Distinguished Co-Facilitators,

Civil society welcomes Rwanda's real progress: poverty fell from 39.8 percent in 2017 to 27.4 percent in 2024, life expectancy reached 70.2 years, and access to water, electricity, and sanitation has expanded significantly.

Yet structural gaps remain. Rural poverty, at 31.6 percent, is nearly double the urban rate, and rural workers earn less than half the wages of their urban counterparts. Women continue to carry a disproportionate share of unpaid care work, and Rwanda still lacks a living wage policy to close persistent gender pay gaps. The 2024 NGO Law grants broad discretionary authority over civil society organizations' leadership and operations, a concern raised repeatedly in Rwanda's recent Universal Periodic Review, and one that can affect the independence civil society needs to fully contribute to SDG monitoring. Ratification of the African Union protocol on the rights of older persons also remains pending.

We therefore ask: what safeguards will ensure the NGO Law is implemented in a way that protects civil society's independence and diversity? What is the timeline for adopting a living wage policy and redistributing unpaid care work? And how will citizen- and CSO-generated data be formally incorporated into SDG monitoring going forward?

Civil society stands ready to be a genuine partner in translating Rwanda's strong growth into equity for those still left behind.