

Rwanda President shares his country's formula for success

It has learnt from S'pore and invested in its people, adopted innovative methods

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Rwanda has achieved success by following in Singapore's footsteps and investing in people, making prudent policy choices and adopting innovative methods, said Rwandan President Paul Kagame.

That is why Singapore's story of building a successful nation continues to be relevant to his country, he added.

During a public lecture at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) on Friday, Mr Kagame, who is on a working visit to Singapore, said his country's development was not an automatic process that can be taken for granted but an example for other nations that they too can achieve progress regardless of their starting point. The lecture is part of the NTU Majulah Lecture series, where eminent speakers share their insights on global topics relevant to Singapore.

Mr Kagame said: "Since the pandemic, like Singapore, Rwanda is working on a vaccine and medicine manufacturing hub. Next year, the first mRNA vaccine facility will be launched by German pharmaceutical company BioNTech in Kigali." It will be the first mRNA vaccine plant in Africa.

The Rwandan President said his country, while able to achieve groundbreaking feats today, had to emerge from the ashes of its past to develop to its current state.

He spoke of its journey since the 1994 genocide, in which some 800,000 people, mainly from the Tutsi minority, were killed and public institutions were destroyed.

"All Rwandans could aspire to was simply to survive. Charting a pathway to prosperity seemed to be a preposterous dream. We still have a long way to go, but our country has been fundamentally transformed for the better," he said.

Rwanda, a nation of more than 12 million people in central Africa,



boasts years of sturdy economic growth, pristine streets, order and safety, intolerance for corruption and abundance of greenery.

Mr Kagame said the progress was a result of three factors: innovation around national unity and social cohesion, inclusive citizen-oriented governance and prioritising technology. Partnerships with foreign establishments have helped too, such as a recent memorandum of understanding with NTU inked in June 2021.

In his speech on Friday, NTU president Subra Suresh said: "NTU is pleased to partner with Rwanda and to share our experience in education, innovation, digital transformation, human resource development and capacity building."

Mr Kagame also talked about Singaporeans who have put down roots in Rwanda, noting that he is "happy to have a number of dynamic young Singaporean entrepreneurs living and working in

Rwanda and making important contributions".

KinderWorld International Group, a private education company, is one Singaporean firm that is looking to make inroads in Rwanda by setting up an international school in Kagarama, a village in Kigali, by 2030. It has 20 schools in Vietnam and Thailand, and wants to build a school and boarding facility in Kagarama that can accept up to 1,500 students.

Discussions are ongoing while a land space of 19ha has been allocated by the Rwandan government for the school, said Dr Abdul Rashid, chief executive of Pegasus Education Group, the tertiary arm of KinderWorld Education Group.

Rwanda Development Board chief investment officer Pacific Tuyishime said Singapore is renowned for having rapidly developed from a low-income country to a high-income one based on its strong education system and cur-

riculum that promotes science and technology. "Having a school with a Singapore curriculum would be a great contribution to the development of Rwanda. In addition to that, the establishment of a Singapore school in Rwanda would attract students from the region to study in Rwanda," he added.

Mr Kagame also met President Halimah Yacob and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on Friday.

Madam Halimah and Mr Kagame reaffirmed the friendly and warm relations between Singapore and Rwanda as fellow small states, and discussed ways to further deepen ties in areas of mutual interest.

Mr Lee, who visited Rwanda in June, said he and Mr Kagame had fruitful discussions on their countries' friendly ties, and reaffirmed the need to continue working together as fellow small states given global and regional developments.

Rwandan President Paul Kagame called on Singapore's President Halimah Yacob at the Istana on Friday. Mr Kagame, who also met Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, said during a public lecture at NTU that Singapore's story of building a successful nation continues to be relevant to his country.

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