



### **Hope in a changing climate**

*An interview with the Rwandan President H.E. Paul Kagame*

The vision that we have for developing our country and our people really hinges on rational management and utilisation of natural resources and environment. This does not in any way have a conflict, there is not such a conflict. In fact, it leads to a kind of win-win situation.

We think preserving our environment, managing properly issues relating to climate change, is really everybody's business, it should involve everybody. And that's why we treat as important this kind of level, that brings everybody on the table and addresses everybody's concerns.

The rich world, much as they're responsible, really, for causing – they are more responsible for causing this damage. They have resources to avail, to try and mitigate that, or work on managing the damage that has been caused already.

Our Vision 2020, the vision for national development and socioeconomic transformation, really hinges mainly, it's how do we manage our resources, how do we properly manage our environment. And here we are talking about people. People, whether we invest in them in terms of education, in terms of their health. And we look at people as the main asset, in our case.

Rugezi wetlands had been damaged by human actions. So, drying up of swamps, and we saw water, it was brought down. And, in fact, hydropower station was producing less and less electricity, later on almost no electricity. So, we had to take a careful look at what had actually been happening that damaged this system. And therefore had to reverse that, again, with human action. And this is why it is important to look at how human actions can destroy or can reverse what has been destroyed or even protect our environment.

We have to look at an equitable formula that brings everybody on board, and we have also to put in some incentives, so that people who pollute more, pay more, those who pollute less have an incentive to continue polluting less, as we encourage those who are polluting more to also come down. We don't want those who are polluting less to shoot up because the other one is staying high. So, it is a rational way of balancing the different actions, of penalties and reward. And whilst the planet is damaged, the poor and the rich will be affected, even though some will be affected more than others, the poor would be certainly affected more than the rich. In a complementary way, we can achieve a lot. But there is no excuse for anybody to continue causing damage to our planet.

We should be encouraged to work for the common interest, for the common good. What the role, for the rich world, and the poor world, would be, has to start from understanding that, in the end, we live on one planet.