STATEMENT OF RWANDA IN THE THIRD COMMITTEE'S SESSION ON THE PROMOTION AND THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

Thank you Mr. Chair!

Let me start by congratulating you as well as the whole bureau for your election to spearhead the work of the third committee.

I would also like to say that my delegation aligns itself to the statements made on behalf of the African group and on behalf of the non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chair,

As you may be aware, Rwanda ratified almost all international legal instruments related to the promotion and protection of child rights including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its additional protocols; the Convention on the protection of children and cooperation in respect of inter-country adoption, as well as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

Furthermore, my country submits regular reports on the implementation of the said Conventions. Just recently, in May 2013, Rwanda presented to the Committee on the Rights of the Child combined reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as on its two additional protocols.

At the national level, Rwanda put in place key laws and key policies for the promotion and protection of child rights, including the law of 2001 on the protection of children rights; the National Policy for Orphans and other Vulnerable Children and the National Policy for the Elimination of Child Labour.
The National Policy for Orphans and other Vulnerable Children has identified appropriate strategies for the protection of categories of vulnerable children, including the

(a) Children living in child-headed households;
(b) Children in foster care;
(c) Street children;
(e) Children in conflict with the law;
(f) Children with disabilities;
(h) Sexually exploited and/or abused children;
(i) Working children;
(j) HIV/AIDS affected children;
(l) Children in very poor households;
(m) Refugee and displaced children;
(n) Children of single mothers; etc.

Mr. Chair,

In addition to establishing national policies, Rwanda has also put in place a National Commission for the Child Rights whose responsibility is to coordinate all activities related to the promotion and the protection of child rights.

Within that Commission, there is the Observatory for the Rights of the Child, tasked with ensuring the respect of children rights all over the country through its child rights Committees, in which children are represented at the national level, at district level and at the village level.

Annual Summits for children (Sommets des enfants) are organized in Rwanda (since 2004), which offer opportunities for representatives of children to discuss with high authorities including the Head of State, Cabinet Ministers, Parliamentarians and Civil Society Organizations on the promotion and protection of children rights.
Mr. Chair,

It is commendable that the political, administrative and legal measures that Rwanda has put in place for the promotion and the protection of child rights were followed by positive results.

In the health sector for example, the rate of infant mortality was significantly reduced from 86 percent per 1000 live births to around 30 percent today. The percentage of under-1 children fully immunized increased from 88 per cent to around 100 per cent against.

Regarding the combat against malnutrition among under-5 children, a community-based nutrition programme was established to monitor growth and Vitamin A supplement and mebendazole de-worming.

In the education sector, Rwanda is gradually breaking barriers that usually prevent children from attending primary education, by abolishing school fees and by constructing more classrooms at the village level where children can easily walk from home.

This programme has been adopted to enable the country to achieve the goal of Universal 12 Years Basic Education (Universal Primary Education and Universal Secondary Education) by 2015.

The rate of pupils joining the secondary schools increased from 45 per cent in 2003 to 88 per cent in 2009. The percentage is much higher today, and the number of girls' enrollment is higher than boys' enrolment in primary school, while in Secondary the enrolment of girls is almost equal to the enrolment of boys.

The education for children with physical or mental disabilities was introduced and teachers were trained in the methodology for such classes.
Mr. Chair,

Let me conclude by saying that Rwandan achievements in the promotion and the protection of child rights were recognized and complimented by the global UNICEF Children’s Award in 2009. Besides, Rwanda is often classified among countries where it is good to be born a girl, due to recognized efforts for the promotion and the protection of the rights of young girls and women.

Thank you!