



REPUBLIC OF BURUNDI NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE RIGHT HONORABLE GELASE
DANIEL NDABIRABE, SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE SOLEMN OPENING OF THE AUGUST
2021 ORDINARY PARLIAMENTARY SESSION**

Bujumbura, 2 August 2021

- **Lord, Our God ;**
- **Honorable Members of the Bureau of the National Assembly;**
- **Honorable Members of Parliament ;**
- **Mr. President of the Supreme Court ;**
- **Members of the Government ;**
- **Attorney General of the Republic of Burundi ;**
- **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps accredited to Burundi ;**
- **Representatives of international organisations ;**
- **Mr. President of the Court of Auditors ;**
- **Mr. President of the Special Court for Land and Other Property ;**
- **Members of the Defense and Security Corps;**
- **Mayor of the city of Bujumbura ;**
- **Mr. Chairperson of the Permanent Forum of Political Parties ;**
- **Representatives of the National Specialised Commissions and Councils;**
- **Representatives of religious denominations;**
- **Representatives of approved political parties ;**
- **Representatives of civil society organisations ;**
- **Distinguished Guests; All Protocol Observed;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen ;**

1. First of all, let us praise the greatness of our Eternal and Almighty God, who has given us the gift of life and who strengthens us with His grace, so that we may carry out our respective missions with wisdom, loyalty and justice.
2. Let us also welcome you to the Kigobe Congress Palace, the headquarters of the National Assembly.
3. We thank you for accepting our invitation. You are with us not only to enhance with your presence the solemn opening of the ordinary parliamentary session of August 2021, but also to witness the determination of the National Assembly to exercise the will of the Burundian people, the sole holder of national sovereignty.
4. The ceremony in which you are taking part is held in accordance with Article 179 of the Constitution of the Republic of Burundi of 7 June 2018 and Article 52 of the Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly.

▪ **Honorable Members of Parliament;**

5. We wish you, too, an excellent return from the parliamentary recess in July 2021. We congratulate you for not breaking with your good habits of making the month of recess worthwhile by making field visits to get closer to your fellow citizens.
6. As a reminder, the month of July started with the celebration of the 59th of Burundi's independence. As usual, the National Assembly joined the Nation in the festivities marking this event. After the solemn anniversary ceremonies, the Members of the Bureau joined the staff of the National Assembly in the premises of the Kigobe Congress Palace to continue the celebration of the day when Burundi and the Barundi people regained their place of honour in the concert of nations.
7. The Independence Day of our beloved country coincided with the beginning of the parliamentary recess, during which the honorable Members of Parliament carried out several activities.
8. We particularly welcome the work done by the Members of the Bureau of the National Assembly who spent the month of July visiting eleven provinces in Burundi to see the social, economic, humanitarian and security realities prevailing there.
9. The First Vice Speaker of the National Assembly visited the provinces of Kirundo, Gitega and Mwaro. The Second Vice Speaker of the National Assembly made work visits to the provinces of Muramvya, Rumonge and Bujumbura.
10. Upon our side, in the exercise of our duties as Speaker of the National Assembly, we visited the provinces of Makamba, Rutana, Cankuzo, Ruyigi and Muyinga.

- **Excellencies ;**
- **Honorable Members of Parliament ;**
- **Distinguished Guests ;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen ;**

11. Together with elected parliamentarians in the visited provinces, the Members of the National Assembly Bureau participated in community development work aimed at building or improving local infrastructure and protecting the environment. There were also activities to support the population in sowing, watering, harvesting and contouring.
12. During meetings with citizens, the opportunity was taken to encourage them to preserve peace and security, to consolidate their cohesion, to respect their leaders, from the bottom to the top of the state, and to strictly follow administrative instructions.
13. Overall, in addition to meetings with citizens, meetings were held with local elected officials and administrators, managers of public, parastatal and private institutions, traders, representatives of Sangwe cooperative societies, youth, registered political parties and religious denominations.
14. The Board Members also paid encouraging visits to tourist sites, schools and academic institutions, the premises of a mineral water processing plant called "Eagle Mineral Water", and the buildings of three key players in the agricultural sector, namely the organo-mineral fertiliser production plant, FOMI in acronym, the Burundi Institute of Agronomic Sciences, ISABU in acronym, and the Burundi Tea Office, OTB in acronym.
15. The Members of the Bureau also made contacts to support community development initiatives and some agro-pastoral projects, initiated by citizens, individually or in cooperative societies.
16. In addition, these visits and meetings for exchange and moralisation have made it possible to address several issues, including those relating to the usefulness of cooperative societies, the successful use of disbursements from the National Communal Investment Fund, FONIC in short, the registration of arable land in the communal land services, the intensification of agro-pastoral activities, even in the dry season, permanent stabling of livestock, the fight against juvenile delinquency, the promotion of education and schooling for young people, the fight against excessive consumption of alcoholic beverages,

the fight against the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, transformational leadership, the need for a judiciary that meticulously applies the law, reconciliation and the facilitation of the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the relevance of faith and forgiveness, the social impact of preaching, the exemplary nature of religious leaders, the proper management of faith-based organisations, and so many other issues.

17. In addition, during the month of July, the honorable Members of Parliament shared Sunday prayers with Christians, to join the Muslim community in the celebration of Tabaski and to provide assistance to the needy people.
18. In the end, the National Assembly was able to see that the population was going about its daily activities peacefully; the only disruptions to its security were of common law.

- **Excellencies ;**
- **Honorable Members of Parliament ;**
- **Distinguished Guests ;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen ;**

19. In addition to the field visits, the National Assembly carried out parliamentary diplomacy activities via videoconference. Thus, the National Assembly was represented, on 6-8 July 2021, at the 4th International Tripartite Conference on "Slum upgrading and prevention within the framework of the Decade of Action", under the initiative of the partnership between the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, the European Union and UN Habitat.
20. On 12 July 2021, the First Vice-Speaker of the National Assembly led a parliamentary delegation that participated in the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under the theme: "The Message of the Pandemic: The Return of Government". This activity was organised at the United Nations Headquarters by video conference, under the auspices of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.
21. On 14 July 2021, the Parliament of Burundi chaired the 8th statutory meeting of the Peace and Security Commission of the Forum of Parliaments of the Member States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, FP-ICGLR.

22. On 15 July 2021, the Burundian section of the Parliamentary Assembly of Francophonie attended the exchange meeting led by the Secretary General of this organisation.
23. Finally, on 22 July 2021, the National Assembly participated in the meeting of the African Tax Justice Network, which discussed mechanisms for making domestic resources work for national economies.

- **Excellencies ;**
- **Honorable Members of Parliament;**
- **Distinguished Guests ;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen ;**

24. During the parliamentary recess, the honorable Members of Parliament followed the implementation of government policies in the management of the internal and external affairs of our country.
25. The National Assembly takes this opportunity to express its support for the firm resolve of "Reta Mvyeyi, Reta Nkozi" to clean up the justice sector. It endorses the exhortation of the Minister of Justice to the magistrates to listen carefully to those subject to trial, to guide them through the various procedures, to hand down judgments on time and in accordance with the law, without forgetting to quickly enforce judgments that have become res judicata.
26. The National Assembly is also monitoring the demolition of anarchical constructions and buildings erected in green spaces. It congratulates the population, which has understood the Government's call for order and has carried it out without delay. Those who are still lagging behind are invited to respect the administrative instructions.
27. In addition, the National Assembly encourages the Ministry of home affairs, Community Development and Public Security to verify the proper conduct of demolitions, with a view to avoiding possible abuse.
28. The National Assembly reiterates its support to the Head of State, His Excellency Evariste NDAYISHIMIYE, and to the whole of his Government, in their efforts to promote good management of the public sectors.
29. Thus, at the diplomatic level, the National Assembly is satisfied with the initiatives undertaken during the month of July 2021 to consolidate relations of friendship and cooperation with other nations, particularly

with Burundi's neighbouring countries. It encourages the Government to carry out this mission to strengthen good ties with neighbours.

- **Excellencies ;**
- **Honorable Members of Parliament ;**
- **Distinguished Guests ;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen ;**

30. Article 163 of the Constitution of the Republic of Burundi of 7 June, 2018 reads that "the Parliament passes the law and oversees the action of the Government." The National Assembly intends to pursue this mission, which is essential to the life of a State that wishes to function according to well-defined rules.

31. Concerning the voting of laws, the National Assembly will consider the agenda sent to it by the Government in accordance with the provisions of Articles 179 and 190 of the Constitution of the Republic of Burundi, an agenda which is as follows:

- i. The Draft Law on the Ratification by the Republic of Burundi of the Agreement amending for the second time the Partnership Agreement between the Members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States on one hand, and the European Community and its Member States on the other hand, signed in Cotonou on 23 June 2000 and amended for the first time in Luxembourg on 25 June 2005;
- ii. The Draft Law on the Ratification by the Republic of Burundi of the Agreement on the Establishment of the East African Standby Force;
- iii. Draft law on the accession of the Republic of Burundi to the 1954 Convention relating to the status of stateless persons;
- iv. Draft law on the accession of the Republic of Burundi to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness;
- v. The draft law governing electronic transactions in Burundi ;
- vi. The draft law regulating migration in Burundi ;
- vii. The draft organic law on the missions, composition, organisation and functioning of the National Security Council ;
- viii. The draft law on the creation, organisation and functioning of the OBR ;
- ix. The draft law on the implementation of the protocol manual of Burundi ;

- x. The draft law on the organisation of the Diplomatic Service of the Republic of Burundi;
 - xi. The draft law revisiting the organic law n°1/03 of 20 February 2017 on the missions, organisation and functioning of the Burundi National Police;
 - xii. The Draft Law on the Statute of the Officers of the Burundian National Police ;
 - xiii. The Draft Law on the Statute of the Brigadiers of the Burundi National Police; and
 - xiv. The Draft Law on the Statute of the Burundian National Police.
32. Alongside this legislative function, the National Assembly plans to carry out its usual activities of representing the people and listening to their grievances, parliamentary diplomacy and capacity building.
33. We take this opportunity to announce that the National Assembly has already started the construction of an additional building here at the Kigobe Congress Palace, in order to relieve the congestion in the offices, to improve the working conditions of the staff of the National Assembly and thereby facilitate better performance.
34. The vision is to put in place quality offices at a reduced cost. For this reason, some National Assembly staff with proven experience in construction are involved in the task.
- **Honorable Members of the Bureau of the National Assembly ;**
 - **Honorable Members of the Parliament ;**
 - **Distinguished Guests; All Protocol Observed;**
 - **Ladies and Gentlemen ;**
35. We conclude by reiterating our sincere gratitude for your support to the National Assembly.
36. We encourage our partners to continue their close collaboration in making the activities of the National Assembly a success.
37. We wish the honorable Members of Parliament an excellent job and invite them to do their best to carry out their constitutional tasks during the three months of this session.
38. With these remarks, I solemnly open the work of the August 2021 ordinary parliamentary session.

God bless you!

We thank you for your support.