

Dear Compatriots,  
Friends of Burundi;

1. As the 2020 year draws to an end and 2021 sees the day, let me give thanks to the Almighty God with all my heart, He who guided us in every way and allowed us to carry out our development projects in peace, security and tranquillity.
2. A day like this is a day to say thank you to the Lord who watched over us all year long. Indeed, as we say in Kirundi, "Whoever lives for one more year increases his longevity".
3. I would then like to send my 2021 Best Wishes to all Burundians living in Burundi and overseas and to all foreigners living in Burundi.

Dear Compatriots,  
Friends of Burundi;

4. The year 2020 that we're seeing off has been marked by many events: there have been moments of hope and moments of grief. Let me first congratulate you all, dear Burundians, for showing bravery and maturity, however events turned out.

We have organized general elections to put in place the republican institutions from the top to the grassroots level, and you, Burundians, you have shown that you have already acquired political maturity, and that you no longer need foreigners to dictate to you the attitude to adopt.

It has become obvious that the future of Burundi lies in the hands of the daughters and sons of Burundi.

Burundian State institutions have been put in place and are now gaining experience. All Burundians have already set to work to form a common front in the fight against poverty. I welcome the fact that even refugees who usually had no hope have already seen that the situation has improved significantly, and are returning in large numbers.

So we joyfully celebrate the New Year because there is peace and stability throughout the country. The country has already earned respect across the nations, there is no doubting that.

5. I would like to once again express my gratitude to you for the serenity you showed when we lost our Supreme Commander, our Patriot Leader. For the country to go ten days without a Supreme Commander and remain calm and serene is beyond anyone's understanding. This shows that as Burundians we have already reached a point of no return in consolidating unity and peace in our country.

6. To celebrate the advent of the New Year, we are focusing our attention on the following theme: "Let us form a united front in the battle against poverty, and work with determination and dynamism".

This is the theme that will guide our action in this New Year, and we will not stop until we have conquered poverty and hunger.

Dear Compatriots,  
Friends of Burundi;

7. When I announced the Program that Reta-mvyeyi, Reta-nkozi (Government which cares about citizens' concerns; Laborious Government) was going to carry out, I informed you of six priority projects. These include the following:

8. First: Good Governance.

Good Governance is the source of justice, peace and development in the country. Our fight to strengthen Good Governance is based on our desire to constantly care about the lives of Burundian citizens.

Measures in favour of good governance require Leaders to behave like fathers in their families.

It also requires that national wealth be safeguarded and used for the benefit of citizens. This is why I never stop sensitizing Burundians to eradicate in Burundi the bad practices of mismanagement of public property, corruption and embezzlement of citizens' funds. We need the national heritage to be for us the development capital for every citizen's life.

That's why our goal is to ensure that all provinces benefit from the country's wealth, whether through employment, awarding contracts or building public infrastructure.

Good governance prohibits the exclusion of people on the basis of considerations linked to gender, ethnicity, or the social or physical condition of the individual.

This means, for example, that the disabled or the elderly, children, women and young people cannot be excluded in the development process or in everyday life.

It is for this reason that I ask all Burundians, members of local organization, journalists or various preachers of religious denominations, to always show that we are and that we must all be complementary.

I urge local organizations to keep in mind the purpose and mission they have set for themselves at the beginning so that they behave accordingly. They must know that their duty is not only to criticize the Government action, but that the most important thing is to help find solutions to the questions that citizens ask themselves, and thus the country will be a vast network of united citizens.

Good governance is also about Public Finances. State revenue and expenditure channels are monitored to ensure that public funds have been used properly.

It is with a view to monitoring the payment of taxes on goods that we set out to combat illegal trade and fraud.

I welcome that many Burundians have already understood as more and more defrauded goods are being seized and that the fraudsters are getting punished according to the law.

I am also happy that many administrative officials have already taken measures to denounce corruption and corrupters.

9. The second priority project is about Public Health, especially the fight against the Coronavirus pandemic.

We stood up to resist this pandemic through the campaign called: "I heal; I do not let myself be contaminated and I do not contaminate others".

Besides the voluntary screening of the population, drugs have been administered free of charge to people who test positive for Covid-19, people have been sensitized and informed, and now this pandemic can be combatted from any place where it manifests itself.

Initiatives to prevent and control other diseases will continue. Indeed, if these diseases are not treated in time, they weaken the health of many people, and consequently prevent them from working, from developing themselves and from developing the country.

10. The third Priority Project was to intensify Agriculture and Livestock, especially by practicing irrigated agriculture during the dry season.

I am happy to see that production in these areas is increasing satisfactorily, and that hunger is being relegated to the past.

The New Year will therefore illuminate a new stage in the field of agriculture.

In its objective to fight against poverty, our Government has put forward the fight against hunger, so that each person has something to eat.

It is even from this source of income that people will get money to buy the goods that they do not produce themselves.

I am also pleased that, in order to increase agricultural productivity of food crops, the Government was able to distribute a lot of fertilizers and lime to the people on time to improve the soil structure.

Model fields covering an area of two thousand two hundred and seventy-three hectares (2,273 ha) have been made available. High-yield food crops are grown in these model fields. In terms of agricultural development, we have not forgotten to develop industrial crops. In actual fact, the country managed to export about ten thousand tons of tea. By the same time, about seven hundred thousand tons of tea has been consumed locally.

As for coffee, around nine thousand tons were exported.

In the coming year, we plan to increase the number of agricultural export products, in order to bring into the country foreign currency to enable us to buy abroad what we do not produce at home.

With regard to animal husbandry, our objective is to increase the number of domestic animals in order to firstly allow the population to consume animal proteins, and then to have a surplus of meat, milk and eggs to export, and if possible, to also create factories for processing livestock products.

It is with this in mind that, during the past year, the Government distributed 2,028 cows of improved breed, 34,224 goats, 14,094 pigs, 11,160 hens and 4,250 rabbits, through chains of solidarity and of development.

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11. No one can effectively talk about agricultural development without talking about environmental protection. This is why the Government has put a lot of effort into protecting the environment.

We have thus continued and strengthened the "EWE BURUNDI URAMBAYE" project by planting trees and developing many tree nurseries.

The seedlings consist mainly of forest trees, agro-forest trees, local natural trees, bamboo and fruit trees.

We are absolutely committed to this project because it allows us to protect water sources and revive those that have dried up.

This is why, by the reforestation that we carried out using mainly bamboo, many water sources, many rivers and lakes like Tanganyika and Cohoha have been protected.

12. The fourth Priority Project is to put young people back to work, so that they also can roll up their sleeves in development.

Our Government, "Reta-mvyeyi, Reta-nkozi", is concerned about the better future of youth, and it will do everything in its power to enable young people to know the ways and means to prepare for a bright future.

It is with this in mind that a retreat in favour of young people who have completed postgraduate studies was organized, because they constitute the nursery for future youth pathfinders in terms of development and are the officers in the General Staff in charge of fighting poverty.

This retreat was mainly focused on awakening the consciousness of young people, in order to encourage them to effectively use the capital that the Government has invested in their projects, whether through loans from the Investment Bank for Youth, or in the Government's Project to Promote Youth Employment.

The Burundian Government has injected BIF 48 billion in this Project. For the moment, we are looking for experts from within the same group of young people who will manage it, because we noticed that we cannot do anything in favour of young people without involving them.

To carry out this Project, we started by looking for ways and means to refine the technical skills of these young people through appropriate training. An ad hoc vocational school is being built in Karusi Province.

The Government's Program includes the following actions: listening to the opinions of young people, taking these opinions into consideration, and supporting young people to enable them to set up their own businesses.

13. Fifth: the fifth priority of this Government is to care for pensioners. Indeed, before they got old, they were of great service to the country.

On the other hand, an elderly person is a person to be protected because, if we have come to adulthood, it is generally because they have worked hard to protect us.

In this program, the urgency has been to cover the medical care of pensioners affiliated to the MFP, and studies are underway to set up a national programme for senior people.

As for their retirement pensions, now workers' social security agencies are carrying out studies in collaboration with the relevant Ministry to determine the amount of money that everyone will get monthly.

14. The Government's sixth priority was to repatriate refugees and ensure justice for displaced people.

I am happy to see refugees returning voluntarily to the country in huge numbers, whether it be refugees who had fled criminals disrupting security, or those who had fled dictatorial regimes.

Our commitment as a Responsible Government (Reta-mvyeyi) is to make the country's daughters and sons feel at home in Burundi.

This is why we are also committed to strengthening security and mutual understanding among politicians, so that all Burundians are reassured, and that even those who have fled the country feel hope and decide to return to their native country.

Dear Compatriots,  
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15. In a country where there is no peace and security, life is impossible.

This is why the major concern of the Government is to ensure that peace and security constantly prevail for everyone and throughout the national territory.

During the year we have just ended, peace was a reality throughout the country and this made it possible to carry out a lot of activities in the country.

I present the summary to you here, and details will be presented to you by the Ministers, each in their area of responsibility as usual.

16. In the area of security, a lot has been achieved. You yourself are witnesses to this; it is easy to recognize a country or a region where there is security, because "Akuzuye ntibamurika" - the facts speak for themselves. And when there is insecurity in a region or country, it is quickly noticed because no one can hide the smoke from a burning house.

17. First, the government must protect the country's borders so that no one violates Burundi's territorial integrity from outside.

In recent years, we have witnessed the deterioration of diplomatic relations with some countries and intergovernmental organizations due to imperialism of some countries.

This has resulted in the birth of terrorist groups encouraged by poor diplomatic relations, but today there is a marked improvement.

This is what gives us strength to continue to make more sacrifices to help other peoples create conducive conditions for a return to peace, and you know that we are contributing enormously to the restoration of peace in favour of the Somali peoples and Central African.

Inside the country, the Government is doing everything in its power so that there are no citizens sleeping under the stars, or people who torment their neighbours or threaten to deprive them of their property.

I am appalled by the fact that there are still Burundians persecuted by their fellow citizens.

And it is for this reason that we are committed to strengthening collaboration between the security forces and the population so that there are no criminals who surprise us.

With regard to disaster management and prevention, we have seen that many households are threatened especially by landslides and floods.

That's why we don't have to wait every time there is damage to act; rather we are taking preventive measures to protect land and rivers through the reforestation project called "EWE BURUNDI URAMBAYE".

But that's not all because we are in the process of drawing contour lines and planting anti-erosion hedges by raising awareness especially among people of Bujumbura city but also of other regions by telling them that we must dig infiltration wells for our household rainwater, and thus rainwater will infiltrate into the earth without having to pass through the gullies that surprisingly overflow rivers, cause floods and tear the land out of the marshes.

18. In the area of international cooperation, the Government is continuing to strengthen good neighbourly relations and cooperation with other countries and international organizations for the socio-economic interest of each of the parties. You are aware that good relations are strengthened by bilateral visits. Thus, the trips we made have enabled us to fill in the gaps where there were any, and it has resulted in Burundi being considered as other countries where peace and security reign.

This is exactly what makes businessmen and tourists bring their capital to invest in Burundi or come to visit our country, and thus contribute to the development of the country.

19. In the field of the economy, due to the dynamism and firmness in the work of the businessmen, the receipts that go in the State Treasury increased, because the taxes that are paid are now considerable.

This has been made possible by tax collectors and taxpayers who have significantly improved their work.

During this year, the Burundian Revenue Authority collected 1,060,655,375,745 BIF from January 2020 to December 29, 2020. Last year, it had received entries of around 990,065,667,298 BIF from January to December 2019, which means it experienced a Growth of 70,589,708,448 BIF, an increase of 7% when we compared this year's revenue to that of last year.

This was also made possible by the fact that illicit trade has been seriously combated; those who squander state property, the corrupters and the corrupt have gradually changed their behaviour from day to day.

As a result, the state has increased the funds it uses each year to around 90%.

It is therefore obvious that if we continue this momentum, the Government will manage to carry out its program without having to contract debts in the banks.

20. In the field of justice, the Government is committed to promoting a truly independent justice, a justice that aspires to the good of all, and which corresponds to the aspirations of the people, including in the field of development.

Justice is the bedrock of peaceful coexistence among the population; it is this that protects human rights in the country.

The main objective in this sector is to fight impunity, to promote the rule of law in the country. Justice also fights against injustice; as our ancestors said, whoever pronounces judgment for brothers must be neutral. No one is allowed to trample on the dignity and rights of others, or enforce the law against the weak only.

It is within this framework that, to strengthen grassroots justice and fight against injustice, the Government has put in place two laws: the first is based on the restoration of the council of local elders at the grassroots level, the second sets up the High Council of Justice to ensure that there is fair justice for all.

Justice must also protect a person already convicted so that he can find time to examine his conscience and to rehabilitate himself.

It is for this reason that even if the State punishes the guilty, it continues to watch over all citizens.

Prisons are not only detention centres, they also play the role of correcting and protecting the condemned ones to avoid that people take revenge against them. They also serve as a sign of persuasion so that citizens realize that whoever is guilty of a crime must be punished; they thus play a dissuasive role so that the population knows the red line not to be crossed. The condemned therefore remains a human person and not something to be thrown in the trash.

21. Apart from these functions of permanent justice, we always continue to rely on transitional justice to drive resentment out of the hearts of the victims of the atrocities that have grieved Burundi in the past, as part of restoring confidence between Burundians and strengthening love between daughters and sons of the same nation.

I appreciate the step already taken by this transitional justice in Burundi and the wisdom used by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in showing the people affected by these barbarities, and by asking for testimonies of the presumed criminals with dignity.

This gives hope to everyone because the Government is handling the situation with due diligence and manages to return the expropriated property to the victims without doing harm and without causing new resentment.

Today it is clear that the Burundians are on the right track in the process of reconciliation and mutual forgiveness. This is proven by the fact that they are turning the dark page in our history.

22. With regard to economic development, we place particular emphasis on building the capacity of the entire population to be able to carry out development programs. This involves improving their health, providing them with technical skills that can enable them to implement their projects through training and the social protection that the Government must provide them when they are in the workplace.

23. From this perspective, in the field of education, the Government is doing everything to break down all the obstacles that prevent the children of Burundi from studying properly. Here we can mention the insufficient number of classrooms, the lack of desks and other teaching aids; not to mention the lack of qualified teachers.

24. As part of the protection of workers and labour, and with the objective of seeking the well-being of all employees, the Burundian Labour Code has been revised. It will facilitate the proper development of job-creating projects.

A census of civil servants of the State and of semi-state companies was organized to constitute a complete and reliable database on civil servants, in order to be able to plan how they can make improvements in their services, so that there are no people who work alone while others twiddling their thumbs without doing anything.

25. In the Public Health Sector, our main concern is the fight against the Coronavirus pandemic.

It is well known that no development activity can take place in an area hit by the Coronavirus.

It is true that we have seriously fought this disease in our country, but it continues to cause many deaths in other countries. It is for this reason that we continue to sensitize the population to observe the response measures against this pandemic by applying the principles we set in our motto, "I HEAL", to encourage voluntary screening, because anyone who tests positive can be cured when they seek treatment on time; "I DO NOT LET MYSELF BE CONTAMINATED AND I DO NOT CONTAMINATE OTHERS", to protect yourself constantly by observing the barrier measures by washing hands regularly, and avoiding touching oneself.

The second concern of the Government is to properly organize the public health sector, starting by the hill level up to the communal level. Now we have even started to build hospitals in the communes that need them the most.

26. With regard to economic development too, the Government of Burundi encourages economic operators to invest in high productivity agricultural projects, so that we can not only have good conservation of crops but also products that respect the international standards that can be exported. We will therefore be able to bring in the currencies that we will use to import products that we do not produce locally.

It is for this reason that I urge them to process other essential non-food products for the population, including products derived from our natural resources which God has provided us with.

I would like to express my gratitude to the domestic investors who have already embarked on manufacturing products which were imported until recently. Their contribution is invaluable in socio-economic development because they help create jobs and make certain products more accessible. There are many recommendations in this area, but the most important thing is to realize that no Burundian should sit there and do nothing.

27. I reaffirm here the Government commitment to spare no effort to support the development initiatives of the population. Those who started working on this programme early can now witness this.

It is within this framework that the Government will focus its efforts on the construction of public infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, roads, hydroelectric power plants and anything that can contribute to improving the working conditions of producers.

All workers, whether they are tradesmen, artists, various sportspeople and athletes, must be valued and supported by the Government to ensure that their profession generates income.

Dear Compatriots,  
Friends of Burundi;

28. Despite the fact that the Government is committed to supporting entrepreneurs, I would like to give some advice to the rest of the Burundian population.

29. First: I invite everyone to do a self-assessment of their work over the past year. In view of the results, have you won or have you lost? Are not progressing? Did you take a step back or a step forward? It's up to you to find the answer today and if you don't find it, you will keep looking for it tomorrow until you find it, and then you will make a resolution that will guide you through this coming year. All is well that starts well. A good start bodes well for a good ending.

30. Second: If we do not love our homeland, we cannot get anywhere. Let us all make a firm commitment to preserve peace and security in Burundi. Let us renounce complacency with criminals, thieves, fraudsters, the corrupt and the bad managers of public affairs.

As I have already announced to both national and international opinion, Justice is called upon to crack down on those who misappropriate public property and who discourage taxpayers, and on the corrupt and the corrupters. I ask that Justice strike them with the greatest energy.

31. Besides these evils to fight, you should know that we can get nowhere if we do not fight against laziness, to ensure that each of us eats the fruit of their effort; and that we can preserve our life by fighting against drugs and sexual abuse.

32. Third: To bring about inclusive community development, we must all engage in the fight against poverty, with devotion and determination because, if we work together everything is possible ". Indeed, the theme of this year is worded as follows: "In our fight against poverty, let us work hard, form a strong alliance, let us be persevering and dynamic".

To achieve this, we must learn to make good use of our free time outside of duty hours, our weekends and annual vacations to better prepare for our future and retirement.

Let us then take all the necessary measures while it is still possible, so that the retirement pension comes as a complement to the stage where we will be at. The future is prepared during youth.

33. Fourth: Every development process begins somewhere. Little by little the bird is making its nest.

Let's learn how to save on the little we earn, and how to make better use of credit because it is an investment that must generate results.

In conclusion, I would like to let you know that, for us, real and sustainable development is that which originates from the ordinary citizen and benefits the citizen in return. This means that when it comes to development, no one should be left behind because every citizen counts and should have a job to do and a role to play.

No country in the world has been able to develop if its citizens sit together and wait for development to come. Let us know that only the mouths that have contributed to the production have the right to eat. No country can develop if its officials seek wages without participating in the increase in production.

I launch a vibrant appeal to Burundians in general and Burundian youth in particular, to use the gift of intelligence they have received from God, to show imagination to initiate development projects themselves, to promote self-employment and to join the national program of regrouping in associations and cooperatives of production. Things do not happen they are done.

I also appeal to economic operators to increase rapid impact projects, to invest massively in the processing of agro-food products and products based on local natural resources such as minerals, water, rivers and lakes, rainwater, clean air, and to be inspired by the national policy of industrialization.

I also urge all civil servants who receive salaries from the Public Treasury to prove themselves worthy of their position by putting themselves at the service of the citizens. So you understand that over the past year we have made an inventory of all the business and development opportunities.

What remains is that we get down to work, and that is what I am committed to by becoming your Leader.

Every civil servant has a duty to help the people to achieve these development goals because that is what they get their salary for. Any breach of this responsibility will now have to be penalized. And anyone who sits down without working will have to make the choice to step aside from the community before being forced out it.

During this coming year, no one is allowed to sit idle by. Gone are the old mentalities that encourage laziness, promote fictitious jobs in State services, and encourage theft, economic embezzlement, misappropriation of public funds and professional dishonesty.

It is for this reason that in 2021, the Government of Burundi, "Reta-mvyeyi, Reta-nkozi", will continue its efforts to revitalize the civil service and the private sector to increase output. It will encourage entrepreneurs to create industries for processing local products.

34. The Government of Burundi will also continue consultation sessions with the vital forces of the Nation for a better ownership of the National Development Plan.

35. The Government of Burundi will spare no effort in safeguarding peace and security, while promoting national reconciliation, and strengthening diplomatic relations with Friendly Countries and international partners.

36. I therefore invite you to celebrate this end of the year party while avoiding wasting because life goes on and your stomach will still demand tomorrow. Celebrate while keeping your safety as criminals often seek to deceive our vigilance during the holiday season.

37. Before concluding, I would like to inform you that a technical commission has been set up to collect information on the prison services and the detention conditions in jails. On the basis of this information, a presidential pardon will be pronounced for some cases and some other sentences will be lightened for others.

38. Let me end this message by reiterating to all of you my best wishes for the year 2021. May it be a successful year for all of you in the fight against hunger and poverty. Celebrate the New Year by abiding in the joy of Christmas, may this year bring you all the blessings you desire for yourself and for the country. Let us also meditate on this year's theme: "In our fight against poverty, let us work hard, form a strong alliance, and let us be persistent and dynamic".

May Almighty God bless you,  
Happy feast to all, Thank you.