

**THE RWANDAN PROCESS OF UNITY AND  
RECONCILIATION: ITS POTENTIAL FOR BUILDING  
SUSTAINABLE PEACE**

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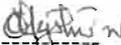
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**“Since war begins in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that peace must be constructed”,**

UNESCO, Constitution of UNESCO, 1945.

**DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY**

I hereby declare that this Research Article is my own original work and has not been submitted previously for any degree at any other University.

Signature: -----

**Aggée M. SHYAKA MUGABE**

## DEDICATION

To my wife **Mwiza Aimée**, for your invaluable love and permanent support;

To my children **Juru Jimmy** and **Teta Olga**, you are the source of my joy and bravery:

This work is yours.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Above all I want to give the praise to the Almighty God, without whom I am nothing. I also express my gratitude to my parents for giving me the opportunity of education.

I express profound gratitude to **Prof. Rwigamba Balinda**, Rector of Kigali Independent University who lent his support for this study, both financially and morally. I do not have appropriate words to express my feelings in this regard. May God reward him.

My sincere recognition goes to **Prof. Geoff Harris**, the supervisor of this study. His advice, guidance and friendship throughout the duration of this study are immeasurable. He became to me a 'Good Parent'.

To all my colleagues of Kigali Independent University, my friends and brothers I express honour for your open collaboration.

## ABSTRACT

This study is an evaluation of the Rwandan unity and reconciliation process and was undertaken to assess whether it possesses the potential for building sustainable peace in the country. The study used an analytical method to measure the key activities of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, the national body that oversees the efforts aimed at promoting unity and reconciliation among Rwandans.

Before properly analysing the process, the study outlined a number of conditions that are necessary for true reconciliation and sustainable peace to be achieved. The analysis allowed a comparison of these conditions to the context in which the unity and reconciliation process is being conducted in Rwanda. This required the exploration of the entire situation at political, economic and social levels. Particular attention has been paid to the situation after the 1994 genocide to examine developments from then until to the present.

It became evident during the study that decisive structural changes have been undertaken to prepare a supportive environment for unity, reconciliation and peace. Appropriate structures' reform occurs in the domains of good governance, economic planning and justice. It also became evident, however, that some important obstacles to unity and peace persist, specifically poverty, reluctance to cooperate with 'Gacaca' traditional courts, corruption and opportunistic political leaders. Appropriate measures have to be taken in addressing these issues for sustainable peace to be a new way of life for all Rwandans.

Generally, the study showed that the process of unity and reconciliation in Rwanda has the potential to succeed since high governing leaders are engaged to restore unity and reconciliation in the country. Political will, the study revealed, is an essential ingredient for sustainable peace. The study also listed a number of encouraging results of the process and proposed some measures to strengthen unity, reconciliation and peace.

**ACRONYMS**

AFP: Agence France Presse

ALIR: Armée pour la Libération du Rwanda

CMM: Centre of Conflict Management

DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo

EOM: European Union Election Observation Mission

ESAF: Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility

FAR: Forces Armées Rwandaises

FARG: Fonds d' Assistance aux Rescapés du Genocide

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

HRW: Human Right Watch

IMF: International Monetary Fund

IRIN: Investor Relations Information Network

LDF: Local Defence Forces

MDR: Mouvement Démocratique Républicain

MINECOFIN: Ministère des Finances et de la Planification Economique

MINIJUST: Ministère de la Justice et des Relations Institutionnelles

NPPR: National Program of Poverty Reduction

NURC: National Unity and Reconciliation Commission

OPRR: Office of the President of the Republic of Rwanda

PVK: Préfecture de la Ville de Kigali

RPF: Rwandese Patriotic Front

TRC: Truth and Reconciliation Commission

UNCTAD: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

USAID: United State Agency for International Development

WB: World Bank

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## Chap 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### 1. 1. Background

Before colonial rule, Rwanda was characterised by unity and peace:

If we start by the existing documents, many of which were written by foreigners, and if we also start by the same Rwandese culture and what is told by our ancestors, we find that there was only one Rwanda. The war between Rwandese ethnics is not mentioned anywhere before the Europeans' arrival. When Europeans came, the seed of hatred and disagreement started being sown among Rwanda's children (Office the President of the Republic of Rwanda [OPRR], 1999:1)

Europeans organised their colonial rule by favouring the Tutsi tribe at the expense of the Hutus, the majority. They provided them with education and governing posts. Belgians used to say that the Tutsi were very intelligent and were born to govern. This insinuated that the Hutu people were ignorant and were only capable of physical work.

Other researchers confirmed this emphasis of colonial policy. Sanders (1969: 530) explains that the Tutsi were regarded as superior beings: "the Tutsi of good race has nothing of the Negro, apart from his colour. He is usually very tall; he is usually very thin. His features are very fine. He is a natural-born leader, capable of extreme self-control and calculated goodwill". Likewise, Des Forges (1999: 36) notes that "in addition to biological superiority... Tutsi were also anointed with cultural superiority". The two authors separately describe the Hutu as being generally short and thickset with a big head, a jovial expression, a wide nose and enormous lips. They continue that the Hutu are lazy, easily angered, superficial, very dependent, and opportunists, without culture and with agronomic ability.

This was the beginning of ethnic identities construction and manipulation that led to social injustice institutionalisation. In 1959, when the Tutsi elites claimed independence, the Belgians changed allies, favouring the Hutu. King Rudahigwa Mutara III (a Tutsi) was killed and most of the Tutsi people fled the country. Since, Tutsi were identified as having enslaved the Hutus, political power was given to Hutu, and Tutsi were excluded from the national affairs.

It is this bad seed which continued to be sown among Rwandans. This resulted in killings and sporadic massacres that took place regularly in Rwanda and which culminated in the unspeakable 1994 genocide, in which approximately one million Rwandans were direct victims. What is clear is that people have used the differences built up under colonial rule to make Rwandans confront one another. According to Professor Rutembesa (personal communication, July 24, 2003), a researcher at National University of Rwanda's Centre of Conflict Management (CCM), colonisers built conflict structures (by favouring Tutsi at the expense of Hutu and vice-versa) which have been maintained by politicians to achieve their own goals. "Inevitably, the repressive culture led to human rights violations, which culminated in the 1994 genocide, in which up to one million Rwandan people perished". (NURC, 2002a: 3).

The end product of all these tragic events is a high level of hatred between Hutu and Tutsi and the persistence of distrust between them. The Arusha Peace Agreement of 1993 identified the unity and reconciliation of Rwandans as a necessary foundation of stability, peace and development. Without security and peace, social justice as well as economic development is simply impossible: "It is obvious, however, that all countries that managed to overcome poverty and achieve development have not won that battle because of an economy based on financial or natural resources only, but rather focussed on the relationship between citizens, on which they fall back and jointly use to fight poverty" (NURC, 2000b: 61). The subsequent process of unity and reconciliation is the focus of this Research Article.

## **1. 2. Overall objective and specific aims**

The overall objective of this Research Article is to study the effectiveness of the steps taken towards unity and reconciliation in post-1994 Rwanda. The specific aims of this study are:

- To explain the concept of sustainable peace and the importance of reconciliation in moving towards sustainable peace;
- To describe the situation in Rwanda following the 1994 genocide;
- To explain the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) program, to assess its outcomes to date and to consider its potential to significantly move towards sustainable peace.

### 1. 3. Methodology

The study will adopt a qualitative methodology drawing mainly from social sciences. The following methods will be used:

- **Literature review.** A review of appropriate literature will be undertaken to develop an understanding of the topic, particularly in the Rwandan context and the concept of sustainable peace. NURC's annual reports and their various other publications will be closely examined.
- **Direct observation.** The researcher will spend one and a half months in Rwanda observing NURC's activities. As part of this, he will attend some solidarity camps that will be held by the NURC in July 2003. This method will provide the opportunity to verify and supplement the data contained in NURC's official reports.
- **Informal discussions.** The researcher will conduct informal discussions with key informants in Rwanda to assess the potential of the NURC as an instrument of building sustainable peace in the country.
- **Interview.** A formal discussion with researchers from the CCM of the National University of Rwanda will be organised on the issues of unity and reconciliation in Rwanda.

These will help 'verify' whether NURC's reports in our possession are accurate.

### 1. 4. Study structure

The study will consist of six chapters. In the introductory chapter, the researcher will raise the questions to be examined and outline how the work will proceed. Issues such as the background, overall objective and specific aims and the methodology will be examined and discussed. In the second chapter, the researcher will explain what sustainable peace is, and what it requires. The third chapter will present the context in which unity and reconciliation are being made in Rwanda after the 1994 genocide. This will involve the analysis of the post genocide and current situations at economic, political and social aspects. The fourth chapter will analyse the origins, programs and practices of the NURC. The fifth chapter will assess the potential of NURC's activities as an instrument of national sustainable peace building. The research will be closed by a recapitulative and prospective conclusion.

## Chap. 2: THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE PEACE

### 2. 1. Introduction

When the fighting stops, the task of reconstruction and recovery begins. Mechanisms for economic and social rehabilitation in post-conflict situations are defined. At this stage, most people want and need to build a veritable peace, also termed stable peace, true peace, lasting peace, positive peace or sustainable peace.

This kind of peace is an outcome of a successful peacebuilding process. According to Boutros-Ghali, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations (1992), peacebuilding refers to the construction of new environments and new cultures which transform deficient structures and capabilities. Peacebuilding creates and maintains beneficial conditions for sustainable social, economic, political and spiritual development of people. Sustainable peace is upheld as a human right and a necessary condition for well-being.

### 2. 2. Positive peace

Peace has always been among humanity's highest values, some regard it as a supreme value. A popular adage says that "the most disadvantageous peace is better than the most just war". Because peace is the highest value of humanity, people try to look for the particular kind of peace which is complete and they call it by different names: positive peace, just peace and true peace, but not just a negative peace. Negative peace focuses on the absence of direct violence such as war. Jeong (2002: 24) argues that negative peace does not question the causes of recurring violence in existing social relations.

Positive peace is more than the absence of violence; it is the presence of social justice through equal opportunity, a fair distribution of power and resources, equal protection and impartial enforcement of law. According to Swan (1995: 36) "positive peace builds toward human development, liberation and fulfilment". Efforts to achieve positive peace emphasise establishing social equality and justice, economic equity, ecological balance, protecting citizens from attack, and meeting basic human needs. Positive peace changes violent structures into non-violent and peaceful ones. Harris and Lewis (1999) argue "positive peace

involves the presence of structures, which provide increasing degree of political liberty and social justice”.

For Galtung (1969: 172) positive peace would not be obtained without the development of just and equitable conditions associated with the elimination of inegalitarian social structures. “The goals of positive peace touch upon many issues that influence quality of life, including personal growth, freedom, social equality, economic equity, solidarity, autonomy and participation” (Galtung, 1973: 355). Positive peace involves profound structural changes and the creation of an enabling environment that favours equality of all and the respect for human dignity.

Positive opportunities can be enhanced through the awareness of mutual dependence on one another. Resolving the issues requires the replacement of violent tactics with non-violent actions in achieving desired outcomes. Commonly positive peace is conceived of the enjoyment of economic and social justice, equality and the entire range of human rights and fundamental freedoms within society. For Jeong (2002: 25), positive peace provides people with equal opportunities. “Equal opportunities allow them to develop their talents and skills so that they can participate in various aspects of development. Economic obstacles for the poor must be overcome to obtain viable and just peace”.

### **2. 3. Sustainable peace**

Many definitions have been given to the concept of sustainable peace. Gilman (1997: 58) calls sustainable peace “a meaningful peace that allows people moving in the right direction”. For him, sustainable peace must uproot or weaken the main causes that create inadequacy, injustice and other problems. To Pedro (1995), peace is not only the silence of the ceasefire between the army and the guerrillas. Peace is social justice and only in a society with social and economic justice can true peace flourish.

According to Reycheler and Pafenholz (2001: 12), the term sustainable peace refers to a situation characterised by the absence of physical violence; the elimination of unacceptable political, economic, and cultural forms of discrimination; a high level of internal and external legitimacy or support; self-sustainability; and a propensity to enhance the constructive transformation of conflicts. Sustainable peace refers to both personal and collective

sustainability. Building sustainable peace goes beyond problem-solving or managing a conflict. It aims at transforming conflicts constructively and creating a sustainable peace environment.

A successful sustainable peace strategy addresses the major components of the conflict: fixing the problems which threatened the core interests of the parties, changing strategic thinking, and changing the structures and the ways of interacting. Through a sustainable peace process, the immediate conflict is not merely resolved but the whole situation shifts. A process is begun which involves operating from a different mindset in terms of dealing with the challenges with past and present conflicts.

As Peck (1996: 45) notes, the building blocks of sustainable peace and security are well-functioning local, state, regional and international systems of governance, which are responsive to basic human needs. Sustainable peace thus involves the institutionalisation of participatory processes in order to provide civil and political rights to all people. It requires adequate legal, law enforcement, and judicial protection to ensure that all citizens are treated equally and fairly and that their human rights are safeguarded. She continues that sustainable peace also involves equitable economic development and opportunities so that economic and social rights can be provided. Sustainable peace entails the development of pluralistic norms and practices that respect the unique cultures and identities of all. Peck insists that sustainable peace also requires the education of dominant groups to convince them that their own long-term security interests lie in the development of a just society.

In his comprehensive book *Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies*, Lederach (1997: 75) argues that sustainable peace indicates a concern for peace per se but also the creation of a proactive process that is capable of regenerating itself over time, a spiral of peace and development instead of a spiral of violence. For Lederach, peacebuilding must be understood as a comprehensive concept that involves an array of approaches and stages needed to transform conflict into more sustainable peaceful relationships. He suggests that sustainable peace, which is an outcome of a successful attempt to transform conflict, addresses structural issues, promotes the building of relationships, and the development of a supportive infrastructure for peace.

Kriesberg et al. (1999: 413) argue: “Conflict transformation refers to a fundamental and enduring change away from a protracted, destructive struggle between adversaries toward a constructive accommodation between them”. Conflict structures can be transformed by focusing on long-term relationships rather than immediate concerns. As far as Boutros-Ghali (1992: 61) is concerned, “ Conflict situations need to be transformed in such a way to identify and support structures that tend to consolidate peace”.

This means that sustainable peace involves the presence of appropriate structures and cultures. Building peace is a long and hard process. Pugh (2000: 22) indicates that just as violent conflict requires the prolonged commitment of warring groups to coercive strategies, so too does a stable peace require the similar commitment of these groups to pursue dialogue, participation and cooperation. Peace is not a condition that endures in a passive way, without engagement of the protagonists. Sustainable peacebuilding must be a dynamic process. Pugh confirms that structural action at the societal level must proactively engage the root causes of the conflict in order to promote active participation across society in a self-supporting peace process; this is sometimes referred to as ‘buy-in’. Sustainable peace requires the careful and inclusive design of comprehensive peacebuilding strategies that involve broad participation.

## **2. 4. Conditions for sustainable peace**

Sustainable peace is not a cheap or quick process; it requires a number of conditions to be fulfilled. These conditions include democracy and good governance, social justice, respect for human rights, human development, individual and collective security, the absence of physical violence, restorative justice and forgiveness and reconciliation. These are not the exclusive factors as others could be added to the list. In this work, the four conditions considered as most necessary for sustainable peace, will be analysed.

### **2. 4. 1. Democracy and good governance**

Once conflict has ended, it is vital to undertake actions to consolidate peace. Such measures may include democratisation processes that promote good governance, freedom and participation of all.

According to Annan (1998), democratisation is key to building durable peace since it gives people a stake in society. “Its importance cannot be overstated, for unless people feel that they have a true stake in society lasting peace will not be possible and sustainable development will not be achieved”. For sustainable peace to be built, democracy must occur first. “The fundamental issue of good governance, in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, transparency, responsiveness and accountability, needs to be attended to. It is in this realm that the most comprehensive and holistic approach to sustainable peace and stability is found” (Ami, 1998).

Democracy and good governance are clearly important determinants of the degree to which peace can emerge and be stabilised in post-conflicts situations. The key to creating or sustaining peace within a country lies not with economic or humanitarian assistance, but with reviving or strengthening the political processes that successfully promote transparency, mutual respect and participation of populations (Kumar, 2000:15). For Kumar, democracy and good governance are matter of urgency and must aim at empowering local communities rather than waiting for foreign assistance.

The task of building sustainable peace belongs fundamentally to the entire population. The involvement of the people in the peacebuilding processes cannot be achieved without democracy. Democracy must be understood as a process that empowers common citizens. As defined by Arunachalam and Tongia (2001: 6), empowerment is a mechanism to create a dynamic environment that is forward-looking, and all-inclusive. Its components include education, access to all information, gender equality, tolerance and diversity, and freedom to pursue all creative activities of human endeavour such as arts and sciences. Well-informed and skilled people are evidently capable of creating and sustaining peace environment. Skilled civil society and robust public institutions make for good governance. This long-term initiative will depend on the emergence of sustainable institutions during the empowerment phase and also on the full participation of the people. A successful state will need to sustain a vibrant and free press as well as religious and cultural institutions that are free from politics.

Democracy and good governance are the key elements contributing to stability in a state. Vital components of such political systems are the deepening of a democratic culture, which equips the citizenry with the power and the confidence to determine its own fate. Undemocratic behaviour always forms barrier to sustainable peace because it provokes social injustice. Good governance is a *sine qua non* (core pre-requisite) for poverty reduction,

democracy and the rule of law. The lack of will to constructively resolve conflicts flows from the absence of democratic principles and values. In order to promote sustainable peace, leaders must realise that good governance implies governing on behalf of their citizens and not just for their own power. Good governance means accountability, transparency, effectiveness, efficiency and responsibility. These are important ingredients for sustainable peace (Republic of South Africa, 2001: 4-5)

Democracy is an essential condition for sustainable peace since it aims at reforming and strengthening deficient structures, at promoting transparency in decision-making, and good governance as the basis of a stable political order. “Justice and political security and governance are the key strategies that help to build peace” Pugh (2000: 21-22). For Reychler and Pafenholz (2001: 216-218), democracy is a prime peacebuilder, an effective confidence-building measure. Major democracy building blocks are appropriate power-sharing arrangements, the respect for human rights, a strong civil society, the rule of law, good governance and inclusive citizenship and participation. To them, essential for the establishment of a sustainable peace is the establishment of series of peace-enhancing structures.

The most important condition of promoting peace within states is hence the development of good governance, which can address the root causes of conflict and meet basic human needs. Good governance offers groups a voice in resolving grievances at an early stage before they grow into major problems; safeguards human rights; and promotes a fairer distribution of resources. Without democracy and good governance, sustainable peace will remain a dream. Good governance supposes the establishment of structures that respect human rights and foster democratic culture and practice. An emphasis on local consultation and decision-making encourages reconciliation and thus sustainable peace.

#### **2. 4. 2. Social justice**

Democracy and good governance without social justice are meaningless. To be effective, democracy must be coupled with social justice. Social justice is the first virtue of democracy, for it is the habit of putting the principle of democracy in daily practice. Social justice rightly understood is a specific habit of justice, which is social and that aims at the good of

community where equality of all people is guaranteed. People, according to social justice theory have the same opportunity in terms of the law.

The concept of social justice is well described by Miller (1999: 12):

When we talk about social justice, we are discussing how the good and bad things in life are distributed among the members of a human society. Concretely, when we attack some policy or some state affairs as socially unjust, we are claiming that a person, or more usually a group of persons, enjoys fewer advantages than that person or group of persons ought to enjoy (or bears more of the burdens than they ought to bear), given how other members of the society in question are faring.

Social justice is regarded as an aspect of distributive justice, and indeed the two concepts are often used interchangeably. Distributive justice means the fair distribution of benefits among the members of various communities. Social justice or distributive justice has to do with the means of obtaining welfare, not with welfare itself.

Social justice is a condition for sustainable peace in that it allows people to have the same chance and opportunity. By doing so, it lays the foundation of social harmony that in turn promotes stability. As Minogue (1998: 253) says, "Social justice refers to a society in which everything currently and conventionally regarded as a benefit or an advantage (or a privilege) available in modern life is freely available to all". If social injustice is one of the essential factors of conflict, it is obvious that social justice is an important condition for durable peace. The equality of all engenders peace in the hearts of people.

In post-conflict societies particularly, justice is necessary to facilitate the implementation of peace strategies. For Rigby (2001: 191), justice is an imperative for peace. "If people are to focus more on their hopes for the future than upon their fears of the past, they must be able to experience significant movement to counter the inequalities and injustices that fuelled the old division". This significant movement is simply justice. To be more effective in such a post-violence context justice has to focus on its restorative aspect.

A more specific element of restorative justice is that it not only promotes unity, reconciliation and peace but also addresses inequalities that led to the wrongdoing. Restorative justice, according to Zehar (1995: 181) is a kind of justice that involves the victim, the offender and the community in a search for solutions which promote repair, reconciliation and reassurance. Restorative justice, therefore, has the added quality of opening channels of communication

between perpetrators and victims. Villa-Vicencio (2000a: 69-70) argues that restorative justice includes the restoration of moral worth and dignity of all people, while striving for the establishment of some measure of social equality between all sectors of society. It also involves the restoration of relationships as a basis for prevention of a reoccurrence of human rights abuses and the reparation of damage to the personal dignity and material well being of victims.

Likewise Hayner (2001: 163) confirms:

Where gross inequalities are a product of past oppression, reconciliation and peace cannot be considered simply as a psychological or emotional process. Restorative justice aims at addressing structural inequalities and material needs. Reconciliation requires commitment, especially by those who have benefited and continue to benefit from past discrimination, to the transformation of unjust inequalities.

By restoring victims, perpetrators and community, restorative justice launches a fertile ground for sustainable peace. Personal and collective healing that are necessary conditions for lasting peace supposes that there must be reparation for the past. Volf (2001: 35) is right when he says that reparation or rehabilitation of the wrongdoing is a new basis of harmony between people. He rejects the idea of ‘cheap reconciliation’, which he considers a sin, a complicity in oppression. “To pursue cheap reconciliation is asking us to become accomplices in our own oppression, to become servants of the devil”. Without restorative justice, sustainable peace in war-torn societies is simply unimaginable.

### **2. 4. 3. Human development**

Democracy and social and restorative justice cannot bring about true sustainable peace without material well-being. Besides, without economic growth, democracy and social justice will remain too fragile. Sustainable peace demands that at least the most basic human needs are met: food security, water, healthcare, and education. When these basic human needs are met, durable peace is likely to follow.

It would be illogic to speak of sustainable peace when people are facing dehumanising poverty. According to a popular Francophone adage, “ventre affamé n’a point d’oreille” (a hungry person does not understand). Development is a human right and when this right is not met, sustainable peace cannot be said to be in existence.

It is not possible to move towards sustainable peace and stability without achieving substantial progress in the area of accelerated economic growth and people-centred development. It has become noticeable that the general breakdown of peace and stability is caused by different factors. Prime among these are the high level of poverty and unemployment that prevail throughout the countries...Macroeconomic strategies that lead to poverty alleviation and the creation of employment opportunities can support and bring about durable peace (Ami 1998:4).

In the same sense Lederach (1997: 24) is convinced that in order to be at all germane to contemporary conflict, peacebuilding must be rooted in and responsive to the experiential and subjective realities shaping people's perspectives and needs.

#### 2. 4. 4. Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Reconciliation is one of the main roads that lead to sustainable peace. Sustainable peace is the flower of which reconciliation is the seed. Undoubtedly, successful reconciliation brings about lasting peace. Besides, conditions for sustainable peace are also conditions for sustainable reconciliation in war-torn societies. In some circumstances, the two concepts are closely associated. In his research, Botcharova (2001: 272) asserts that reconciliation always takes time to complete because it refers to sustainable transformation that leads to sustainable peace.

Sustainable peace is more about relationships than about reconstruction work and suppressing gunfire, thus it is possible only through the transformation of people and relationships from below. The transformed people would then be able to change their relationships and build adequate new structures to support them. For the necessary infrastructures to be in place, the processes and solutions for a lasting peace must provide space for input and implementation across all levels of the affected society.

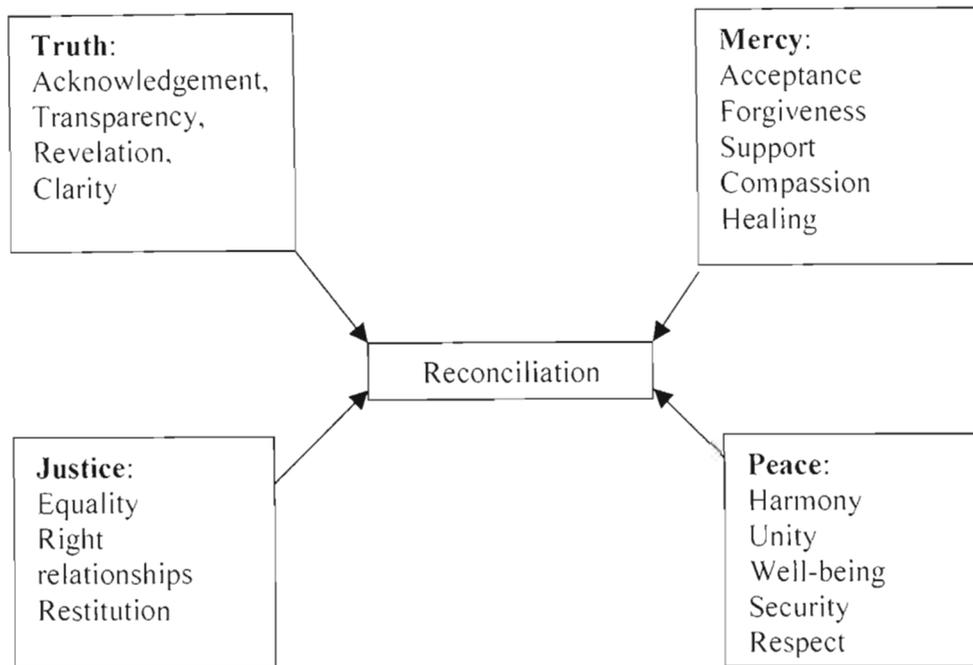
This space where sustainable peace can be built is reconciliation. According to Lederach (1997: 27) reconciliation represents a space:

Reconciliation, in essence represents a place, the point of encounter where concerns about both the past and the future can meet. Reconciliation, as encounter suggests that space for the acknowledging of the past and envisioning of the future is the necessary ingredient for reframing the present. For this to happen, people must find ways to encounter themselves and their enemies, their hopes and their fears.

Lederach suggests that reconciliation is a place where Truth, Mercy, Justice and Peace meet. Truth refers to honesty, revelation, clarity and open accountability about the past; Mercy

means compassion, forgiveness, and acceptance. Without these values, healing that brings about reconciliation will be out of question. Justice involves making things right, creating equal opportunity (social justice), rectifying the wrong (restorative justice) whilst Peace designs harmony, unity, well-being and security. Without these elements, conflicts will definitely continue.

**Figure 2. 1. The place called reconciliation**



**Source:** Lederach, 1997: 30

If  $\text{Reconciliation} = \text{Truth} + \text{Mercy} + \text{Justice} + \text{Peace}$ , what does sustainable peace look like? Is it not just another name for true reconciliation? Reconciliation and sustainable peace are sometimes inextricably linked with one another. Lederach continues that reconciliation can be understood as both a focus (perspective) and a locus (social space, location):

As a focus, it is built on and oriented towards the relational aspect of conflict. As a social phenomenon, reconciliation represents a space, a place or location of encounter, where parties to a conflict meet. Reconciliation must be proactive in seeking to create an encounter where people can focus on their relationships and share their perceptions, feelings, and experiences with one another, with the goal of creating new perceptions and new shared experience.

Reconciliation is thus another important condition for sustainable peace since it seeks to address the wrong of the past by attacking its root causes and envisioning a more prosperous, stable and shared future.

Table 2.1 presents a summary of the main elements of sustainable peace, the necessary conditions required and examples of practical actions which could be taken.

**Table 2. 1. Summary of main ideas of sustainable peace**

<b>Main elements of sustainable peace</b>	<b>Necessary conditions</b>	<b>Example of practical action required</b>	<b>Major outcome</b>
Absence of physical violence	A commitment to the non-violent resolution of conflict	Education programs for peace, Non-violence, Tolerance	Homicide rate too low or insignificant
Reconciliation of former enemies	Accountability and truth about the past, Acknowledgement, Asking for forgiveness, and common development projects	Campaign and education for forgiveness, Creation of truth commission	Transcendence of enemies' image, Cooperation and good relationship
Human and economic development	Poverty reduction, Appropriate strategies	Structural adjustment, Decentralisation.	Increased GDP, Improvement of social conditions and life quality, Increased life expectancy, Material well-being.
Democracy and social justice	Transparency, Wide participation, Freedom of expression, Equality of all before the law	Impunity eradication, Combating corruption and favouritism, Fair elections, Creation of just structures	Liberty, Reduced structural violence, Empowerment of the voiceless

## 2. 5. Conclusion

After this analysis, it is important to compare these conditions to the situation in which unity and reconciliation is being conducted in Rwanda. Are all these conditions being met? What are the particular requirements in Rwanda for sustainable peace to occur? The fifth chapter responds specifically to this question. However, it is clear even at this level that some of the mentioned conditions of sustainable peace are being met in the context of Rwanda while others are not met. Indeed, direct violence has appreciably reduced; the combat against corruption and favouritism is promising. Enormous efforts are needed to install a fair justice system that respects the principles of equality and freedom of expression. Democratic theories must be concretised in tangible facts in order to guide the everyday life style of Rwandans. Human development and poverty reduction are also very encouraging but poverty is still widespread and must be appreciably reduced in order for unity and reconciliation to take place.

It is important to note that sustainable peace is a process, a way of operating, a journey, rather than purely an end-result. Building sustainable peace must be understood as a permanent task, which is never complete. It is an orientation, a continuous commitment and a regular want. Conditions for sustainable peace, like perfection, will never be achieved but what is important is having a society which is committed to achieving them and working to do so. That is, a society that is moving towards sustainable peace.

Chapter Three provides the background against which sustainable peace, and in particular reconciliation, is being sought in Rwanda.

## **Chap. 3: RWANDA: AFTER THE GENOCIDE AND CURRENT SITUATION**

### **3. 1. General overview**

Rwanda is a small country of 26, 338 square kilometres situated at the heart of Africa. The general population is around 8 million people whose mother language is Kinyarwanda. Other official languages are French, English and Swahili (largely spoken in East Africa).

Rwanda does not have much by way of natural resources; its economy is principally agricultural. The country has been colonised by both Germans (for a short period) and Belgians. The latter brought about sweeping changes to the indigenous social-political structures in converting the country from a monarchy to a republic. Neighbouring countries are Burundi in the south, Tanzania in the east, Uganda in the north and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in the west. The country does not have any contact with the ocean. The climate is temperate.

### **3. 2. The social aspect**

The most important consequences of the genocide are evident at the social level. According to the government of Rwanda (2003), the 1994 genocide left the country with well over 300, 000 unaccompanied or orphaned children. Nearly 600, 000 women were widowed and the rest of the community traumatised and suspicious. For Havugimana (2001: 1-4), “losses occurred at different levels and have strong social repercussions. In our survey of 1995, 97% of survivors interviewed had lost at least one close relative. According to the government estimates, nearly one million people were killed, 400, 000 of whom were children...over 100,000 are in prisons”.

As a result of this, entire families and extended families were completely wiped out. Homes of many peoples were destroyed as well. This implies the loss of important symbols of privacy, identity and a safe place, which fostered family union. Consequently, thousands and thousands of children are homeless and without any caregivers. They are developing a

particular culture of violence, where they become involved in delinquent group activities such as rape and robbery.

Despite the government's early commitment of ameliorating ethnic unity and reconciliation, the wounds are still deeper, the memory of genocide is fresh and the healing process will take time to complete. Suspicion between Hutu and Tutsi is not uncommon. Some opportunist politicians attempted to use ethnicity as a way of reaching their egoistic ends. Impediments to reconciliation remain.

In 1994, a new word appeared in Rwandan vocabulary 'Ihahamuka'. This describes a variety of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder manifestations thought to originate from the genocide. This was frequent for the cases of many children or adults who are traumatised merely from seeing soldiers in uniform because they saw some murdering their relatives during the genocide. The national mourning week that is held from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> April each year is another important occasion that provokes general emotion in the population following the speeches, films and other actions associated with genocide. For this reason, the healing of wounds and justice for survivors seem to be unavoidable requirements for reconciliation.

Briefly, the 1994 genocide involved widespread destruction of the social relationships in Rwanda, a relationship that was already fragile because of other historical tragic events in this country. The end product was the development of ethnic hatred and of poverty and the destruction of the Rwandan social fabric.

### **3. 3. The economic aspect**

The 1994 conflict of Rwanda has affected the economy of the country, an economy that was initially weak. Since a large number of productive people have been killed and others have fled, the economic system, which is mainly agricultural could not remain intact.

Rwanda is a rural country with about 90% of the population engaged in agricultural activities, principally subsistence farming. Rwanda is the most densely populated country in Africa. In 1994, the population density was more than 450 persons per square kilometre of arable land. It is landlocked and has few natural resources and minimal industry. According to the Ministry of Finances and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN, 1996), Rwanda's primary

exports are coffee and tea. The 1994 war decimated Rwanda's fragile economic base, severely impoverished the population and eroded the country's ability to attract private and external investment. However, in the few years since the tragedy, Rwanda has made significant progress in stabilising and rehabilitating its economy asserts the same source. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has rebounded and inflation has been curbed. In June 1998, Rwanda signed an Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Rwanda has also embarked upon an ambitious privatisation programme with the World Bank (WB). Continued growth in 2000 depends on the maintenance of international aid levels and the strengthening of world prices of coffee and tea.

During the four years of civil war from 1990 to 1994 that culminated in the genocide, the GDP declined in three out of four years, posting a dramatic decline at more than 40% in 1994, the year of the genocide. The 9 % increase in real GDP for 1995, the first post-war year, signalled the resurgence of economic activity (IMF, November 2000). The government of Rwanda posted a 13 % GDP growth rate in 1996 through improved collection of tax revenues, accelerated privatisation of state enterprises and continued improvement in export crop and food production. Tea plantations continue to be rehabilitated and tended as their farmers' sense of security returns. However, the road to recovery was slow.

As security in Rwanda improves, the country's nascent tourism sector may expand. Centred on the attractions of a population of mountain gorillas and a game park, tourism has potential as source of foreign exchange if the country's tourism infrastructure is improved. Possibilities of economic expansion, however, are limited by inadequate infrastructure and transport. Existing foreign investment is concentrated in commercial establishments such as mining, tea, coffee and tourism. Minimum wage and social security regulations are in force.

### **3. 4. The political aspect**

The political thinking of the Rwandan government is still informed by the 1994 genocide. Since 1994, the government has advocated a policy of emphasising the 'Rwandanness' of all its citizens and all references to ethnic origin have been eliminated from identity cards. The inclusion of all Rwandans has become the major preoccupation of the national government.

The government of Rwanda has established a number of institutions aimed at creating checks and balances, such as the National Human Rights Commission, the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission and the Office of the General Auditor of Public Finances. As Rwandan society has democratised since the genocide, so issues of good governance and the development and implementation of checks and balances have emerged as part of the government's policy, correlating as they do with the conditionality imposed by external multilateral and bilateral funders.

There is generally open debate relating to many of government's policies. Populations are involved in all processes of decision-making, especially in electing local government representatives. The political parties' popular activities were suspended until the end of the transition in 2003 since the inception of the broad-based transitional government to avoid ethnic divisions between Hutu and Tutsi whose unity is evidently fragile. The political parties' activities were allowed at the higher level only (political bureau). The National Union Government of Transition was formed by six parties involved in the Arusha Peace Agreement on Rwanda of 1993. Members of parliament were nominated by their respective political parties until the end of the transition. Special social groups such as women and youth are represented in the parliament.

The major project in the political domain is decentralisation to ensure people's participation. According to the USAID (2003) "local governments are beginning to assume responsibility for many of the social services previously maintained by the central government. The government is involved in an impressive effort to educate and inform citizens of their rights and responsibilities under a more pluralistic system". However, while the government has been developing democratic governmental processes since 1995, help is needed to ensure transparency and inclusiveness at all levels.

### **3. 5. The main recovery tasks**

Looking at both human and material destruction caused in 1994, there was no other option to handling the situation save that of confronting the reality. Four issues were the most urgent:

- Establishing security and state authority;
- Making justice available to all;

- Avoiding vengeance and
- Accommodating the large number of returning refugees.

When the ‘genocidaires’ were defeated, they escaped to neighbouring countries. Over two million citizens held for political bargaining and being a source of military recruitment. The threat to security was very real because ‘Interahamwe’ militia (those responsible for the genocide) and defeated ex-army members were in neighbouring countries refusing refugees the right of returning home. The refugees finally returned after a strong political and military campaign especially in DRC, and security has also returned to every corner of the country. The return of the refugees was a pre-requisite to national security; it was a matter of urgency.

As the cornerstone of maintaining internal order and avoiding acts of retaliation, justice was the most crucial aspect when dealing with the effects of genocide. On the one hand, the surviving relatives of the dead wanted to see those who killed their dear ones punished. To them, the best justice should be an eye for an eye! Yet no government can adopt that kind of solution, especially if the final goal is reconciliation. On the other hand, however, those people who committed crimes had to be punished if the culture of impunity was to be eradicated.

The government did not and does not have sufficient means of bringing rapid justice to the 120, 000 suspects of genocide who were in prisons. Worse still, the judicial system has lost its personnel, judicial infrastructure was destroyed, the financial capacity was too low, and Rwanda did not have a law on its statute books to punish genocide. The situation was urgent. An organic law on the crime of genocide and related crimes has been adopted in 1996, and a traditional system of justice known as ‘Gacaca’ that is both reconciliative and restorative has been created. This kind of justice involves members of the community in the trial and sentencing process, so that justice can be achieved quickly.

### **3. 6. Conclusion**

This chapter has provided an overview of the genocide and its effects and the context in which the idea of reconciliation was born and conducted. After the genocide, the economy was severely damaged and the wounds in the social fabric were yet fresh.

Despite the political will of reconciliation, some opportunist politicians used to manipulate the concept of ethnicity as a way of reaching their political ends. Establishing national sovereignty, achieving justice, avoiding vengeance and returning refugees were the four most urgent issues facing the country. To make an important contribution to the second and third of these, the government established the NURC, whose role is the subject of the next chapter.

## **Chap. 4: THE NATIONAL UNITY AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION: ITS PROGRAMS AND STRATEGIES**

### **4. 1. Origins**

Rwanda has experienced years of bad governance based on discrimination. As a result, prolonged periods of corrupt and repressive regimes saw the entrenchment of ‘divide and rule’ as the principle of governing. Inevitably, this repressive culture led to widespread human rights violations, which culminated in the 1994 genocide that saw up to one million Rwandans perish. The Arusha Peace Accord of 1993 between the then government and the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) and other political forces identified unity and reconciliation processes as fundamental to stability and development in Rwanda.

The Government of National Union considers the unity and reconciliation of Rwandan people as the basis for defeating social, economic and political underdevelopment and set up the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission. The establishment of this commission, therefore, marked a major milestone in attempting to fundamentally change the effects of bad governance based on discrimination and sectarianism. This chapter draws heavily on NURC’s 2000 annual report.

The National Unity and Reconciliation Commission was established by the Law n° 3/99 of March 12, 1999. This Law provides that the commission is entrusted with “preparing and conducting, at national level, debates intended to promote unity and reconciliation among Rwandans” (NURC, 2000a: 9).

The activities of the NURC are the outcomes of two important processes: the consultative meetings which took place in the state house of the Republic of Rwanda in ‘Village Urugwiro’ from 09<sup>th</sup> May 1998 to 13<sup>th</sup> March 1999 between all Rwandan leaders and the grassroots consultations that took place across the country. According to the NURC (2000b: 6), during these consultations, the following factors were identified by both the leaders and the general population as being the main causes of the 1994 genocide and other massacres in Rwanda:

- History wrongly understood and deliberately manipulated;

- Bad governance, meaning repressive regimes that divided people on ethnic basis;
- Social injustice and impunity which created unequal opportunity and discrimination; and
- Poverty.

It has been noticed that if unity and reconciliation are to be achieved in Rwanda, these root causes of the conflict have to be addressed. The NURC programs have been therefore defined in response to these structural issues. The program of civic education has the following aims: re-teaching the true history of the country and focusing on the traditional unity of the Rwandan people; introducing the principles and practice of democracy aimed at fostering both political and economic good governance through poverty alleviation strategies; the participation of all; decentralisation of power and the reform of the justice system to eliminate impunity.

#### **4. 2. Functions of the NURC**

As provided by the above Law, the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission has the following functions:

- To organise and oversee national public debates aimed at promoting national unity and the reconciliation of Rwandan people;
- To use all means possible to sensitise Rwandans to unity and to lay on it a firm foundation;
- To conceive and disseminate ideas and initiatives aimed at promoting peace among Rwandan people, and to encourage a culture of unity and reconciliation;
- To denounce any written or declared ideas and materials seeking to disunite Rwandan people;
- To prepare and co-ordinate Rwanda's programs promoting unity and reconciliation;
- To educate Rwandans on their rights, and to assist in building a culture of tolerance and respect of other people's right;
- To give guidance to institutions charged with drafting laws aimed at fostering unity and reconciliation;
- To monitor closely whether government organisations respect and observe the policies of national unity and reconciliation;

- To monitor whether political parties, leaders and the population respect and observe the policies of national unity and the reconciliation practices.

The Commission's functions and programs were developed on the basis of ideas from the Rwandan community after a consultative campaign on what could be done in order to re-establish unity and relationships among Rwandan people. While going about its daily duties, the commission appealed to Rwandan citizens at all levels to contribute their opinions on how to achieve unity and reconciliation. A discussion forum was established for Rwandans to look into the real causes of their divisions and to suggest what mechanisms to put in place in order to build sustainable unity and reconciliation in Rwanda.

The commission's duty is therefore to act as a forum where all categories of Rwandans can contribute their ideas and advice in order to eliminate ignorance, poverty, the lack of justice, bad governance, and ethnic exclusion that are obstacles to unity and reconciliation in the country.

#### **4. 3. Structure of NURC's organs**

Four organs form the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission of Rwanda: the Rwandan Community, the National Summit, the Commission's Council and the Permanent Secretariat. Each of these levels has its proper missions.

##### **4. 3. 1. The Rwandan Community**

According to NURC establishment Law, Rwandan communities across the country constitute the basis for the NURC work and policies. In its work, the NURC seeks to operate in a participatory way to permit Rwandans of all walks of life to shape and influence the ways and means in which unity and reconciliation is to be achieved. In this sense, the role of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission is essentially that of providing a platform upon which Rwandans may air their views on what has divided them in the past, and on how to build a lasting united and reconciled Rwanda. The NURC programs draw from these exercises.

#### **4. 3. 2. The National Summit of Unity and Reconciliation**

Chaired by the President of the Republic, and attended by community leaders drawn from all communities of Rwanda, the National Summit is held once a year. It reviews progress and accomplishments in regard to unity and reconciliation. It assesses whether unity and reconciliation processes are progressing successfully and suggests corrective measures if necessary. As provided for in the Protocol of Arusha Peace Agreement on Power Sharing in Rwanda, Article 88, “the National Summit for the Unity and Reconciliation Commission will conduct special debates on unity and reconciliation among Rwandans”. Article 24 of this Protocol provides that “the National Summit for Unity and Reconciliation will aim at bringing together all categories of Rwandans to exchange ideas on their unity and reconciliation, with the aim of searching for strategies and concrete actions likely to allow the achievement of this objective”.

#### **4. 3. 3. The Commission’s Council**

The Commission Council comprises 12 members, and is chaired by a managing committee composed of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and the Executive Secretary. They meet once a month to evaluate the program of the Permanent Secretariat, to monitor its functioning in carrying out the objective of strengthening unity and reconciliation among Rwandans. The Chairman of the Commission is responsible for following up and presiding over Commission’s meetings.

#### **4. 3. 4. The Permanent Secretariat**

The Permanent Secretariat is managed by the Executive Secretary and has the following functions:

- To coordinate and supervise the general duties carried out within the Commission’s Permanent Secretariat;
- To liaise with the Commission, government and other institutions in efforts to achieve unity and reconciliation among Rwandans;
- To consult extensively with the national leadership as often as possible;

- To consult extensively with civic society, e.g. community-based organisations, churches, youth and women's associations;
- To mobilise funds from inside and outside the country to support Commission's activities;
- To mobilise international agencies in similar endeavours;
- To seek national and international support for Rwanda's reconciliation efforts.

The Executive Secretariat is the Commission's executive body. It is headed by an Executive Secretary who holds the rank of Minister of State. His/her duties are:

- To prepare the Commission's meetings;
- To examine how the Commission's plan of action can be implemented and to seek all possible ways to ensure its implementation;
- To prepare and organise debate conferences on unity and reconciliation;
- To follow up various programs related to unity and reconciliation run by community-based structures or institutions;
- To prepare and organise a National Summit to exchange ideas and views.

The Executive Secretariat also comprises a Commission's General Secretariat and three directorates: the Directorate of Civic Education, the Directorate of Conflict Resolution and the Directorate in charge of Supporting Community Initiatives. The National Unity and Reconciliation Commission's programs correspond to these directorates. The Commission's General Secretariat is headed by a General Manager, who holds the rank of Secretary General in a Cabinet Ministry and whose main duties are:

- To coordinate management duties within the Permanent Secretariat;
- To take care of financial resources and administrative duties within the Commission;
- To carry out any other duties assigned to him/her by the Executive Secretary.

The General Secretariat has two departments: the information and research department and the finance and human resources department.

#### **4. 4. Programs of the NURC**

The programs of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission are grouped in three main activities: civic education, conflict mediation and community initiatives support. There

is another important program concerning communication. Each of these programs is managed independently.

#### **4. 4. 1. Civic Education**

This program aims at telling truth about what happened and correcting false beliefs that promote conflict and violence. It comprises three sub-programs:

- The section concerned with ideology which is in charge of ‘Ingando’ or Solidarity Camps. This program concerns leaders of political parties, church leaders, etc. and future leaders (i.e. secondary school leavers admitted in universities and other high learning institutions);
- The documentation and training program (in provinces);
- The section concerned with research in civic education

In general, the civic education program has the following responsibilities:

- To train and involve national authorities in the process of unity and reconciliation;
- To periodically train Rwandans of various categories through meetings, seminars, discussions, conferences and media on unity and reconciliation;
- To use civic education to establish a culture of tolerance, peaceful coexistence and unity and reconciliation in Rwanda;
- To establish an education syllabus aimed at promoting unity and reconciliation in primary and secondary schools, and universities and other higher learning institutions; and
- To evaluate the progress being made in unity and reconciliation programs.

This program deals especially with the policies of good governance and democratisation policy and aims at educating people about true Rwandan history. Civic education has become an important forum where Rwandans exchange their views about what happened, why it happened and to try to find appropriate solutions.

#### **4. 4. 2. Conflict mediation program**

Another important policy of the national unity and reconciliation process is the fostering of a culture of conflict resolution through peaceful means such as dialogue and cooperation. This program is carried out through three sub-programs:

- The legal unit;
- The evaluation and monitoring program; and
- The conflict mediation program.

The conflict mediation program has the following responsibilities:

- To review laws pertaining to unity and reconciliation in Rwanda;
- To propose legal reforms in the interest of unity and reconciliation;
- To act as a monitor and to denounce injustice and discrimination;
- To report on relevant matters to appropriate national institutions;
- To closely monitor whether government organisations respect and observe the policies of national unity and reconciliation among Rwandans;
- To monitor whether political parties, leaders and the population in general respect and observe the policies and practices of national unity and reconciliation; and
- To mediate in conflicts pertaining to the unity and reconciliation of Rwandan people.

This program is strongly linked to justice and monitors and denounces injustice in the country. One of its essential tasks is the reviewing of laws pertaining to unity and reconciliation and the proposal of law reforms in the interests of national unity and reconciliation.

#### **4. 4. 3. Community initiatives program**

This program is concerned with assisting with community development projects as a means of reducing poverty and as a way of promoting unity and reconciliation. It encourages cooperation among Rwandans of all ethnic groups by bringing them together in common development projects.

This program has the following tasks:

- To develop practical programs to promote unity and reconciliation;
- To communicate the opinions of the population on unity and reconciliation to leaders;
- To co-ordinate the action plans of government institutions and national and international non governmental organisations aimed at improving the socio-economic status of the population in order to reduce poverty and strengthen unity and reconciliation;
- To monitor and co-ordinate projects for unity and reconciliation initiated by the population, local institutions and independent organisations;
- To support and initiate local social and economic efforts that seek to unite and reconcile Rwandans.

The communication program aims at sensitising and informing the population about the national unity and reconciliation policy; liaising with public and private media and serving as an exchange forum for Rwandans. It also informs the public about the projects and activities of the commission.

It is important to note that the NURC can also define specific programs when deemed necessary. In addition it can define a year program in accordance with assessed needs. For example, the Commission planned three programs in 2002:

- To play an active role in the reconciliatory justice under the Gacaca jurisdictions;
- To strengthen the structures of the commission as an institution with high level of capacity and efficiency for optimum results; and
- To monitor and ensure that unity and reconciliation policy is taking roots in Rwandans' daily life.

#### **4. 5. Specific activities of the NURC**

The NURC has identified a number of activities to be carried out in order to concretise national unity and reconciliation programs:

- To reinforce justice in order to eliminate impunity;
- To speed up 'Gacaca Jurisdictions';

- To conduct training for Rwandans of all categories through various educational means such as radio, television, newspapers, meetings, conferences, songs, sports, plays, and so on.
- To include the programme of unity and reconciliation and patriotism in the curricula of all education levels;
- To assist the victims of the consequences of genocide and massacres, war and exile;
- To reform the structure and functioning of political parties to avoid that they become the source of sectarianism;
- To put in place good governance which will provide an example of unity and reconciliation, truth, justice and the culture of peace. This will include avoiding favouritism in recruiting employees;
- To appoint representatives to the Commission from Cell to Provincial levels;
- To educate orphans;
- To deal with the problems of street children;
- To abolish the use of verbal expression that hurt people and bring about sectarianism. For example the use of words such as 'Congolese', 'Burundians', 'Ugandans' to denote where people come from after the war;
- To allow people of all categories to participate in developing programs of unity and reconciliation;
- To encourage crime perpetrators to tell truth and to ask for forgiveness from the victims in public, and to encourage victims to show courage in forgiving them;
- To ensure the security of those who tell the truth about the events of 1994;
- And to draw up the list of people who protected others in 1994 and who died because of that, and to reward them.

#### **4. 6. Conclusion**

This chapter has described the origins, programs and strategies of NURC, which was established to build reconciliation amongst Rwandans. The next chapter assesses its impacts to date in contributing to sustainable peace.

## **Chap. 5: ASSESSING PROGRESS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN RWANDA**

### **5. 1. Introduction**

According to Prof. Rutembesa (personal communication, July 24<sup>th</sup> 2003), a researcher at the National University of Rwanda's Centre for Conflict Management (CCM), the national unity and reconciliation process' realisations lie mainly in good governance, army reintegration and the creation of 'Gacaca' system of justice.

This evaluation of NURC's activities will focus on the issues of justice, good governance and poverty reduction interventions. This chapter will assess the potential of the national unity and reconciliation process as a means of building sustainable and positive peace in Rwanda. This assessment will show both the strengths and weaknesses of the process. Although the NURC remains the key analysis framework, it is important to note that the reconciliation process in Rwanda is a widespread activity that goes beyond the NURC which is the purely coordinator of unity and reconciliation efforts. Rather the broader concept of national unity and reconciliation process will be used instead of NURC. The evaluation will involve NURC's perspective as well the views of outside bodies and the researcher's personal experience.

### **5. 2. Justice**

As seen through previous chapters, true reconciliation cannot occur without accountability and justice about the past. The main task of the people, who have to mend the tissues of a society that has been completely torn, is to eradicate the culture of impunity, thus setting the path to social cohesion and future development of the country. The modern justice system is not an adequate tool for settling such issues. According to the Ministry of Justice (MINIJUST, 2003), regular courts have been able to give a decision on about 5, 864 cases between 1996 and 2000. To bring the remaining 115 000 people in detention for their role in the 1994 genocide to trial, would have taken an additional 60 years. This time frame excludes the trials of the many perpetrators who, until then, had not yet been apprehended. This was obviously an unworkable situation. In order to streamline and speed up the process, the traditional court system, Gacaca, was established as a means of bringing about the desired effects as quickly as

possible. The quicker the process could be dealt with, the sooner Rwandans could get on with the task of rebuilding their nation.

The traditional Rwandan system of settling disputes was aimed not only at the punishment of the guilty person but also of promoting social harmony and cohesion. This system requires wide participation in rebuilding justice, given the participatory manner in which crimes have been perpetrated. By using these Gacaca Courts, NURC has the following expectations:

- The reconstruction of what happened during the genocide and the admission of guilt by the perpetrators;
- The speeding up of the legal proceedings by using as many courts as possible;
- The reconciliation of all Rwandans and the building of their unity.

According to the Department of Gacaca (2003), Gacaca courts comprise four levels (Cell, Sector, District, and Province), 11,000 courts and 250,000 popularly elected judges. This system of justice will hasten trials and, hopefully, will reveal the truth that is necessary for reconciliation. NURC is convinced that Gacaca justice is an ideal way towards effective unity and reconciliation. Many participants in solidarity camps with whom the researcher talked affirmed that Gacaca is an effective tool for unity of Rwandans since it allows people to sit together and reveal the truth about the past.

For this, the NURC has undertaken a campaign to sensitise people to support this reconciliative justice based on the eradication of impunity, on genuine repentance and on the compensation of survivors. A law passed on August 30<sup>th</sup> 1996 classified perpetrators into categories once their roles during the tragedy has been established. The Gacaca courts are competent for the trials of suspects in categories 2, 3, and 4. These respectively include persons whose criminal acts or whose acts of criminal participation place them among perpetrators, conspirators or accomplices of intentional homicide or of serious assault against the person- causing death; persons whose criminal acts or whose criminal participation make them guilty of serious assault against the person; and persons who committed offences against property (MINIJUST, 2003).

The Gacaca courts provide for a range of penalties that vary according to whether the suspect has confessed and pleaded guilty spontaneously or after denunciation by the Cell's Gacaca court. Details about this range of penalties appear in appendix 1. In order to speed up the

process, suspects who have confessed and have been sentenced to imprisonment will receive a commutation of half of the sentence into works of public interest. In some regions, NURC has initiated projects that such persons carry out. For instance, in Ruhengeri (north west), such persons re-built villages for survivors as a symbolic reparation act and a price for forgiveness and reconciliation (NURC, 2003)

The NURC has visited locations around the country encouraging both prison inmates and the wider community to participate in the Gacaca process and to tell the truth about what happened in their villages during the genocide. This process encourages the survivors to forgive those who repent and helps to open a new chapter in their relationships. This mobilisation campaign has started to bear some fruits. According to the NUR, well over 40,000 suspects have confessed their crimes and they have been provisionally released by presidential decree, waiting for Gacaca trials.

The Gacaca process can contribute to promoting the national unity and reconciliation activity. The way in which this traditional system of justice operates will allow more truth to come out because citizens who have been the eyewitnesses of the events that occurred are encouraged to give evidence. The names of the victims and perpetrators of the crimes committed will be established and, even if the task proves to be difficult, given that some places are mere ruins; some situations at least will be clarified. Knowing the truth is an important step towards reconciliation, especially when this truth involves acknowledgement. Lederach (1997:26) argues, “acknowledgement is decisive in the process of reconciliation. Acknowledgement through hearing one another’s stories validates experience and feelings and represents the first step towards restoration of the person and the relationship”. Likewise, Walter (1998: 53) adds that truth is medicine. Without it, a society remains infected with past evils that will inevitably break out in the future.

The main contribution of the Gacaca court system lies in its capacity to reveal the truth about the genocide and other massacres that occurred in Rwanda in past years. By allowing the populations of the same cell to work together, this system of justice will provide a basis for collaboration and unity between Rwandans, mainly because when the truth is known, there will be no more suspicion, the perpetrator will be punished, justice will be done to the victim and the innocent prisoner can be reintegrated in the society.

The unity and reconciliation process emphasises the importance of restorative justice if sustainable peace is to become a reality in the country. The 1994 genocide was planned and executed by the then government. It is therefore the responsibility of the government that inherited the chaos to establish mechanisms to support the genocide survivors.

The government has established a fund to assist the poorest of the survivors. The fund (Fonds d'Assistance aux Rescapés du Genocide or Fund for Genocide Survivors Assistance, FARG) is currently allocated 5 % of the government's total annual budget and this money is used mainly to cater for the education fees of the survivors' children, for medical treatment and for shelter to those who lost their homes. But supporting the survivors only, without considering the rest of the community affected by war, including the families of genocide suspects who are presently in prisons, may engender envy and generate hatred. To prevent this, the government has created another fund under the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Social Welfare that takes care of poor cases throughout society.

These strategic actions seem to be effective in promoting unity and reconciliation in Rwanda. Da Silva (2001: 304) argues, "restorative justice tends to focus on the perpetrators, the victims and the community; while it seeks justice for the victims it also explore ways to restore harmony between the three parties. It seems that restorative justice is a more inclusive and wholistic process for bringing about reconciliation in society". The process of Gacaca justice emphasises that accountability and breaking the cycle of impunity are keys to create conditions for peace and stability. The Gacaca system also termed 'Ubutabera bwunga' (reconciliative justice) is expected to allow communities to establish the facts and decide the fate of those accused of lesser offences. It is believable, given the first fruits of the process that the Gacaca process will contribute to promote unity, reconciliation and peace in Rwanda.

However, although the Gacaca justice system has started its activities successfully, there are some problems that may hinder its effectiveness. The high level of poverty is the most important obstacle to reconciliation. It is hard and irrational for people to understand how they can embrace either justice or the reconciliation processes when they are struggling with obtaining the basics of everyday life such as food, medical care, and housing. As one young person put it once during the TRC hearings in South Africa, "reconciliation is only the vocabulary of those who can afford it. It is inexistent to a person whose self-respect has been

stripped away and poverty is a fostering wound that consumes his soul” (Villa Vicencio, 2000b: 207). This problem is examined more fully in section 5.5.

Another important problem is that some people may lie or confess to a crime just to get out of prison. Others remain reluctant and do not want to support the Gacaca process; they refuse to tell the truth about the genocide. Without truth, the whole process of reconciliation is compromised. In their research entitled *Postgenocidal reconstruction: building peace in Rwanda*, Prendergast and Snock (1998: 7) argue, “on the downside, Gacaca holds the potential for undermining the rule of law and perpetuating the culture of impunity if friends, family, and neighbors refuse to hold people accountable for their crimes”. Corruption in the ordinary judicial system as well as in Gacaca system is another impediment to unity and reconciliation among Rwandans.

In addition, the Gacaca system has been questioned on several aspects of human rights. According to Human Rights Watch (HRW, 2003), given the poor training of judges, defendants accused of similar crimes may be placed in different categories, resulting in sentence disparity. The lack of impartiality of judges has raised in several communities and there is no protection for witnesses and detainees, who testify publicly, thus making it difficult for Tutsi - a small minority in most communities - to accuse others. Gacaca is not perfect, but it is much better than conventional justice.

### **5. 3. Good governance and democracy**

Justice goes hand in hand with democracy, good governance and a respect for human rights. ✓  
The government of Rwanda has undertaken a wide process of democratisation to ensure the participation of all in decision-making processes and to ensure freedom and equality before the law. A number of institutions have been created to foster transparency, human rights respect, and so on.

The presidential and legislative elections in Rwanda in August, September and October 2003 were a test of democracy in the country. Although at the internal level, many Rwandans appreciate the ongoing process of democratisation, outside bodies' views have been different from these. Indeed, following the election results, considered by the majority of Rwandans as

a tangible result of efforts to build a more united and prosperous Rwandan society, external observers and political opposition in Rwanda are pessimistic.

According to Twagiramungu, a former prime minister and main opposition leader quoted in — Agence France Presse (AFP, 2003), “there is no political openness in Rwanda. We are experiencing a system of unique party disguised in multipartism”. Twagiramungu was reacting to the new government nomination. For him, the core ministries stay in the hands of RPF (party of President Kagame) members. “Many other ministries were given to ‘independent’ people often considered as allies of FPR”. The same source quotes the external opposition that qualified the new government as “the continuity of dictatorship”. For the political opposition, undemocratic practices in Rwanda constitute the main obstacle to unity and reconciliation between Rwandans.

Speaking of the recent presidential and legislative elections in the country, the European Union Election Mission in Rwanda (EOM, 2003) says that “democratic conditions were not fully guaranteed”. The mission denounced “irregularities” such as “intimidations and pressures” against those sympathizing with Twagiramungu, the main opposition candidate. It also says that state resources were utilised in favour of Kagame, the outgoing president, at the expense of other candidates. These allegations have been strongly rejected by Rwandan officials who accused the European Union of wanting to support candidates on the basis of their numerical ethnic importance.

The EOM, as well as HRW (2003) affirm that the concept of “ethnic divisionism” was manipulated to weaken the main opposition candidate. Based on these elements, they said that the elections were not “fair and transparent” although they recognised that elections allowed Rwanda to take an important step forward in its democratisation process and that “they took place in a safe climate without violent incidents”.

Reacting to the EOM report on presidential election in Rwanda, the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Louis Michel, in his recent visit to Rwanda, said that the mission had underestimated the historical context of Rwanda. To him, it was essential to refer to the recent past of Rwanda to judge the outcome of the electoral process. He emphasised that Rwanda has taken an important step in its democratisation process before calling the government for strengthening democratic principles and practices.

What is clear is that full democracy can never be achieved. In the view of this researcher, the above organisations tend to underestimate the gravity of divisionism during the presidential campaign in a traumatised society where the same divisions caused an unimaginable tragedy. Campaign documents targeting ethnic divisionism prepared by Twagiramungu have been presented to the press, both national and international. Twagiramungu himself recognised the document insisting that ethnic mentions were a simple ‘error’. He added that the concept of ethnic divisionism was manipulated by government leaders to undermine the opposition. The political thinking of Rwandans, however, is still affected by the recent history of the country.

The same thing is confirmed by outside bodies of human rights. International Crisis Group (2002), a Brussels based human rights and democracy organisation, asserts that political control in Rwanda will damage any hope of reconciliation. Reconciliation, it argues, presupposes the existence of political liberty and transparency to avoid blockade. “The government’s repression of critical voices creates a vicious circle by radicalising the opposition both inside and outside Rwanda. A blood pact, or ‘Igihango’, has been sealed between certain heirs of the ‘Hutu power’; and survivors of the genocide”. The organisation argues that “the absence of fair and transparent democracy creates the fragility of the internal reconciliation process”.

The government of Rwanda, on this view, must give Rwandan opposition and civil society the chance to regulate themselves, to assume their responsibilities towards the genocide and to create the foundations for general reconciliation, and not seek to impose every element of the process. For International Crisis Group, the government of Rwanda must reach out to the opposition in exile and offer it participation in a national debate on country’s future. The government must come to allow and accept criticism and the emergence of political opposition’s ideas. It confirms that the opposition has been either forced to exile or silenced. “In the name of unity and reconciliation, the various segments of Rwandan society are subjected to a paternalistic and authoritarian doctrine and cannot express themselves freely”.

On its part, Amnesty International (2003b) for example argues that the “divisive ideology is a vague terminology used by the government to disenfranchise the political opposition”. The organisation, as well as Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN, 2003), a United Nations’ service, affirms that freedom of expression is not respected in Rwanda and that members of the opposition are not allowed to freely criticise the government. For Amnesty

International, political opposition must enjoy at least the basic freedom of opinion and expression for peace and development to happen in Rwanda.

However, Amnesty International (2003a) is optimistic about the ongoing process of democratisation in Rwanda. “Amnesty International welcomes the positive steps taken by the current government of Rwanda during the post-genocide transition period. The accomplishments of adopting a new Constitution, including the legislation concerning the administration of political life and the management of pre-elections are significant”. But the organisation urges the government of Rwanda to concretise the theories of the new constitution in practice.

The international human rights bodies suggest that neutral institution equipped with political, administrative and financial independence can help build reconciliation and peace in Rwanda through a genuine democracy. Such an institution must be allowed to establish equitable standards for political competition and to define the limits of freedom of expression and association, in order to avoid abuse bound to lead to ethnic tensions. Unity and reconciliation between political leaders must occur first for general reconciliation to take place. This requires the existence of just democracy that increases freedom of expression and press, participation of all and open debate. Political control and the lack of fair democracy are likely to feed new social disorder that naturally undermines reconciliation efforts.

The unity and reconciliation of Rwandans will not depend on how fair the legal theories are but rather on what the democratic practices and habits will be. Sustainable peace depends mainly on the environment that prevails in terms of respect of, amongst others human rights, freedom of expression and equality of all before the law. More efforts are therefore needed to strengthen culture of democracy, justice and good governance in order to promote lasting peace in the country.

The researcher is convinced that the reconciliation process in Rwanda will build up, as democracy will develop. The relationship between democracy and reconciliation is very close. In their book *Reconciliation after violent conflict*, Bloomfield et al. (2003: 10) argue that the best form of post-conflict government is a democratic one. Bloomfield and colleagues insist that reconciliation is a matter of rebuilding fair new relationships between former enemies. This exercise demands a high level of trust among them and trust depend on how political

activities such as elections, governance, decision-making processes are transparent, free and inclusive. The more the transparency the quicker the reconciliation.

#### **5. 4. Education**

The NURC civic education campaign is wide ranging and has used mediums such as songs, calendars, T-shirts, comic strips and booklets in its education drive for peace and good governance.

The main objective of the civic education campaign -also termed 'Ingando' or 'solidarity camp'- is to foster unity, peace, reconciliation, tolerance and other positive values through training, conferences, seminars, mass media, and so on. Topics vary according to the seminars' audience. Permanent topics include the causes of conflicts, massacres and genocide in Rwanda, the traditional unity that characterised Rwandan ancestors, the relationships between Rwandan people, the culture of peace and the strategies which can be used to avoid violent conflicts. As revealed in chapters one and four, the manipulation of history where the Tutsi people were presented as foreigners and colonisers, served as an important source of conflict. Examples of 'Ingando' organised by the NURC are given in Appendix 2.

This author attended several solidarity camps, firstly as a journalist reporter (1999-2001) and more recently (2003) as a researcher. The core message is that all Rwandans are friends and brothers, and that physical differences must not be considered as a source of conflict. In fact, it is often difficult to distinguish Tutsi from Hutu on the basis of physical appearance alone. Besides, since marriages between them are not uncommon, relationships and resemblances are therefore profound. These elements facilitate unity and reconciliation.

What is clear is that political leaders in the past, in order to reach their own objectives, manipulated the concept of ethnicity. The present government is investing efforts in trying to convince Rwandans that they are the same. This new ideology, coupled with concrete actions such as power sharing, military integration and so on is producing effects on the thinking of Rwandan people.

Military integration has been one of the more tangible outcomes of the national unity and reconciliation process. It is a great achievement that former belligerent forces form the

national army of Rwanda. It is important to note that the security that prevails in Rwanda is an outcome of the relationship between former belligerents and the cooperation with the populations to safeguard stability and peace. The education for peace has played a key role in this collaboration. All soldiers of the defeated army attended solidarity camps before their reintegration in the army. The NURC organises seminars for both military and civil society to emphasise the role of their cooperation.

Education for peace has produced a very particular result in the north west of the country during the infiltration movements of 1997 to 2000. Some parents reported their sons who were involved in such movements to the national army. These were not imprisoned, but grouped in NURC solidarity camps to develop peace values through re-education. These ex-infiltrators have already created a unity and reconciliation cultural troupe known as 'Abahamya b'ukuri' or 'truth witnesses', which organise meetings, to speak of the importance of unity and reconciliation in Rwanda.

In collaboration with other concerned state institutions, NURC also organises regular visits to neighbouring countries to encourage Rwandans who still stay in refugee camps to come back home. Peace, unity and reconciliation in the country are permanent issues of these discussions. The result is encouraging and Rwandans continue to repatriate.

In addition, the political will to accomplish reconciliation is another essential tool. The divisions, discrimination and ethnic hatred that damaged Rwanda are mainly a political invention and the same politicians are capable of reducing or even eliminating the culture of hatred and replacing it with a culture of unity and harmony. Ordinary populations generally are innocent and follow the ideology of their political leaders. The recent presidential results are eloquent proof that people follow the political ideology that is taught to them.

Paul Kagame, a Tutsi (the 15% minority) received more than 95% of the votes compared with the two main Hutu candidates (from the majority, 85%) who together received less than 5%. The important factor that favoured Kagame is his firm belief in the domains of unity, reconciliation, security, good governance, decentralisation, power sharing, army integration, the poverty reduction program, the improvement in the conditions of women (they will represent at least 30% in decision-making instances, according to the new Constitution), assistance to genocide survivors and other poorest groups and so on. Since 1994, he has

taught unity and reconciliation through all his public speeches, and manifests a strong will to replace 'Hutuness' and 'Tutsiness' by 'Rwandanness'.

However, some people and organisations argue that solidarity camps have the potential to become a framework for political indoctrination for the sake of the ruling party. The International Crisis Group (2002) comments that, "faced with the risk of electoral competition based exclusively on ethnic lines, the RPF wants first and foremost to restructure Rwandan political culture through popular education and solidarity camps. The Rwandan leadership argues, in effect, that the transformation of existing states of mind is pre-requisite for the restoration of full civil and political rights".

Although this view, the education program has an important role in developing positive attitudes towards unity and reconciliation. A number of concrete actions towards reconciliation can be mentioned:

- Students have equal chances in school. In the past, admission to schools used to be made by pre-established quota according to ethnic groups and regions. Currently, students are promoted on the basis of grades scored during exams. Admission to state universities is automatic to those who achieve the required grades;
- A large number of refugees have returned and their property, if illegally occupied, has been returned to them;
- Large numbers of orphans have been re-integrated into families. Rwandan people have taken a tremendous step and understood that every Rwandan child has the right to life regardless of the child's ethnic background or that of his/her foster family;
- Local elections as well as presidential ones have been organised. People exercised their right to choose their representatives and international observers have qualified these elections of generally fair and transparent;
- Ethnic background is no longer mentioned on identity cards. To be a Rwandan is actually the only consideration, which officially affords everybody his or her rights and a role in the management of his/her country. In the past, every Rwandan was required to have an identity card, which mentioned his/her ethnic background and region of origin. During the 1994 genocide, this card allowed killers to identify easily Tutsi people and to eliminate them;

- Various commissions were set up to improve the social welfare of the population and to reinforce transparency and efficiency in common affairs management. These commissions evidently contribute to strengthening both social justice and unity and reconciliation. They include the National Human Rights Commission, the Constitutional Commission, the National Electoral Commission, the Poverty Reduction Program and the Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission;
- Structures aimed specifically at women and at the youth have also been set up to ensure the participation of these groups in all national processes.

Education for peace, unity and reconciliation in Rwanda has become the top priority, not only of the NURC but also of the entire political machinery. All political speeches and manifestations include reconciliation messages. According to Prendergast and Snock (1998: 10), “the government of Rwanda is carefully managing the post-genocidal transition process. Movements towards unity and reconciliation are encouraging. Discussing publicly democratic values, allowing participation, and focusing on problem-solving are seen as methods to lay the groundwork for peace and reconciliation”.

Despite all these encouraging factors, impediments to reconciliation still exist. Corruption in local and judicial instances is a source of injustice and therefore an obstacle to unity and reconciliation. Other high-ranking political leaders attempt to play the ethnic card to reach their egoistic ends. The main political party, ‘Le Mouvement Democratique et Republicain’ (MDR), was abolished early this year mainly because of its internal dysfunction based on discriminative and ethnic ideology. “Corrupt politicians who are still convinced that they need to use ethnicity and regionalism to achieve their ambition are obstacles to unity and development” (NURC, 2002b: 18). Informal discussions held by the author in July 2003 on unity and reconciliation in Rwanda, show that some political leaders and intellectuals do not favour reconciliation.

### **5. 5. Poverty: the Community initiatives support program**

The community initiatives support program of the NURC aims at reducing poverty while promoting unity and reconciliation. Among other things, poverty has been identified as an outstanding obstacle to the unity and reconciliation of Rwandan people. The NURC is aware of some economic and social initiatives and encourages these projects through two principal

missions: “To identify, promote and support initiatives, associations and non-governmental organisations; which are involved in improving social and economic standards of Rwandan population; and to identify and promote the government programs that aim at specifically fighting against poverty and boosting total development of Rwandan population”. The idea is that true unity and reconciliation cannot happen without reducing the poverty level in the country. The NURC community initiative support program is part of the national policy of poverty reduction.

The relationship between poverty on the one hand, and unity and reconciliation on the other is so complex that it is not easy to know which should be resolved first in order to solve the other. Clearly, poverty is an obstacle to reconciliation and in turn poverty cannot be successfully fought without people’s unity and collaboration. The process of unity and reconciliation that will be the foundation for development goes hand in hand with the increase of production and the decrease of poverty.

The NURC has identified, encouraged and initiated community development projects across all provinces to which it provides financial and technical support as is demonstrated in Appendix 3. Such programs/projects not only contribute to reducing poverty but also build collaboration and cooperation among Rwandans since they have common goals and shared interests. This cooperation is a very important tool that brings people together and allows them to transcend enemies’ images for a shared future. Hayner (2001: 164) calls this process “binding forces”. “In some circumstances, it may be helpful to encourage projects that bring opposing parties together for joint gain, such as development or reconstruction programs. The degree to which there is contact between former opponents will help determine whether reconciliation develops”.

Reconciliation obviously requires contact, physical presence and interaction between conflicting parties or former enemies. The NURC tries to bring together Rwandans of all ethnic groups through common projects. Kelman (1999: 201) refers to this collaboration as “a pattern of cooperative interaction”. For him, the development of a pattern of cooperative interaction between two enemy nations or communities is a key component of positive peace. Cooperative peace in the economic sphere, as well as in such domains as public health, environmental protection, communication, education, science and culture can make significant contributions towards reconciliation. “By establishing crosscutting ties, common

interests and personal relations, they can help stabilize and cement a new peaceful relationship and create commitments, habits, and expectations consistent with maintaining and perpetuating peaceful coexistence”.

The NURC funds and initiates such projects and interactive activities. Many of them involve demobilised soldiers, street children, rural women’s associations, widows, children heads of households groups, teachers and pupils associations, and so on. The projects embrace fishing, agricultural activities, mobilisation on peace and reconciliation, building schools and health centres, building houses for destitute and vulnerable groups, cleaning of towns and markets, cultural troupes and prisoners’ assistance. To be successful, projects must be based on equality and reciprocity.

The community initiatives support is likely to produce positive effects since it is combined with the National Program of Poverty Reduction (NPPR). According to the IMF (2000), the Rwandan government has developed a ‘comprehensive’ and ‘innovative’ poverty reduction strategy, which documented a ‘commitment’ to tackle the country’s problems. The program is ‘frank’ and ‘innovative’ in linking its analysis and strategies. The participation in this process and the sense of ownership are impressive. The poverty reduction program has articulated a strategy of social and economic transformation that Rwanda needs to make the transition to peace, stability and development.

According to the MINECOFIN (2003b), the NPPR has identified six broad priority areas, each of which contributes to promoting unity and reconciliation: rural development and agricultural transformation, human development, economic infrastructure, good governance, private sector development, and institutional capacity building. This process of poverty reduction is conducted in a very open way and the Rwandan population is the primary audience. Participation of all is the privileged approach; people themselves engaged in defining and identifying their problems and in finding solutions to the poverty in their own communities. This includes assessing both governmental and non-governmental interventions and developing structures that provide the basis for community level action and development. This participation is in line with what the scholars such as Casmir (1991) and Freire (1983) and others posited, that people cannot be developed they can only develop themselves. The decentralisation process in Rwanda aims at empowering local communities to identify their problems and propose appropriate solutions.

The NURC works side by side with local communities to allow them to successfully combat poverty while promoting cooperation and reconciliation. The unity and reconciliation of Rwandans will increase as poverty decreases. This collaboration between government, non-governmental organisations and local communities appears to be economic good governance. Governance is good when it is effective, efficient and when the participation, interests and livelihood of the governed are a prime motive of the leaders' actions.

If external bodies are pessimistic regarding democratic transparency in Rwanda, they appreciate however its efforts in terms of economic reconstruction and poverty reduction strategies. Although the war against poverty is always a long term and seemingly unachievable task, results in economic improvement and poverty reduction in Rwanda speak for themselves, in terms of economic performances. According to the World Bank (2003), in 2001 the effective increase in GDP was 6,7 % and it increased to 9,4% in 2002. The inflation rate was stabilised at 1, 2%.

For the MINECOFIN (2003a: 8-9), progress has been made in the social sector even if the situation remains delicate, specifically in terms of health with one medical doctor for every 50, 000 people, one nurse for every 5,000 and a hospital bed for every 1, 000 people (see table 5.1). The health system has 365 health centres whose geographical distribution is quite satisfactory with two or three health centres per district. The rate of infant mortality is 107 out of 1000 live births, the rate of maternal mortality is 1071 out of 100,000 childbirths, and the life expectancy at birth is 49 years.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2002) says that poverty persists in Rwanda. It however comments that progress has been made in reducing poverty. Indeed, life expectancy was 40 years at birth in 1990 and 42 in 1995 and increased to 49 in 2002. These indicators show the high risks experienced by the majority of the Rwandan population. However, improvement is being made in comparison with the past as demonstrated in table 5.1.

**Table 5. 1. Health profile in Rwanda**

Health services	1980	1990	1995	1998	1999	2000	2001
Population per doctor	29,150	35,090		66,666	52,000	55,705	50,000
Population per nurse	10,960	7,450		9,500	9,850	6,365	5,000
Population per hospital bed	1,500	1,700	1,700	1,700	1,700		1,000
Children immunisations (% of children under 12 months)							75,0

Source: MINECOFIN (2003a: 293).

According to the same source, encouraging progress has also been made in education. The expenses of running the education system constitute 17, 4% of the ordinary budget and 3, 5 % of the GDP. In the year 2001/2002, the education sector made considerable progress as far as access to education was concerned. The increase in enrolment rates in primary education was 2, 7%, 19 % in secondary education and 17% in institutions of higher learning. At the level of primary education, the net rate of enrolment has shifted from 72,2% in 2000 to 73, 3% in 2002. There is a rapid improvement in teacher qualification. In 2000, 53, 2% teachers were qualified and by 2002, this had reached 81, 2%.

Poverty reduction and human development in Rwanda is impressive. Outsider's views are convergent. According to *Soft International* (2003), a Brussels based newspaper, Rwanda as well as Mozambique and Uganda have been placed on the list of 'Small Lions' by the Britain newspaper '*The Economist*' to mean that these countries have made strong economic and developmental progress in just a few years. This improvement is an important element for building sustainable reconciliation between Rwandans.

Even if the process of economic and political good governance is only in infancy in Rwanda, what is clear is that people are being empowered in all processes that affect their lives. This is a very important condition for sustainable peace to happen. The unity and reconciliation will take time to complete, but the process is promising because it is conducted within a

favourable context. However, the persistent poverty that weakens the people's capacity to reconcile remains the other serious threat to peace and reconciliation.

## 5. 6. Conclusion

After this short evaluation of the Rwandan unity and reconciliation process, one has to ask the question whether key conditions for sustainable and positive peace are met. It would be unrealistic to say that all these conditions are being satisfied in the context of Rwanda. In particular, more efforts are needed to ensure transparency, participation of all and corruption eradication.

However, positive and encouraging signs are happening, the most obvious of which are:

- The institutionalisation of the Gacaca system of justice that permits both restorative and punitive justice will contribute to unity and reconciliation because it offers the opportunity for truth to come out and speedier outcomes. Both are important factors towards reconciliation;
- The ongoing democratisation process characterised by a firm commitment to good governance gives people a voice. Since the program concerns the implementation of new democratic and transparent structures and policies, it will increase the chances for addressing the structural causes of the conflict in Rwanda;
- The encouragement of common development projects that increases contact, interaction and cooperation among Rwandans is the other force working towards unity, reconciliation and peace;
- The poverty reduction program will promote unity and reconciliation by improving the social quality of life and material well-being of Rwandans. When material conditions are good, people are more ready to understand each other;
- The political will of leaders is another indicator that sustainable peace is possible.

## Chap. 6: GENERAL CONCLUSION

### 6. 1. Summary

This study aimed at:

- Explaining the concept of sustainable peace and the importance of reconciliation in moving towards sustainable peace;
- Describing the situation in Rwanda following the 1994 genocide;
- Explaining the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) programs, assessing its outcomes to date and considering its potential to significantly move towards sustainable peace.

The first and second aims have been developed in Chapters Two and Three respectively. Sustainable peace involves the creation of a proactive process that is capable of regenerating itself over time, a spiral of peace and development instead of a spiral of violence. This requires the replacement of violent attitudes and structures with non-violent ones. Sustainable peace occurs within a structural context that enables good principles and practices to be applied. Positive peace, which is an approach to conflict transformation, addresses structural issues that led to conflicts and fosters a supportive peace infrastructure. The assumption here is that for true peace to happen, people must enjoy freedom, equality and material well-being. Injustice, authoritarianism and poverty are the main structural roots of the massacres and genocide of Rwanda. To build peace one has to address these issues.

The government of Rwanda realised that national unity and reconciliation is the most appropriate weapon to build sustainable peace. Unity and reconciliation is the way to restoring peace, security, respect of human rights and sustainable development on which shall be built a politically stable Rwanda. The creation of the NURC was therefore imperative. The NURC must be understood as a ‘coordinator’ of all unity and reconciliation efforts. As proposed by Adam and Adam (2000: 36), truth commissions help to establish the truth about what happened and truth is an important step towards reconciliation. Reconciliation, in turn, is one of the main roads that lead to sustainable peace. The NURC was established to carry out all the tasks regarding unity and reconciliation of Rwandans and thus help lead the country to sustainable peace.

After the 1994 genocide, Rwandans inherited a number of genocide consequences all of which were heavily destructive and complicated: the initially fragile economy was destroyed; social problems correlated to the genocide survivors such as widows, orphans, street children; school and health infrastructures were also destroyed, there was political instability and widespread poverty. Such a context prevented reconciliation from taking place in the country.

To promote unity and reconciliation, a number of actions have been laid down. These actions and attitudes are structural adjustments aimed at creating a more uniting and reconciliative environment and include:

- The creation of traditional participative justice known under the name of Gacaca that is both reconciliative and punitive. This justice system will speed up trials and reveal the truth about the past;
- The democratisation process that is concretised through the creation of a range of institutions aimed at promoting transparency, the participation of all, freedom and the respect of human rights;
- The institutionalisation of a national poverty alleviation strategy;
- The suppression of all ethnic and regional origins in all identification documents;
- The permanent spirit and will of power-sharing between Rwandans of all ethnic groups in the government, army and police.

These actions and others show clearly how decisive the political will of uniting and reconciling Rwandans is. It is evident that the process of reconciliation in the country is being conducted within a positive structural context. It possesses the potential for building a more peaceful and stable Rwandan society. This responds to the third aim –whether NURC’s programs and practices conform to the requirements for building sustainable peace. However, the process will take time to complete just as the discriminative ideology took a long time to tear the country apart. Many more efforts are needed to bring Rwandans to true unity and reconciliation. As Reychler and Pafenholz (2001: 12) state, “creating a sustainable peace environment is a long and slow process because it addresses all the major components of the conflicts: fixing the problems, which threatened the core interests of the parties; changing the strategic thinking; and changing the opportunity structure and the ways of interacting”.

Even if the process of unity and reconciliation in Rwanda is promising, there are still factors that hinder its effectiveness. The most important of these factors are:

- Some political leaders and intellectuals are still manipulating people on basis of their ethnic origins in order to achieve their political goals;
- Some people are reluctant to accept the Gacaca justice system and refuse to cooperate to establish truth;
- Corruption still gnaws at both judicial and administrative systems and constitutes a source of injustice;
- Poverty among the populations.

This situation suggests the need for modifications in the means used to build sustainable peace through unity and reconciliation.

## **6. 2. Recommendations**

The above observations lead to a number of suggestions in order to improve conditions of the national unity and reconciliation process in Rwanda:

- Including political leaders and intellectuals as participants in the civic education program and paying particular attention to them;
- Establishing a political code of conduct;
- Intensifying the poverty reduction program and campaign;
- Energetically combating corruption and introducing severe measures against those responsible for corruption;
- Pursuing the Gacaca justice sensitisation in order to attract people to cooperation; and
- Reinforcing the financial capacity of the NURC to strengthen its policy and program.

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## APPENDICES

**Appendix 1:** Range of penalties provided by Gacaca courts (Supreme Court of Rwanda, 2000: 9)

**Appendix 2:** Examples of ingando (solidarity camps) organised by the NURC (NURC, 2002a: 16-17)

**Appendix 3:** Examples of development projects assisted by NURC (NURC, 2002a: 41)

The following table shows the sentences prescribed by the Organic Law on the Gacaca Courts :

CATEGORY	CONFESSION AND GUILTY RECOGNITION	SENTENCE
1°	HAS NOT CONFESSED OR HIS/HER CONFESSION HAS BEEN REJECTED	DEATH SENTENCE OR LIFE IMPRISONMENT
	CONFESSION BEFORE THE PUBLICATION OF HIS/HER NAME ON THE LIST OF FIRST CATEGORY	25 YEARS IMPRISONMENT OR LIFE IMPRISONMENT
2°	HAS NOT CONFESSED OR HIS/HER CONFESSION HAS BEEN REJECTED	25 YEARS IMPRISONMENT OR LIFE IMPRISONMENT
	CONFESSION AFTER ACCUSATION AND NAME PUT ON THE LIST MADE BY THE CELL'S GACACA COURT	12 TO 15 YEARS IMPRISONMENT HALF OF IT IS SPENT IN PRISON, THE OTHER IS COMMUTED TO WORKS OF PUBLIC INTEREST
	CONFESSION BEFORE ACCUSATION AND NAME PUT ON THE LIST MADE BY THE CELL'S GACACA COURT	7 TO 12 YEARS IMPRISONMENT - HALF OF IT IS SPENT IN PRISON THE OTHER IS COMMUTED TO WORKS OF PUBLIC INTEREST
3°	HAS NOT CONFESSED OR HIS/HER CONFESSION HAS BEEN REJECTED	5 TO 7 YEARS IMPRISONMENT HALF OF THE SENTENCE IS SERVED IN PRISON THE OTHER IS COMMUTED TO WORKS OF PUBLIC INTEREST
	CONFESSION BEFORE NAME BEING PUT ON THE LIST MADE BY THE CELL'S GACACA COURT	1 TO 3 YEARS IMPRISONMENT HALF OF THE SENTENCE IS SERVED IN PRISON AND THE REST IS COMMUTED TO WORKS OF PUBLIC INTEREST
4°		RETURN THE STOLEN THINGS OR PAY THE EQUIVALENT.

## II.2.4. ACTIVITIES IN PROVINCES

### 1) Ingando

**Main Objective:** Present and explain to the population the national policy on unity and reconciliation

Province	BENEFICIARIES	PERIOD & LOCATION	RESULTS	OBSERVATIONS
1. Butare	420 mobilisers from all sectors	04/02-03/03/2001 Mugusa-Gikonko	Better understanding of "peaceful coexistence" notion	Transport issues raised
2. Cyangugu	500 members of LDF including 200 from Gikongoro and Butare provinces.	From December 2000 to January 2001 Ntendezi.	Involvement of everyone in the improvement of social relations well defined	Better understanding of Ingando, different vision of what they had in mind before.
	328 local leaders from Bukunzi district	05/05-19/05/2001 Ntendezi	A theatre troupe was set up in the region	Lack of time to finalise the course
3. Gisenyi	356 people including Directors of Secondary schools, District inspectors and some chosen teachers	1-10 September Inyemeramihigo College	Discussions were fruitful despite the lack of enough time	Training (Ingando) should be organised during holidays to allow teachers to attend.
	347 returnees and released suspects of genocide	18/05-15/06/2001 Mudende	Participants understood the rights problems of the country and identified the enemy of the population: Poverty	A coherent and permanent monitoring and evaluation system should be set up

	803 Ex-FAR/Interahamwe and some members of ALIR	20/06-20/12/2001 Mudende	Most of the participants were caught on the battle field. They received a training, which will help them to reintegrate the society.	Children amongst them were handed over to the Ministry of Local Government and Social Affairs.
4. Umutara	207 local leaders	1/06-23/06/2001 Gakoni-Murambi	They committed themselves to be promoters of peace and reconciliation	Training should not be organised during the dry season
5. Byumba	199 women	22/07-17/08	They became close collaborators of the NURC	The Ministry of Youth and the Ministry of Gender should be more involved
6. Kibuye	Members of District councils' Njyanama", teachers and Headmasters.	15/07-13/08/2001 Nyamishaba	Apparent change of attitudes. Participants promised to tell the truth in any circumstances	The Ingando was very successful though the participation was low.
7. Ruhengeri	463 people including: -teachers -district inspectors -1 teacher from each primary school centre -Prefets of Secondary schools	21/07-11/08/2001 Musanze	Teachers committed themselves to accompany the Government and the Commission in the way to Unity and Reconciliation	Such training reaffirmed and consolidated security in Ruhengeri province
8. PVK	329 youths from associations supporting orphans like Tumurere	10/08-10/09/2001 Gacuriro	The Youths understood national unity and reconciliation policy	The NURC has no representative in PVK up to now. It is time to have one like in other Provinces

### II.3.4. Identified, visited and funded community initiatives

Association	District	Activity	Visited by	Mount requested Rfs	Amount received in Rfs
<b>AJENI:</b> 41 members	Bukunzi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Building houses for destitute</li> <li>- agriculture and animal house boundary</li> <li>- building schools</li> <li>- mobilisation on unity and reconciliation</li> </ul>	NURC Kigali and Cyangugu  CRS Kigali	1,000,000	1,000,000 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- purchasing iron sheet for 4 houses</li> <li>- purchasing chemicals funded by CRS</li> </ul>
<b>DUHUZE IMBARAGA:</b> 41 children heads of households	Gatare	Will learn tailoring and carpentry	NURC Kigali and Cyangugu CRS Kigali	1,189,900	1,189,900 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- purchasing tools for tailoring and carpentry. CRS funded this item</li> </ul>
<b>TUZAMURANE</b> Demobilised	Impala	Agriculture, social and cultural activities (choir and mobilisation on unity and reconciliation)	NURC Kigali and Cyangugu CRS Kigali	2,250,000	2,250,000 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- purchasing a canoe, fishing net and other accessories. Funds were provided by CRS</li> </ul>
<b>NGIRANKUGIRE</b> Demobilised	town of Cyangugu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fishing</li> <li>- Mobilisation on unity and reconciliation</li> </ul>	NURC Kigali and Cyangugu CRS Kigali	2,250,000	2,250,000
<b>Supporting children from disadvantaged groups:</b> 167 batwa children	Gatare Gashonga	- supporting batwa children for one year to help them attend school with required necessity	NURC Kigali and Cyangugu CRS Kigali	798,000	798,000 for purchasing uniform and school material, with funds provided by CRS