



Burundian President calls for relentless fight against corruption



On Friday, February 21, 2025, the President of the Republic of Burundi, His Excellency Evariste Ndayishimiye, attended the retreat dedicated to the development of a national strategy to fight against corruption organized by the Inspectorate General of the State. This meeting brought together all stakeholders, including civil society, to strengthen consultation and collective commitment in

this fight at Kiriri Palace.

During the discussions, speakers addressed several key themes, including the government's efforts to fight against corruption, the active role of civil society, and the responsibility of public institutions in implementing this policy. In his address, Burundi's Head of State, His Excellency Evariste Ndayishimiye, stressed respect for the law as a funda-

In this Edition:	page
Burundian President calls for relentless fight against corruption	1
Burundi's First Lady launches an awareness campaign on youth health in the context of MPOX	2
Bill adopted: digitization at the heart of Burundi's municipal tax reform	2
Report 2024 of the Burundian Ombudsman: Assessment and Future Prospects	3
The leaders of religious denominations invited to pray for the gift of discernment	5
Burundi and Japan strengthen their cooperation with the signing of an exchange of two notes	5
Burundi strengthens cooperation with Zambia and Chad: Two agreements in the process of ratification presented to the National Assembly	6
First Meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee of the Belgian-Burundian Cooperation Program 2024-2028	7
The National Women's Forum is launching a workshop to raise women's awareness of their rights	8

mental pillar of national integrity. He urged all those involved to promote good governance and intensify action to eradicate corruption in all its forms.

The first day ended with group work aimed at deepening reflections and formulating concrete recommendations for a more effective fight against this scourge. **(Presidency)**

Burundi's First Lady launches an awareness campaign on youth health in the context of MPOX



On Wednesday, February 19, 2025, the First Lady of Burundi H.E Angeline Ndayishimiye, led an awareness-raising campaign at the Lycée du Saint-Esprit, addressing crucial themes such as pregnancy prevention in schools, nutrition, Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, vaccination and Mpox. The event aims to raise awareness in schools of these vital health issues.

In his speech, the World Health Organization (WHO) Representative in Burundi, Dr. Xavier Cresper, expressed his hope that this initiative, supported by the First Lady of Burundi, would encourage political leaders to pay greater attention to the health needs of young people aged 10 to 19. He emphasized that this campaign could serve as a springboard to accelerate action in favor of adolescent health and encourage them to be

responsible of their future, underlining the World Health Organization's commitment to supporting the Burundian government in the development and implementation of policies and strategies focused on improving the health of young people.

The Minister of National Education and Scientific Research, Mr. François Havyarimana, also welcomed this initiative by thanking the First Lady of Burundi for her commitment. He highlighted the positive impact of these sessions, noting that they had contributed to a significant decrease in pregnancies among students.

In her speech, the First Lady of Burundi, H.E. Angeline Ndayishimiye, encouraged students to demonstrate responsibility and adopt respectful behavior for their future. She emphasized the importance of protecting themselves against diseases such as HIV/AIDS and Mpox, which remain public health concerns in Burundi.

In conclusion, the First Lady of Burundi urged young people to work hard to ensure their personal success and that of their families, highlighting the importance of education in building a better future. Organized by the Office of the First Lady for Development in Burundi (OPDD) with the support of the World Health Organization (WHO), this activity aligns with Sustainable Development Goal Nr 3 (SDG 3) for health and well-being. **(Presidency)**

Bill adopted: digitization at the heart of Burundi's municipal tax reform

The report on the mid-term evaluation of the twelve (12) pilot communes using digitization for revenue collection is imminent. These communes are: Bubanza, Bukinanyana, Cankuzo, Gitega, Kayanza, Kirundo, Makamba, Muyinga, Ngozi, Nyanza-Lac, Rutana and Ruyigi. The announcement was made by the Minister of the Interior, Community Development and Public Security. The Honorable Martin Niteretse was defending the bill amending Law No. 1/02 of March 03, 2016 on the reform of communal taxation in Burundi, which was finally adopted unanimously by the Honorable Deputies present at the plenary session on Tuesday, February 18, 2025.

In fact, it was a response to an opinion proposing the setting up of a communal revenue office, following the example of the OBR at national level. For this speaker, legal reform goes hand in hand with institutional reform. It is necessary to regulate tax collectors to achieve the desired results. However, the government envoy remains confident. Digitization minimizes revenue leakage as far as possible. If the results of the evaluation prove successful, digitization will be popularized.

In addition to the property tax, some communes arrogate to themselves the right to levy taxes known as land fees or transport fees, informed the plenary, who were aston-



ished at the absence of such fees.

The report on the mid-term evaluation of the twelve (12) pilot communes using digitization for revenue collection is imminent. These communes are: Buzanza, Bukinyanya, Cankuzo, Gitega, Kayanza, Kirundo, Makamba, Muyinga, Ngozi, Nyanza-Lac, Rutana and Ruyigi. The announcement was made by the Minister of the Interior, Community Development and Public Security. The Honorable Martin Niteretse was defending the bill amending Law No. 1/02 of March 03, 2016 on the reform of communal taxation in Burundi, which was finally adopted unanimously by the Honorable Deputies present at the plenary session on Tuesday, February 18, 2025.

In fact, it was a response to an opinion proposing the setting up of a communal revenue office, following the example of the OBR at national level. For this speaker, legal reform goes hand in hand with institutional reform. It is necessary to regulate tax collectors to achieve the desired results. However, the government envoy remains confident. Digitization minimizes revenue leakage as far as possible. If the results of the evaluation prove successful, digitization will be popularized.

In addition to the property tax, some communes arrogate to themselves the right to levy taxes known as land fees or transport fees, informed the plenary, who were astonished at the absence of such fees.



Taxation falls within the realm of law, a member of the Government stated before explaining that revenues are collected in accordance with the law. Anyone who contravenes this law by collecting taxes not specified in the law or by failing to collect a revenue commits the offense of embezzlement, which is punishable by up to ten (10) years in prison. Still regarding this taxation that falls under the domain of law, this aspect explains the setting of rates, even if they are flexible, emphasized the Government representative who intends to navigate the budget law thanks to its annual nature.

In his explanatory note, the Minister of the Interior, Community Development, and Public Security, Mr. Martin NITERETSE, revealed some shortcomings in Law Nr 1/02 of March 3, 2016, concerning the reform of municipal taxation in Burundi. Notably, there is a lack of distinction between the taxable matter of the State and that allocated to the municipality. There is also the tax rate, which was defined differently by the municipal council in each municipality, leading to a differentiated application from one municipality to another.

The main innovations introduced in this draft law include, among other things, the determination of a fiscal scope specific to municipalities and the enumeration in the law of the principles on which municipal taxation is based. **(National Assembly)**

Report 2024 of the Burundian Ombudsman: Assessment and Future Prospects

In accordance with the law governing the Institution of the Ombudsman, article 17, paragraph 1, the Ombudsman of the Republic submits an annual report on his activities to the President of the Republic, the National Assembly and the Senate. Consequently, on Monday February 17, 2025, the current Burundian Ombudsman, Madam Aimée Laurentine Kanyana, was invited to the National Assembly to present her annual report on the activities car-

ried out during the year 2024.

During her presentation, she indicated that particular emphasis had been placed on community mediation, the practice of which will ultimately enable the population to appropriate this valuable institutional instrument for alternative conflict resolution. In 2024, the Ombudsman Institution received 525 complaint files, involving 1,462 complainants, 744 of them women and 718 men,



as a single file can concern many complainants.

Of these files, 359 were deemed admissible, while 166 were inadmissible. In addition to the admissible files, 98 files were carried over from 2023, bringing the total to 457 files, 427 of which were closed, i.e. a rate of 93.43%. At present, only 30 files are still being processed. The fall in the number of complaints, from 1101 in 2023 to 525 in 2024, can be explained by the outreach initiatives undertaken by the Ombudsman and the country's highest authorities.

With regard to conflict prevention and management, the report indicates that the Ombudsman Institution has followed a clear and determined orientation aimed at regularly going out to meet the population to enquire about their real needs and collect grievances in order to provide appropriate responses. To this end, field visits and public broadcasts have been organized to achieve this noble objective.

The Ombudsman of the Republic of Burundi, Madam Aimée Laurentine Kanyana, stressed the importance of promoting a culture of dialogue between the different strata of the population. She stressed the need to learn to manage conflicts through dialogue, rather than by force or violence. As part of the awareness-raising campaign, workshops were organized to implement strategies aimed at informing stakeholders about social cohesion and the establishment of lasting peace. In addition, numerous activities were carried out at both national and international level to improve collaboration and cooperation.

During her presentation, the Burundian Ombudsman shared the future ambitions of her institution. Drawing on her experience within the institution, she also made several recommendations: to systematically take into account the Ombudsman's recommendations to public authorities in a transparent manner and within acceptable timeframes so that the Ombudsman's services maintain public trust; to continue the proximity approach advocated by His Excellency the President of the Republic and implemented by all institutions of the



Republic, which has had a positive impact on the number of complaints submitted to the Ombudsman's institution; to urgently establish mechanisms for monitoring admissions to detention facilities, as well as regular analysis of the situation of detainees, in order to propose appropriate measures for each individual according to their status; to implement measures to fight against fraud and speculation on various products by instituting very strict controls to discourage certain state officials from exploiting these situations for personal gain; to strengthen the capacities of the new authorities resulting from the 2025 elections so that they can fulfill their functions for the benefit of citizens in a timely, effective, honest, accessible, and transparent manner.

This is an important aspect of general principles such as the rule of law, human rights, and good governance; to enhance control and sanction mechanisms so that the exercise of freedom of expression does not harm others, particularly their reputation and integrity.

In conclusion, the Institution of the Ombudsman was delighted with the progress made in 2024, with a success rate of over 90%, and hopes that 2025 will fill the gaps to reach the top step of the ladder.

The President of the National Assembly, the Right Honorable Gélase Daniel Ndirakobuca, pointed out that the Ombudsman institution is not part of the three powers in Burundi, stressing that it belongs neither to the executive, nor to the legislature, nor to the judiciary, but that it operates within well-defined limits. "We have received the report and feel that there is still much to be done to change mentalities so that we can move forward in terms of social progress". **(National Assembly)**

The leaders of religious denominations invited to pray for the gift of discernment



On Tuesday February 18, 2025, in commune Mwumba of Ngozi Province, at Hotel Ruhuka, accompanied by the Governor of Ngozi Province, the Speaker of the Senate, Right Honorable Emmanuel SINZOHAGERA opened a Seminar-Workshop organized by House of Glimmer of Hope in collaboration with African Enterprise under the theme "the role and responsibility of Sacrificers, Prophets and 'Kings' in building the Burundi that God wants, that we desire and for which we pray".

In his opening address, the President of the Senate recalled the role of each participant as Sacrificers,

men and women chosen, consecrated, especially dedicated to God's work as priests; and as Prophets called and commissioned by God to constantly remind his people and their leaders to live according to the principles of his word.

He went on to point out that another evil in many churches today is the emergence of false prophets who claim to have met and heard God, when in fact they have not. He invited each of them to pray for the gift of discernment to recognize the sheep and the ferocious wolves.

In closing his speech, the Speaker of the Senate, the Right Honorable Emmanuel SINZOHAGERA, asked the workshop participants to help each other build a solid biblical foundation, to assess themselves and identify the dysfunctions that threaten them in their respective roles and responsibilities.

He also stressed that our country is approaching elections, in which the leaders of religious denominations must play a role in guiding and educating the faithful in mutual respect and self-control. **(Senate)**

Burundi and Japan strengthen their cooperation with the signing of an exchange of two notes



On February 19, 2025, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation, His Excellency Ambassador Albert SHINGIRO, and the Japanese Ambassador to Burundi, Mr. Fukushima Isao, signed an Exchange of Two Notes between the Government of Burundi and the Government of Japan for a Food Security Grant KR 2024 and a Rice Mill Project in Burundi.

In his speech on this occasion, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation highlighted the strong bilateral relations between Burundi and Japan, underlining the significance of the two projects which had just been approved by the signing of the Exchange of Two Notes. The first project aims to improve rice cultivation in Burundi, with a budget equivalent to 4,202,279 US dollars and a grant to strengthen food security worth 2,266,692 US dollars.

He also highlighted Japan's constant efforts to support Burundi's development since 1963, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, education, health and infrastructure. Burundi sincerely thanks Japan for its development cooperation in the form of technical assistance and donations, while remaining aligned with Burundi's Vision of an emerging country by 2040 and a developed country by 2060, and the revised national development plan.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Development Co-

operation reiterated the Burundian government's commitment to ensuring the success of these projects, and called for the opening of an independent office of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in Bujumbura to strengthen local cooperation.

The Japanese Ambassador expressed his thanks to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Development Coop-

eration for the constant, strengthened and flourishing collaboration between the two countries. He stressed the importance of continuing to strengthen this cooperation. During his speech, he also announced the appointment of a Japanese Honorary Consul in Burundi, whom he introduced publicly. The ceremonies ended with a reception hosted by the Japanese Ambassador as part of the Japanese Emperor's Day celebrations. **(MFADC)**

Burundi strengthens cooperation with Zambia and Chad: Two agreements in the process of ratification presented to the National Assembly



On February 20, 2025, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation, His Excellency Ambassador Albert SHINGIRO, was invited to the National Assembly of Burundi to present two bills concerning the ratification of two cooperation agreements between Burundi and Zambia on one hand, and Burundi and Chad on the other.

Agreement with Zambia: A Strategic Partnership for Development

The first draft concerns the updated cooperation agreement between the Republic of Burundi and the Republic of Zambia, signed on June 14, 2024. In his speech, Minister SHINGIRO emphasized that this agreement testifies to the common desire of the two nations to strengthen, extend and diversify their relations of friendship and cooperation. It also aims to adapt them to the specific needs of both countries, while taking into account their respective capabilities.

The agreement covers a wide range of areas, including political, economic, scientific, technical, legal, communications, transport, agricultural and cultural cooperation. It fits perfectly with Burundi's vision of becoming an emerging country by 2040 and a developed country by 2060. The Minister specified that priority activities would be implemented in these sectors, notably the exchange

of agricultural experience, research, economic cooperation and the export of products, as well as cooperation in the legal field, notably in the extradition of fugitive criminals.

Agreement with Chad: Strengthened Cooperation in the Energy and Mining Sector

The second bill presented concerns the cooperation agreement between Burundi and Chad. This agreement aims to create partnerships in areas of shared interest, primarily in the socio-economic domain. It also paves the way for future collaborations in various sectors. Minister SHINGIRO detailed the priority activities outlined in this agreement, including training and technology transfer in the energy and mining sectors, as well as strengthening partnerships in mining operations and joint initiatives in renewable energy. Bilateral trade between the two countries will also be stimulated.

Adoption of the Bills Ratifying the Agreements by the National Assembly

The bills related to these agreements were submitted to the National Assembly of Burundi, where they were subject to a session of discussions. Following questions raised by the honorable deputies, which focused on the priority activities of the two agreements, the National Assembly unanimously adopted the first agreement and approved the second agreement with 99.07%.

In conclusion, these agreements with Zambia and Chad illustrate Burundi's ongoing efforts to diversify its international partnerships and strengthen its capacities in key areas for its economic and social development. The second agreement also marks an important step towards establishing new collaborations in strategic sectors such as energy and mining. **(MFADC)**

First Meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee of the Belgian-Burundian Cooperation Program 2024-2028



On Tuesday, February 18, 2025, the first meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee of the Belgian-Burundian Cooperation Program for the period 2024-2028 was held in Bujumbura. This committee is mandated to monitor the objectives defined in the specific agreement concluded between the two countries on December 20, 2023.

In his opening speech, Mr. Sylvie Manirerekana, Assistant to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation, highlighted the historical importance of the relations between Burundi and Belgium. He recalled that, despite ups and downs, these relations remain characterized by lasting friendship and fruitful cooperation. He expressed the hope that Belgium would resume its role as Burundi's primary bilateral partner, a goal towards which both nations are actively progressing.

Mr. Manirerekana also reminded attendees of the main objectives of the program, namely the promotion of sustainable agri-food systems; improving access to quality social services, particularly in the health and education sectors; developing professional skills; and strengthening governance. He encouraged participants to rigorously and openly examine the state of execution of this program, while taking into account local challenges and national priorities.

For his part, Mr. Bart Pennewaert, Deputy Director General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid of Belgium, welcomed the friendly relations between the two countries and reaffirmed Belgium's commitment to support Burundi in its long-term development vision. This vision aims to make Burundi an emerging nation by 2040 and a developed nation by 2060.

Mr. Pennewaert emphasized that this program, which has a budget of Euros 75 million over five years, is also aligned with Burundi's National Development Plan (PND).

It should be noted that the meeting was marked by the official signing of the internal regulations of this Joint Consultative Committee to ensure the effective implementation of Ntusingare Inyuma program. **(MFADC)**

Presentation of the provisional report of the mission for the development of implementing texts of the Commercial Code



The Ministry of Commerce, Transport, Industry, and Tourism, through the Trade Facilitation and Integration Project in the Great

Lakes Region (PFCIGL), organized a workshop on Tuesday, February 18, 2025, in Bujumbura, to present the provisional report of the mission for developing the implementing texts of the Commercial Code.

In her welcome speech, the coordinator of the PFCIGL, Madam Clotilde Nizigiyimana, emphasized that this report defines the rules governing the life of businesses, frames commercial relationships, and guarantees the legal security of transactions. She noted that it is imperative for these implementing texts to be clear, coherent, and adapted to the economic and social realities of the country so that they can fully play this role.

The objective of this report is to diagnose the gaps and inconsistencies in existing texts, identify missing texts, and examine, if necessary, their compliance with international standards, before proposing concrete solutions to improve their effectiveness, highlighted the coordinator of the PFCIGL

At the beginning of his speech, the assistant to the Minister of Commerce, Transport, Industry, and Tourism, Mr. Gérard Niyokindi, emphasized that this report marks an important step in the ongoing reform and reflects the desire to create an economic environment conducive to growth, innovation, and employment. He also noted that the report diagnoses the gaps and inconsistencies in existing texts, identifies missing texts, and examines their compliance with international standards.

The consultant to the Minister of Commerce, Transport, Industry, and Tourism, Dr. Maître Amani Jean Pierre, highlighted during his presentation the quality and relevance of this report, thus contributing to the establishment of a modern and effective legal framework in commercial matters, in line with Burundi's ambitions.

Due to the relevance of the questions, observations, comments, and recommendations raised by participants regarding this provisional report, a deadline of three days has been granted for them to submit any additional suggestions before its final validation.

It should be noted that this project is fully funded by the World Bank, amounting to US 90 million dollars. **(ABP)**

The National Women's Forum is launching a workshop to raise women's awareness of their rights



The National Women's Forum (FNF) organized a sensitization workshop for women members of the communal offices of the FNF from February 18 to 19, 2025, in Kayanza province. The objective was to help them better understand the legislation in force in favor of women and girls.

In his speech, the governor of Kayanza province, Mr. Rémy Cishahayo, emphasized the importance for women and girls to know their rights. He highlighted that women are a pillar of development and that a country cannot progress without ensuring the respect of women's rights.

The president of the FNF, Mrs. Emérence Bucumi, expressed her gratitude to the Burundian government for its efforts in promoting and protecting women's rights. She reminded everyone of the existing functional mechanisms to ensure this protection and emphasized the importance of this workshop in consolidating the knowledge of the participants.

While acknowledging the progress made in legislation protecting women's rights, Mrs. Emérence Bucumi urged decision-makers to consider the proposals arising from various meetings regarding the revision of the law on the repression of violence against women. Legal expert and university professor Mr. Cyprien Manirakiza emphasized the importance of women's involvement in sustainable development. He highlighted the existing imperative laws at international, continental, and national levels, encouraging participants to learn and understand their rights.

Mrs. Justine Komezadusabe, one of the participants, expressed her satisfaction with the teachings received. She committed to sharing the knowledge gained with other women to strengthen awareness on a larger scale.

The workshop concluded with practical group evaluation exercises led by Mr. Cyprien Manirakiza. These exercises aimed to enhance the assimilation of the teachings received and ensure better application of the knowledge acquired by the participants. **(RTNB)**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation

Department of Communication

www.mae.gov.bi

Twitter: @MAEBurundi