





**STATEMENT BY H.E. PAUL KAGAME, PRESIDENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF RWANDA, AT THE COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF  
STATE AND GOVERNMENT MEETING**

**Perth, 28<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

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-  **The Right Honourable Julia Gillard, Prime Minister of  
Australia, and Chairperson;**
-  **Distinguished Heads of State and Government;**
-  **Mr Kamalesh Sharma, Secretary General of the  
Commonwealth;**
-  **Ladies and gentlemen:**

**I am greatly honoured to be among you representing Rwanda,  
the 54<sup>th</sup> and newest member of the Commonwealth.**

**On behalf of the Rwandan people, and on my own behalf, I  
extend our sincere appreciation to the Commonwealth Heads of  
State and Government for supporting Rwanda's admission to  
this family at the 2009 meeting.**

**Let me specifically express gratitude to Trinidad and Tobago  
for warmly welcoming us to this great organization as Chair  
and host at the time.**

**In the same way, I thank Mr. Kamalesh Sharma, Secretary General of the Commonwealth and the entire Secretariat for working tirelessly to ensure the full integration of our country into this community.**

**I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Her Majesty the Queen, and offer congratulations on her upcoming 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary as Head of the Commonwealth.**

 **Excellencies;**

 **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;**

**Rwanda is pleased to be part of this community because we espouse the values and principles that have shaped the Commonwealth and earned it respect and esteem.**

**Our citizens know from experience that peace, security, and equal opportunities for all –including gender equality – are important pillars of good governance, and a strong basis for socio-economic development.**

**This is a very interesting time, when the Commonwealth is seeking to adapt and face up to new challenges of our ever changing world. Rwanda is glad to be part of, and to contribute to that process.**

**We also believe that when we work together, we win together. The economic and political challenges that the global community has witnessed recently provide more than enough evidence regarding the degree of our interdependence.**

**In this context, cooperation and partnership are key; the kind where the rules to be followed are clear, fair, and equally applicable to all.**

**And what supports this is mutual respect and understanding – a calling that the Commonwealth of Nations is known to aspire to. We are happy to associate with this attitude and practice.**

**Rwanda pledges its support and contribution to the collective efforts to make the Commonwealth a stronger and more dynamic organization for us and future generations.**

**Finally, I wish to thank the outgoing Chairperson, the Right Honourable Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago Kamla Persad-Bissessar for commendable service during her tenure, and the incoming Chairperson, the Right Honourable Prime Minister of Australia Julia Gillard, for hosting us so graciously.**

**I thank you for your kind attention and look forward to our deliberations.**