

**Legal and Policy Framework for Gender  
Equality and the Empowerment of Women in  
Rwanda**

**Pamela Abbott and Marklin Rucogoza**

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## Preface

The Rwanda Public Policy Observatory is designed to provide easily accessible guides to the laws and policies of Rwanda. Each guide will provide a brief and simple guide to the laws and policies in a given area of public policy. The guides will be invaluable as an introduction and easy source of reference for all those interested in any given area of public policy.

The intention is to produce a complete set of guides over the next two years. They will be available on the Rwanda Public Policy Observatory page of the IPAR-Rwanda web site [www.ipar-rwanda.org](http://www.ipar-rwanda.org).

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## I. Introduction

This document provides a brief guide to the institutional, legal and policy framework for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women in Rwanda. Rwanda has demonstrated a strong commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women. Equal rights for women is recognised as a human right, women are not 'the second sex'. Gender equality is enshrined in the constitution. It was the first country in the world to have more than 50 per cent of its members of parliament as women. It legally mandates that at least 30 per cent of positions in decision making organs at national, regional and local levels are held by women. There is a Minister for Gender and Family Promotion in the Prime Minister's Office, a Gender Monitoring Office and a commitment to gender responsive budgeting. The Women's National Council ensures that women are able to have their voice heard locally and nationally. Gender is a cross cutting issue in *Vision 2020* (the country's long term development framework) and in the *Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2007-2012* the mid-term implementation plan. Laws have been put in place to ensure women are able to inherit land on the same basis as men, have equal rights in marriage and on divorce that criminalise all forms of gender based violence and protect women as well as men's employment rights.

However, there is still a long way to go. Traditional values, especially in rural areas continue to construct women as inferior and subordinate to men. Nearly 60 per cent of women work as dependent family workers and over 80 per cent of women are engaged in agricultural work, mainly in subsistence farming. Gender based violence is a major concern and girls continue to be underrepresented in science and engineering in secondary school and higher education. Girls are also much less likely than boys to gain a place at a public university. Population growth rate remains high and the fertility rate is high burdening women with pregnancies and childcare. Women, in addition to productive work on average spend more than 20 hours a week on collecting wood and water, domestic work and childcare. Women, especially poor women and those living in rural areas are generally unaware of their rights.

### In terms of equal rights we can consider:

- equal rights (treating men and women in the same way, not discriminating on the basis of gender);
- promoting gender equality (differential treatment to achieve equality of outcome);
- positive action (treating men and women differently to make up for historic disadvantage).

Rwanda has variously developed laws, policies and strategies based on all three. Rwanda has, for example, legislated for equality in marriage, provides for the needs and protection of women at work and ensures the political representation of women by reserving seats for women in both houses of parliament and a quota for women



for all political offices.

Rwanda has gone a long way to promote equal rights for women and to enable women to develop their capacities as this guide will demonstrate. However, there is long way to go before women are fully able to benefit from the laws and policies put in place by the Government.

## 2. International and Regional Framework

Rwanda has shown its commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women by ratifying (legally committing to implement) the international conventions and protocols on gender equality and women's empowerment. On ratification under the 2003 Constitution once a treaty is published in the *Official Gazette* adopted international treaties and agreements became more binding than organic and ordinary laws (Clause 190). This means that domestic courts and other governmental bodies look to the treaty language itself as a source of law. There remains, however, a need for a clear dissemination and implementation plan (Gender Monitoring Office 2011).

### 2.1 International Treaties

Rwanda has ratified the following international treaties and protocols.

- *Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948* and approved and ratified through the Presidential Order No 159/01 of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2002 (O.G. No 12 ter of 15<sup>th</sup> June 2003).
- *The Convention on Civil and Political Rights 1966.*
- *The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1980* and approved and ratified through the Presidential Order No 159/01 of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2002 (O.G. No 12 ter of 15<sup>th</sup> June 2003).
- *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995*
- *The Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age and Registration of Marriages* concluded in New York on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1962 and approved and ratified through the Presidential Order No 159/01 of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2002 (O.G. No 12 ter of 15<sup>th</sup> June 2003).
- *The Convention on the Political Rights of Women* concluded in New York on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1953 and approved and ratified through the Presidential Order No 159/01 of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2002 (O.G. No 12 ter of 15<sup>th</sup> June 2003).
- *The Optional Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children supplementing the Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime* concluded in New York on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2000 and approved and ratified through the Presidential Order No 159/01 of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2002 (O.G. No 12 ter of 15<sup>th</sup> June 2003). UN Resolution 61/144 on Trafficking in Women and Girls 2006.
- *The Convention on Married Women's Nationality* concluded in New York on 20<sup>th</sup> February 1967, approved, and ratified through the Presidential Order



No 159/01 of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2002 (O.G. No 12 ter of 15<sup>th</sup> June 2003).

- ✦ *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women 2003, UN Resolution 61/144 on the Intensification of Efforts to Eliminate all forms of Violence Against Women 2006, UN Resolution on Eliminating Rape and other Forms of Sexual Violence in all their Manifestations including in Conflict Related Situation 2007.*
- ✦ *The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820. On Women, Peace and Security, 2008.*

## **2.2 Regional Treaties and Protocols**

Rwanda has not only made a commitment to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women by ratifying international convention and protocols but also by signing a number of regional treaties and protocols.

- ✦ *The Optional Protocol to the African Charter of Human and People's Rights to Women's Rights in Africa approved and ratified through the Presidential Order No11/01 of 24th June 2004 (OG no special of 24th June 2004).*



## East African Community and other Regional Treaties

Rwanda is a member of the East African Community (EAC), the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), the South African Development Cooperation (SADC) and the Common Market of East and South Africa (COMESA). NEPAD is committed to the empowerment of women. SADC agreed a *Declaration on Gender* in 1997 and an addendum in 1998 on the *Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children*. The COMESA Treaty recognises that the sustainable economic and sustainable development of the region requires the full and equal participation of women as well as men. The EAC Treaty commits the member states to the mainstreaming of gender and the enhancement of the role of women in cultural, social, political, economic and technological development.

*The East African Community Gender and Community Development Framework*

EAC Secretariat 2009

This *Framework* serves as a guide for the preparation and implementation of programmes and projects that are gender responsive. It identifies as priorities putting in place institutional and legal frameworks, the empowerment of women, gender mainstreaming especially in macroeconomic and sector policies and programmes, and gender, peace building and conflict resolution.

## 3. Institutional Framework

### 3.1 The Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion

The Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion is located in the Prime Minister's Office. It leads the national machinery to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women throughout the country and the Minister represents women at Cabinet level. The Ministry is responsible for ensuring that the *National Gender Policy* is implemented.

### 3.2 The Gender Monitoring Office

The Gender Monitoring Office was mandated in the Constitution. It is responsible for ensuring that systems are in place for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of gender mainstreaming and that gender disaggregated data is collected to enable the monitoring of gender equality. It oversees the collection and analysis of gender disaggregated data at both national and local levels.

### 3.3 The National Women's Councils

The National Women's Council was set up to coordinate the women's councils across the country in 1996. Its budget comes mainly from Government through the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion.





There is an Executive Committee at every administrative level i.e. at Cell, Sector, District, Province and national. At each level, there is a General Assembly and an Executive Committee. The Executive Committee has 10 members elected by the General Assembly. The members of the Executive Committee are volunteers and are charged with organisation, promotion, and education.

Representatives of the women's councils are on all the key decision making groups that are responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the *EDPRS* and are involved in the elections for the 24 seats reserved for women in Parliament.

The National Women's Council provides a framework for information exchange, women mobilisation and advocacy. The women's councils play an important role in policy development and implementation by enabling women to put forward their views and solve problems together.

### **3.4 National Gender Cluster**

The National Gender Cluster acts as a forum that brings together Government and all stakeholders including official development partners, the private sector, representatives of women's councils and CSOs to discuss the further implementation of the National Gender Policy. It is chaired by the Minister for Gender and Family Promotion.

### **3.5 Gender Responsive Budgeting**

The Government is committed to gender responsive budgeting. The aim is to mainstream a gender perspective into the analysis of public expenditure and to raising public revenues (national taxes and official development aid) so that the impact on women and men are considered. Gender responsive budgeting will be piloted in the health, education, agricultural and infrastructure sectors.

Gender responsive budgeting will ensure that the budget is allocated to achieve Government priorities including gender equality. It ensures that the needs and interests of women and girls, men and boys are addressed in expenditure and revenue policies. Women will benefit from the introduction of gender responsive budgeting because it help to ensure that the Government's commitment to gender inequality is implemented.

### **3.6 Gender Focal Points**

Gender Focal Points are expected to promote gender equality and equity. Gender Focal Points are Government employees occupying positions where they can influence decision making, planning policies and management. In public institutions, the directors of planning are the Gender Focal Points and they are charged with monitoring the progress in the implementation of the National Gender Policy, ensuring that gender disaggregated data is collected and ensuring that all policies, programmes, projects and budgets are gender responsive.



### **3.7 The Human Rights Commission**

The Human Rights Commission is responsible for ensuring there are no violations of human rights in the country. It looks at any violations and if necessary takes those responsible to court.

## **4. Laws, Policies and Programmes Promoting Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In this Chapter we set out in more details information on the ways in which laws and politics in Rwanda give women rights to equality with men and empower women. These are your rights as women and you need to claim them. Men need to support women and make certain they are able to claim their rights. The Women's Councils provide an important organ to enable women to claim their rights. Collective action by women through the women's councils and other organisations will enable women to make certain that they are able to exercise their rights.

### **There are three types of rights that women have;**

1. the right to equal treatment with men, meaning that men and women should be able to have the same outcomes. So we should expect that girls and women not only have the same rights to education as boys and men but that the delivery of education takes account of girls' and women's needs so that they are able to do as well as boys and men;
2. specific rights where women have needs that men do not have - for example, the right to maternity care;
3. affirmative action rights where special measures are taken to speed up the achievement of women's right and the empowerment of women - for example by having a quota of seats for women in decision-making bodies.

### **4.2 Legal and Policy Framework**

#### **4.2.1 The Constitution**

The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda was introduced in 2003 following approval by a referendum held on the 24th May 2003. Women's groups played an important role during the extensive consultations held on the Constitution and lobbied for quotas for women in parliament and public office. The Constitution incorporates the principals of gender equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and provides a strong legal framework for mainstreaming gender.



The provisions of the *Constitution* include:

- ✚ universal suffrage. This means that all adults, men and women have the right to vote and stand for office in national and local elections;
- ✚ thirty per cent of all posts in official decision making organs are reserved for women. This means that at least 30 per cent of the members of all decision making bodies such as the Cabinet, Parliament, District Councils should be women;
- ✚ twenty-four seats in Parliament are reserved for women. They are elected by a joint assembly made up of members of members of local authority councils and members of the executive committees of women's organisations at the local level. they are expected to ensure that the needs and interests of women are taken into account in all laws discussed and passed by Parliament as more generally representing the interests of women;
- ✚ all citizens are born and remain free and equal in rights and duties. All are equal before the law. This means that men and women are equal;
- ✚ discrimination based on gender is illegal and punishable in law. This means that if you are discriminated against on the grounds of your gender the person who does the discriminating can be punished. Discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity, clan, tribe, colour, religion or belief, opinion, economic status, difference of culture, language, social situation, physical or mental deficiency are also illegal.
- ✚ only monogamous civil marriage between a man and a woman is recognised. This means that you cannot have more than one partner at the same time. Husbands and wives are equal in marriage and have the same rights on divorce.
- ✚ equal pay for work of equal value. This means you cannot be paid less on the grounds of your gender;
- ✚ the right to education. This means that boys and girls, women and men have the same rights to education. Primary education is compulsory which means you are legally responsible for making certain your children attend school until they have completed the primary stage;
- ✚ members of parliament for the other fifty-three seats are elected by citizens. The lists of candidate s are drawn up by the political parties and must comply with the requirement that 30 per cent of public offices are held by women.

#### **4.2.2 Vision 2020**

Vision 2020 is the long term development framework that highlights the development goals for Rwanda It provides a vision of how Rwanda will transform into a knowledge based middle income economy. Gender is a crosscutting issue. This means that women should benefit from develop as much as men do. All policies and programmes are expected to take gender into account and ensure women and girls needs are taken into account equally with those of men and boys.



### **4.2.3 The Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2007-2012**

The *EDPRS* is the mid-term strategy for implementing Vision 2020. Gender is cross-cutting issue in *EDPRS* along with HIV/AIDS, the environment, youth and social inclusion (including the inclusion of people living with disabilities). There are three key programmes, private sector growth, Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme and promoting good governance.

. The National Gender Policy guides the implementing departments in ensuring that the strategies and programmes they adopt to implement the *EDPRS* are gender sensitive and empower women.

The gender monitoring office ensures that gender disaggregated data is collected and that policies, programmes and strategies related to *EDPRS* are monitored and evaluated to ensure they are promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

. Gender responsive budgeting ensures that government spending is in line with mainstreaming gender in line with *EDPRS*.

The *EDPRS* Strategic Outcomes include the maternal mortality rate as one of the strategic outcome indicators and the National Gender cluster plays a central role in the annual review process, which looks at what has been achieved over the previous year.

### **4.2.4 The National Gender Policy**

The National Gender Policy provides a framework for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and demonstrates the Government's commitment to addressing all forms of gender inequality in the country.

The National Gender Policy clearly sets out the process of mainstreaming gender in all public and private sectors, policies, programmes, projects and so on. It also concerned with the empowerment of women. The Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion coordinates the implementation of the policy.

The Policy sets out the key objectives for ensuring the economic empowerment of women: for employment and growth; for health; in education and vocational training; in governance and justice; in environment protection and land use management; of the most vulnerable; for participating in the private sector; in water and sanitation; in infrastructure; in transport; and, in ICT. All of these are in line with the *EDPRS* priorities.

### **4.2.5 The National Decentralisation Policy**

The National Decentralisation Policy enables women as well as men to take part in making decisions about priorities for government and contributing to the planning



process and to stand for election for committees at a local level.

#### **4.2.6 The Girls Education Policy**

The Girls' Education Policy and a Strategic Plan were approved in 2008. They are aimed at achieving gender equality in education at all levels. The Policy will be implemented through Girls Education Strategic Plans at District, school and institutional levels.

The overall objective of the Policy is to guide and promote action aimed at the progressive elimination of gender inequalities in education and training at all levels. A Girls' Education Task Force collects data to assess progress annually and reports on the findings.

As part of the implementation of the policy, separate toilets for girls and boys are being provided in all primary schools to reduce the drop-out of girls from education.

Special attention is being given to encouraging girls to take science and mathematics, subjects where they are underrepresented in secondary, technical and vocational and higher education.

### **4.3 The Economic Rights and the Empowerment of Women**

Women have the same right to be economically independent as men - that is they have the same right to generate money and to decide how that money is spent as men do. Women have the same right to decent work as men do. By decent work means work that enables a woman to earn enough for her and her family to live on, that enables them to have time to enjoy non-work activities, that is secure and where they work in a healthy and safe environment.

Starting an income generating activity is one way in which women can become economically independent. At present about 60 per cent of women are dependent workers; in other words, they are economically dependent on their husbands or fathers. When women have control over their own money it enables them to take control over their lives and gives them greater bargaining power with men. Women can take decisions so that their and their daughters' needs and interests are met as well as those of their husbands' and sons'. When women have money, the health of their children improves, daughters are more likely to go to and be kept in school and women's health improves.

The Government is committed to improving access to finance for women as well as men, and especially in rural areas. This will enable women to borrow money to invest in making their farm more profitable or to start non-farm income generating activities. Starting a small business is one way that women can earn their own money and not have to be dependent on their husband/father.

Economic empowerment is not only about being able to borrow money from



financial institutions on the same basis as men it is also about being able to save and having the right own savings. Women have the same rights to control their own savings as men in Rwanda.

#### **4.3.1 Women's Access to Finances**

- ✚ There are three Government guarantee funds administered by the National Bank of Rwanda that can help poor women entrepreneurs' access credit. The entrepreneur has to make an application and submit a business plan to a bank/microfinance institution. The funds are:
- ✚ The Woman's Guarantee Fund enables women who have no collateral or credit record to access finance for income-generating activities. Women have to submit a viable business proposal to a bank or micro-credit institution. If the financial institution accepts the proposal the fund guarantees 50 per cent of the loan for individuals and 75 per cent for group loans. The maximum loan is 5 million FRW for individual loans and 10 million for group loans, with a three year repayment period. Financial institutions are expected to have a focal point to support applicants, and access to loans for women living in rural areas is seen as a priority;
- ✚ The AVEGA Guarantee Fund enables genocide widows whose business plan is approved to have a loan with an interest rate set at 12 per cent;
- ✚ The Retrenched Public Servants Guarantee Fund is equally available to men and women and guarantees 50 per cent of the loan and an interest rate of 10 per cent for applicants whose business plans are approved. The ceiling for individual loans is 5 million FRW, and 10 million FRW for group loans.

There are also Savings and Loans Cooperatives and other institutions which can provide finance for starting up or developing an income-generation activity. These include:

- ✚ Umurenge SACCOs savings and credit cooperatives being started in every village with the support of the Government;
- ✚ People's Bank for Women's Programme;
- ✚ COOPEDUC – a savings and credit cooperative stated by the women's Association DUTERIMBERE
- ✚ UMWARIMU SACCO – helps school to access teachers soft loans (without collateral).

#### **4.3.2 Women's Land Rights**

Women have the same rights to inherit land as men.

#### **4.3.3 Women's Employment Rights**

The extent to which the Labour Law applies women depends on the work that they do. If they work:



- for a family enterprise (farming or non-farming) only the provisions relating to health and safety at the workplace, to child labour and to pregnant and breastfeeding mothers apply;
- for informal sector worker only the provisions relating to social security, trade union organisation and health and safety at work apply;
- in the formal sector all the provisions of the Law apply;
- for the Government the Civil Service Code applies but so do most of the provisions of the Labour Law.

### **The Labour Law:**

- prohibits child labour: boys and girls under 16 are not allowed to be employed, and those between 16 and 18 years are restricted in the hours they can work and they are not allowed to do dangerous work or work at night;
- prohibits forced work, being made to work against your wishes, except for military service and civic work;
- prohibits gender-based violence and harassment; if you leave your employment because of gender-based violence by your supervisor or because you reported someone for gender-based violence it counts as unfair dismissal;
- prohibits discrimination on the grounds of gender, marital status or family responsibilities; you cannot, for example, be refused a job because you are married, because you are a woman or because you have children;
- the working week is normally a maximum of 45 hours and one 24 hour rest period must be given each week, normally on a Sunday;
- workers are entitled to a minimum of one and a half working days' annual leave for each month worked;
- workers are entitled to up to six months of sick leave, the first three months of which are paid;
- women have the right to 12 consecutive weeks' maternity leave, six weeks of which are paid and six weeks paid at 20 per cent of full pay; women may choose to return to work after the first six weeks of maternity leave, and on return to work they must return to their old job or an equivalent one;
- a nursing mother is entitled to an hour a day of paid rest for 12 months from the birth of their child; if a mother returns to work after six weeks of maternity leave she is entitled to two hours a day for the first six weeks;
- pregnant and breastfeeding mothers are not allowed to do any activities that may be harmful to their lives or that of their baby;
- you cannot be sacked from your job because you are pregnant;
- employers are responsible for the health and safety of the workplace;
- people cannot be discriminated against because of a disability; if you become disabled due to a disease or accident at your workplace and cannot carry on with your previous job your employer is requested to find you alternative employment you can do;
- workers have the right to belong to a trade union or professional association;



- ✎ workers have the right to strike provided they follow the procedures set out in the Law;
- ✎ Individual disputes with employers should be settled amicably; if you fail to come an agreement with your employer you should refer the matter to the Labour Inspector, and if the matter remains unresolved you can take your employer to court.

#### **4.4 Women's Rights to Live Free from Violence**

The Law legislates for zero tolerance of gender-based violence. It is not acceptable under any circumstances. Any GBV by any man against any woman or girl is against the law. The law provides for legal sanctions against gender-based violence perpetrators.

Gender-based violence includes physical violence, sexual violence, economic violence and psychological violence. Bullying, unwanted sexual advances or threatening you with violence are all GBV. Gender-based violence includes neglecting children because of their gender. Parents are responsible for protecting your child from this type of violence.

Gender-based violence also includes marrying more than one partner at the same time (polygamy) or living with someone as if married while still being married to someone else. It is also gender-based violence if a woman works for her partner and he does not provide for her keep.

Gender-based violence can be used as grounds for divorce against.

#### **4.5 Women's Political Rights and the Political Empowerment of women**

##### **4.5.1 Women' Representation on Decision Making Bodies**

Any decision-making body should have at least 30 per cent of female members; this is to ensure that the interests and needs of women and girls are taken into account equally with those of men and boys. Under the Constitution at least 30 per cent of seats have to be reserved for women in all decision-making organs, including Senate, the Lower Chamber of Parliament, the Cabinet, Permanent Secretaries, Supreme Court Judges, High Court Judges, Gacaca Court Judges, Provincial Governors, Mayors and members of Provincial and District Councils.

Twenty-four seats in the Lower Chamber of Parliament are reserved for women and these are elected by women. In addition, at least 30 per cent of those included on the party lists for election to the Lower Chamber have to be women.

##### **4.5.2 Women's Right to Vote**





There is universal adult suffrage in Rwanda. All adults aged 18 years or older have the right to vote in elections for local councils and the Parliament. Women have equal rights with men to vote and in addition have the right to vote for the 24 women members of Parliament elected through the National Women's Council.

#### **4.6 The National Women's Council**

The National Women's Council is specifically in place to ensure that the needs and interests of women and girls are taken into account. All women have the right to be members of the General Assembly of their local Women's Council and to stand for election for the Executive Committee. This ensures that the views of grassroots women are put forward and can be taken into account at every level from the District Council to the Government (Parliament and the Cabinet).

The Women's Council elects the 24 women members of Parliament for the seats reserved for women. These women are in Parliament to ensure that the needs and interests of women and girls are taken into account in the Budget and all Government Legislation

#### **4.7 Women's Rights in Marriage and the Family**

##### **4.6.1 Women's Rights to Martial Property**

When people get married they have to decide how they are going to manage your property. They have three choices:

1. community of property, which means that all the things a husband and wife own belong to both of them equally except for items for personal use such as cloths, jewellery and tools, which remain personal property;
2. limited community of assets, which means that on marriage a couple agree which of the things they own or acquire during your marriage become communal property and which remain their own personal property;
3. separation of property means that each partner retains their your own property and contribute to the household expenses.

##### **4.6.2 Women's Rights in Marriage and Family Life**

Only monogamous civil marriage between a man and wife is legally recognised. No one can be married without their consent. Forced marriage is illegal.

Wives and husbands have equal rights in marriage and both mothers and fathers have the right and duty to bring up their children.

Husbands have a duty to feed their wives. This means that a husband must provide for his wife's maintenance.



### **4.6.3 Women's Rights on Divorce**

On legal separation or divorce, there is a right to an equal share of the property if marriage was under the community of property (Communauté de bien). Those married under limited community of property share what belongs to the household. Those married under the separation of property are entitled to their own property.

Women who sue for a divorce if it is granted can be awarded maintenance. A former partner can be ordered to pay up to one third of his/her income to a former partner.

### **4.6.4 Women's Inheritance Rights**

If a husband dies and the marriage was under the joint property or limited community of property regime the wife becomes responsible for all the property and she is expected to raise the children of the marriage children and look after the parents of deceased husband if they are needy. Women who remarried while they still have dependent children get a quarter of the property and administer the rest on behalf of their children. Women without dependent children get half the property and the legitimate heirs of their husband gets the other half. If a woman fails to look after the needy parents of her deceased husband/wife or the dependent children they are given part of the property.

Women married under the separation of property regime children inherit the property of a deceased husband or, if there are no children, a relative as defined in the law. All your legitimate children, girls as well, as have a right to inherit the property on the death of their parents.

## **4.7 Women's Reproductive Rights and Right to Health**

### **4.7.1 Abortion**

Women only have a right to have an abortion if their physical and/or mental health would be seriously in danger if they continued with the pregnancy or if the unborn child is in danger of dying.

### **4.7.2 Women's rights to Contraception**

Women have the right to contraception advice and to modern contraceptives if they are 21 years or older. Contraceptives are available at health clinics or hospitals.

### **4.7.3 Women's Rights to Antenatal Care**

Women have the right to four ante natal care visits during pregnancy and to be tested for HIV when



#### **4.7.4. Women's Rights When Giving Birth**

Women have the right to give birth to your baby in a health care centre.

#### **4.7.5 HIV/AIDS, Condoms and Male Circumcision**

Women are more likely to be infected with HIV in Rwanda than men but men are more likely to infect other people. All adults in need of treatment are entitled to free treatment. The Government is encouraging all men to become circumcised. Male and female condoms are available free.

#### **4.7.6 Mutual Health Insurance**

Everyone in Rwanda is entitled to basic medical care free and on demand if they have health insurance. The Mutual Health Insurance provides affordable insurance with graduated payments so that the poorest are entitled to free membership and the better off to make larger contributions (2011 Budget Speech).

### **4.8 Women's Right to Peace and Security**

There is a Nation Action Plan for implementing the United Nations Security Council Resolution on Women, Peace and Conflict. A steering committee chaired by the Minister of Gender and Family Promotion is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Action Plan. The Action Plan identifies five priorities:

1. prevention of violence and conflict;
2. protection of women's rights and taking into account the special needs of women;
3. reinforcement of women's participation in decision making;
4. peace-building and women's empowerment in the post-genocide reconstruction;
5. coordination and evaluation of the implementation of the Action Plan.



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