



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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SCHER: My name is Daniel Scher and I'm the associate director of the Innovations for Successful Societies project. I'm here on the 26th of May, 2010 in Kigali with Mr. Charles Munyaneza. Mr. Munyaneza, thank you very much for taking time out of your day to meet with us. I know that as executive secretary of the Electoral Committee you must have a lot of demands so I appreciate you taking time out.

Before we begin with some of the questions that I have for you, I was wondering if you would mind just introducing yourself and telling us a little bit about your background and the types of positions you have held in government.

MUNYANEZA: *Thank you so much, and also thank you for taking an interest in trying to know what Rwanda has gone through and what we people of Rwanda have tried to do in order to make Rwanda what it is today and what we think it should be tomorrow.*

About my background: As you said the names, I am called Charles Munyaneza. Currently, as you said, I am the executive secretary of the Electoral Committee, but previously I held other positions in government especially in the ministry—or the ministries because the ministries used to change names. They are the same ministries in charge of local government, internal affairs, which also dealt with community development generally. Even at one time I was in the ministry that was charged with resettlement of the people. So briefly, my training, I hold two university degrees. My first degree is in political science. That I got from Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda. My second degree, which is a master's degree, is an M.B.A. from Maastricht University School of Management from the Netherlands. Of course, I've had a number of other trainings.

I have had training in the area, especially in the area of governance and directions. These trainings were held in a number of countries. The few that I can mention, training that I got in governance but most specially to do with local government, decentralization, physical and all forms of decentralization that I got from Harvard University, School of Management from Harvard University in the U.S. It was a short summer course, about one month, but we got together with my colleagues that were drawn from many different developing countries, where we got some insight in governance in general but also in issues related to decentralization and empowerment of the people.

I also had training from the University of Pretoria in South Africa, where we also underwent comprehensive training in the areas of democracy and good governance. Of course, that had a number of elements in it. I've had the opportunity to visit many countries on study tours and visits, mainly in comparing our systems to other systems, especially in Africa, especially to those countries that we thought had similar backgrounds to our country. We visited, or I have visited, many countries, but I can just mention a few. I visited Ghana and Benin in West Africa, where together with a number of other government officials, including the current minister was brought to our team. We had gone to assess their government system, had gone to assess their decentralization program and policies. From that, we got some input as we tried to develop our own.

We also had the similar study visit or tour to Uganda, because after 1994 Uganda was one of the few countries that had really started implementing the decentralization policy and programs. This is also a country that had undergone some kind of conflict and had undergone bad leadership, dictatorship, civil war. So we had to learn more from them.

We also had similar visits to Ethiopia, Eritrea, Canada. Canada, of course, is more developed than us, but we had gone through their democratic systems, electoral systems and the rest. We have also been attending many international meetings, conferences, workshops. We have also participated in drafting some policy frameworks; especially we talk about the charter on good governance, democracy and elections, both for the African Union but also for the East African community. We have been part and parcel of the drafting process of these policy documents, the majority of which have been approved by these countries' head of state. We are already in the process of implementing these policy frameworks. That's about my training and others related to it. I did not work in many establishments, as I said.

In 1994, just after the genocide, I joined the Ministry of Local Government. In fact, just for a very few months before I joined the Ministry of Local Government I worked for the Rwanda Office of Information, which we call right now ORINFOR (Rwanda Bureau of Information and Broadcasting). There, I was in charge of research and documentation. Especially, we were trying to look at the role politicians and the media played in the genocide and how that can be used to prevent future happenings, either by the politicians or political parties or by the media. I was involved in that research and documentation. After, I think, close to three, four months that I stayed there, we had come up with a number of documents, written documents, documentaries which I think are still used in many government departments.

From there I joined the Ministry of Internal Affairs. At that time it was called the Ministry of Internal Affairs, where I was a director of territorial administration and political affairs.

SCHER: OK, what year was this that you—?

MUNYANEZA: *End of 1994, '95, about that. This was a crucial period in our history, and the minister of internal affairs was naturally involved in many issues. Many, many issues. We were in the process of reestablishing our administrative structures because the genocide had destroyed almost everything. We had no leaders, no local leaders. Many of them had died. We did not have anything like local government. I was involved in a process of having a local government in place. There were also some problems of the settlements, problems of returning refugees, problems of instituting some parts of the country and the others. We were involved in many things.*

The ministry went from changing names. At one time the element of reintegration came in, the Department of Reintegration, the settlement of integration. I came in and was involved in resettling people, the current policy of imidugudu has its background there. Because we had a problem of very many landless people because of the history of this country. There were a number of things and then it came to be called, the ministry came to be called the Ministry of Local Government. That was approaching 1996, '97. At that time as director of territorial administration, we were trying to see what our country could do in terms of policy framework, in terms of future governance of the country based on what the people of Rwanda thought or wished our future country could look like. To do that we were involved in trying to get in closer to the people, to listen to them, to consult with them, first of all to know how to give them a chance to tell us what they thought were the problems, what they thought were the causes of the problems they had, and what solutions they thought could be prescribed for those problems.

So briefly, with that we managed to come up with a number of policy frameworks such that by 1997 we had consulted across the country and even right now we still have documentation of that. We had these sent to the people. They had told us what they thought were the root causes of the problem. Like they were telling us what they thought was the cause of genocide. They were telling us what they thought was the cause of poverty. They told us what they thought was the cause of bad governance. They told us what they thought we could do as a government and as a people.

For instance, to solve the problem of resettlement how people could share land because one of the things that posed a very big problem for this country was about how to resettle people after 1994. This was because of the history, as I said. Rwanda is a small country, as you can see, with a big population relatively compared to the land that we have. Because of the history that we have, we had, at one time we had one population getting out of the country as refugees. This is around 1959 to 1963. Those people left their land, the land which their ancestors and grandfathers had and had inherited those from their grand-grandfathers and ancestors. They went to many of these neighboring countries, where they stayed for close to 30 years.

Then there was the genocide and war, which was there between 1990 and 1994. At the end of '94, the country had close to three million refugees outside the country. These people who fled in 1994 had taken up the land of those people who had left in 1959. We found this situation where a small piece of land was legally owned by two different or three different families.

SCHER: Did you say three million?

MUNYANEZA: *Three million, 1994, after the genocide. [interruption]*

SCHER: This is part two of the interview with Mr. Munyaneza. David Hausman has now joined the interviewer.

HAUSMAN: I hope I won't be asking you to repeat anything when I ask you about the problems that you had and the things you did first, immediately after the end of the genocide in 1994—.

MUNYANEZA: *To do that you first have to have the context, how the country was at that time. For somebody who was not here, some things are very difficult to comprehend and to understand. This is a genocide that claimed over one million people in just a very few days, months, 90 days, 100 days. This is something people had not thought. Of course, Rwanda had seen problems, killings and—but nobody had ever thought that the country would have killings to that level whereby Rwandans could kill fellow Rwandans. To think, if you look at the history of genocide in the world, this becomes peculiar, meaning that the social fabric of the Rwandan society had been destroyed. Social trust, misunderstanding among the people of Rwanda, even hope— people had become hopeless, even those who had survived the genocide, even those who were not in the country.*

Of course as I was saying, very many people before the genocide had been living outside the country as refugees for over thirty years. Even in those returning, we used to call them old-case refugees, found a country that was destroyed. There was no basis—there looked to be no basis whatsoever to begin flow. So the context was that we still had fresh genocide memory within the country. You could read it from the faces of many Rwandans on the streets—they were fresh memories.

At that time even people were still unburied many people are still scattered. The scars were still very fresh. As I was saying this is a genocide that had been committed by Rwandans against other Rwandans. You could imagine the kind of harmony that was supposed to be there and trust among the family of Rwandans because this was supposed to be one family. Whereby one knew that I lost my relatives because of that person or because of the family of that person. The people knew each other. People knew who had killed who.

So that was the kind of society that we had immediately after the genocide. But the country was— if you look at the population, we had very many refugees. In 1994, there were close to three million refugees outside the country, some who had fled in 1959 and who had not returned, and very many others who had fled the country during the genocide, mostly to Congo and Tanzania and very many refugees. Even those who had not been refugees as I was saying were internally displaced because nobody had anywhere to belong as saying this is my property, this is my piece of land.

As I was saying, in Rwanda we had ownership of land belonging to different people, different families. I'll give you my specific example. So you have that person-to-person level. I was one of those people who were born and grew in exile, I mean as a refugee—

I was just giving myself as an example. I found myself being born and grew outside the country because my parents had fled the country in 1959. My father, my mother fled the country as youngsters. I'm told my father fled the country when he was around 19—19 or 20. When he reached outside the country, he married and we were born, myself and the others. But my father and my grandfather had land in Rwanda before they fled in 1959. So when they fled the country as refugees, their land was occupied because of the pressure of land because of the population. The land that they had been occupied by those families that remained in the country.

So what used to be the land of my father, my grandfather and whatever, was occupied by other Rwandans who had to do it because they didn't have anywhere else to stay. Now, in 1994, after the genocide, my father, my grandfather and other relatives of mine returned home, returned home from exile. On returning, they found that the land that they had left in 1959 had been occupied by other people, but these people at the same time had also fled in 1994. So my family occupied the land that they had left in 1959, but in actual fact that land was no longer theirs because it had been taken over by another family.

Now in 1995, '96, when we were repatriating these millions of refugees who had fled in 1994, those people who occupied my family's land also came back and found that my family had a huge point, the land which they also called theirs. So you found a very small piece of land being claimed by my family but also at the same time was being claimed by the other family that had occupied it. There was a problem of showing whose land is this. Is it for my family? Is it for the other family which occupied it? Of course everybody had the right to it because all of them were Rwandans and both my father and his father and the other family also were Rwandan. All of them had the right to this piece of land and they could— neither my father or the other family had anywhere else to go. We had to find a way of sharing this piece of land between our two families because we could not tell them this was our land. Neither could they tell us that this was their land. So it was our land. We had to find a way, one, of sharing it and also of settling on it

peacefully and cohabit peacefully. With that kind of background history, it was a very big challenge.

SCHER: So can I just ask, were these types of issues arising very, very quickly after the genocide?

MUNYANEZA: Yes.

SCHER: As people were coming back from exile and then returnees coming back?

MUNYANEZA: *Yes, this was a very, very crucial issue. In fact, if it had not been addressed we could have seen another kind of civil war or another conflict. Because Rwanda did not increase in size, it did not increase in size, yet the population was increasing. Because refugees had not been staying in the country coming back, because at this time they had the right to come back, where before they hadn't had that right. So this piece of land which belonged to all Rwandans had to be shared at all costs. We had to find land for settlement, for building houses, but also land for cultivation to survive. This is one issue that became— that provided a very big headache to people in government, especially those of us who were in the ministry charged with resettlement and making the people that settled—. Yes, just after the genocide, 1995, '96, that was the problem as people returned.*

As I was saying, that's where the policy of imidugudu came; these congregated settlements came up. That's one context. I was talking about the refugees, the land. Land was also a problem I was trying bring it as a factor because in Africa land is, can cause problems if it is not well managed in Africa, not only Rwanda which had also come through such things.

Then there was a sense of insecurity in this country. Those people who had committed genocide were still roaming about in these neighboring countries, especially in the Congo. They were poised to come back. They thought they had business unfinished because when they were fleeing they hadn't finished what they were supposed to have in terms of killing those that they thought they had to finish off and they were just across the border. Those people living around the border could see them just across the border. They were in the Congo and some parts of Tanzania.

So one, the survivors of genocide who were here, not only were they traumatized but they also thought those people are still in and around them, they need to come back and finish them off. So psychologically we had a population that was not set up. We had a population that felt very insecure. In such circumstances, you cannot talk of development, you cannot talk of governance, you cannot talk of democracy, like having elections for instance. You could not talk of those things.

I was talking about the survivors of genocide. Even those of us who had not survived the genocide or had not been targets because we were not here—we found a country where everybody seemed not to be strong, but might become more. Very few, in fact none of us looking at the country, looking at the problems there, the destruction that had happened. Nobody was working. Nobody was sure what was coming tomorrow.

Apart from the genocide as well as outside the country, the fact that nobody knew what he or she was going to do tomorrow and how he or she was going to survive tomorrow created that sense of insecurity, which was also a very big

problem in terms of social harmony and creating a society that could survive itself.

Then there was a problem of national unity. Our society was greatly disunited, very suspicious; many people are very suspicious of the other. We had very little confidence in one another because of that past, recent past, because you had seen one person killing the other. Out of nowhere, out of nowhere, you find one family killing each neighbor. You find people who have been working together or studying together in the same school, or in the same university, you find professors who had been teaching in the same university, one turning against the other. Just overnight. So this kind of suspicion, lack of trust, seeing one as an enemy and the other looking at the others—"these are our enemies"—meant that the issue of national unity had come to its lowest ebb.

In terms of nationhood, in terms of having a nation, one would say that ours was almost a failed state. That's what Rwanda was at that time. So there had to be a number of things to be done to make sure that I trust you because you are Rwandan, you also trust me. I don't look at you as my enemy. You don't look at me as your enemy. To make sure that our children see each other as children of the same people. The problem of national unity and reconstruction became a very major issue because of this history, because of this genocide that had happened.

Even with this problem of people having not stayed together for very many years, I was telling you we had Rwandan communities in these different neighboring countries, in Europe, where all these people were returning back with different cultures, with different perceptions. Bringing together these people was a big problem. Of course we were poor, the country was poor. Everything had been destroyed. Even before the genocide, Rwanda was a poor country, but even what was there was destroyed by the genocide. The institutions had collapsed, there were no institutions.

In fact for those people who came here before, I mean immediately after the genocide, saw that Rwanda was being fed by these neighboring countries, the food that we were eating here.

HAUSMAN: Can you say more about how the institutions had collapsed?

MUNYANEZA: *For instance, when we came in we did not find any ministry there. We started fresh, we started from zero. We started a ministry from zero, a new minister, new staff, secretaries, documentation. There was nothing. There was nothing. You could not find anything in terms of archives, everything. Like myself when I became a director there was nothing to refer to.*

HAUSMAN: Were you in Kigali from the very beginning?

MUNYANEZA: *Beginning?*

HAUSMAN: After the genocide.

MUNYANEZA: *Yes, I was here. I was in Kigali even at the end of the genocide as the genocide was getting— as the genocide was being stopped. I was here. I even saw dead bodies on the streets. I know, I was there. I'm saying that we started from—I was talking of ministries. I was talking of even agriculture, it was not there. There was no food. There was no food because nobody had time— had the time to cultivate. You know we had genocide covering three months, 100 days, meaning*

that within those months nothing was being done apart from the killings, apart from people fleeing the country and apart from the world stopping the genocide and the rest.

So you find that there was nothing in the fields. Even what was there could not be harvested because there was nobody to harvest it. Rwanda was being fed, in fact, we were feeding from food from these neighboring countries. Even the basics were from these neighboring countries. Even the currency that was being used, Rwanda had—in 1994 we did not have a Rwandan currency. We were using Ugandan shillings. We were using Burundi francs. We were using the Congo. We were using dollars, those who could have dollars. There was no Rwandan currency in circulation. That also meant, that there was no collection of taxes, because there was nothing to tax, meaning there was no internal revenue generation.

We depended on goodwill. The country depended on goodwill from our neighbors but also from very many international NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) here. We had very many international NGOs involved in feeding the population, involved in settlement, very many things. That also created a sense of dependence. If steps had not been taken quickly, as I'm going to demonstrate, this dependency would itself have caused a problem to Rwanda because we spent almost two years depending on outside good will. People were shaping our destiny because internally we did not have food—we were destroyed.

We were at the moment trying to bring about security; that's what we were fighting with, to make sure that security was there, to make sure that the borders were secure. Rwanda had no police. I was talking of these institutions. Rwanda had no police. It was us who created it. In fact we created what we call the police communale, communal police, at that time. We do not have anything like national police that you see now. This national police evolved, it evolved from that communal police that we established when we started the ministry.

HAUSMAN: In that early period, what did you do about local governments?

MUNYANEZA: *Local governments, we just appointed people. Those people that we could get, because, as I was saying, in the genocide and the immediate end of genocide there was no local government. We came in the ministry—that's fine. There was a minister, we were there as directors, and some other few staff. But in the grassroots, there was no effective local government. So what we did in the first place was to appoint local leaders. The people we used to call bourgmestres, heads of communes. These people were appointed and these are the people who were appointed from those people that we could get. In fact, very few even could allow to serve in such circumstances.*

In the first place we first used the soldiers. Some of them became [Indecipherable] and others, because there were very few civilians who could be used at that time and in the few months after genocide. Then eventually we put in place structures, appointed structures, until 1999 when we had the first election of local leaders.

HAUSMAN: Continuing about this, at the very beginning, in 1994, I've been told that in some areas of the country, local cell level committees were formed that were modeled on the committee structure of the RPF (Rwandan Patriotic Force) itself. Have you heard about that?

MUNYANEZA: That's correct, because, as I was saying, we formed the committees. Of course the RPF had its structure during the time of the struggle to make it succeed. So when it took over power then and stopped the genocide, there was no other alternative in place. People had to use the model that at least they knew that could work because the other people had no other experience apart from its own experience. And you also not find any other structure in place. The structures that had been in place had been destroyed. So we had to experiment, the kind of structure that they had been used to. Because you know that during the struggle, there was a time of peace negotiations. In 1992, '93, that was a time when there was talk and there were negotiations in Arusha, peace talks and whatever. So in the area that had been liberated by the RPF, and these were in northern parts of the country, the RPF had reestablished those structures, even before the genocide in the areas it had liberated.

With the end of genocide, these structures were kind of extended as an experiment to the other parts of the country to make sure that people at least had some kind of organization, to address these other very many problems that I was talking about. There was need for some kind of an organization whereby people could start tackling these many challenges. We used this kind of local government until 1999, when we had the first even local government elections where people elected their local governments, committees, these executive committees and the councils. That's when we started the process, in 1999. By then there was no electoral commission of course. We are the ones who did it in the Ministry of Local Government. In fact, I was the head of that kind of operation.

HAUSMAN: Can you explain the relationship between the elected committees that were modeled on the RPF and the appointed representatives at the local level?

MUNYANEZA: The relationship?

HAUSMAN: Did they work together?

MUNYANEZA: No, there is a time, as I was saying, they appointed people. Most of these people were appointed and they were modeled, as we were saying, to the kind of committees that the RPF used to use in exile, but also in those parts that had been liberated.

HAUSMAN: The people on the committees themselves were appointed?

MUNYANEZA: Yes, yes, I was saying in 1994, '95, '96 we could not talk of elections. We could not have elections in that kind of context. People were not settled. People had no land. There was that lack of security that was there. There was that problem of trust and disunity and whatever. We could not think of elections. The priority was one, to repatriate Rwandans and settle them. Two, to ensure that everyone was secure where they were settled. Three, to make sure that they—they started at least producing something for their own survival. And the fourth, to create national institutions and strengthen institutions that were being created. In that even the local governments were institutions that needed some kind of remodeling, remodeling and putting them in place, preparing for the ground for this kind of governance that we know.

That's why between 1996 and 1998 we found that some people, the majority of us, were settled. Security was being granted. Some people had started producing something to eat. Some institutions were in place. We in the Ministry of Local Government, led by the Minister Protais Musoni, started a process of

nationwide consolidation of Rwandans. We dispatched teams from the Ministry of Local Government but also from other ministries, social ministries and others and we went to the people. We went to the people in the villages. We had some kind of communal meetings with them.

In those meetings: one, we tried to bring back confidence to the people, confidence to them, to show them that despite the problems that they had gone through, they were still people and they could always reshape their destiny. That was one of our objectives. Two, we went to the people to give them a chance, first of all, to identify the root causes of their problems at that time, the process that they had gone through, because we knew the problems of Rwanda had to be created on the whole by Rwandans. We had enough foreigners coming to Rwanda to create the problem. Though we normally talk of this colonialism and those problems that go with it, generally the problems that Rwandans faced were a problem of Rwanda and Rwandans. We are a problem to ourselves.

We had to go to these people in Rwanda to make sure that they sit down together in these communal meetings, in open air, and spontaneously identify what they thought were their problems and the root cause of those problems and the nature of those problems as a first step. What were those problems, the nature of these problems, and what they thought was the cause of these problems? We spent almost a year on not only that and were documenting all these things. I think even now in the Ministry of Local Governments must have—myself I think I've got some of this documentation. We were taking pictures and filming and documenting these things. The people were freely giving their views, and then there were some people taking notes. They were taking notes, taking notes.

Then we came to a stage where we again asked them, what do you think should be the solution? How do you think we can solve all these problems that you have talked about? The problem of security, problem of bad governance, problem of poverty, problem of disunity and ethnicism, the so-called ethnicism that had led to genocide. We asked them, what do you think should be the solutions to these problems that you are talking about?

Again we wanted to show the people of Rwanda that they were the cause of problems, but they were also sources of solutions to those problems. In fact, they proposed amongst themselves what they thought were possible solutions to those local problems. By the way these problems, though they were in a way general if you looked at the country at a whole, but locally you'd find some of these problems deferring.

So they had, first of all, to look at local problems, problems in their neighborhoods, their localities, but also some kind of national problems. We proposed what they thought were solutions to it. We were documenting, systematically documenting that.

Then around 1998, we had brought together all those ideas in the Ministry of Local Government. It is from that, mainly from that, that here I think you must have heard that there was some kind of national dialogue that happened in Rwanda in 1998, '99 in the president's office. All the stakeholders, national stakeholders spent almost two years also discussing at the national level. We had done the local government consultation, the grassroots consultation. Then we reached a stage whereby there was that national dialogue, looking at these problems and possible solutions, taking into account what had come from the grassroots.

Then, from that national dialogue, the country came up with major policies and policy frameworks. That was, for instance, the idea of having these gacaca (courts) that you hear about came about to deal with the problem of justice, justice emanating from genocide and the rest. This had come from the people. These people had said, you know, we had the ones who committed the genocide. We know those who committed the genocide. We are the ones who can easily deal with this problem. From that national dialogue, these gacaca courts were thought of and technicians went and tried to draft something that could be implemented. That's where this national unity and reconciliation policy came about and the creation of the national unity and reconciliation commission came about.

SCHER: Can I just ask, as you were saying you went around and you were collecting ideas from the people. Were the ideas about the problems they were facing and actually the solutions quite different from the types of problems that national-level people such as yourself and your colleagues saw? I mean was there a difference between those—?

MUNYANEZA: *Sometimes some of us might have had some misconceptions. Like, as I said, I was a director in the Ministry of Local Government, but had not lived in Rwanda. I was only how many years in Rwanda. I couldn't assume, although I was a director, to know the realities on the ground. I would have deceived myself. If I had sat in my office here in Kigali and drafted a policy, for instance, on decentralization or good governance based on what I thought I knew— I think I knew very little because—this was common to most of us in the government at that time. Most of us in the government shared this problem. We had either read about Rwanda or we had seen Rwanda only for—not many years. We had seen Rwanda at the time of that conflict. Sometimes we could really assume that the problem of— this problem of disunity and whatever was caused by maybe colonialists or foreigners or whatever. But when we went to the ground we found that this was a problem of Rwandans and promoted by Rwandans, especially politicians and these local leaders of that type.*

The problem of poverty. We found that it was a problem of mentality. Rwanda was a very closed society. Rwanda used to be a very closed society. We could have sat in our office in Kigali and prescribed wrong solutions to these problems. But when we went there, of course we had our own experience, we had our own view of the problems, so we had to marry them with those of the people to find a middle ground. But especially the views from the population took the upper hand.

For instance, they could say the problem of sharing land, I mean the issue of sharing land came out of in fact it started from this province, this tiny province. There was a prefecture over there. That's where it began. People sat and said there is no way we can live together if we don't share this land and they did it themselves. These things played across the country. We could not have sat in Kigali and thought of how the other families of ours could share this land. We could not. If we had prescribed a wrong solution, it could have had a very bad effect on the ground: one, in terms of ownership, but two, in terms of sustainability. These things had to be owned by the population. These things had to be sustained by the population. It was very, very important.

These policies that you see—the gacaca, the unitary reconstitution, decentralization, this local governance that we have, the imihigo that you are talking about—all these were products of those consultations, and the policies just came up to define what had come out of the population. So that's what

happened. By the time I left the ministry and joined the commission and we had put in place these policy frameworks which—. That's where we also thought we could start on the constitution, making progress, with people participating. The constitution that we have to date was drafted by the people of Rwanda. We had from 1999, 2000, 2001, 2003, there was this collection of views from the population, based on what they had mentioned. Because the constitution had to be written based on what the society was.

If you had not done that, we would have sat in our offices, maybe hired the consultants, some of whom who could really have been foreigners, to come and write our new constitution. But because of that experience, views came out of the people, and then we had only ex-pats, the re-pats to draft the new constitution, which culminated into the referendum that we had in 2003 as we moved out of the transitional arrangements

SCHER: I had a question on actually the logistics of collecting information and suggestions from the people. Were you working through the committees that had been established or the appointed committees—?

MUNYANEZA: Yes.

SCHER: Or were you holding other sorts of forum to get the most input you could from citizens?

MUNYANEZA: *Both. But certainly we were using those ad hoc committees. These are committees that were anyway learning the affairs of the public from 1994, '95. We had local committees, what we used to call the [Indecipherable] houses, used to have somebody in charge of that. We used to have cells, we had the structures. The cells that said it had a committee managing it. We used to have what we call a sector, or secteur at that time, and that also had the people managing it, then the commune and the prefecture. Most of these people, all of them in fact were appointed/ So to reach the population we used to go through those committees in terms of mobilization and in terms of organization.*

We used to use volunteers. By the way, some of us after '94—in fact for the whole of '94, almost for the whole of '94 after the genocide—we were not earning salaries. We were working for government but not earning salaries. We were only fed. What we needed was only food and accommodation. Government would get food from world food program and they would just give us beans and maize and we could eat. Then the next day we got office. That's what happened. There was still this kind of volunteerism because there was no salary anyway. We spent very many months without earning salaries. At the end of the month you'd go and you'd get salary, no. We could only be given food and accommodation and that was all. That's how we built this system. That was the case even down there, even in these committees we were not paid. These were people just volunteering and leading others. So that's what happened at that time.

SCHER: How are we doing for time?

MUNYANEZA: *Ten minutes.*

SCHER: I wanted to ask you a little bit about the decentralization process, because you've described in detail where you got these ideas and how it came about that there was this decision taken to decentralize.

MUNYANEZA: Yes.

SCHER: First I was wondering, you mentioned that local politicians had manipulated people in the villages and in the rural areas.

MUNYANEZA: Yes.

SCHER: Yet you took a decision to decentralize that would in effect give local leaders even more power than they had enjoyed before.

MUNYANEZA: Yes.

SCHER: Were you concerned at all about that, that once you decentralized and gave people more authority to spend money and to implement projects—that you were actually creating quite powerful figures in the district?

MUNYANEZA: *Of course, that is always a challenge but you have to take a decision. It is like the hen and the egg—what comes before? We thought the decentralization process could be one of the solutions to the problems that we had. In terms of empowering the people—once the people had identified their problems, then there was a need to empower them to solve those problems. Otherwise the ideas could have remained just in theory. People had identified their problems. They had even thought of some possible solutions, so what was remaining was to empower them, to give them the means to put into practice what they thought was good for them. That's how the decentralization came up, most of the physical decentralization, everything. But of course we knew that. It is not only in Rwanda.*

Once you decentralize, these are the challenges that you make. But you decentralize, monitor, and then try to work, to make the system work. The decentralization policy was adopted in 2000, in May 2000. Even now, we are still trying to make it work. If you go to local governments, we have devolved power; we no longer have appointed leaders. All the leaders there are elected, but we still have some problems. The decentralization process also is one of the solutions to those problems; that's how it is taken. In terms of priority, resource mobilization, use of resources. If people misuse the resources, then the people have the powers to make those people accountable. So this is—and it also goes with the governance and all new things. The commission, right now, we are always in the by-elections; that's how I start looking at the fruits of what we are doing those years, when I was still in the ministry.

When I hear that this council has been dissolved by the people, this mayor has been—a vote of no confidence has been passed against this mayor, or this whole executive committee of a district—then I take my mind back and say that this is a process of empowering these people. This is something that was not there, but now people can sit in their councils and say no, this mayor has been misusing our funds. This executive committee is not performing; let's replace it. As the electoral commission you are always in the process of by-elections, replacing people who have not been performing. This imihigo thing is one of the instruments people have put in place to evaluate and hold people accountable.

We think this is a product, this is a product of all that long process, that long history, the efforts that were put in place to make the people where they're—. We still see more to come because we are still in the process; we still see more to come. Of course, we are still just—there are still some weaknesses here and there, challenges here and there, problem with capacity but at least the ground is set and set by the people. That's the beauty of it. The foundation is set by the

people. That's why we see the sustainability, it is built on a good foundation. Never mind the challenges. These are always supposed to be there. But as long as people own the system, as long as people see and associate themselves with what is there and they find themselves as part and parcel of the—if I can call them founding members or whatever they say, then it is very sustainable. The leaders of today, what they have to guide, to guide these people.

SCHER: Can I ask you another more logistical type of question. It is my understanding and please correct me if I'm wrong that just before the real implementation of the decentralization process in May 2000 the number of districts were reduced from about 105 to—.

MUNYANEZA: *We had 100 and—in fact, by that time we had 154.*

SCHER: Oh, 154.

MUNYANEZA: *After genocide as we were creating these, this is a structure that we found in place. It is the number of communes and number of sectors, number of what—these were there. So what we did was to put in officials, just addressing the structure that was there, finding the people to—. So as we started the process of decentralization we were reducing these administrative entities. We moved from 154 to 104. Then after the 2001 elections, we went to again reducing, until now we have 30 districts. This is again in line with decentralization, creating viable administrative entities that can easily deliver services to the people. It is one of the ingredients of the decentralization policy that was formulated at that time and that has been revised over time. We have been making an evaluation of the process, the implementation of the process, and so many ideas have been coming up. That's how it responds today. We have got thirty districts, bringing together the form 154 because they were not viable entities if you look at that there.*

One, they could not recruit their own staff. They could not pay salaries for their own staff. None of them could have any project, even the most basic. At this time due to this physical decentralization, financial decentralization and this devolution it is their advantageous when they can recruit their own staff, they can pay salaries for their staff, they can do the markets for themselves. They can repair roads, they can even build some roads. This is a process that we think is on the right track. It has got its roots from what was done from 1995, especially this period between 1995 and '99 was very critical.

SCHER: Do you have time for one more question?

MUNYANEZA: Yes.

SCHER: This is the imihigo question that I wanted to ask you. When you were thinking through these decentralization plans and beginning to implement things, did you have imihigo or a similar system in mind—?

MUNYANEZA: *No. What people had in mind was accountability and performance and delivery. That's what people had in mind. To create institutions and to have leaders who would be accountable, who would deliver and who would be responsible. That's what people had in mind in drafting this policy. Then the issue of imihigo came as a way of implementing that or achieving that philosophical understanding. Because in imihigo, it means that if you are a leader, first of all you know that you must deliver. Then you tell the people who elected you that "Look, while I'm in office this year, or this period of time I shall do this together with you." And this*

thing is there, it's made public. People know that this council, this executive committee, this mayor is supposed to do this here between this year and that year in terms of delivering social services, in terms of governance, in terms of infrastructure and the rest.

Then, at the end of it, it makes these people accountable. So if I say I'll do this and I don't do it, then that is realistic to measure the performance of these people. So that came after, as a way as people thought, as a way of implementing these issues, these philosophical issues that people had at the beginning. So imihigo is one of those things and it is working, it's working. At least the people know what their leaders must do. The people know that they have leaders, OK? But they also have a part to plan in this imihigo process. Then at the end of the day, it is easy for me to know whether they have performed or they have not performed. This is very scientific, it is very scientific.

SCHER: Thank you. I don't want to take up any more of your time.

HAUSMAN: Thanks so much.

MUNYANEZA: *All right.*