

Remarks
MEETING OF THE COMPACT2025 LEADERSHIP COUNCIL
IFPRI HEADQUARTERS, OCTOBER 6th
WASHINGTON D.C.
Delivered by Ambassador Mathilde Mukantabana

**Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is a great honour to be here today for the meeting of the Compact2025 Leadership Council, on behalf of the Government of Rwanda. After the successful launch of the Compact2025 initiative in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Malawi and Rwanda – it is imperative to sustain the momentum and extraordinary commitment garnered for the elimination of hunger and undernutrition across the globe. I thank the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) for organizing this meeting of the C2025 Leadership Council toward this end.

**Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

The Rwandan economy is experiencing its best growth performance since independence, accompanied by impressive gains in poverty reduction. Agriculture remains the backbone of the economy in Rwanda. The sector directly employs around 70 percent of the labour force and contributes to one-third of the national GDP on average (between 2007 and 2014). The agriculture sector grew at an annual average of 5.5% between 2007 and 2014, and food crop production grew at over twice the rate of population growth in the same period.

Rwanda has made significant progress toward reducing hunger and malnutrition, and in addressing some of the underlying issues that hold back progress. The incidence of stunting among children under 5 years of age fell from 52% to 38% between 2005 and 2015, i.e. a 3% reduction per year. Moreover, undernourishment has fallen by almost half from 1990 to 2014. Although the assessment of the trends in food and nutritional security in Rwanda shows progress, we agree that the current situation of hunger and malnutrition is still unacceptable. To date, hunger and malnutrition persist in Rwanda and result in severe human and economic costs. In order for Rwanda to meet its national goals, including reducing the prevalence of child stunting to 18 per cent by 2018 and ending hunger and under nutrition by 2025, the movement must be accelerated. The good news is that sharp progress can be attained – as **political commitment; mechanisms for accountability; and, coordination of partnerships** are already in place - and need to be leveraged to achieve our goals and targets for ending hunger and malnutrition in Rwanda.

Rwanda's policy environment for enhancing food and nutritional security has evolved in the recent years. Boosting agricultural productivity and improving food security is a priority under Rwanda's Vision 2020, which includes child undernutrition as a key indicator.

Furthermore, food security and nutrition are considered foundational issues in the national Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) II (2013-2018) and are also among the pillars for the 3rd Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation (PSTA III). Many stakeholders within the Government of Rwanda, as well as outside of the government are working hard to end hunger and malnutrition.

**Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

On March 24, 2016 we held the Compact2025 roundtable discussion in Rwanda. Rwanda was the first country where Compact2025 organized a roundtable discussion.

The attendance at the roundtable demonstrated the tremendous support and enthusiasm we have in Rwanda for this bold initiative. There were over a 100 people from different sectors and participation from the government included the Prime Minister and the Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources.

The main recommendations resulting from the Rwanda roundtable discussion included:

- Upgrading capacity with a focus on monitoring and evaluation, nutritional impact assessments, disaggregated/household level data collection, soil fertility mapping, and climate change
- Improving program targeting for the poorest and most vulnerable households and districts
- Increasing access to water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities
- Developing an operational plan for implementing Rwanda's National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan
- Enhancing the involvement of local government in food security and nutrition policy and program planning
- Promoting nutrition education and awareness campaigns

The roundtable discussion once again underlined the importance of focusing on food security and nutrition and the fact that we can only eliminate hunger and undernutrition if we work together, both at the national and global level.

Following the Compact2025 roundtable discussion, Rwanda established a coordinating secretariat under the Ministry of Local Government the following responsibilities:

- To provide strategic oversight and ensure efficient and effective coordination for all food and nutrition interventions in Rwanda
- To provide policy advice in all food and nutrition related matters
- To raise awareness of key stakeholders on food and nutrition and advocate for resource mobilization
- To monitor and evaluate of all food and nutrition interventions

Although, the Secretariat staffing will be done in November 2016, under the championship of the Ministry of Local Government, different development partners have been consulted and the following results were achieved:

**Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

As well demonstrated by its guiding planning documents, political will and concrete actions, Rwanda remains fully committed to the objectives of Compact2025 and we look forward to the next roundtable discussion planned for 2017.

Lastly, I thank IFPRI for providing us with a valuable tool to realize this critical social goal by the year 2025. I am hopeful that the deliberations of the Compact2025 Leadership Council today will help us to further discuss and refine guiding principles to improve national coordination, policy and implementation for the enhancement of food and nutritional security in our respective countries.

Thank you very much for your kind attention and I hope the discussions will be rewarding.