Version anglaise du Discours de S.E. le Président de la République de la République

Dear compatriots, Friends of Burundi ;

1. I would like first and foremost to thank God Almighty, the One to whom our Founding Fathers entrusted Burundi by dedicating a verse to him in the National Anthem that says “God that gave you to us should keep you safe”. We thank him for keeping Burundi and Burundians alive day and night, something that exceeds the capabilities of a human being.

2. Today is a day unlike any other, a day of joy and happiness for all Burundians. It is a day of thanksgiving, a day to display our excitement as Burundians come once again to be worthy of consideration both nationally and internationally.

3. Indeed, this constitution is for Burundi. It will address issues of all Burundians, those who voted for it and those who did not, without forgetting foreigners. No one should therefore ask how someone else voted or tease them based on how they voted as this constitution has come to unite those who voted Yes, those who voted No, those who abstained and those who did not vote. It will give equal opportunities to all Burundians without discrimination.

4. Burundians have just adopted a new Constitution that fits well with their aspirations after the amendment of some outdated articles of the old Constitution of the year 2005, while other articles have been revised, and new articles have been added on to bring the Constitution in line with today’s realities and laws in our sub-region, the East African Community.

5. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, O dear Compatriots, for you deserve many tributes. In recent days you have shown a great sense of patriotism. This is the first time that such an event has occurred, when elections are being prepared and conducted in Burundi without having to beg for outside help, and this will continue even for other upcoming polls.

6. Burundians have proven to the world once again that they are brave people ! This was done with the intention of handing over to our children, to our grandchildren and to our great grandchildren, a country free from all oppression, a country worthy and capable of being listened to in the concert of Nations.

7. Another important thing I would like to emphasize is that this constitution has not come to change institutions or violate the law. The institutions you elected in 2015 will continue to govern you until you elect others that will replace them, and all regulations in line with this constitution will continue to be followed. No one should mislead you into believing that this constitution is immediately installing a Prime Minister and other rumors, what is urgent is to strengthen our independence, honor and dignity of citizens as well as walk in line with countries we share the East African Community. Articles 288 and 290 are very clear about it.

Dear compatriots, Friends of Burundi ;

8. There is nothing that outshines the values of our country, Burundi. That is why we must do everything to strengthen its independence. The sovereignty of our country must always be respected now and forever. Burundi is the cradle of all Burundians without exception.

9. The return of colonizers to their respective countries did not exactly translate into Burundi being respected and listened to on the international stage. Not at all. Therefore it was necessary to affirm our honor by continuing to develop in all sovereignty, to organize all that is good for the country as you have just demonstrated.

10. This is a great sign that shows once for all that Burundians have already understood the meaning of the good and the honor of the Nation, that Burundi has strong men and women of spirit and respectful of a promise. Democracy is taking shape in the country, and the citizens have the absolute right to take decisions that concern their country without fear of foreigners and colonizers who mistreated us for years.

11. We, Burundians, at the stage where we are, can no longer be mistaken for kids who are always told what to do or take in. Moreover, Burundi is not an island either. Far from it. We are surrounded by other countries and we are closely following events elsewhere around the world, we hear and see what happens there. We need to be left alone to organize the affairs of our country in all sovereignty because we are no different and we do not interfere in other nations' domestic affairs.

12. Burundi is under divine protection, nothing can shake it. The storms have always existed but thanks to Almighty God, Burundians have always peacefully overcome them. It is a great honor that we will never forget, and this, we conquered it ourselves. It is also an honor for Burundians living today, those who will be born, even our ancestors who fought for and protected Burundi, who have preserved its honor and dignity since its birth.

Dear compatriots, Friends of Burundi ;

13. The Constitution is the Basic Law, the basis of all other laws. A country that does not have a Constitution is a lifeless country. This is the foundation on which the country will build all that it plans to do in the future. We would like to inform you that Burundi will continue to develop, especially since all articles of the Constitution emanate from the aspirations of the citizens, owners of Burundi, a beautiful field that God the Creator of the earth and Heaven has given us as a gift.

14. The Constitution that you have just confirmed by referendum belongs to all Burundians. Indeed, as I said, it did not fall from the sky. It is the result of the inter-Burundian dialogue that has been organized within the different institutions and sectors of national life.
15. Politicians, members of civil society organizations, citizens, everyone has contributed in their own way by expressing what they thought was needed to change in the old Constitution. That’s why you were impatient to see the arrival of May 17, 2018 and we got up very early to go and vote with an unprecedented turnout. May this serve as a lesson to others.

16. I would like to thank all Burundians with all my heart. Be it those who voted YES, those who voted NO or those who preferred to abstain. Burundi is a country where democracy has taken shape, a country where all Murundi expresses his thoughts in complete freedom without anyone judging him.

17. I would also like to thank the politicians for taking part in this competition by highlighting the interest and the honor of the country, and especially by conforming to the wishes expressed by the citizens. Electoral competition is a characteristic of a democratic state. The most important thing is the respect for the choice of citizens.

18. I would also like to express my gratitude to the National Independent Electoral Commission and its provincial (CEPI) and communal (CECI) branches for having worked tirelessly, day and night,

to reach the outcome worthy of consideration. I congratulate you for the good job done for the country. God bless you for that.

19. My gratitude is addressed to the local leaders for their availability during the preparation of these elections, especially by sensitizing the population of their administrative entities to participate to the election. I thank the defense and security forces, the journalists, in short, anyone who contributed directly or indirectly to make this referendum a success. God bless you.

Dear compatriots, Friends of Burundi ;

20. There are nine unprecedented things in the history of elections in Burundi that characterized the 2018 referendum, during the preparations, the campaign, the election itself and afterwards :

Number one : The election was held in a free and peaceful environment.

Number two : Instead of fleeing like it used to occur during election periods, people who had fled the country returned home.

Number three : Burundians showed up at record numbers at all stages of the election period, including the elderly.

Number four : Burundians showed their enthusiasm and generosity and this led to the election being funded entirely from internal sources.

Number five : There is an apparent similarity between Burundians living in Burundi and overseas concerning figures of voter registration and results. This proves that they equally have the same aspirations for their country.

Number six : Different categories of Burundians contributed ideas of what needed to change in the constitution. The government did not initiate the changes, instead ; it listened to what citizens had to say.

Number seven : Nationwide, voters arrived at polling stations very early and in many parts, finished voting earlier than planned.

Number eight : People prayed for this election more than previously, before, during and after the polls. I take this opportunity to thank the Bujumbura Mayorship for organizing prayers at the Independence Square. One cannot succeed in such an event without God’s guidance.

Number nine : it was the first time that all stages of the election were concluded without incident.

21. The Constitutional Referendum has come to an end but I would like to remind you that we are approaching the general elections of 2020 during which Burundians will choose the leaders and the institutions that will replace those elected in 2015 to govern them at different levels of the country.

22. I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank those who responded to the call I made to them by contributing funds for the elections. Remember these sayings : "the water you ask from others will not wash your body cleanly", "the expected assistance from the neighbor always comes after the rain" and "a man quenches his thirst with the water that he fetches himself". The step taken is satisfactory and I reassure Burundians that these forthcoming 2020 elections will be more successful than before. The Lord is my witness.

23. While we are expressing our thanks, there is still work to be done. That is why I am reminding you to continue contributing to these elections. You know that these contributions are made on a voluntary basis, not by force. However, let’s meditate on the fact that we always sing the hymn of our country saying : "Dear Burundi that we all love, We commit to you our hands, our hearts and our lives .... ".
So let our actions prove it, nobody should say that it does not concern them.
Moreover, Burundi is a common garden that God has given to us.

24. Like you recently heard it from the Finance Minister, contributing to the 2020 elections have reached a satisfactory level. We will be informing you regularly of the progress of this activity in order to evaluate the step taken and what remains to be done. We would like this activity to be completed as soon as possible so that all necessary means for the next elections are gathered. I urge Burundians to remain calm and learn from the past.
25. I take this opportunity to appeal to the politicians who are abroad to return to the country and prepare for the 2020 elections. You are aware that there are those who have returned and we thank them for their contribution to the development of the country. We therefore welcome others. I would like to take this opportunity to ask countries hosting criminals wanted by the Burundian justice to hand them over, especially the 2015 coup plotters. They have a clear choice between the gains of good relationships among nations and, helping and abetting troublemakers.

26. Burundi is a secure and peaceful country. The borders are wide open for anyone who wants to return to his native country.

27. I also appeal to those in the refugee camps to return home and I ask the host countries to make it easy for them. Refugees are not slaves to be held in camps, they keep the right to return to their country especially that our country is peaceful. Besides we are, and we have always been a peaceful people. Troubles have always originated from abroad, with the support of Burundian tractors. Properties of those in exile have been safeguarded and secured. We hope that by the time we hold the 2020 elections, all Burundians who want to do so will be back to their native country like others are doing so today. We welcome you ; welcome among your brothers and sisters who love you, by the way our ancestors said that “No one loves a baby better than the mother unless they want to steal it”.

28. We should bear in mind that even God helps those who help themselves. That’s why you have to be wary of the words from those who put their stomachs first and those who encourage people to make bad decisions, saying that they are going to make their lives better. Their goal is to destroy the country and to distract Burundians and the Nation. Come out of the darkness to embrace the light of humanity. Know how to distinguish right from wrong in order to prosper.

Dear compatriots, Friends of Burundi ;

29. Even though the elections went well and the enemies of the country were ashamed, there were events that bothered us and saddened Burundians and friends of Burundi. You all learned just before the elections that terrorists attacked Ruhagarika in Buganda Commune, Cibitoke Province with the aim of stopping voting from taking place. We once again offer our condolences to the bereaved families, while informing you that we are working very well with the DRC to ensure that these criminals are arrested and punished according to the law.

30. Even on election day, there were some groups of thugs who tried to create disorder, forgetting that citizens have already understood that no one is superior to the honor and tranquility of the country, deciding thus to preserve them and to stop anyone who dreams to disturb them.

31. I thank and congratulate Burundians who have been vigilant, rejected and brought to justice those who wanted to destabilize the polls. I also thank Burundians who have invested themselves wholeheartedly to ensure the elections run smoothly, some even spending whole days without food or drink, and doing so on a voluntary basis.

32. I could not finish without thanking the governing bodies, especially the defense and security forces for their bravery during the election. I congratulate them, let them go ahead and continue to show the Burundian people and foreigners that Burundi is a respectful country, with rule of law, honor and tranquility.

33. I also thank the leaders of the political parties, but would like to ask them to teach their members well. The reality is that nearly 200,000 votes were null, it shows that there are Burundians who have either not been taught or not taught much about the elections. Political party leaders are therefore asked to collaborate with the Electoral Commission so that nobody is disoriented in future elections.

34. I thank the citizens who rose early and voted during regular time, while telling those who came late to understand that the concerns of the country come before anything else.

35. I would like to inform all Burundians that the Constitutional Referendum in which we were engaged is now over. Let’s go back then to our development work. You have noticed that the community development work has yielded a significant output. Let’s be more united, roll up the sleeves and work as part of an indestructible front to develop the country, given to us by Almighty God.

36. I would like to ask Ambassadors and Heads of Diplomatic Missions accredited to Burundi to tell their compatriots that the country is open to business. That the international community should be closer to Burundians than it has done lately. I end by reiterating my thanks to all.

Dear compatriots, Friends of Burundi ;

37. Before the head of state comes into office, he/she swears on oath that he/she will respect the constitution and all other laws. In the old constitution, on which I referred to when I swore on 20 August 2015, as well as the constitution I promulgated today, they are all clear about the Burundi President’s terms in office.

38. Let me remind Burundians and foreigners alike what I said that day, in my speech : “the victory we got in this election is for all Burundians, whether they voted for us or not, even foreigners living in Burundi today or who will come in the future. I promise to respect decisions of the Constitutional Court regarding this last term of mine, also confirmed by the East African Community Court. It means that when God opens, no one else can lock, no adventure” ; moreover when God shuts the door, no one else opens.

39. Our ancestors said : “A man can turn in his bed but he cannot U-turn over his promise”. In our party CNDD-FDD, the party that nurtured us, the identity of the Bagumyabanga, even for any Burundian who respect themselves is to never be a traitor. Let then Burundians and foreigners alike know that I never change my mind. My term in office will come to an end in 2020.

40. In that line of ideas, I ask Burundians and foreigners alike to never be misled by those who give wrong interpretations concerning terms of the President in office today.

41. You should know it from today, those who want to repent should do so. This constitution was not amended for President Pierre Nkurunziza like enemies of Burundi have been singing it. This constitution has been amended for the honor and the bright future of Burundi and Burundians.

42. As far as I am concerned, I am prepared and ready to support with all my heart, all my intelligence, all my beliefs, the new head of state that we will elect in 2020.

43. That is what I have promised to do and I will continue to honour my country until my last day on planet earth. This decision is part of Almighty God’s plans for our country and myself. Glory be to Almighty God today and forever. God Almighty is my witness.

Long Live the New Constitution ;
Long Live Burundians and Burundi ;
May Almighty God Bless Burundi ; And Burundians ;
Thank you