of Vision 2020².

The Pillars of Vision 2020 are (1) good governance and a capable state, (2) human resource development and a knowledge based economy, (3) a private sector-led economy, (4) infrastructure development, (5) productive and market-orientated agriculture and (6) regional and international economic integration. There also commitments to working towards gender equity and equality, protecting the environment, exploiting natural resources in a sustainable way and wide spread use of science and technology including information and communications technology.

All of this demands a heavy investment in human resource development and capacity building at all levels. A forward looking, responsive higher education and research system that works in partnership with all other sectors of education private sector is essential if the development of appropriate human resources is to be achieved. In particular, it requires a higher education system that produces graduates that are creative, eager to continually absorb new knowledge and learn new skills, and are equipped to achieve their potential in a continually changing world and are confident to do so. It also requires graduates that have enterprising skills and are entrepreneurial and are able to take on new challenges and seize new opportunities.

3.2. Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2008-2012

The *Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy* is the key strategy supporting the social and economic development. The Higher Education Policy is designed to support the delivery of the strategy through widening access to higher education and ensuring that higher education graduates have the necessary knowledge and skills to support social and economic development strategies.

The *Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy* (EDPRS) acknowledges that the growth in the number of higher education students has been significantly. Matching higher education courses to the needs of the labour market will be further improved through the targeting of loans and grants to priority subjects such as science and technology. Improvements in equity and access to higher education system will also be supported by the criteria used in for the means testing of student loans and grants.

Increasing access to higher education is a priority if Rwanda is to compete effectively in the global economy. Growth in student numbers will involve an expansion of full and part-time programmes with the use of ICT enabling open and distance modes of learning.

It will also mean expanding the range and diversity of programmes, with new priority subjects included in the curriculum that meet the EDPRS needs. Equally important is the need to improve the quality of provision so graduates have the requisite knowledge and transferable skills required to support social and economic development and to ensure that graduates' skills meet labour demands.

This will require that academic staff transform their teaching and learning methods and approaches to be consistent with a more student-centred, practically-oriented philosophy. Higher learning institutions will need to place an emphasis on industrial attachment and practical work in their courses.

² References: Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy, Integrated ICT-led Socio-Economic Development Policy and Plan for Rwanda and the National Science, Technology, Scientific Research and Innovation Policy; Government of Rwanda Vision 2020

3.3. Relevant National Policies

The *Integrated ICT-led Socio-Economic Development Policy and Plan for Rwanda* aims to transform Rwanda into an information-rich knowledge based society and economy within twenty years. A *National Information and Communication Infrastructure Plan* has been developed to provide the structure for the implementation of the policy. The strategy seeks to promote and popularize the use and integration of science and computer literacy in schools and workplaces and to intensify training efforts in technical and scientific fields. In addition, it hopes to establish a network of Science and Technology resource centres to link in with other information sources.

The *National Science, Technology, Scientific Research and Innovation Policy* forms the basis for an operational integration of the science and technology education programme. The policy identifies under-developed skills in all areas of science and technology and the lack of resources in teaching institutions to support the teaching of quality science and technology education. The policy proposes an enabling legal and policy framework and its strategy envisages building strong partnerships with the Private Sector.

Higher education will be responsible for training higher technicians and professionals, as well as ensuring there is an adequate supply of mathematics and science teachers for primary and secondary schools and instructors for vocational and technical schools and carrying out needs-related research.

3.3.1 The Integrated ICT-led Socio-Economic Development Policy and Plan

The *Integrated ICT-led Socio-Economic Development Policy and Plan for Rwanda* aims to transform Rwanda into an information-rich knowledge-based society and economy within twenty years. A *National Information and Communication Infrastructure Plan* have been developed to provide the structure for the implementation of the policy. The strategy seeks to promote and popularize the use and integration of science and computer literacy in schools and workplaces and to intensify training efforts in technical and scientific fields. In addition, it hopes to establish a network of Science and Technology resource centres to link in with other information sources. Higher education institutions will play a key role in training the workforce to deliver this policy.

3.3.2 The National Science, Technology, Scientific Research and Innovation

The *National Science, Technology, Scientific Research and Innovation Policy* forms the basis for an operational integration of the science and technology education programme. The policy identifies under-developed skills in all areas of science and technology and the lack of resources in education institutions to support the delivery of quality science and technology education. The policy proposes an enabling legal and policy framework and its strategy envisages building strong partnerships with the Private-sector. Higher education will be responsible for training higher technicians and professionals, as well as ensuring there is an adequate supply of mathematics and science teachers for primary and secondary schools and instructors for vocational and technical schools, and carrying out needs-related research.

3.3.3 National Investment Strategy

This Policy is in line with the National Investment Strategy³ which highlights the development of higher education as one of its priority education programmes, along with the promotion of science and technology.

3.4. International Development Goals

(i) Millennium Development Goals

Higher education plays a key role in addressing social and economic problems and offering practical solutions.

The key international guidelines for poverty reduction and sustained economic growth are the eight Millennium Development Goals:

1. Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger;
2. Achieving universal primary education;
3. Promoting gender equality and empower women;
4. Reducing child mortality;
5. Improving maternal health;
6. Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
7. Ensuring environmental sustainability;
8. Developing a global partnership for development.

Higher education has a vital role to play in enabling Rwanda to achieve the Goals. It can generate and provide qualified personal, knowledge and technology to support the implementation of policies and strategies designed to enable Rwanda to achieve the Goals in a timely and expeditious manner.

Specifically, it can contribute to Goals 1 and 4 by stimulating economic growth and reducing poverty and hunger. It can contribute to Goals 2 and 3 by stimulating demand for education as a consequence of economic growth and encouraging parents to invest in their children's education – girls as well as boys. It also plays an important role in initial and in service teacher education and in promoting gender equality and quality education at all levels.

Higher education plays an important role in promoting primary, secondary, technical and vocational education. In particular higher education plays a key role in teacher training and in education research and development that supports the drive for educational for all.

It can contribute to the achievement of Goals 4 to 7 by educating and training the necessary skilled and educated workforce and providing continuous professional development, consultancy and research. It can contribute to Goal 8 by providing the graduates who can support the development and implementation of donor funded programmes and government employees to ensure good governance.

³ Reference: National Investment Strategy , Ministry of Finance and Planning: June 2002

(ii) New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD)

The policy is in line with the objectives of NEPAD to support peace, stability, better governance and economic growth through the strengthening of higher education.

4.0. INTRODUCTION TO THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

4.1. The Role of the Government

Significant progress has been made since 1994 in establishing a sound base for higher education in Rwanda. The Government's strategic role in higher education in Rwanda is focused on:

- Setting clear targets for the performance of the higher education sector;
- Regulating the quality and standard of higher education;
- Facilitating and managing the environment for private sector investment in higher education;
- Targeting the development of priority subjects, such as science and technology;
- Managing funding formula and appropriate cost recovery mechanisms that create access to higher education, but also reduce the cost to the public purse and contribute in improving the provision in higher learning institutions;
- Encouraging growth in research, innovation and knowledge transfer to support social and economic development.

Government must ensure that higher education provision is developed and delivered within a regulated strategic framework of national priorities. Government must also ensure that the best use is made of available capacity, physical and human. Unnecessary duplication of provision should be avoided through strong collaboration between the national higher education institutions in terms of sharing facilities, equipment and teaching staff, where appropriate. Regional links and networks that enhance teaching, learning and research are also very important for the development of the sector.

4.2. Strengths of the High Education sector

- **The strong Government commitment to higher education.** This is evidenced by the rapid expansion of higher education provision in the country with significant Government investment in this expansion and the establishment of a framework which encourages private investment in higher education sector. There are currently a total of 25 institutions of higher education, 12 of them private, although not all are fully accredited, which together cater for an estimated 40,000 students. The National University has significantly expanded and four new specialist institutes, in education, health, science and technology and management have been established by the Government. More recently nine colleges of higher education to provide education to diploma level have been established in nursing, education and technology.
- **The establishment of public private partnerships** to support the delivery of higher education and the commitment of the Government to developing a framework for further facilitating such partnerships.
- **The establishment of strong independent Government agencies**, the Student Financing Agency for Rwanda (SFAR) in 2006 and the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), in 2007, with clear mandates, respectively for student financing and ensuring the quality of provision in higher education.
- The Government's strong commitment to:

- Improving quality and standards while driving down costs in real terms;
- Widening and expanding access to higher education;
- Building the capacity of higher education staff.
- **The development of collaborative working between the public higher education institutions**, with a strong commitment to develop collaboration further and to work with the private-sector.

4.3. Challenges/constraints facing the higher education sector

However, even with these developments the sector faces significant challenges. Higher education provision must be developed and delivered within a regulated strategic framework of national priorities. These priorities include: enrolment growth and gender equity, restructuring of academic and administrative units, ensuring the quality and relevance of undergraduate programmes, building the capacity of learning resources, development of post-graduate studies, capacity-building of research, development and innovation, capacity-building of community services and continuing education, achieving financial sustainability, and building ICT capacity. Key curriculum areas for growth are planned to include offerings in the environment and sustainable development, logistics and supply chain management, food science, processing and manufacture, tourism, leisure and hospitality management, engineering and design, water and sanitation.

The best use should be made of available capacity, physical and human. Unnecessary duplication of provision should be avoided through strong collaboration between the higher education institutions in terms of sharing facilities, equipment and teaching staff, where appropriate. Regional links and networks that enhance teaching, learning and research are also very important for the development of the sector.

Within the wider context of the social, economic and political development of the African Sub-Sahara Region and the specific development of Rwanda in particular the Higher Education system is confronted with monumental challenges:

- **Accessibility:** Despite the noticeable growth in the last few years, access to higher education in Rwanda is a privilege extended to only a few people and is well below the sub Saharan average age participation rate of between five and seven percent and the World Bank recommended age participation rate of 10 percent. Currently the age participation rate for higher education is about one percent. This is neither desirable nor practical for the future development of the country. The challenge is to move towards increased participation in higher education.
- **Inclusive Education:** A just society ensures that groups that have previously been excluded from higher education are given the opportunity to benefit. The challenge is to enable those from previously excluded groups, most notable people with disabilities and those from remote rural areas, to benefit from higher education.
- **Gender Imbalance:** A modern society must recognise the right of women to develop their full potential. The challenge is to remove barriers to access for girls and women and actively promote their access to science and technology higher education,
- **Funding:** Public sector higher education has relied almost exclusively on funding from the public purse. Given the various competing demands on these very limited resources and the need for rapid and substantial expansion of higher education this position is no longer

sustainable. The challenge for Government is to introduce an equitable system of cost sharing for students and seek the diversification of sources of funding including encouraging of private investment in higher education and public private partnerships.

- **Increasing demand:** There is increasing demand for higher education both from school leavers and those who did not have the opportunity to go on to higher education when they left school but with the majority of those who aspire to take higher education having limited resources from which to contribute towards the costs. The challenge for Government is to find ways of providing support to all those who can benefit from higher education and cannot afford to pay the full costs.
- **Donors:** Donors have been prioritising investing in basic education although in recent years they have recognised that higher education does support social and economic development. The challenge is to persuade donors to invest in post basic education.
- **Responsiveness:** The Government intends to "leapfrog" the development gap and build a "knowledge based" economy. Such an economy would be heavily dependent on high quality advanced education, research, science and technology. The challenge is to have a higher education system that makes a measurable and acceptable contribution to the realisation of this vision.
- **National Confidence:** Rwanda strives to become an inclusive society that respects the rule of law and values individual differences and dignity. The challenge is to build a Higher Education sector that puts Citizen Responsibility and Core Values at the centre of learning.
- **Quality of entrants to higher education:** Many entrants to higher education are poorly prepared and too few secondary school leavers have the necessary qualifications in science and mathematics for the places available on science and technology programmes. The challenge is to work with the school system to ensure that secondary school leavers are adequately prepared for higher education and that more pupils and especially girls take science and mathematics levels.
- **Relevance of higher education provision:** Higher education provision is not well matched to the development needs of the country or ensuring that graduates have the skills and competencies sought by employers. The challenge is to ensure that the higher education provision matches the countries needs and in particular, produces more science and technology graduates and ensures that all graduates have the skills and competencies sought by employers.
- **Professional and Academic Development:** Higher education has few staff with advanced academic qualifications and research experience. Consequently, institutions rely heavily on expatriate teachers, which is expensive to sustain. The continuing professional and academic development of local academic staff is essential if higher education is to meet its future teaching and research commitments. The challenge is to put in place the required post-graduate programmes and increase the number of staff with advanced qualifications.
- **Research:** The underdeveloped human resource base in the country also contributes to the underdeveloped research capacity in higher education. Historically, there has been little awareness as to the importance of research as an essential process in social and economic development. Research, therefore, has been uncoordinated, often lacking the necessary staff,

resources and equipment. The challenge is to put a National Research Strategy in place as soon as possible and require lecturers as part of their contracts to undertake research that leads to publication in relevant journals.

- **Knowledge Transfer:** As well as research being underdeveloped there is an underutilisation of the role that higher education institutions play as absorbers and transmitters of knowledge. Higher education can play a key role as knowledge brokers – disseminating up to date knowledge to key areas of society. The challenge is ensure that higher education institutions are encouraging and supporting their staff in undertaking consultancies and engaging in other knowledge transfer activities.
- **Governance and Management of Higher Learning Institutions:** A sound system of governance, management and planning of higher education is required. Such a system will ensure the efficient distribution of resources across higher education. It will provide quality assurance of academic standards and ensure that Annual Plans are adopted and implemented. The challenge is to establish functioning Boards of Governors at all the higher education institutions that have the expertise to guide the strategic direction and be accountable for the corporate governance of the Institution.
- **Quality Enhancement:** The academic quality of higher education provision is poor. A National Quality Assurance and Improvement system across higher education is required. The challenge is to implement quality systems that ensure that Rwanda meets international standards in the areas of courses, curriculum, research, knowledge transfer, teaching and learning in higher education.
- **Learning and Teaching Methods:** Teaching is mainly didactic and often relies on outdated material. There is a need to develop more student centred methods of learning and teaching and ensure that students are engaging with up to date knowledge. The challenge is to ensure that all academic staff are trained in modern methods of learning and teaching and are ensuring that the curriculum is up to date.
- **Continuing Education:** Higher education institutions need to embrace the principles and practices of life long learning as part of their contribution to building a “knowledge economy”. The challenge is to provide access to continuing education at all stages of a person's development.
- **Infrastructure and Equipment:** A forward looking higher education system that meets the demands placed upon it requires continual investment in infrastructure and equipment. However, many institutions in Rwanda are already starting from a very low base, lacking essential equipment, poor facilities and substandard buildings. They require substantial investment. The challenge is to find the resources to support the upgrading of all institutions and then provide ongoing capital investment.

4.4. Principles and Values of Higher education

This Policy document identifies the following policy principles and values that are form the basis for building a sustainable Higher Education sector. These are:

- **Equality and Access:** It is the intention of the Government to develop Rwanda as an inclusive society, which recognises and respects individual differences. Higher Education will be expected to reflect this through a visible increase in equitable access to higher education.

- **Fighting Genocide ideology:** : It is the intention of the Government to ensure that higher education fights Genocide ideology and supports conflict resolution and the management of conflict through teaching, research and knowledge transfer.
- **Quality:** Whilst the Government wishes to see expansion of Higher Education, this must be based on sustainable quality and excellence in teaching and learning.
- **Accountability:** The Government wishes to see greater accountability from higher education institutions in the way that they are governed, managed and deploy resources.
- **Diversity:** A much greater range in the form and type of Higher Education available is required in the future.
- **Responsiveness and Flexibility:** Higher Education needs to operate in a climate of positive change, adaptive and responsive to changing needs, including the needs of private sector employers.
- **Citizenship:** Faculty and students need to embrace the importance of building a nation on an agreed set of core values. These positive values and the behaviour should be based on tolerance, independence and critical thinking and promote entrepreneurial skills. All students should be competent in certain generic skills such as mathematics and communication.
- **Science and Technology:** The building of a "knowledge led" economy, coupled with societal development needs to be at the heart of the curriculum. Higher education must also address moral and ethical issues related to research activities.
- **Efficiency and Effectiveness:** Development of educational opportunities must be linked to considerations of the cost and effectiveness of delivery methods to larger number of students.
- **Funding:** In order to meet its ambitions for the development of higher education, the Government must implement workable cost-sharing models of funding. This requires students to take some responsibility for funding their studies. It also requires close collaboration with the Government's many donor partners in agreeing funding objectives and priorities.
- **Planning and Management:** The Government is committed to the introduction of open and transparent management systems and holistic and integrated planning mechanisms. This requires the active participation of all stakeholders at all levels of decision making and planning.
- **Private Investment:** The Government wishes to encourage private investment in higher education including the development of public private partnerships.
- **Collaboration:** The Government wishes to see collaboration between institutions in the development and delivery of higher education, research and knowledge transfer.

4.5. Vision for the higher education sector

To build a world class, higher education system underpinning Vision 2020 by supporting the development of a dynamic, entrepreneurial and internationally competitive Rwanda, through the

production of a skilled and educated graduate workforce and the carrying out of research, innovation and knowledge transfer to meet the needs of the economy and enhance the quality of life for all.

4.6. Mission for the higher education sector

Based on these principles and values the Mission for Higher Education in Rwanda is:

To provide quality higher education programmes that match the labour market and development needs of Rwanda for graduates who are capable of contributing to national economic and social needs and who can compete on the international labour market and that supports the development of the national culture, promotes life long learning, research, innovation and knowledge transfer.

5.0. KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES FOR THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

5.1. General Objectives

To establish a higher education sector that meets development needs of Rwanda for an educated and trained workforce research and knowledge transfer to support social and economic development and is internationally competitive.

5.2. Specific Objectives

- To provide programmes of high education that are matched to the labour market and development needs of Rwanda and build regionally competitive institutions of higher education;
- To widen participation to higher education by enabling greater access ;
- To offer a second chance to those who have been unable as yet to benefit from higher education;
- To provide open and flexible learning systems that exploit the potential of using ICT;
- To promote effective systems of academic quality management;
- To improve and modernise the teaching/learning processes in higher learning institutions;
- To develop effective systems of continuing education and to facilitate lifelong learning to ensure that skilled workers are constantly retrained in the face of changing labour market needs;
- To build capacity in science and technology to bridge the science gap;
- To build capacity in science and technology to bridge the science gap and develop the potential of science and technology, particularly information and communication technology for the transformation of Rwandan society and to become a regional knowledge hub;
- To support the sustaining of the Rwandan Cultural Hermitage through teaching and research;

- To foster a culture of tolerance, critical thinking, open debate, acceptable ethical standards, and respect for human values as well as producing well-informed citizens who can provide leadership in public life, civil society and businesses;
- To encourage regulated private and non – government initiatives in the establishment, funding and running of higher education and promote public private partnerships for the provision of higher education;
- To support collaboration and resource sharing between institutions of higher education;
- To promote public private- partnerships for the provision of higher education;
- To give greater autonomy to public sector institutions of higher education within a framework of accountability;
- To improve the governance and develop the leadership of higher education;

6.0. POLICY OBJECTIVES AND CORRESPONDING MAJOR STRATEGIES

6.1 Policy Objective 1: Widening participation and fair access

Strategies:

- Support a diversified sector with generic universities, specialist institutes and colleges of higher education.
- Increase access to higher education for those who can benefit including women/girls, people with disabilities and those from the poorest homes.
- Ensure that there is a flexible range of provision to meet the needs of a range of learners as well as the labour market. This will include the development of sub degree education to meet labour market needs requiring such level of training and to encourage lifelong learning.
- Permit a variety of patterns of attendance to study for qualifications including: full-time, part-time (day, evening, weekend), open flexible learning; unsupported distance learning, supported and directed distance learning and work based learning.
- Permit the recruitment of mature students (at least 5 years since leaving secondary school) for higher education without the minimum entrance qualifications provided they completed secondary education and can demonstrate the potential to benefit.
- Ensure that all providers of Higher Education are redressing barriers to access all providers will be required to monitor their student population profile and produce strategies and plans for redressing identified inequalities.
- Develop learning centres within higher education institutions, including ICT learning centres, to provide short courses for business and the community more generally.

6.2 Policy Objective 2: Educating graduates that are fit for purpose and internationally credible and thereby support the development needs of Rwanda

Strategies:

- Institutions to become fully compliant with the *Higher Education Qualifications Framework and Code of Practice*. The National Council for Higher Education will monitor compliance through

accreditation, institutional audit and subject review. The Qualifications Framework will support institutions in providing a range of qualifications and exit routes for learners to meet their needs and the qualifications they need to take up labour market opportunities.

- Mechanisms will be put in place to ensure quality assurance and improvement in teaching and learning.
- To reward and promote good teachers and require that all academic staff become registered practitioners with the National Council for Higher Education. Academic staff that pass the Post Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education and become Registered Practitioners will be rewarded
- To support the introduction of learning laboratories to facilitate the production of materials for students to support the move from a didactic to student centred pedagogy and enable the use of electronic resources.
- All students to be required to engage in personal development planning in order that they can understand and reflect on their achievements and present these achievements to employers.
- Students will also to be trained in good citizenship, engage in community service and become bilingual in French and English to meet the needs of the Rwandan labour market.
- All institutions will be expected to work closely with employers' representatives when they are developing and delivering programmes.
- The National Council for Higher Education will carry out graduate tracer surveys and labour market analysis to ensure that institutions are producing graduates to meet the need of the labour market.
- To introduce a standard student transcript that will record all the credit awarded to the student as well as other standard information including language competency, personal development, and planning and community service. This will ensure that the information available to employers and other stakeholders is clear and consistent and gives information on the range of skills and competencies that graduates have gained.

6.3 Policy Objective 3: Supporting research, innovation and knowledge transfer for sustainable development

Strategies:

- Regular audit of research and knowledge transfer capacity. This will enable the current quality and extent of research and knowledge transfer activity to be assessed.
- Higher Education institutions will be required to include a strategy for developing research and knowledge transfer activities across the range of their academic provision to support teaching at honours degree and post graduate levels.
- Higher education institutions will selectively provide postgraduate research training and PhD programmes as appropriate.
- The Government in partnership with the higher education institutions will agree on the priority areas that each institution will be required to develop research and to ensure that it develops its taught provision, investment in infrastructure and equipment and staff development in line with the areas that institutions are expected to develop research expertise in.
- The Government will establish the National Research Council. The Council will be responsible for funding research in line with national policy and priorities.
- Higher education institutions will, where appropriate, be required to demonstrate that they have

established research and knowledge transfer units and that they are actively seeking research funding and knowledge transfer contracts from international funders of research and consultancy as well as the private, voluntary and state sectors in Rwanda.

6.4 Policy Objective 4: Building the capacity of higher education staff

Strategies:

- The introduction of good human resource management practices in all higher education institutions, including having staffing plans, a staff development strategy and a human resource operating manual. The National Council for Higher Education will monitor compliance through institutional audit.
- Support the continual professional development and upgrading of the skills of staff in higher education institutions. All institutions will be required to provide staff with job specifications and introduce a system of staff development and performance review.
- In recognition of the under representation of women and other marginalized groups in senior posts and academic positions, all higher education institutions will introduce an Equal Opportunities Policy and promote equality of opportunities. Institutions will be expected to monitor and evaluate the working of the Policy.
- The establishment of post-graduate courses and training in Rwanda and reduction to a minimum the number of staff sent abroad to take post graduate qualifications.
- Higher Education Institutions will be required to develop a strategy for upgrading the qualifications of academic staff who do not meet the minimum requirements for appointment to the grade they hold.

6.5 Policy Objective 5: Developing sustainable approaches to funding

Strategies:

- Higher education being a primary tool for our development, its five years budget was prepared as it is shown in table below:

Budget	2008	Mini 2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	Total budget
Recurrent budget	18,531,153,517	12,316,725,181	23,006,729,063	24,869,258,579	27,714,449,197	106,438,315,537
Development budget	5,373,000,000	3,815,825,126	9,123,662,768	10,012,682,456	13,565,649,545	41,890,819,895
Total budget	23,904,153,517	16,132,550,307	32,130,391,831	34,881,941,035	41,280,098,742	148,329,135,432

- Encourage future expansion of Higher Education through a diversified and mixed funding model including public sector institutions reducing their reliance on public funding and the development of public private partnerships.
- Students cost sharing will be introduced with students expected to contribute to. The Government will provide financial assistance for the majority of full time students attending public sector institutions through a means tested loan scheme. The government will ensure that no qualified student is barred from higher education solely because of their own or their family's inability to provide support.
- Enabling a much more rapid growth in Rwandans gaining postgraduate qualifications by supporting students to take programmes in country part time. They will do so either through the University of South Africa or by taking an in country post graduate programmes.

- Introducing a system of formula funding for public sector higher education institutions and allocating it via a block grant. Funding will be allocated on the basis of a formula that will take account of funded student numbers and the differential costs of subject provision. The new funding formula is intended to lead to lower unit costs and simultaneously stimulate greater participation.
- Public sector institutions will be expected to make efficiency savings and develop other funding streams in order to reduce their reliance on Government funding. A Performance base line for each institution will be established and income generation targets agreed taking account of the differential potential of higher education institutions to raise additional funding. This will be combined with invested to improve the infrastructure and equipment in public sector institutions.
- Encourage higher education institutions to share scarce resources including human resources where ever practicable and review the programme and subject provision in public sector higher education institutions in order to rationalize provision wherever possible and close uneconomic and other provision that does not clearly meet social or economic priorities.
- Encourage collaboration between institutions in the provision of core foundation subjects such as basic languages, communication skills and foundation mathematics and sciences.
- Encourage regulated and controlled growth in the private sector where there is evidence of unmet demand that cannot be met by public sector institutions. Investigate the fiscal, legal and investment conditions for private providers establishing institutions.

6.6 Policy Objective 6: Planning higher education to maximize the effective and efficient use of scarce resources

Strategies:

- To ensure that the very limited resources available for investing in higher education are used to best purpose. All investment decisions and spending will be tested against the contribution it makes not only to achieving long term goals but also immediate priorities. All policies and plans must be subject to risk analysis at national and institutional levels.
- Ensure that investment in higher education and the resources available are used in the most efficient and effective way to achieve the outcomes expected the sector to deliver by facilitating resource sharing.
- The Ministry of Education with Higher Education in its portfolio shall be responsible for strategic planning of Higher Education sector. The Higher Learning Institutions and other institutions such as SFAR, NCHE, etc shall contribute to the Higher Education Sector Strategic Plan.

6.7 Policy Objective 7: Combating genocide ideology and concretising the “never again” commitment

Strategies:

- The Government of Rwanda will require that all higher education institutions have in place policies and procedures to fight Genocide Ideology, manage conflict and support conflict resolution.

- Higher education institutions will be required to ensure that all activity is undertaken in the context of a respect for human values and that citizenship and individual responsibility are integrated into the curriculum of taught programmes.
- Higher education will support the creation of an inclusive society that respects the rule of law, values human rights, respects diversity, difference and human dignity and overcomes a colonial mentality.
- Engage students in community service.

6.8 Policy Objective 8: Autonomy, accountability, leadership, governance and management

Strategies:

- To ensure the maximum development and responsibility of institutional managers within a transparent framework of accountability for actions and the maintenance of academic freedom and integrity.
- Public sector institutions to ultimately be accountable to the government for the public funds invested in them and for developing strategies to implement the higher education plan in the context of their institutional mission.
- Leadership skills will be required at all levels and good management and business systems will need to be put in place. Board of Directors will have a key role to play in helping institutions develop their strengths, remain relevant and strategic in their thinking and planning, and be responsive to the needs of learners, employers, staff, the development needs of Rwanda and the wider society.

7.0. PROGRAMMES OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

Education is a key dimension in the Government's Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy. People who lack education have limited access to, and control over, economic opportunities. It is education that provides the human capital necessary to change the life opportunities of people and consequently reduce poverty. Education brings benefits to individuals and to society as a whole; it improves the life chances of individual beneficiaries and supports economic growth.

The Ministry of Education will require all accredited Higher Learning Institutions to address the policy objectives as specified in line with their Missions:

1. Provide equitable access to learning opportunities;
2. Provide learning programmes that are of high quality and relevant to students' lives and careers;
3. Provide research, innovation and knowledge transfer to support sustainable development;
4. To be highly effective and internationally credible;
5. To support Rwanda's national, regional and international ambitions.

8.0. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

In implementing its policy objectives for higher education, the Government will adhere to two key principles: firstly, any planning and funding of Higher Education shall take place within the Government's existing planning and funding frameworks, and secondly, priority will be given to those actions that build long-term sustainability through capacity building in higher education. All institutions shall work together whilst adhering to their missions.

8.1. Planning and Policy Implementation

The Ministry in charge of Higher Education shall be responsible for the planning and coordination of higher education and the implementation and monitoring of the Higher Education Policy. The Ministry of Education will work in partnership with other ministries with responsibilities related to higher education, agencies established to support the implementation of higher education policies, higher education institutions, employers and development partners.

In recognition of the importance of Science and Technology for the future development of the country, the Government has given the Minister of Science, Technology, Research and ICT in the President's Office responsibility for research policy and the policies for promoting science and technology, research and ICT. The Ministry of Education, the NCHE and all the higher education institutions shall work closely with the Minister of Research, Science and Technology and ICT on issues concerned with the promotion of science and technology in higher education, with reference to *National Policy for Science, Technology and Innovation*.

8.2. National Council for Higher Education

The National Council for Higher Education is responsible for advising the Minister in charge of Higher Education on all matters relating to the accreditation of higher education institutions. It is also responsible for monitoring and evaluating the quality and standard and ensuring the quality and enhancement of teaching and research.

8.3. Student Financing Agency Rwanda

The Student Financing Agency is responsible for the financing of Rwandan students in higher education in Rwanda and abroad as well as the management of scholarships and student loans. The loan will provide an advance to students to enable them to study. It is then repaid to the Government when the student gains employment and their income reaches a pre-agreed level. It is responsible for implementing the student cost-sharing scheme

When fully developed, it is intended that loans will be available to those pursuing study for any approved higher education course, by any approved pattern of attendance or mode of study.

8.4. Higher Learning Institutions

Higher education is delivered by the institutions of higher education. Higher education institutions are responsible for the delivery of higher education, research, innovation and knowledge transfer in accordance with this policy and their specific mission. They execute their functions through their Board of directors, Senates and Executives Councils as specified in Acts of Parliament establishing them (Public institutions) and operating agreements (private institutions). This autonomy of higher education institutions protects their ability to be challenging and creative in delivering teaching and research and protects academic freedom.

Individual higher education institutions are responsible for transmitting, extending and challenging existing knowledge and ideas through high quality teaching and research. They will be expected to focus on high quality delivery in all areas and to provide learners with a positive learning experience. Public sector institutions will be accountable for the funding invested in them both publicly and privately and all will be accountable for maintaining public confidence in the value of their output. Both public as

well as private higher learning institutions will be required to be well-governed and well-managed organizations and to plan strategically. They will be expected to regularly review the relevance of their activities to ensure that they are responsive to the social and economic needs of Rwanda and the needs of individual learners and employers. Higher education institutions will be expected to engage with the wider community.

8.5 The Private Sector

The private sector is an important stakeholder in higher education. The private provision of higher education is an important component of the system and industry and commerce are key consumers of the products of higher education - graduates, research, consultancy, continuing professional development and other services. Providing a supportive environment that encourages investment by the private-sector and philanthropists in higher education and ensures that higher education meets the needs of the private-sector are important elements of the implementation of the *Higher Education Policy*.

9.0. CONCLUSION

This Higher Education Policy draws heavily on numerous background papers and official and semi-official documents concerning the development of higher education in Rwanda. It has also gone through intensive consultations with all stakeholders and presents policy guidelines, strategic directions and the institutional framework for higher education.

A costed strategy for the implementation of this policy and other sub sector policies in higher education, such as funding policy, research policy, etc, will be developed.