



EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA  
TOKYO

**Rwanda – Japan Business Workshop**  
**Opening Remarks by Ernest Rwamucyo, Ambassador of Rwanda to Japan**  
**18 August 2020**

I commend the organizers of this Rwanda – Japan Business Matching Workshop.

Normally the seminar would be held in a setting of physical interaction between the respective partners and stakeholders with a particular focus on Rwanda and Japanese Private Sector, Companies and individual business Executives meeting in person to discuss mutually beneficial business partnerships and deals.

However, due to challenges caused by the coronavirus pandemic, this is not possible. Challenges push us to seek solutions and magnify possibilities and opportunities. Covid19 has pushed us to be more creative and has amplified the power of technology, innovation and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in keeping us productively engaged.

This online Business Matching Seminar and virtual interaction bringing together Rwandan and Japanese businesses and private sector actors; and the enabling partners including Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), UNIDO, Rwanda Ministry of ICT and Innovation, Rwanda ICT Chamber, Rwanda Development Board, Kigali Innovation City and the Embassy of Rwanda in Tokyo, all in real time is a vivid example of the such possibilities offered by technology and ICT. This will impact and Change the way we do business for the next generation.

I am informed that we have about 161 participating individuals and corporates. Through this medium, we can also reach business partners beyond Rwanda and Japan. I am confident that over the four-part series of interaction between 18<sup>th</sup> August 2020 and 10<sup>th</sup> September 2020 will help participating businesses forge productive business partnerships.

Coming to the core objective of this business workshop and to set its context:

Rwanda developed and has implemented a long-term vision to transform into a knowledge-based economy and to be a regional services hub at the heart of the African continent. This transformation would be anchored on and driven by ICT, technology and innovation.

This vision has been smartly pursued and is on target to be realized.

Today, Rwanda has built state-of-the art ICT infrastructure. Rwanda has installed over 7000 km of broad band fiber optic cable, covering the entire spectrum of the country with regional and global connections. The country has 95 percent 4G LTE Network coverage across the country. Rwanda is ready to embrace the 5G Revolution given existing infrastructure, its ambition and open-mindedness to technological innovations.

According to the World Economic Forum's Networked Readiness Index, Rwanda ranks N0.1 for networked readiness in the East African Community and N0. 5 in Africa. The WEF defines Networked Readiness Index as a "measure of how well an economy is using information and communication technology to boost competitiveness and well-being".

The ICT and technology sector has been growing at an annual growth rate of 11% since 2006. Rwanda's ICT sector is projected to grow from US dollars 700m to US dollars 25bn in 2025.

To spur the continued growth of the sector, Rwanda has invested significantly in capacity development focused on institution building, skills and human resources development, stronger and efficient legal and regulatory framework and building global partnerships.

The country is creating a critical mass of local and African talent with good skills and an innovative mindset.

Rwanda has about 50,000 higher education graduates each year of which about 2000 graduate with qualifications in ICT.

The country hosts 4 of Africa's top Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Universities; notably Carnegie Mellon University Rwanda Campus, African Institute of Mathematical Sciences (AIMS), Africa Leadership University and International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) East Africa Campus.

Approximately 30 percent of Rwandans are fluent in at least one of the major Internationally spoken languages; and quite a significant number are bilingual with the ability to speak and write English and French. This can be attractive for global corporations and offers opportunities for Business Processing Outsourcing Companies (BPO).

About 70 percent of the Rwandan population is under 30 years of age and with universal access to basic education, they are well educated and trainable.

We have a number of Rwandans trained in Japan including in ICT. For instance, through our partnership with the City of Kobe and the Kobe Institute of Computing, we have had a good number of Rwandans trained at premier Japanese Universities. Most of them return not only with strong qualifications in IT, engineering, sciences and management, but also with a better understanding of the language and culture. This offers soft entry into Rwanda for Japanese businesses.

Rwanda is very safe, secure and has a predictable, friendly and welcoming business environment.

The World Bank 2020 Doing Business Report ranks Rwanda as the 2<sup>nd</sup> easiest place to do business in Africa and 38<sup>th</sup> globally. The country has a highly digitized and efficient administration, with zero tolerance to corruption.

Registering a business takes only 6 hours; within which time business registration will be completed and a business registration certificate issued, tax identification number and facilitation to open a business bank account if required.

Rwanda Development Board (RDB) is a premier institution established as one stop house with the mandate to provide red carpet services to prospective investors. For more information go to [www.rdb.rw](http://www.rdb.rw)

This Rwanda-Japan Online Business Marching Seminar is a great opportunity for Rwandan enterprises in the ICT Sector to have meaningful interaction with business partners in Japan.

The objective is to invite Japanese companies to explore opportunities and consider investing in Rwanda.

Participating Rwandan businesses are eager to work with our Japanese friends to forge and build profitable and sustainable businesses and to grow together.

There is a great opportunity for Japanese Companies to build successful businesses in Africa with Rwanda as the hub and launching pad. We are ready to work with you to facilitate your entry into the Rwandan market.

To hand hold you and support Japanese companies to explore opportunities and invest in Rwanda are core Rwandan institutions which are represented on this platform including: Ministry of ICT and Innovation, Rwanda Development Board, Rwanda ICT Private Sector Chamber, Kigali Innovation City and The Embassy of Rwanda in Japan.

Together, we will all provide you with full support and facilitation through the whole journey of investing in Rwanda.

Rwanda has opened its airspace for international travelers. Of course, safety during the Covid19 pandemic remains of paramount importance and comes first. Rwanda has generally implemented successful measures to contain the pandemic with good results and remains very vigilant. International travelers can now travel to Rwanda on international commercial flights and private jets as long as they have a valid negative Coronavirus PCR test certificate with a sample taken within 120 hours of arrival in Rwanda.

You get Visa on arrival and do not need to pre-apply for the Visa. You are welcome to VISIT RWANDA both for business and for tourism.

In closing, I would like to emphasize that this seminar is an outcome of tremendous work by our partners JICA and UNIDO.

Rwanda and Japan enjoy strong bilateral relations. We have a strong programme of development cooperation. JICA is at the heart of driving this results-oriented partnership. This is a comprehensive partnership focused on public investments, private sector support and technical cooperation and capacity development.

It is also a multisectoral partnership prioritizing infrastructure development, transport, energy, agriculture, water and sanitation, ICT and other priorities.

The JICA ICT Innovation Ecosystem System Strengthening Project which is supporting this Seminar is a result of this broad partnership. We are committed to making the collaboration even stronger.

Let me sincerely commend Mr. Atsushi Yamanaka, Chief Advisor for the Project for his commitment and for its success.

I would also like to thank UNIDO and Mr. Tadesa Dadi Segni, UNIDO Africa Advisor, for being an important leader in this partnership.

I thank all the organizers and participants in this Seminar and wish you a successful event that will bear tangible business partnerships.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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