

## Rwanda and Women leaders in 2012

By Professor Shirley Randell Jan. 10, 2013

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(以下文章節錄自 **Randell** 教授寄給國際女大學人聯盟 IFUW 會員的來信，除了介紹非洲盧安達國家近況，也提及了過去一年女性在各行各業的領袖，最後還介紹了一個她將領團的四月初的盧安達參訪。主編註)

**Rwanda** is one of the few countries in Africa where aid effectiveness is demonstrable. Aid dependence in Rwanda has gone from 85 percent in the late 1990s to 41 percent today. It was 50 percent only two years ago. Over the eight-year history of the World Bank's *Doing Business* reports, Rwanda emerged as the second most improved country in the world. Rwanda's GDP per capita has more than tripled over the last ten years, and there is optimism the country is on course to achieve middle-income status (which needs a GDP per capita of US\$1,240) over the next eight years, as envisioned in its recently-adjusted *Vision 2020*. Family planning services have generally gained public acceptance, with both population growth rate and fertility rate dropping over the years – to 2.6 percent and 4.6 percent, respectively. This commitment to an entrepreneurial economy has helped it achieve broad-based economic growth of 8 per cent per year over the past five years. Health indicators have improved dramatically, malaria has been virtually eliminated; the majority of the population is covered by a fiscally sustainable health insurance scheme. Further, Rwanda has consistently ranked the least corrupt country in Africa by Transparency International and World Bank indexes, and receives some of the highest scores in the world in Gallup's annual surveys of trust in government, optimism and safety. Rwanda's population has grown to 10,537, 222, up from 8,128, 553 in 2002. Women constitute 51.8 per cent of the total population, down from approximately 53 per cent ten years ago. However, in Kigali, men outnumber women, with a ratio of 104 men per 100 women. Countrywide, population density grew from 321 people per square kilometre in 2002 to 416 in 2012, the highest in Africa. That makes Rwanda the second most densely populated country in the world, after South Korea, which has about 490 people per square kilometer.

**Women.** A deep shock and sadness during November to Rwandans, including me, was the passing of *Aloisea Inyumba*, Minister for Gender and Family Promotion.

Aloisea was a close friend who greatly encouraged me in all of my work over the last seven years in Kigali, as senior gender adviser for SNV, initiating Rwanda's Association of University Women (RAUW), and founding director of Centre for Gender, Culture and Development. Minister Inyumba possessed a pride for her country that burned brightly, first through the liberation struggle and then nation building. She was present and fully engaged at every stage of Rwanda's journey over the last 18 years. Earlier in 2012, she was named among the three recipients of the inaugural '*Women have Wings Courage Award*' – the others being women activists Virisila Buadromo from Fiji and Chi Yvonne Leina from Cameroon. The award is reserved for outstanding women from around the world living the courageous spirit of Amelia Earhart, the first pilot to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean and the first woman to receive the US Distinguished Flying Cross. From 1994-99, Inyumba served as the first Minister of Gender and Social Affairs in post-genocide Rwanda, and was instrumental in the immediate management of post-genocide trauma. During that period, she oversaw burial of victims and resettlement of returnees, actively promoted truth-telling and reconciliation, and spearheaded a national adoption campaign to place genocide orphans in homes. Inyumba was passionate about women's empowerment and participation in leadership. In 2010, she said, "I am who I am because of the background that I acquired with women at the grassroots. Before I became a minister I was involved with mobilisation of resources with the communities; if you look at women in leadership positions today in Rwanda they came from women NGOs, community-based organisations, very much involved with civil society, and today they are the ones who are providing the leadership". Aloisea will be greatly missed.

A contingent of 15 highly qualified *Rwandan female police officers* to the Ivory Coast is the first police unit to serve with the UN Operation since it was established in 2004 by the Security Council to facilitate the peace process in the country. The goal of the UN is to have at least 20 per cent of its police service comprising female officers by the end of 2014, and it is half way there. The mission is assisting the West African nation with key tasks, including the restoration of law and order, national reconciliation, the holding of legislative elections, and economic recovery. Official figures from the peace-keeping unit at the Rwanda National Police indicate that of the 490 police personnel on deployment, 150 are women.

*Park Geun-hye* was elected as the first female president of Korea, overcoming a ferocious challenge from opposition rival Moon Jae-in in a close race. Park, 60, the daughter of assassinated military strongman Park Chung-hee, and a Saenuri Party

veteran will face the challenge of governing a deeply polarized nation struggling to cope with a frail economy, eroding living standards and social dysfunction. In Somalia, *Fausia Yusuf Haji Aden* has been appointed the first female Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, and *Maryam Kassim*, the Minister of Social Development in the new Cabinet. A record number of women were elected to USA Congress: 20 in the Senate and 78 representatives and three delegates in the House. Five states elected their first female Senators—Hawaii, Massachusetts, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Wisconsin—and other "firsts" in the 2012 elections broke representation barriers for religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity. *Vera George Mousa Baboun*, a university lecturer, is the first female mayor of the Palestinian city of Bethlehem.

*Pushpa Basnet* of Nepal was named 2012 CNN Hero of the Year. Basnet supports children who otherwise would be incarcerated with their parents in Nepal. She started a home in Kathmandu where children can receive education, food, medical care and a chance to live a more normal life. Afghanistan Minister for Human Rights, *Sima Samar* has been awarded an international human rights award and plans to use the prize money of Euro 50,000 to establish more scholarships for young Afghan women to pursue their higher education. In Australia, *Kathleen Farrell* is only the 15th woman to be appointed as a judge in the history of the Federal Court. Her career has been studded with amazing achievements, including becoming a partner at Freehills at only 28, being the first practising lawyer to become president of the Australian Government Takeovers Panel and now only one of a very few to be appointed to the Federal Court bench directly from the ranks of solicitors.

The public reaction to the attack on *Malala Yousefzai* that shocked Pakistan and the world, has at least been a cause for hope. Malala was well known for her education and women's rights activism in Swat Valley, where the Taliban has at times banned girls from attending school. For many, Malala was a symbol of resistance against fundamentalism, extremism, and terrorism. As importantly, Malala was a symbol of hope for thousands of other girls in Pakistan going to school in often difficult circumstances. Malala spoke out against the Taliban insurgency by blogging about their ban on schools for girls in Swat. She wrote about the great loss having so many young girls out of education meant for the future of Pakistan. Her writing was courageous and moving, and it shows that words can bring change. The UN has declared a Malala day to honor the 15 year-old Pakistani activist.

**Invitation to Rwanda Friendship Tour.** Globespot has just placed Rwanda as sixth of the top 10 countries in the world to visit. Two types of reaction are to be expected when you mention you are going to Rwanda: "Rwanda? Isn't it a bit dangerous?" and "Oh, to see the mountain gorillas?" But there is more to Rwanda than genocide and gorillas. Stunning ubiquitous mountains, national parks, lake beaches, great culture, a dynamic capital: the country has a lot to offer its visitors and is working really hard to convince them to forget about its dreadful past and come *en masse*. And with its incredibly well-paved roads, a bus system that would put some European countries to shame, clean and safe streets, and friendly, helpful people, Rwanda makes a perfectly smooth introduction to Africa. I will be with EOS Visions and RAUW to host another Rwanda Friendship Tour this year from 1-8 April 2013. You can get information and book on

<https://goworldbrain.com/trips/education-of-women-and-girls-in-rwanda> The Tour will have a special focus on the education of women and girls. I will return to Kigali after speaking engagements at the Commission on the Status of Women in New York and Oxford Univ Roundtable, UK in March, and am spending Jan and Feb with family in Sydney, Canberra, Wollongong, Austinmer, and Adelaide in Australia.

Joy to the world is the Christmas message, joy that comes from knowing that we belong to one another! If God is with "us", there can be no "them". There is just us. In 2013, we fail separately or thrive together.

Loving greetings to all, Shirley

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*Strong hearts, strong minds, strong women*

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