WELCOME SPEECH BY MS. EUGENIA KAYITESI, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE OF POLICY ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH(IPAR\_RWANDA) AT THE IPAR 8TH ANNUAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE ON “**URBANISTION, URBAN PLANNING AND GOVERNANCE.”**

* The Guest of Honour, Honourable Ambassador Claver Gatete, Minister of Infrastructure,
* The UN Resident Coordinator Mr. Fodé Ndiaye
* IPAR Board Chairperson Mr. Wellars Gasamagera
* IPAR Board Members
* Development Partners
* Invited Guests
* Fellow IPAR staff
* Ladies and Gentlemen
* All protocol observed

Good Morning!

* I am pleased to welcome you all to today’s IPAR’s 8th Annual Research Conference.
* Thank you all for honoring our Invitation, despite your very tight schedules to come and participate in this conference.
* This Conference is organised by the Institute of Policy Analysis and Research(IPAR-Rwanda).
* Guest of honour Sir, every year, IPAR-Rwanda organises an annual research conference as part of its mandate to promote dialogue and encourage a culture of debate on policy issues in Rwanda.
* The theme for this year’s conference is “**Urbanisation, Urban Planning and Urban Governance”.**
* This forum, therefore, is very much within IPAR’s mission to encourage a culture of debate and dialogue and exchange ideas on the theme of Urbanisation, urban planning and urban governance which has been strategically identified by the Government of Rwanda as a potential engine of socio-economic development and sustainable human settlement with a target to reach 35% of urbanization rate by 2024. from 18.4% in 2017
* As cities grow both challenges and opportunities for city dwellers come up and Rwandan cities are not exceptional as will be highlighted in the presentations that will follow. This therefore calls for policy actors and researchers to come together to discuss and exchange ideas that will generate evidence that will inform better policy design and implementation.
* Increased urbanisation aims at increasing the socio-economic fabric through accrued vertical linkages and competition in the private sector, access to market, specialisation and diversification.
* It is also meant to boost structural transformation through movements of workers from less to more productive sectors, and especially from farm to off-farm activities. Urbanisation is hence expected to accelerate private-sector-led economic growth and increased productivity.
* It is also expected to densify centres of excellence in various domains, including education, Information Technology, etc….and hence boost knowledge transfer among development actors of the country.
* However, while urbanisation may boost economic growth, rural-urban migration may also bring challenges. Part of these challenges are related to the urban planning of growing cities, leading to housing and sanitation issues, among others. Access to safe water, development of affordable and sustainable housing, relocation of citizens living in high risk-zones are key practical issues, which will have to be taken into account into the development planning of the City of Kigali, the six secondary cities and other urban centres, in order for urbanisation to bring its expected gain in Rwanda.

**The Guest of Honour, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

* The overall aim of this conference is to provide policy makers with the latest evidence on policies and programmes which can assist in achieving positive urbanisation outcomes. The key issues to be discussed will revolve around social economics of Kigali city, Kigali master plan, the affordable housing, Informal settlement and secondary cities in Rwanda with aim of drawing policy recommendations that will inform relevant stakeholders
* The Conference provides an opportunity for researchers, academics, government officials, representatives of development partners and international and local NGOs with an interest in urbanisation, urban planning and urban governance to discuss ways related to achieving sustainable urbanisation in Rwanda as envisioned in the National Strategy for Transformation (NST-1) and draw recommendations that will inform policy and ultimately contribute to National development
* The event further aims to shaping and prioritizing with the target audience policy recommendations that could inform future planning and policy implementation process in Rwanda
* Once again thank you all for honouring our invitation to this conference and I wish you all fruitful deliberations

Thank you