



Inkingi Forces Démocratiques Unifiées United Democratic Forces

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Kigali - Rwanda

"Pour un Etat de Droit, la Democratie et l'Egalité de chances"; "For the rule of law, democracy and equal opportunity"

FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Introduction

The United Democratic Forces, FDU-INKINGI, form a political party encompassing citizens with a community of ideas and a shared belief in the approaches and strategies for:

- Installing the rule of law underpinned by a pluralist democracy and a fair justice system, characterized by equal opportunity and social equity;
- Creating an environment conducive to sustainable development of the country which should lead to social well-being of all Rwandans.

Therefore, given the current environment, economic development must primarily find solutions to the impoverishment of the rural areas and the socio-economic integration of young people, the two major vectors of exclusion and social violence.

For a country whose economy is based on agriculture, the development of this sector should be a prerequisite for industrialization and development of services with higher added value.

When farmers' income level improves there is an increase in demand for manufactured goods and services which in turn induces the creation of new industries and sustainable services.

The agricultural policy must promote family farming and aim for food security of farmers, especially through an increase of income and purchasing power of farmers, which may ultimately lead to an increase in domestic market. No Rwandan should go hungry.

We finally urge the reader to use extreme caution when dealing with agricultural data presented by the government. The apparent disinterest of the current regime for rural areas leads to the fact that shown figures are highly approximate because they are not based on real everyday life of the peasantry with which the regime's urban officials are not familiar. With its knowledge of the rural reality and its commitment to peasant focused emancipatory movement, the party FDU-INKINGI promises to correct the current situation by presenting figures, analyses and conclusions based on real facts, hence reliable.

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2. The context

Current economic policies in Rwanda have shown little concern for the rural economy. Investment capacities of the rural world have been reduced because they were stripped by the transfer of their savings toward the city, by the determination of adverse prices on agricultural products and by imposing a ruinous taxation, especially on coffee and tea. Owing to their ingenuity, farmers have managed to continue to fund the rural areas themselves and ensure their survival. However, this economic environment does not allow them to get funds for basic health coverage and education needs for their children, despite the fact that learning is an instrument of emancipation and social justice.

Therefore, the party FDU-INKINGI attests that the current economic policy in Rwanda benefits only a very small minority of urban people living in opulence while the majority of the population lives in abject poverty; most of Rwandans are unable to cover their minimum food needs. Given that most of the capabilities of the most thriving economic sectors derive from plundering, it is easy to understand that the fate of peasantry and urban lumpen proletariat, the two main productive forces, are inexorably disintegrating. The speculative way of doing business for a peculiar development that is found in the capital city of Kigali and is presented by the regime as the showcase of the country's economic dynamism, ultimately hides a deep poverty of rural and peri-urban areas.

Rwanda is currently led by an oligarchy constituted by a small splinter group of people that takes all Rwandans into hostage and marginalizes the majority of Rwandans that are reduced to second class citizens. And the highly vaunted dream of turning Rwanda into African Singapore is likely to be achieved at the sole benefit of a tiny proportion of a bureaucratic bourgeoisie, sectarian and wheeler, leaving the majority of the population in a tragic nightmare of misery under which they cannot survive.

3. The problematic of policies imposed on Rwanda by the RPF

According to the Vision 2020, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) government would like to fundamentally transform Rwanda into a middle income country by the year 2020. This vision requires achieving annually an average growth per capita of U.S. \$ 900 (against U.S. \$ 220 in 2000), a poverty rate of 30% (against 60.4% in 2000) and an average life expectancy of 55 years (against 49 years 2000).

The orientation of agricultural policy would be reviewed to promote intensification to increase productivity and achieve growth rates of 4.5% to 5% per year, by producing high value crops coupled with modern management of livestock. The ultimate goal would be to replace subsistence farming by an agricultural system that is fully monetized and commercial by the year 2020. Thus, monoculture, such as maize, has been pushed to the extreme, imposed by the local administration to the extent of forcibly destroying farmers' crops. Some farmers are forced to replace their crops with new cash crops such as flowers which do not have any direct food value and severely threaten their food security, particularly in the events of bad weather conditions but mainly because of non-remunerative prices imposed by commercial companies or by new rules initiated by the RPF. These policy choices have caused hunger and malnutrition in many parts of the country and have produced opposite effects to the solutions sought.

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On the one hand, the forced grouping of peasants into strategic hamlets abusively called “IMIDUGUDU” and the illegal land squatting have disrupted the agrarian structures. The land reform, in its current form, robs farmers of their main resource (land) to the benefits of the regime’s great dignitaries, including the RPA Generals and foreign companies, primarily the Anglo-American firms (Global Eco-fuels LLC - USA and Eco Positive Ltd - UK) which signed contracts for plantation of Jatropha to produce bio-fuels.

a. Monopolization of both secondary and tertiary sectors by the RPF

The all-out privatization of public companies allegedly in order to “improve their management and profitability” has generated a distortion that currently affects the sustainable development of the private sector. Indeed, not only the assets were sold for ridiculous prices, but even worse, these companies ended up in the hands of either the commercial arm of the RPF, TRISTAR Investment (such as RwandaCell), or the indebted friend friends of the RPF. TRISTAR may also have shares in the processing of agricultural products with INYANGE Industries; in general trade with “UMUTARA enterprises”; in construction with NDP COTRACO, etc..; and may also hold a monopoly in the coffee business in Rwanda through its branch BOURBON Coffee and may control the distribution of public contracts through Rwanda Investment Group (“RIG”).

This direct or indirect omnipresence of the RPF in the productive sectors constitutes a situation of blatant conflicts of interest that impedes any objectivity of the Government in its role as arbiter and in implementing economic policies. Moreover, not only such a situation creates unfair competition with regard to other economic actors, but it also imposes a de facto monopoly by operators in the secondary and tertiary sectors who are under the yoke of the RPF and impose their prices to producers. Therefore, farmers become hostage to a system that imposes monoculture while the income they get from it cannot cover the costs of other crops they do not produce themselves. Additionally, these policies inhibit all creativity, efficiency and productivity, and hamper the development of the private sector in general.

b. The so-called Rwanda’s economic development miracle

The official economic indicators even though manipulated hide poorly the growing poverty of suburban populations and the extreme poverty of rural populations.

According to a recent CIA Report (2009 WorldFactBook CIA), Rwanda allocates about 3% of its GDP on military expenditures, which elevates it to the 27th place worldwide. However, according to the Global Report on Human Development in the same period (2009), Rwanda occupies the 167th place in terms of human development. This difference between the two indicators shows the importance attached to military spending at the expense of socio-economic development, including education, health and agriculture. Such expenditures are meant primarily to safeguard in place a dictatorship that refuses democratic openness and thus creates a situation of permanent insecurity that is potentially explosive.

Data from the household survey in 2005/2006, indicate that the poverty rate (people living below the poverty line) is about 60% of which 90% live in rural areas. These data indicate that the rate is down with regard to the situation in 2000/2001, but in absolute terms, due to

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the population growth, the number of people living below the poverty line increased from 4.8 million to 5.4 million.

According to the Global Report on Human Development in 2009, approximately 40% of the country's wealth is held by the richest 10% while the poorest 10% hold only 2% of the country's wealth. Rwanda is therefore developing at two different speed rates; all the wealth is accumulated in Kigali and in a few other urban centers, while rural areas are abandoned to themselves. While 12% of the international aid in 2005 were allocated to security to protect the regime and ensure its survival, the agricultural sector that supports over 95% of the population received only 1%. These statistics suggest that current economic policies contribute marginally to the reduction of poverty.

Even though Rwanda is presented as an economic success, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) performed a mid-term review of the Vision 2020 and found a rather disastrous situation:

- Poverty is gaining ground and hits 62% of the rural population, while this proportion was 50% in 1990; nearly a third of the Rwandan population suffers from food shortages;
- The gap between rich and poor has reached a record level and puts Rwanda in the top 15 percentile of the most unequal countries in the world (GINI¹ = 0.51 in 2006). It should be noted that this index has been increasing since 2000/2001 (47%);
- Less than 45% of children complete primary school, while the average for Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is 60%. The gross secondary school enrollment is 17%, compared to 28% for SSA;

¹The Gini index calculates how far the distribution of income / consumption among individuals or households within a country deviates from a perfect distribution. A curve known as the Lorenz curve represents the cumulative share of total revenues collected from the cumulative number of recipients starting with the individual or household as poor. The Gini index measures the area of the area between the Lorenz and squashed the hypothetical line of absolute equality, expressed as % area exceeding the area below the diagonal. A value of zero indicates perfect equality and a value equals to 100% indicates a perfect inequality.

Despite the manipulation of statistics, the economic situation in Rwanda did not change much as shown in the UNDP Report for 2010. On this basis, the GINI index would be 46.7% while the population living below the poverty line would be 56.9%. Scholarships for poor children have been suspended since 2011; they cannot afford University studies.

4. The FDU-INKINGI's solutions for equitable economic development.

4.1 Equitable economic development.

The economic recovery will be part of both a national development plan and a perspective of regional integration. The party FDU-INKINGI would like to bring about an economy that is based on free enterprise combined with work-related social rights, social responsibility of

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business and sustainable development.

The measures proposed to improve the overall economic situation will focus on:

- (i) establishing legal tools that limit the interference of political actors in the production sphere to focus on the implementation of policies;
- (ii) rebalancing of public spending by prioritizing the areas of health, education and agriculture;
- (iii) setting up salary equity between different levels of government employees to reflect these priorities.

4.2 Agricultural development based on food sovereignty.

Food sovereignty is the right and the duty of the peasantry and the state to feed their population, protect themselves against agricultural imports at very low prices and therefore lead an agricultural policy that:

- gives priority to sustainable local production,
- guarantees farm prices that cover the costs of production,
- facilitates access of farmers and peasants to land, water, seeds and long term credit
- fights against land grabbing by a handful of absentee owners (public employees and Sunday entrepreneurs) and multinational agro-fuel,
- finally, keeps intact the genetic, cultural and environmental heritage.

4.3 Participatory reorientation of the agricultural production.

Needed agricultural reforms should not abruptly be imposed to farmers. To stimulate these economic actors to adhere to the required changes, these reforms must be accompanied by appropriate incentives.

Obviously, there is a need to initiate a land reform that will abrogate the current system of inheritance and the progressive fragmentation of land. However, this reform should not deprive farmers of their land to concentrate them into the hands of the wealthy.

The party FDU-INKINGI undertakes to develop systems of secured credit for farmers in the long term, susceptible to allow better production, compensation for rightholders, and to safeguard the unity of the lots. Indivisible farm lots will be managed by the family organization. Meanwhile, different property taxes according to potential agricultural incomes by region should make better use of land assets.

The current policy imposed of villagization will be abrogated because it hampers the private initiative and deeply infringes the right to property of individuals and families. FDU-INKINGI will implement an agricultural policy that will emphasize investment programs with intensive labor such as investment in the sustainable management of natural resources (water, soil-terracing, vegetation) especially the development of marshes and plains in the East,

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BUGESERA, RUSUMO and MUTARA to develop irrigated agriculture.

The revival of the agricultural production will be based on:

- Farmer participation where the researcher, extension worker and the peasant become partners and work together and where local communities or private organizations are progressively taking care of the cost of the extension;
- The association of agriculture and livestock;
- Regionalization of crops in order to help farmers get specialized in products with high efficiency so that they can take advantage of the market economy, promote exchange between regions and get a substantial farm income;
- Promotion of production chains to trigger induced effects in the secondary and tertiary sectors;
- The progressive decongestion of the agricultural sector: promoting non-farming employment (various crafts, services, industry, etc ...) with emphasis on urban and rural areas;

To rationalize land use, the regionalization of cultures is needed. It begins with a reasoned choice of different crops prone to intensification by each agro-climatic region, according to the following criteria:

- The productivity that goes along with reallocation and better use of lands;
- The profitability of agricultural investments and other factors of production (land, labor, inputs, etc ...);
- The monetization to generate income which increases the purchasing power and domestic use (cash crops or crops of substitution to importation) that are necessary for the development of the secondary sector;
- The potentially induced effects on other sectors (secondary and tertiary) and the creation of jobs (branch: production → processing / storage → Marketing);
- A balanced diet to prevent erosion of household budgets and the state by diseases resulting from malnutrition and the low yield of the labor;
- Replacement crops to mitigate the vagaries of the weather and heavy insurance costs.

To reconcile the country's development and the one of rural families especially by ensuring their food security, the following crops will be preferred, according to technical requirements, the balance between cash crops, crops of substitution to importation and replacement crops:

- High altitude: Wheat, Corn, Potatoes, Peas, Tea;
- Medium and low altitudes: Bananas, Cassava, Sweet potatoes, sorghum, beans, peanuts,

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sunflower;

- Developed area: Rice, Corn, Soybeans, Sugarcane, forage

Other crops such as flowers, fruits and vegetables, pyrethrum and tobacco will be developed following the soils within different agro-bio-climatic regions.

However, regionalization of crops also means an appropriate policy in marketing of agricultural products and the opening up of regions to promote trade between areas with surplus and areas with deficit; development of agricultural credit and agricultural insurance; supply and marketing of fertilizers (or local manufacturing, especially nitrogen fertilizer).

4.4 The importance of reforestation and forestation in agricultural production

The decline in fertility is the main constraint to increasing agricultural production. Such a decline in production is mainly due to overexploitation of farms and erosion. Therefore, improved fertility requires good policy for the use of fertilizers and soil conservation. This is why the party FDU-INKINGI will do everything in its power to promote the use of agricultural inputs that are primarily organic. Obviously, the agricultural research will have a central role in this approach. The generalization of erosion control is crucial for the conservation of soil. With regard to this issue, the territorial development with radical terracing will be in FDU-INKINGI's priorities. These investments with intensive workforce, supported by a system of agricultural credit in the long term, will also enable the monetization of the rural areas and help the rural poor.

Another problem facing the agricultural production which is not talked about enough is the lack of firewood. Since forestation does not produce sufficient quantities of firewood, farmers resort to the use of agricultural wastes that should be used to recycle the soil fertility. Forestation, reforestation and agro-forestry will therefore be part of the priority programs of FDU-INKINGI's agricultural policies.

An important aspect required for these policies to become sustainable, is the adequacy of lands that are available for the agricultural community. Besides a continuous search for ways to decongestion the farming workforce toward other sectors, a good demographic policy must be implemented to reduce the demographic pressure on lands.

4.5 The livestock development

The availability of animal productions shows that livestock production covers less than 50% of nutritional needs of the population in animal protein. However, given the limited purchasing power, the offer in nutritional products of animal origin corresponds to the current effective demand. But it is also important to note that the effective demand for meat consumption is ten times higher in urban than in rural areas. The country therefore relies on imports and food aid in animal products.

The problem is therefore to increase the income of the population while making available to consumers cheap products that cover the costs of production so as to allow the majority of Rwandans to meet their needs in animal proteins.

The main constraints to animal production are of the following orders: food, health, genetics,

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supply and valorization. Technically, there are ways to overcome these constraints in Rwanda and install a modern and productive farming system from extensive to intensive system using animals with higher production level, enjoying a balanced diet and of good quality, living in a controlled hygienic environment, subject to strict management and oriented to specialized production, with the mastery of all techniques of conservation, processing and marketing.

The party FDU-INKINGI will establish a sustained program of genetic improvement of livestock management and pasture enrichment; development of agro-pastoralism and forage crops; production of concentrates and industrial transformation of livestock products. Niche beekeeping and rational exploitation of natural resources with a view of integrating economic activities into activities aimed at conservation of wildlife and flora will be strengthened.

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