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Country is Africa's Best On Gender Equity

The New Times (Kigali)

NEWS

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Kigali

Rwanda has been ranked Africa's number one and the world's second in recognition and respect of women rights.

According to the Gender Equity Index (GEI) presented recently by the Social Watch Report 2007 at the UN headquarters in New York, Rwanda and Finland share the second place, each with 84 points. Sweden, with 89 points, tops the ranking of 154 countries rated.

Social Watch is an international network of more than 400 citizens' organisations committed to social, economic and gender justice.

Rwanda's impressive performance is attributed to thorough application of affirmative action policies, such as legislation to ensure minimum quotas for women's political participation and labour market equity.

"This demonstrates that it is not necessary to achieve high levels of economic growth or industrialisation to implement effective policies to promote greater equity," Karina Batthyány, the Social Watch research team coordinator, said.

Rwanda is one of the few developing countries to register such tremendous progress between 2004 and 2007, according to the index.

Others are Ecuador, Cape Verde and Guatemala.

However, the study shows that the general trend is either very slow or no progress at all towards equality between women and men.

Germany, Barbados, Denmark, Iceland, New Zealand and the Netherlands complete the top 10 best performing nations on the GEI ranking.

The worst 10 include Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Morocco, Benin, the Central African Republic, Togo, Chad, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire and Yemen.

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