

SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY AMBASSADOR ALBERT SHINGIRO, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION OF BURUNDI ON THE OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATION OF 40 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN BURUNDI AND THE STATE OF BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG

(BUJUMBURA, NOVEMBER 13, 2024)

Your Excellency the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Burundi, dear Carsten;

Mister Representative of the Board of Directors of the Baden-Württemberg Foundation for Cooperation and Development, SEZ;

Ladies and Gentlemen members of the German Community in Burundi;

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, national and foreign guests here present, all protocol observed,

Good evening!

1. Allow me to start, as I am taking the floor, by expressing my delight at having been able to find a little time to celebrate with you this anniversary of the partnership between Burundi and the Land of Baden-Württemberg. I would like to thank you, Mister Ambassador, for taking the initiative of drawing our attention to this anniversary, because it is truly worth of it. I am back from a long journey this afternoon, but tiredness and jet lag have been less convincing in preventing me from taking part in this historic celebration. You also know that in some societies, if you miss your wife's birthday, you're finished and there's no excuse. Even if it's

not a story about a couple, it's still 40 years of fruitful and mutually beneficial partnership. So I didn't want to run the risk of spoiling this highly valued celebration between our two States and our two peoples.

2. Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Guests, forty years of partnership between the Republic of Burundi and the Land of Baden-Württemberg have just passed. Forty years of inter-state relations do not represent, in absolute terms, a long time. This is because States are entities which; barring a disaster, are destined to last in time and space. Forty years, however, consist a sufficiently mature period of time to be able to rightly measure the scale of the results of combined efforts to build a better world for current and future generations.

3. I am naturally delighted to have taken part in the launch, on April 4, 2024, of the jubilee year of friendship and cooperation between the two States, in the presence of many German high-ranking personalities, including the Federal Minister for Food and Agriculture, the Minister for Rural Affairs and Consumer Protection of the Land of Baden-Württemberg and several other dignitaries from the Land, whom I still remember seven months later.

4. As you know, **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,** the creation of this partnership, now in its forties, marked a new era in the history of relations between the two States and the two peoples. A new era indeed, and not by chance. It all began back in October 1963, when King Mwambutsa of Burundi paid a working visit to Baden-Württemberg. Although at that time I was not yet born, nor were most of you, we all learned about this royal visit in history

classes, because it marked the beginning of a beautiful shared history between the two nations.

5. The fact is, **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**, that what started as useful but timid contacts has gradually developed into a vast network of active and fully committed people. The partnership then evolved towards a precise objective, namely to connecting the two States through decentralized diplomacy and thus enable the development of friendships and partnerships that are frank, sincere and guided by a spirit of trust and mutual respect. Since then, cooperation linkages have been forged between decentralized bodies such as municipalities, universities, hospitals, religious communities, and so on.

6. Forty years of harmonious collaboration allow us to note today that the test of time and unexpected contingencies and situations have not succeeded in shaking our common determination to continue to pool our efforts to ensure the well-being of our populations and develop people-to-people links. Forty years also allow us to express our full satisfaction not only with the quality of our commitments and our results, but also with our shared determination to meet the challenges that still persist in unison of approach and vision.

7. **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**, the Joint Declaration of Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Burundi and the Government of the State of Baden-Württemberg signed on May 16, 2014 in Stuttgart was a historic step in consolidating this partnership. I am delighted to have contributed to this at the time when I was Permanent Secretary of our Ministry. In this Declaration, which is date of ten years back, the two parties decided, among other things, to increase the involvement of all components of our

populations. To this end, it was decided that there should be wider consultation through the partnership committee, whose role is to assess progress towards the agreed objectives and identify future actions.

8.I am particularly pleased that this partnership continues on the basis of trust and mutual respect, transparency, shared interest and consultation, with the common objective of promoting sustainable development on a global scale, peace, democracy and human rights with a view to building societies where universally recognized intrinsic values triumph all other considerations. I am proud that the partnership between our two States has taken into account all these parameters, thus guaranteeing the effectiveness of our cooperation in compliance with the guiding principle of national ownership.

9.I am also proud to have the Foundation for Cooperation and Development, SEZ, duly represented at this ceremony. Welcome to Burundi, dear Mister Steffen! SEZ has been working with Burundi since a very long time, and this work was intensified with the signing of the Framework Agreement on Technical Cooperation in Stuttgart on October 25, 2012. Through this channel, experienced German experts have provided technical support to the people of Burundi in various sectors, with the aim of meeting their basic needs and raising their level of practical knowledge. The sharing of experiences, practices and lessons learned, and the transfer of technology that you are advocating, Mister Representative of the SEZ Board of Directors, is a commendable program that has a direct impact on the lives of our peoples. Please convey our sincere gratitude to your authorities at the Foundation and reaffirm the

Burundian side fully commitment to raising our ties of friendship and cooperation to the highest possible level.

10. Forty years on, we are right if we say that the foundation which our partnership is built on is very solid, healthy and supportive. We can easily move to a higher stage in our commitments, while capitalizing on the results already achieved. I fully agree with the Minister for Agriculture of Baden-Württemberg when he said, during our meeting in Stuttgart in April 2024, that **“we must move towards a more enhancing partnership”**. The time has come, then, to nurture and sustain this momentum together, and to do so decisively, to raise our partnership to an exemplary level for the interest of our respective peoples!

11. Ambassador; Mister Representative of the SEZ Foundation, Distinguished guests, It is with the expression of this shared determination that I would like, on behalf of the Government of Burundi and in my own behalf, to wish once again a very happy anniversary to our States and our peoples who have demonstrated, over all these years, a clear desire to establish, strengthen and further diversify an effective, efficient, sustainable and mutually beneficial partnership. In the meantime, we promise you, Mister Ambassador, to taste German beer on the scale of your country.

Thank you for your kind attention!