

US students conclude study tour with visit to Kagame



President Kagame welcomes the Wharton School of Business students and dons at Village Urugwiro yesterday. The New Times/ V. Urugwiro.

A delegation of 30 students and instructors from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania in the US, yesterday, met President Paul Kagame at Village Urugwiro, Kigali during which they heard about the country's recovery process following the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

The visit by the delegation, led by Katherine Klein, a professor at the Wharton School, was part of their study tour titled: "Conflict, Leadership and Change: Lessons from Rwanda".

Speaking to journalists shortly after the meeting, Klein said: "Our Masters of Business Administration (MBA) students came to learn about Rwanda's transformation and to draw leadership lessons."

Klein, on her third visit to Rwanda, pointed out at the country's progress over the years.

"Our impression is extremely positive and we are inspired by what we see and hopeful for Rwanda's future," Prof. Klein added.

She said they learnt a range of lessons from the Head of State, including his leadership style and how he manages stress.

Their discussion also touched on women empowerment in Rwanda, the country's tragic history, recovery process, security and economic growth.

“The country’s progress is inspiring and it’s amazing to see that people are living in peace and with a sense of hope,” Klein said.

During their five-day tour, the delegation also met other government officials, business leaders, students and other ordinary Rwandans.

Klein said it was important to understand the country’s situation instead of making conclusions based on hearsay.

“I encourage people to come and see this beautiful country and find answers to their questions,” Klein said.

Wallrick Williams, one of the students, said it was his first time to come to Rwanda, adding that what he saw on the ground is different from what he had heard before his visit.

“I expected to find a complicated situation. But I am impressed and touched by Rwanda’s progress. It is an unbelievable lesson and I am fortunate to have made this trip to Rwanda,” he noted.

Also on the delegation was Eric Kacou, course instructor, and a local coordinator, Issa Higiyo.

Dr. Vincent Biruta, the Minister for Education, said the students’ mission was to understand the country’s transformation process based on good governance practices.

“The President explained to them the country’s journey 20 years after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi and the style of leadership that shaped the country’s recovery process,” he said.

Later, President Kagame tweeted about his discussion with the students: “A very productive meeting I had with the Wharton- U.Penn, Students this aftern! Alwz welcome and appreciated.”

It is the third time MBA Wharton students are visiting Rwanda.

The visit coincided with the launch of the commemoration activities in the lead up to the April 7 twentieth anniversary of the Genocide against the Tutsi.