



Association des Volontaires de la Paix

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High level Dialogue meeting on Peaceful Coexistence

“A case of Rwanda”.

*KIGALI, Classic Hotel,
Wednesday, August 27th, 2014*

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1. INTRODUCTION

On Wednesday, August 27th, 2014 at Classic Hotel in Kigali City-Kicukiro District, AVP held a High level Dialogue on Peaceful coexistence typically an exchange meeting on the post-genocide peaceful coexistence project implemented by AVP(Association des Volontaires pour la Paix), organized by AVP.



The meeting began with the introduction remarks by the legal representative of AVP, **Dr. KARAMBIZI Vénuste** who welcomed the participants and thanked them for having positively reacted to the AVP invitation. He emphasized on the importance of the meeting to be part of the reconstruction of peaceful coexistence consecutive to the tragic history of Rwanda in the recent past.



He reminded that the AVP was established in 1991 aiming to actively defend the respect of human rights in Rwanda. That goal was pursued after the genocide up to today. He also recalled the context of the peaceful coexistence project and thanked partners who have contributed to its funding, namely the Belgian Embassy for the first phase (2007-2012) and FETZER Institute for the second phase (2013 - 2014).

He invited participants to contribute actively in discussions to enrich the ideas that will help to achieve better the AVP Project objectives, including the extension of its activities throughout the country and permanent monitoring of development initiatives funded by AVP.

1.1. The official opening remarks of the meeting

The meeting was honored by the official opening remarks of the **Director General Community Development Social Affairs in MINALOC.**

She was representing the Minister of MINALOC and noted that the meeting on peaceful coexistence after the genocide against Tutsis fits well within the Government of Rwanda's policy and it is considered as a high priority with the respect of human rights and good harmony among all components of the Rwandan society.



Mrs. TUMUSHIME Francine

She added that the peaceful coexistence of Rwandans is a prerequisite to achieve all goals they want to achieve. She emphasized on good cooperation between the Government of Rwanda and NGOs, and she promised permanent support from MINALOC to continue to strengthen the partnership between the government and CSOs.

Members of AVP, various people representing their organizations, beneficiaries and media organizations representatives actively participated in the Dialogue.



2. SEQUENCES OF THE MEETING

2.1. Documentary film presentation on AVP's Peaceful Coexistence Project

Participants watched a short documentary film on AVP's Peaceful Coexistence Project. This film related briefly achievements of the project based on the three main strategic objectives of AVP, namely the socio-humanitarian interventions, protection of human rights and the human right promotion.

The film pointed out the main channels used to sensitize the target population about the needs of reconciliation for a peaceful coexistence among neighbors, including public awareness campaigns, trainings, radio programs, articles in newspapers, sketches etc.

After sensitization, AVP gathered 60 selected people (comprising 30 genocide survivors, 20 genocide perpetrators released from prisons and 10 who carried out the sentence of the work of general interest/TIG) for a two(2) days training where they discussed on human rights and conflict resolution.

After training, these people formed a Common Initiative Group (CIG), which implements a socio-economic project on their choice, with AVP financial support. Over the two phases of the Peaceful Coexistence Project, 74 CIGs have been formed and contributed efficiently to peaceful cohabitation.

2.2. Beneficiaries Testimonies



AVP's direct beneficiaries' representatives

Three Executive Secretaries of Sectors have contributed to those testimonies, namely that of MWOGO Sector in BUGESERA District, another of MURAMBI Sector in KARONGI District and the last from MURUNDA Sector in RUTSIRO District .

Five direct beneficiaries of the project who are members of CIGs also testified about positive changes in their lives that have been achieved thanks to the project support, both at the socio-economic level and in terms of peaceful coexistence between neighbors who were often before rather suspicious.

Testimonies of direct and non-direct beneficiaries of the project were then presented to participants which focused on immediate or intermediate outcomes of the project (socio-economic positive changes) while others testified that a real peaceful cohabitation among targeted population was strongly built (impact).

2.3. Presentations on Specific Themes

2.3.1. AVP background

Honorable KALIMA Evode started by briefly introducing the background of AVP from its foundation, on 08th June 1991 up-to today. He mentioned that the AVP was created to contribute to build a rule of law in Rwanda and continues to work in the same framework.

The AVP beginnings were difficult given that the governance badly characterized the time of its creation, especially the beginning of the liberation war launched by the RPF on 1/10/1990, which gave the pretext to the ruling sectarian government to massacre, torture and imprison innocent citizens because of their ethnic origin, which constituted grave violations of human rights that resulted finally into the 1994's genocide against the Tutsis.

It is in this context that AVP was created by eight brave people including Mr **Katabarwa André** the one among the four who survived the genocide and who was also present at the meeting.



Ambassador KATABARWA André

Since its creation, AVP has continued to publicly denounce the crimes that were committed in the 1990s and raised awareness of the international community so that it could come to protect the victims. After the genocide, AVP continued to contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights, with particular emphasis on sensitization and prevention.

The main objectives of AVP focussed on the promotion of the peace pillars, such as social justice, democracy and development; the elimination of divisive factors that undermine the Rwandan society, first aid for people in danger, victims of war and natural disasters and permanent vigilance of the human rights protection and promotion.

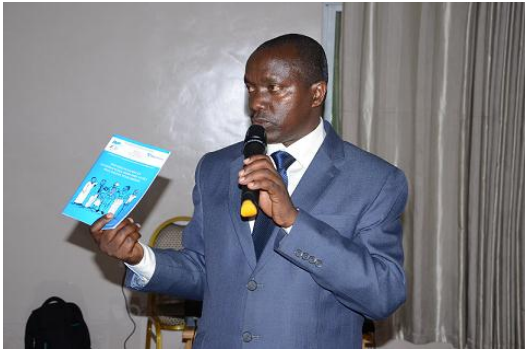
Honorable KALIMA Evode,

He reminded some of the AVP's achievements during over its 23 years of existence in the socio humanitarian field, the defense and promotion of human rights as well.

He concluded by stating that AVP remains faithful to its original aims and called upon other people animated by the ideal of peaceful coexistence and culture of peace to join the AVP.



2.3.2. Achievements of AVP Peaceful Coexistence Project (PRORECOP in French)



The topic was introduced by **RUZIGANA Maximilien**. He first recalled that AVP was at the forefront of the struggle for peaceful coexistence and that it has contributed to help Rwandans to handle harmoniously the consequences of the genocide perpetrated against the Tutsis.

Mr. Maximilien RUZIGANA Project Leader

Regarding the achievements of AVP, he highlighted some of them which are considered as important such as:

- ✓ Training on human rights, sensitization on GACACA jurisdictions;
- ✓ Conferences-debates on themes such as tolerance and racism in Rwanda;
- ✓ Production and publication of magazines on peace culture in primary schools;
- ✓ Production of radio broadcasts on the respect of human rights namely “TUBWUBAHIRIZE” known at Radio Rwanda in 1998-2007 as human rights and peace weekly broadcasted program;
- ✓ Sensitization on human rights through players in different regions.

He then emphasized the particular contribution of PRORECOP which was implemented in 37 sectors of 7 districts including BUGESERA in East, KAMONYI, Nyanza, NYARUGURU and NYAMAGABE in South; KARONGI and RUTSIRO in West.

“PRORECOP” was geared to strengthen the unity of presumed hostile categories of people (genocide perpetrators and survivors). After sensitization and focused training of PRORECOP’s beneficiaries, they ended by creating Common Initiative Groups (CIGs) that helped to strengthen more the unity among the members.

Some of those micro projects implemented by project beneficiaries with AVP financial support were in the areas of farming, goat husbandry, cassava and vegetable cultivation, apiculture, water supply and creation of mutual assistance cooperatives, etc.

He continued by stating that the project was successful because only two sectors out of 37 (5.4%) have not realized the project objectives given that beneficiaries failed to work together due to various reasons. However, the project still faces some challenges such as:

- ✓ Insufficiency of funds to extend the project activities on other districts;
- ✓ Inability to afford field-based project staff for the day to day implementation and follow up of the project activities;
- ✓ Community conflicts resulting from some strategies to solve the genocide problems;
- ✓ Inability to meet the project beneficiaries' basic needs. Most of the project intervention is in rural areas and present signs of persisting poverty due to lack of infrastructures.

He concluded by wishing that the project could be extended to other regions as well as be followed up at field level on a daily basis.

2.3.3. Government Contribution to CSOs' activities in reconciliation and sustainable peace building following the genocide against Tutsi

This theme was presented by **Dr. KARAMBIZI Vénuste**, who stated that the civil society sector is one of the 3 main pillars of socio-economic development as well as social and political stability in any country. He highlighted the contribution of the Government of Rwanda to CSOs activities in at five main levels: political, legislative, institutional, planning and programming and coordination and collaboration.

He praised the political goodwill of the government to build the unity and reconciliation of Rwandans after the genocide perpetrated against Tutsis in 1994 and then reminded the legal provisions in place to implement the policy of unity and reconciliation but also to strengthen the partnership and the good cooperation between the government and civil society organizations.

At institutional level, he cited numerous institutions that were established to strengthen good governance and peaceful coexistence among Rwandans such as RGB, NURC, NCHR, CNLG, National Dialogue Council, Office of the Ombudsman, GMO, NWC, NYC etc. These institutions also work hand in hand with civil society organizations in their respective areas of intervention.

Regarding the planning and collaboration levels, the presenter reminded that the Vision 2020 considers that a successful reconciliation of the Rwandans is a prerequisite to national stability and development while the government of Rwanda commits itself to support the civil society to work for the public interest and the national development.

In this domain, the government institutions in their relationship with CSOs manage to ensure a safe climate and environment proper to facilitate different interventions of civil society in their public interest-based activities.

The Joint Action Forum is also a vital framework for the success of this harmony between the public sector and the civil society.

He concluded by affirming that the collaboration between government institutions and civil society organizations is generally good but there is a weakness related to the lack of financial support from government although the political will and favorable legislation have paved the way for such collaboration.

2.3.4. Opening Debates on the presentations done on peaceful coexistence in Rwanda.



After the three presentations the participants were very appreciative and interested to give their comments others ask questions related to the big achievement of AVP during the 7 past years on Post Genocide Peace coexistence in Rwanda. The questions asked were related to the continuity and sustainability of the project.

Many of them were thanking AVP, its members, partners for the efforts shown in peace building along the process taken from 2007. Others proposed the recommendations that have to be formulated at the end of the session. The participants thanked a lot of the effort done by AVP and its partners and to contribute to the Rwandan unity and reconciliation building the thanks especially FETZER INSTITUTE and The Belgium Embassy.

Here on the photo above the panelist are AVP leaders and local authorities (Executive secretary of Murunda, Murambi and Mwogo Sectors and the person in charge of Good governance in Bugesera District) answering to questions of participants during the session.

2.3.5. Role and contribution of donors to build the peaceful coexistence in Rwanda.



Mr. Edmond Murenzi in charge of CSOs partnership at Belgium Embassy who spoke on behalf of the donors of AVP particularly those who supported financially and technically the project of Post genocide Peace Coexistence thanked a lot AVP for the initiative and taken for the realized activities, he added that AVP has some the contributed to the reconstruction of the country by empowering the community with the capacity of living in peace.

By thanking FETZER institute for the support to AVP and Belgium Embassy initiative, He called up on all individuals, institutions that have in their mandate to support CSOs to assist AVP for the extension of this project which contribute to the wellbeing and development of Rwandan community.

3. CONCLUSION

In his concluding remarks, the President of the Rwandan Civil Society Platform,



Mr. MUNYAMALIZA Edward thanked AVP for organizing the Dialogue that brings together diverse partners to discuss on a topic of utmost importance for the country and its citizens.

He stressed that unity and reconciliation are the first priority of the country, both as a political philosophy and also as a pillar and cross cutting strategy for sustainable development.

According to experts, unity and reconciliation as values is the natural ally of development. Therefore all institutions, including those of civil society and every citizen in general has to contribute to it actively.

He concluded by wishing that the partnership between AVP and decentralized administrative units close to the people, continues to intensify, as it is the only way to ensure the sustainability of the AVP project achievements. He asked that the available documentation on the achievements of AVP in the context of promoting unity and reconciliation could be communicated to the NURC for better information sharing and partnership building.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

After all presentations by various experts, followed by debates, participants commended and following recommendations were formulated:

1. Participants recommended that the area covered by the project, which is only 37 sectors of 7 Districts could be extended to the whole country;
2. Participants recommended that the Government of Rwanda put into practice the political will which is showed through the article 12 of law N°04/2012 of 17/02/2012 governing the organisation and the functioning of national non-governmental organizations, by including in the national budget a specific line meant for supporting initiatives of local non-governmental organizations, like some other countries do for their local NGOs;
3. Participants recommended that trainings on peaceful coexistence could be organized in the future targeting intellectuals and young people to discuss deeply about the divisive factors that were behind the tragic history of Rwanda, to come up with lessons to build a sustainable peace;

4. Participants recommended that the Forum of local NGOs should organize at the end of every year conferences debates on unity and reconciliation, given that reconciliation is a long process. On its part AVP is committed to organize annual exchange meetings on its achievements;
5. Participants recommended that the decentralized administrative authorities should continue to monitor and promote the sustainability of the achievements of AVP project in their respective areas, given that when they are not involved in the monitoring process of the common initiative groups projects, there is real risk that they end by failing;
6. Participants recommended to initiate a study on impact analysis on unity and reconciliation achievements in the 37 sectors of AVP project intervention;
7. Participants agreed that no development is possible, if certain suspicions persists and hinders the unity of action among Rwandans. Therefore, the AVP project whose objective is to build the peaceful coexistence of Rwandans, as an essential condition for development, should have the support from several partners;
8. A system of facilitation for candidates wishing to join the common initiative groups formed in different areas of the country through the AVP financial support should be analyzed and initiated by AVP and its partners;
9. The program of awareness and training on the peaceful coexistence for development and human rights should continue in areas not previously covered by AVP, especially targeting Rwandans who have not benefited, including distributing to them educational tools that have been developed by AVP;
10. AVP should mobilize resources to enable it to monitor on permanent basis development initiatives it has supported in the different sectors to ensure their sustainability;
11. Participants recommended to approach the private sector to be engaged in a development partnership with them in the framework of the AVP project;
12. In general participants agreed that, given the gravity of problems that destroyed the unity of Rwandans, sustainable solutions to address them must be a result of synergic actions between various partners: the Government, CSOs, women, youth and the private sector.

**This report has been done with the intention to show realizations
of AVP on Peaceful coexistence in Rwanda.**