



Toespraak

Toespraak ter gelegenheid van de ontvangst van de President van Rwanda Z.E. de heer Paul Kagame

6 oktober 2015

Mr. President,
Your Excellencies,

On behalf of the Senate, and on behalf of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, I welcome you to the States-General of the Netherlands.

The Netherlands and Rwanda maintain strong bilateral relations in multiple domains. Therefore, after receiving the President of the Senate of Rwanda in February last year, it is an honour to receive you here today.

Mr. President,

Less than two weeks ago, the UN Summit on Sustainable Development took place at the United Nations in New York. A highlight in international politics. For Rwanda in particular. Few countries have had as much success in delivering the Millennium Development Goals as Rwanda.

Now the world is looking forward to 2030, with a new strategic agenda, with new goals. And I am certain Rwanda will continue to do well.

That you will once again develop an ambitious programme rooted in the principle of shared responsibility with the international community and within Rwandan society itself.

In pursuing development, strengthening key institutions and fostering democracy remain crucial. As we experienced in the Netherlands the past 70 years, in our efforts to bury the burden of the Second World War, to rebuild our society and to move forward.

And still, we are continuously developing. Although our democracy here in the Netherlands dates back many years, the Senate received a proposal regarding the introduction of a general provision at the beginning of our constitution just last year, stating that "the constitution guarantees democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights".

This new provision sketched the contours within which our constitution should be read and understood. Thus: something new, and a deepening of our democratic values and understanding.

I realise we are a different country, in a different region, with a different history.

Rwanda still copes with the aftermath of the genocide on a daily basis.

Towards this background, it is inspiring to see how Rwanda has developed these past 21 years. It takes a lot of courage and hard work to not become a hostage of history, but a victor of prosperity.



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Yet, you have shown that this is possible! The Rwandese ambition and determination have taken you from being heavily reliant on aid to becoming increasingly self-sufficient.

Largely due to your efforts in economic cooperation, for instance with the Netherlands. And also during this visit, you will meet many business representatives. I wish you successful meetings and I do hope you will forge sustainable partnerships.

Mr. President,

Coming back to the UN Summit, I would like to round off with a variation on the words that our King spoke in the General Assembly on the 28th September; by saying:

"It is not always the loudest voices that speak the deepest truths. In fact, it is often the hard working member states that show us the way forward."

Thank you.

And may I give the floor to you Mr. President.