

The Governance In The Land Of Thousand Hills: Implication For The Principles Of Good Governance

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Abstract: This paper was undertaken to identify a broad overview of the current state of governance and good governance practices in the land of thousand hills (Rwanda), taking into account the principles of good governance such as safety and rule of law; citizens' participation in governance and human rights; sustainable economic opportunity; human development; equity; control of corruption; and transparency and accountability in governance. It adopted a descriptive research design with both qualitative and quantitative data from the secondary sources such as Mo Ibrahim Foundation reports, Rwanda Governance Board scorecards, and Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace (IRDP) documents. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics such as percentage distribution, bar charts and Pie charts. Concerning the state of governance, despite poor governance characterised the country in the after independence period which resulted into genocide against Tutsi in 1994, Rwanda has improved on the state of governance in the aftermath. Currently, it is recorded among the best performers in terms of governance in most of the dimensions of good governance not only in Africa but also worldwide.

Keywords: Governance, principles of good governance, land of thousand hills, human rights.

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Rwanda is located in the part of African Great Lakes region and it shares the borders with Uganda in north, Tanzania in East, Burundi in South and Democratic Republic of Congo in West. As many other African countries, at the end of 19th century, it has faced colonialism where it has been colonized by Germany from 1890 to the end of World war one after which it was handed to the Belgium until the independence in 1962.

As far as democratic leadership is concerned, the first democratically organized Presidential elections in Rwanda took place in 1965. In in the post-independence era; the country was characterized by poor political governance which has led to the genocide against Tutsi in 1994 which is estimated to have killed a million of people. After the genocide, the country undertook political reforms with aim to promoting good governance. It is in this regard that the 1998/99 debates, under the chairmanship of the President of the Republic, were initiated with agenda among other things,

“...searching for a democratic system appropriate to Rwanda” (IRDP, 2010).

In terms of democratic elections, in post genocide era, Rwanda held its first local elections in 1999 and its first post-genocide presidential elections in 2003 where the president Paul Kagame was democratically elected. Equally important, the first legislative elections were also held in 2003. The second presidential elections were held in 2010 and the third elections were held in August, 2017. In addition, Rwanda's new constitution after 1994 genocide against Tutsi was established in 2003 and amended in 2015 through a referendum.

Today, the government of Rwanda is eager to promote good governance practices to ensure and maintain economic, social and political stability and development of its citizens in its entirety. As held by Mutesi Florence (2014:1), the Director of research at Rwanda Governance Board (RGB), in order to maintain social and political stability, the Government of Rwanda has taken on the task of ensuring that good governance practices exist throughout the country. This paper

therefore is intended to assess the current state of the governance and good governance practices in Rwanda taking into account the principles of good (democratic) governance also referred to as dimensions of governance. These include safety and rule of law; citizens' participation in governance and human rights; sustainable economic opportunity; human development; equity; control of corruption; and transparency and accountability in governance.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section makes a brief review of existing literature on the main concepts underpinning the subject matter of this paper. This was done by taking into account various definitions and contextualisation of such concepts by different authors and scholars. The review of literature was also done by taking into considerations the principles of good governance.

A. GOVERNANCE, GOOD GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Different institutions such as academic institutions, international organisations and development agencies amongst others contextualise and define differently the concept governance. In the perspective of UNDP, governance is defined as the system of values, policies and institutions by which a society manages its economic, political and social affairs through interactions within and among the state, civil society and private sector. It is the way a society organizes itself to make and implement decisions—achieving mutual understanding, agreement and action. It comprises the mechanisms and processes for citizens and groups to articulate their interests, mediate their differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations.

According to Graham, *et al.* (2003:1), governance is a process whereby societies or organizations make their important decisions, determine whom they involve in the process and how they render account. On the other hand, the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights (2007:2) defines good governance as the exercise of authority through political and institutional processes that are transparent and accountable, and encourage public participation. Graham, *et al.* (2003:6) also define good governance as a mode or model of governance that leads to social, environmental and economic results sought by citizens. According to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (2002:2), good governance implies an efficient and predictable public sector incorporating participation and the rule of law, i.e., with the characteristics of democratic governance.

Munshi and Biju (2004) refers good governance to a participative manner of governing that functions in a responsible way based on the principles of efficiency, legitimacy and consensus for the purpose of promoting the rights of individual citizens and the public interest, thus indicating the exercise of political will for ensuring the material welfare of society and sustainable development with social justice. Good governance can be equated to democratic governance. The Swedish International Development

Cooperation Agency (2002:54) held that democratic governance is a mutual reinforcement of good governance and democracy. It maintains that a symbiotic relationship exists between the concepts democracy and good governance which implies that neither concept can be upheld in the long term without the other.

In general, democratic governance as well as good governance should be influenced by or depend on societal and institutional values and norms. In this regard, Bertucci (2007:3) claims that the State should put in place mechanisms that allow society to exercise its democratic rights, for instance, to participate and elect leaders of their choice. In essence this facilitates society's compliance to governance practices and procedures. Besides being capable of democratically constructing an adequate legal framework for the achievement of society's goals, the state, or public administration, must be effective and efficient in providing the services that citizens demand of it (United Nations, 2007:29).

Additionally, for good understanding of democratic governance, it is also important to address the concept democracy in its various types. Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (2011:4) distinguishes two types of democracy. These are direct or participatory democracy and representative democracy. In *direct democracy*, citizens, without the intermediary of elected or appointed officials, can participate in making public decisions. Direct democracy thus reduces the distinction between government and the governed and between the state and civil society; it is a system of popular self-government. On the other hand, in *representative democracy* as the most form of democracy, the citizens elect officials to make political decisions, formulate laws, and administer programmes for the public good (Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2011:4).

From the broad definition of governance, we can identify four types of governance. The United Nations Development Programmes identifies the four types, which, to varying degrees, are all subject to the influence of civil society and the private sector. These are (1) *economic governance* which includes processes of decision-making that directly or indirectly affect a country's economic activities or its relationships with other economies; (2) *political governance* refers to decision-making and policy implementation of a legitimate and authoritative state; (3) *administrative governance* is a system of policy implementation carried out through an efficient, independent, accountable and open public sector; and (4) *systemic governance* encompasses the processes and structures of society that guide political and socioeconomic relationships to protect cultural and religious beliefs and values, and to create and maintain an environment of health, freedom, security and with the opportunity to exercise personal capabilities that lead to a better life for all people (UNDP, 1997:10).

Additionally, within the national landscape, there are different players in governance. These include private sector, the institutions of civil society (including the voluntary or not-for profit sector), government and the media (Graham, *et al.*, 2003:2). The other democratic institutions and actors include the media, civil society, political parties and, especially, a strong opposition in parliament (Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2011:9). There are also different areas where the governance

is applied; and these areas determine the way governance is exercised.

According to Graham, *et al.* (2003:2), there are four areas or zones where the concept is particularly relevant. These are global, national and organisation spaces. Governance in global space, or global governance, on one hand, deals with issues outside the purview of individual governments whereas governance in 'national space', i.e. within a country: this is sometimes understood as the exclusive preserve of government, of which there may be several levels: national, provincial or state, indigenous, urban or local. Organizational governance (governance in 'organization space'), on the other hand, comprises the activities of organizations that are usually accountable to a board of directors (Graham, *et al.*, 2003:2).

Furthermore, good governance is beneficial to the entire community in a number of ways. It encourages public participation in government, inclusion in law-making and policymaking, and accountability of elected and appointed officials. It enables civil society to become actively involved in policymaking and leads to the wide representation of societal interests in decision-making (United Nations High Commission for Human Rights, 2007:9). It also entails that responsibility and transparency are reinforced, and that real participation is fostered, which implies that the link with democracy becomes much clearer and that good governance reinforces democracy and vice versa (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, 2002:3).

B. GOOD GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES AND INSTITUTIONS

The effective implementation of good governance requires adherence to the principles of good governance and putting in place appropriate institutions responsible for the citizens to streamline their participation in policy making and in the whole governance of the country. Additionally, while evaluating countries in terms of governance, different countries are found to have reached different levels of governance. This is due to the extent to which such countries adhere to and apply such principles of good governance and put in place responsible institutions.

The institutions responsible for good governance are important in the sense that they play multiple functions in the governance of a country. Johnston (2016:29) admits that public institutions will foster good governance to the extent that they ensure effective, equitable, honest policies and implementation, and access to information, both in terms of popular access to government information, and mutual access within government. Additionally, Betts and Wedgwood (2011:1) held that states can only manage development properly, and achieve the sorts of results intended, when they are underpinned by effective and accountable institutions and systems. This is because as highlighted by Johnston (2016:5), many such institutions will have the task of checking the excesses of the powerful in the name of ordinary citizens: courts, for example, must enforce laws of fair play, such as honest elections and basic business transparency, as well as enforcing contracts.

Similarly, the principles of good governance are critical in the governance of a country in a number of ways. Such

principles can be referred to as the pillars of good governance; and they help to determine whether a given style of governance is democratic or not. Additionally, in fighting corruption, good governance efforts rely on principles such as accountability, transparency and participation to shape anti-corruption measures (United Nations High Commission for Human Rights, 2007:2).

As noted by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (2011:4), such principles differentiate democratic rule from any other types of government. Any democracy around the world can be evaluated on the basis of them. The governance principles set the overall enabling environment and drive the capacity of institutions to perform better and respond to crises (UNDP, 2011:270).

For instance, citizens' participation is paramount for sustaining good or democratic governance in any country. According to Amakihe, *et al.* (2017:5), citizens' participation makes the government official to be more responsive to citizens. Besides, participation contributes to policies which respect civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural rights (United Nations High Commission for Human Rights, 2007:5). However, it is important to mention that citizens' participation is also hampered by a number of issues. Skelcher and Torfing (2010:12) admit that first, large inequalities in education and wealth often makes it extremely difficult to ensure an equal participation and influence. Second, a major obstacle to participation and influence is that the problems and issues that trouble people's daily lives are often caused, or at least, influenced by distant national, transnational and global forces and dynamics, which are difficult to affect through popular participation.

Additionally, to ensure democratic governance, the rule of law is particularly important. Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2011:20) held that democracy without the rule of law is quite literally unthinkable. Where the rule of law exists, it is easier to manage potential conflicts during crisis. An effective rule of law can also support reforms or adaptation processes within state functions and overall government performance (UNDP, 2011:280). It establishes a framework to which all conduct and behaviour conform, applying equally to all the members of society, be they private citizens or government officials. It protects fundamental political, social, and economic rights and defends the citizen from the threats of tyranny and lawlessness (Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2011:20).

Taking into account the importance of good governance principles and institutions in the governance process of a country, UNDP (2011:283) mentioned that the institutions responsible for realizing and upholding the governance principles need to perform, adapt and be stable. This means that institutions responsible for ensuring accountability (e.g., anti-corruptions commissions, judicial bodies, ombudsmen's offices, parliaments) also need to perform well to fulfil their mandates and to gain legitimacy.

According to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (2002:3), the key institutions of good governance are a democratic constitution, a government and a parliament with its controlling functions, a central bank, national and local authorities, an independent judiciary, independent mass media and an active civil society i.e. the basic democratic institutions and processes. Similarly,

Johnston (2016:4) held that checks and balances, public accounting procedures, open but orderly markets, competitive politics, and administrative transparency are institutions and values essential to good governance, but citizens and officials both must have a stake in making them work.

On the other hand, according to UNDP (2011:270), the main governance principles are participation/inclusion, non-discrimination/equality and rule of law/accountability. Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (2011:4-6) also show that those principles include citizen participation, equality, political tolerance, accountability, transparency, regular, free and fair elections, economic freedom, control of the abuse of power, separation of powers, bill of rights, a culture of accepting the results of elections, human rights, multi-party system, neutrality of state institutions, and rule of law.

III. METHODOLOGY

This section describes the methods adopted for gathering and analysing data. It also shows the nature of data collected. Briefly, this paper adopted a descriptive research design with both qualitative and quantitative data from the secondary sources. The choice of the design is as a result of the nature of the paper. For data collection, existing sources (secondary) such as Rwanda Governance Board and Mo Ibrahim Foundation reports, Rwanda Governance Board scorecards, Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace (IRDP) documents and various journal articles amongst others were searched, retrieved and reviewed. In addition, data were analysed using content and statistical methods of analysis. Moreover, for the analysis and better understanding of the state of governance in Rwanda, the 2016 and 2017 Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance were used. Such data were analysed using descriptive statistics such as percentage distribution, bar charts and Pie charts.

IV. DISCUSSIONS

The analysis and discussions of the results was done basing on data from Rwanda Governance Board Scorecard and reports and Mo Ibrahim Foundation Index Reports of African Governance (2016 and 2017). Both 2016 and 2017 Mo Ibrahim Foundation Index Report of African Governance show that Rwanda has made an interesting step towards democratic governance. In 2015, Rwanda is ranked the 9th in Africa with 62.3% overall score (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2016:18), while in 2016, Rwanda is ranked the 9th in Africa with 63.9% overall score (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2017:16). Additionally, the 2016 Mo Ibrahim Foundation Index Report of African Governance show that Rwanda is the only country to feature both among the ten highest scoring and the ten most improved countries over the past ten years and it managed to improve across all categories of the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2016:18).

In the framework of both 2016 and 2017 Mo Ibrahim Foundation Index Report of African Governance, the scores were given in respect of the four dimensions or categories which are further subdivided into sub-categories. Those

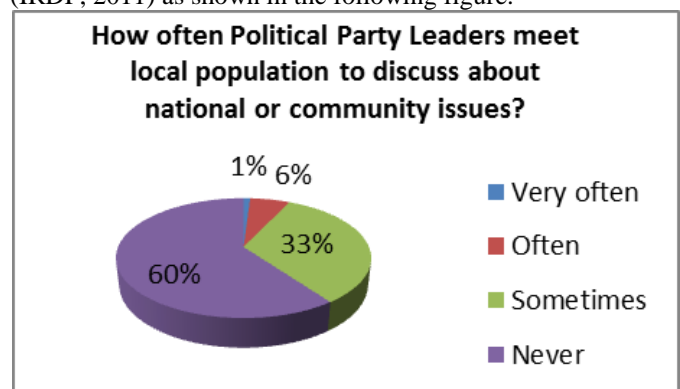
dimensions consist of safety and rule of law, participation and human rights, sustainable economic opportunity and human development; and the scores given in respect of such dimensions are based on to contextualise, analyse and understand the democratic governance situation of Rwanda.

A. CITIZENS PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNANCE

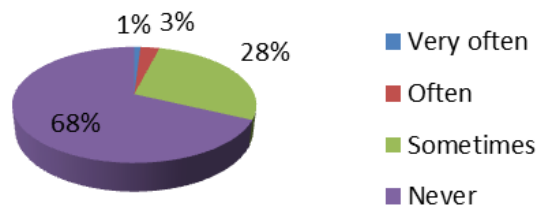
Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) through Citizens Report Card 2016 records the net satisfaction with citizen participation in government programmes at 58.9%. This shows an increase in satisfaction compared to Citizens Report Card 2015 where the net satisfaction with citizen participation was recorded at 51.0% (RGB, 2016a:114). Additionally, the research conducted by Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace (IRDP) in 2011 on Citizen's Participation in Democratic Governance in Rwanda revealed that local citizens participate in implementation of the programmes at the grassroots level at 89%; in designating leaders at 97%; in establishing the laws or law making processes at 51%; in policy making at 26%; in decision making at the grassroots level at 64%; and in evaluation of the programmes at grassroots level at 33% (IRDP, 2011).

This implies that there is low citizens' participation in policy making processes and in evaluation of the programmes at grassroots level with the score below 50%. The citizens' participation in democratic governance in Rwanda is recorded high in designating leaders; and this is mainly realised through the elections of leaders at both local and national levels, the volunteerism during elections and through contesting elections amongst other modalities of participation. Furthermore, in Citizens Report Card 2016, Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) highlighted that there are some challenges that must be addressed so that the citizens can fully participate in decision making. These include change of persisted mindsets among Rwandans that citizens are there just to execute what the leaders have said and planned is required; governing institutions need to design effective citizens' engagement plans from lowest level; and there should be sustained sensitization and citizens' education for them to fully participate in the decision making process (RGB, 2016a:118).

In the same study, IRDP revealed that Civil Societies Organizations (CSOs) and Political Parties weakly involve in promoting citizens' participation in democratic governance (IRDP, 2011) as shown in the following figure.



How often Civil Society officials meet local population to discuss about national or community issues?



Source: IRDP, 2011.

Figure 1: Citizens' ties with Political Party Leaders and Civil Society Organisations Officials

As shown in the figure 1, there are weak ties with political party leaders and civil society organisations officials and local citizens. This, in turn, implies a weak involvement of political parties and civil society organisations in promoting citizens participation in democratic governance.

In addition, Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) through its governance scorecard 2016 edition scored the citizen participation in governance with 61.93% while civil society participation in governance is scored with 72.45%. In the same assessment, transparency and accountability in governance are scored with 85.78%. Additionally, RGB indicates that citizen participation has been empowered by and large through the Rwanda's known Home Grown Solutions (HGSs); where these have increased, and greatly impacted citizens' involvement in contributing to solutions and decision making process (RGB, 2016b:30).

In the assessment of the governance situation in Rwanda in terms of rule of law, RGB gave scores basing on 5 indicators which are performance of the judiciary (75.02% scores), performance of the legislature (72.27% scores), performance of the prosecution (91.8% scores), access to justice (76.48% scores) and use of ICT in judiciary (82.85% scores) (RGB, 2016b: ix). Moreover, in Citizens Report Card 2016, RGB reports the overall satisfaction (net satisfaction) of the citizens in justice sector of 76.7% (RGB, 2016a:71).

In the assessment of governance in terms of reforms, fighting against corruption and freedom of media, Rwanda was ranked as the best reformer. For instance, Rwanda is ranked among least corrupt countries. In Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2015, Rwanda is ranked the fourth on the continent and 44th out of 168 countries worldwide; in CPI 2016, Rwanda is ranked the 50th out of 176 countries worldwide and in CPI 2017, Rwanda is ranked the 48th out of 180 countries worldwide. It occupies the leading position in the East African community countries as least corrupt and most transparent. Rwanda's score is above global average, which is 43% and is ranked in the same category as the G20, with an average of 54% (Transparency International, 2015 and 2016); and with an average of 55% (Transparency International, 2017). In Rwanda governance scorecard 2016 edition, the incidence of corruption was also scored 86.13% whereas control of corruption was scored 87.77% (RGB, 2016b: x); and in Citizens Report Card 2016 by RGB, fighting against corruption and injustice scored 81% (RGB, 2016a:81).

In addition, the 2015 Gallup worldwide poll on freedom of media, the country scored 86% on freedom of media topping the list of assessed African states (Gallup, 2015). In Rwanda governance scorecard 2016 edition, the rights to media freedom scored 85.85% (RGB, 2016b: ix). Moreover, in Citizens Report Card 2016 by RGB, the role of media in promoting governance and social cohesion scored 89.3% (RGB, 2016a:83).

B. SAFETY AND RULE OF LAW

In 2015, Rwanda is ranked the 15th with 61.5% score and classified Medium High (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2016:26), while in 2016, ranked the 12th with 64.1% score and classified as a bouncing back (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2017:26). In addition, this dimension was sub-divided into four sub-dimensions and Rwanda's score in each of such sub-dimension is presented in the figure 2 below.



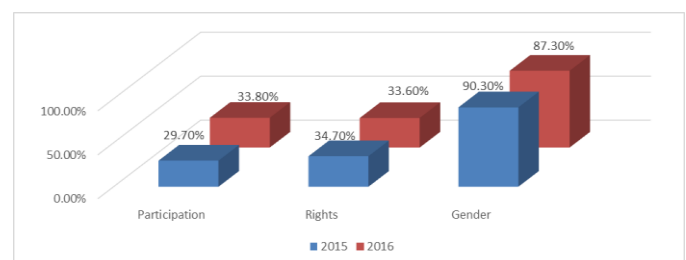
Source: Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2015 and 2016)

Figure 2: Rwanda's Score for Rule of Law, Accountability, Personal Safety and National Security for the Year 2015 and 2016

For the year 2015 and 2016, Rwanda performed well (above 50%) in all sub-categories of safety and rule of law for the year 2015 and the year 2016. However, it scored high in accountability with 69.1% in 2015 and 72.1% in 2016.

C. PARTICIPATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

As far as participation and human rights dimension is concerned, Rwanda is ranked the 28th with 51.6% score in 2015 (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2016:39), while in 2016, Rwanda is ranked the 27th with 51.5% score (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2017:44). This dimension has been sub-divided into three sub-dimensions and the scores in each of such sub-dimensions are shown in the figure 3 below.



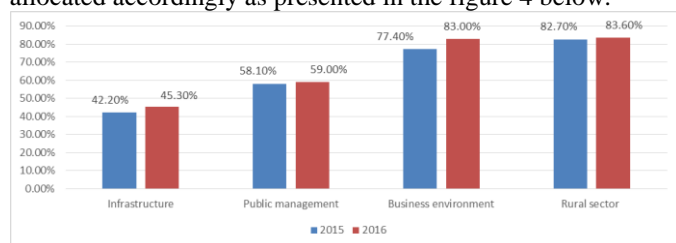
Source: Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2015 and 2016)

Figure 3: Rwanda's Score for Participation, Rights and Gender for the Year 2015 and 2016

For both years 2015 and 2016, Rwanda had poor performance in both sub-dimensions of participation and rights with the score below 50% while at the same time, it has made good performance in the sub-dimension with a high score of 90.30% in 2015 and 87.30% in 2016.

D. SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

In 2015, Rwanda is ranked the 5th with 65.1% score and it is classified High (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2016:48), while in 2016, Rwanda is ranked the third with 67.7% score and it is classified among the countries with slowing improvement (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2017:62). Furthermore, this dimension was sub-divided into four sub-dimensions and the scores were allocated accordingly as presented in the figure 4 below.



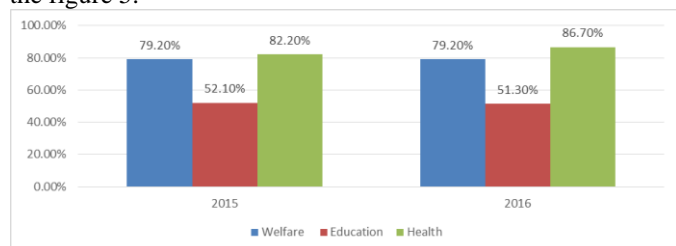
Source: Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2015 and 2016)

Figure 4: Rwanda's Score for Infrastructure, Public Management, Business Environment and Rural Sector for the year 2015 and 2016

The figure 4 shows that in all sub-dimensions, Rwanda scored above 50% for both 2015 and 2016 except for the sub-dimension of infrastructure where it scored 42.20% in 2015 and 45.30% in 2016. This indicates weak performance in the sub-dimension of infrastructure development for the year 2015 and 2016.

E. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

In 2015, Rwanda is ranked the 5th with 72.4% score and classified High (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2016:63), while in 2016, Rwanda is ranked the 5th with 72.4% Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2017:82). The dimension of human development is also sub-divided into three sub-dimensions. Rwanda's performance in each of such sub-dimensions is presented in the figure 5.



Source: Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2015 and 2016)

Figure 5: Rwanda's Score for Welfare, Education and Health for the Year 2015 and 2016

From the figure 5, Rwanda's scores in all sub-dimensions are above a half (50%) for both 2015 and 2016. It also shows that for both years, it performed well in the sub-dimension of health with the score of 82.20% in 2015 and 86.70% in 2016.

V. CONCLUSION

As far as the governance is concerned, Rwanda has been characterised by poor governance in the after independence period which has even led to genocide against Tutsi in 1994. However, in the aftermath, Rwanda has been progressing towards embracing good governance and today, it is recorded among the best performers in terms of governance in most of the dimensions of good governance not only in Africa but also worldwide.

According to the 2016 and 2017 Mo Ibrahim Foundation Index of African Governance, Rwanda is ranked the 9th with the overall score of 62.3% and 63.9% respectively. In most of the dimensions of good governance, Rwanda scored above 50% except in the dimensions of infrastructure where it scored 42.2% in 2015 and 45.3% in 2016; citizens' participation with 29.7% in 2015 and 33.8% in 2016 and human rights with the score of 34.7% in 2015 and 33.6% in 2016. Rwanda is also ranked among the ten best performers in Africa in the dimension of sustainability and economic opportunity and human development. Moreover, Rwanda is ranked among the five best performers in Africa in the sub-dimensions of accountability, personal safety, gender, business environment, rural sector, and welfare. Particularly, Rwanda is ranked the first in gender, rural sector and welfare for the both 2016 and 2017 Mo Ibrahim Foundation Index of African Governance with the score above 75%.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Like other countries, Rwanda is in the struggle to improve on its state of governance and it has so far made a considerable progress in many of the dimensions of good governance. However, in order to keep on improving the state of governance, the following recommendations are hereby made:

- ✓ The local government needs to be structured in the manner that enhances the citizens' participation in the government activities. Besides, elected officials are required to involve the citizens in planning, execution and evaluation of their performance.
- ✓ The fact that there are weak ties between political parties and civil society organisations and local citizens, the government should also encourage the participation of the civil society as well as political parties in order to improve on such ties and increase the level of citizens' involvement in the governance of the country.

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