

THE NEWTIMES

Rwanda's First Daily

Blair impressed by country's progress

KIGALI - The former British Prime Minister Tony Blair yesterday said that Rwanda, as a country that has gone through difficult times, is determined to forge a new future where it will be remembered, not for its past but for its fast development.

Addressing the press shortly after visiting Isonga Primary School in Runda, Kamonyi District, Blair who has been in the country on a 2-day visit, said that much as Rwanda cannot erase its past history, the current leadership has shown the determination to focus more on the future than dwelling on the past.

“Rwanda has been through difficult times in its past when the genocide happened, obviously it lives with that memory but as a country, it is trying to forge a new future where they develop the country and where the country becomes known not for its past but its future.”

“They have got a great vision for the country but they need partnership in order to deliver that vision. I have seen exciting changes here in the last couple of years and there is more that can be done,” said Blair

Blair was taken around the school by Education Minister Dr. Charles Murigande to see a project where parents are building 4 new classrooms using their own resources and labour under the new government plan to build 3,000 classrooms by January 2010.

The 3000 classrooms are needed to facilitate the 9-Year Basic Education Programme that started with the just-concluded academic year.

Government plans to have these classrooms ready at different schools across the country.

Blair also visited the school's cow zero grazing project to support its feeding programme. The school has 1,600 pupils under the nine year basic education programme.

He also watched a volley ball game before engaging in a chit-chat with the students.

Blair hailed the country for addressing its challenges using home grown solutions. He said one of such innovations is working with communities to build new classrooms to the right standards which would have cost the government an estimated Rwf50bn.

Earlier in the day Blair had visited the bio-diesel project at the Mulindi-based Institute of Scientific Research and Technology (IRST) funded by the Government as part of a major plan to shift towards the use of green energy.

He also witnessed the signing of a bio-diesel concession worth \$250m between the government and Eco-fuel Global and Eco Positive.

“We have seen today a project which is going to be a private sector project, which is going to bring investments. It will not only create thousands of jobs in Rwanda but also produce bio-fuel in Rwanda which is very important for making Rwanda energy secure,”

“---and then here we are at a school which is getting new classrooms to get more children get education. There is a lot happening in Rwanda today and I am very proud and feel a very good sense of honour to be part of it,” Blair said.

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