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**ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE  
FOR RWANDA**

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**OPENING STATEMENT BY THE ADMINISTRATOR OF UNDP  
Mr. JAMES GUSTAVE SPETH**

Geneva, 18 - 19 January 1995

Mr. Prime Minister,  
Honorable Ministers,  
Distinguished Delegates Colleagues.

It gives me much pleasure to welcome you to the Round Table Conference for Rwanda. I am grateful to you, Mr. Prime Minister, for your personal commitment to and participation in the process. This has enabled UNDP to work with the relevant Government Ministries, with the fullest support of the UN Agencies, many of which are represented here, and with the Bretton Woods Institutions, to prepare expeditiously the Programme now before all of you. I am grateful also for the inclusion of the several ministers representing the major political parties comprising the broad-based Transition Government in your delegation. This is truly an affirmation of the importance which your Government attaches to national unity and to the issues which we will be discussing over the next two days.

I wish now to recognize and say how pleased we are to have Minister Burton, Minister Pronk, Minister Derycke, and all the other high ranking officials who are heading delegations from Rwanda's bilateral partners participating in this event. I also wish to thank my colleagues from the United Nations, particularly Under-Secretaries-General Hansen and Ji, Under-Secretaries-General Ogata and Lasso, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Rwanda Ambassador Khan and Assistant Secretary General Kouyate from the UN's DPA for being here. The presence of Ministers and high ranking decision makers on both sides of the table marks the significance of this Conference and augurs well its outcome.

None of us can forget the horror of what unfolded in Rwanda. With 13% of Rwanda's resident population dead, 2 million living as refugees in neighboring countries, half a million displaced within the country, and 150,000 children orphaned or left on their own, the Rwandese people are in a state of shock and almost total deprivation. The economy shrank in 1994 by 50%, and little infrastructure remains operative.

The international community, including the UN System, responded to the crisis in Rwanda by providing ample relief aid while strengthening national peace-keeping operations.

Today we meet not only to consolidate that process, but also to agree on a programme that will assist the Government to move boldly on - toward much needed peace and national reconciliation and the start of the long road back to economic recovery.

The programme proposes to do this by addressing two main critical areas - National Reconciliation and Socio-economic Rehabilitation and Recovery.

### **National Reconciliation**

Under the Programme of National Reconciliation, we will be reviewing the Government's plan for the reintroduction and strengthening of the system of the Rule of Law with immediate emphasis on the revival of Rwanda's court system. This will enable the Government not only to participate in bringing to justice the perpetrators of crimes against humanity, but to lay the institutional foundation for a national order capable of sustaining the discipline of judicial democracy.

The Rule of Law, it must be emphasized, is a complex fabric, involving several parts: constitutional, legislative, judicial and executive. UNDP thus welcomes the seating of the Transitional National Assembly a few weeks ago, the composition of which appears in line with the spirit of the Arusha Accord. The proportional representation in both legislative and executive bodies, combined with more effective means for social healing at the local level, do constitute, in our opinion, the best guaranty for the respect of basic human rights and for solving land tenure disputes.

The second area for review under the Programme of National Reconciliation concerns Public Sector Reform. Needless to say, Rwanda's administrative capacity has been severely affected

by the crisis. Many of the skilled staff of key ministries are either out of the country or feared dead. In line with recommendations from the Bretton Woods institutions, the Government intends to keep staffing within limits compatible with a newly defined role for the State. In this context, UNDP supports the Government's determination to liberalize the economy further, thus creating a more conducive environment for private initiatives and investments.

Within the public administration, basic records and management systems are in disarray. Vehicles and equipment have been vandalized. Moreover, working conditions are significantly complicated by the collapse of supporting infrastructure and the lack of office supplies. Our efforts over the next two days should lead to a start up of a programme which addresses those basic requirements. We cannot insist on absorptive capacity as a precondition, we must help to build it, capacity building in government is a key theme of the government's Round Table proposals.

Finally, the Programme of National Reconciliation aims at the Reintegration of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) under a programme formulated as provided in the Arusha Accord. Although reliable statistics on refugees and internally displaced persons are still hard to come by, it now appears that Rwanda's total population would be near where it was before, around 7.8 million, once all refugees from all periods have returned home.

### **The Rehabilitation Programme**

The second main area for our review over the next two days is the Rehabilitation Programme, a necessary ingredient for securing peace and national reconciliation. As we know, the Rwandese economy has experienced increasing difficulties since the mid-1980s when the cultivated area - because of over-population - could no longer be increased to expand production as a means of countering the international price decline in Rwanda's main export crop, coffee. The difficulties exacerbated in recent years, as an increasing share of national resources had to be diverted to the war effort. As a result, per-capita GDP declined by 30% over the 1988-93 period. The

first objective of the Rehabilitation Programme which we will be reviewing is to recover the production levels prevailing before the crisis, thus recouping the additional 50% loss incurred in 1994.

The success of the Rehabilitation Programme will undoubtedly depend on the orderly return of a large number of refugees and their resettlement along with the internally displaced, in time for the next harvest season. We will also need to work hard at the rehabilitation of infrastructure, the distribution of seeds and tools to farmers and the rebuilding of cattle herds. The Rehabilitation Programme will, in turn provide impetus for the return of the refugees. In the industrial sector, Government is proposing the establishment of a special fund with a focus on the private sector, as a means of stimulating manufacturing activity and creating jobs.

The Rehabilitation Programme also aims at the rehabilitation of the social sectors which were particularly affected by the diversion of funds to the war effort. Essentially, there is a call for a compact on human development - Rwanda pledging to ensure the fulfillment of very basic human needs for all its people, and her partners pledging the support to do this. This compact will imply a significant change in Government budgetary priorities, including the privatization of public enterprises, elimination of low-priority development projects and reduction in military expenditure.

The Government understands that these objectives can be achieved only if -through equity, justice and equal opportunity - there is peace and consensus among all of its people, irrespective of ethnic background or language or political affiliation.

Finally, the Rehabilitation Programme calls for a regeneration of the environment. Before the recent crisis, as far back as 1990, the national parks in the North had been ravaged as a result of the armed conflict and poaching. Since then, the forest sector, even in the protected areas, has suffered from the large population movements. In addition, the Mutara hunting area, the Akagera park and the forests in Bugesera are now threatened by overgrazing by cattle herds arriving from Uganda and Burundi. UNDP welcomes and applauds the Government's efforts

to face the country's environmental challenge by finding the means to address widening degradation including the continuing losses of forest, soil and water resources. A rural nation depends on its natural resource base.

UNDP also hopes to work with the Rwandese Government and the other Governments in the sub-region in developing a regional environmental programme which will aim at addressing the regional degradation caused by the Rwanda crisis.

### **Programme Cost**

Mr. Prime Minister, Honorable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, the Programme of National Reconciliation and Socio-Economic Recovery before you calls for approximately \$264 million to support the resettlement of refugees and the internally displaced within Rwanda.

The Rehabilitation Programme also calls for approximately \$500 million to support the socio-economic rehabilitation effort, the details of which will be examined with you under the co-chairing and equally able joint direction of His Excellency the Prime Minister and UNDP's Regional Director for Africa, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

Thus, the Government seeks support for an overall programme for \$764 million -a significant amount no doubt. But in retrospect, this amount would seem moderate in comparison to what we have already spent and could continue to spend on relief assistance in Rwanda if we do not, together with the Government, attempt to address the long standing problems of that country. More importantly, the amount reported would seem small in comparison to the destruction which we have seen and the hundreds of thousands of lives which have been lost.

In closing, Honorable Participants, I wish to say to the Prime Minister and his colleagues and to all the Rwandese people that no matter how sympathetic and supportive the international

community, the primary responsibility for achieving peace and national reconciliation and national unity will rest on your shoulders. At the same time, we know clearly that no one group, ethnic or otherwise, will be able to achieve peace and promote development for the country. Similarly, no amount of force or brutality can secure national stability. Your challenge is to grasp the opportunity afforded by the support which your development partners will be prepared to give to you for the Programme which is before us. On our part, I assure you that UNDP commits itself fully to helping the Government and the people of Rwanda achieve the goals set forth in the Programme. We will be taking responsibility for the coordination of its implementation. A mechanism is needed to monitor, to coordinate and to ensure transparency and accountability.

I wish to pay tribute to the neighbouring countries of Rwanda which have made great sacrifices by receiving and assisting the Rwanda refugee population and I wish to thank all of you for participating in this Round Table, thus showing strong support for the Rwanda people.