

STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF BURUNDI DELIVERED BY H.E. MR. ALEXIS BUKURU, THE AMBASSADOR OF BURUNDI TO BOTSWANA ON BEHALF OF H.E. PROF. FRANCOIS HAVYARIMANA, MINISTER OF NATIONAL EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

**11TH AFRICAN DAY OF SCHOOL FEEDING (ADSF) -
MINISTERIAL SESSION
GABORONE, BOTSWANA
1 MARCH 2026**

Excellencies, Honorable Ministers and Distinguished Delegates; Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good Morning.

1. It is a distinct honour to deliver this statement on behalf of His Excellency Professor Francois Havyarimana, Minister of National Education and Scientific Research and the Government of the Republic of Burundi.
2. As Burundi currently holds the Rotating Presidency of the African Union, we approach this session as a champion of the continental agenda. We stand ready to support the African Union Commission with the highest energy to ensure the success of the Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) initiative across our continent.

Excellencies,

3. **Regarding 2025 Implementation and Challenges**, Burundi has made significant strides through our National School Feeding Programme (PNAS). In the 2025-2026 academic year, we reached 960,224 children across 1,073 schools, representing 33% of the total eligible population.

However, we faced bottlenecks related to supply chain logistics and climate-induced crop variability. To mitigate this, we decentralized procurement. Today, 87% of our schools benefit from decentralized local purchases, directly linking schools to local cooperatives. The impact is measurable: absenteeism dropped from 19.7% to 4.5%, and school success rates increased to 87.2% in beneficiary schools.

4. **On Budgetary accountability**, our political will is reflected in our financing. The Government of Burundi has doubled its budget allocation for school feeding from \$4.5 million to \$9 million USD for this cycle. We are proud to report that 51% of the food needs are now covered by local agriculture, injecting approximately \$7.6 million USD into the local economy between 2022 and 2025. While we partner with organizations like the UNWFP and AFD (Agence Francaise pour le Development), our trajectory is firmly towards domestic resource mobilization, ensuring sustainability beyond donor support.

Excellencies,

5. **Looking ahead to 2026 Plans and Resilience**, Burundi is fully aligned with the AU Theme of the Year 2026 on Water and Sanitation. We recognize that a school meal cannot be safe without clean water and hygiene. Our strategic shift for 2026 focuses on the nexus of nutrition and WASH. We are revitalizing our Inter-Ministerial Committee to ensure cross-sectoral integration between Education, Agriculture, Health, and Water sectors.

Our goal is Universal Coverage by 2032. To achieve this, we are expanding value chains to include nutrient-rich products like eggs, milk, and avocados, while simultaneously investing in school infrastructure, specifically potable water points and toilet to safeguard the dignity of our adolescent girls. We are moving from mere food provision to holistic child protection and resilience.

6. As I conclude, Burundi reaffirms its commitment to the Gaborone Call to Action. We urge all Member States to anchor school feeding in national budgets and to prioritize local procurement.

I thank you for your kind attention.