



REMARKS OF HER EXCELLENCY MRS JEANNETTE KAGAME

Inclusive Fintech Forum Side Event – The Business Case
for Women in Fintech.



JUNE 21, 2023
KIGALI

**Mr Tidjane Thiam, Board Chairman of the Rwanda
Finance Limited,**

**Mr. Ravi Menon, Managing Director of the Monetary
Authority of Singapore,**

Global Fintech Leaders and Stakeholders,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All protocols observed,

Good afternoon.

- Thank you for having me here!
- I hope that Kigali has been hospitable to you.

Dear Friends,

- For all the rapid progress we have experienced, and new knowledge we have acquired, an old problem has made its way on the train, with us.

- For many women, who have grown up in a world that was not built in their image, occupying space in emerging markets is an uphill battle.
- And yet, unless all potential is yielded, and all contributions are counted, we, as populations, will always fall short of the achievements that are, in fact, within our grasp.
- I share your conviction, that Fintech can bridge the existing gaps in financial inclusion, even more so, with AI revolutionising the worlds of Finance, Technology, and a number of other industries central to our development.
- Fintech can and will spur economic growth and financial stability for our continent's skilled, youthful communities, in line with global frameworks for sustainable development.

- Rwanda has taken encouraging steps in gender mainstreaming, gender-responsive budgeting, and ensuring female representation at all levels of leadership.
- But this isn't enough. Financial backing for women-led fintech solutions must carry strong, compelling incentives; not because women are in need of assistance, but because equality is their legitimate right.
- After all, it's all about the brain, which all men and women possess.
- It would be a shame, and a failure, not to gain from their equal capabilities.
- We believe that inclusion must be intentional, systematic, and, yes, compulsory, to prevent the waste of talent, skills and expertise.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- I wish to repeat this: by limiting the space for women in Finance and Technology, we are not just failing women: **we are failing every one.**
- So I ask of the women before me to say no to a few things;
- **No** to thinking of yourself as a guest in a male space.
- **No** to imposter syndrome, and doubting your equal ability to perform, or to become the next exciting, big development in fintech.
- **No** to considering your gender a handicap in your field, but rather understanding, that the mentality that discriminates against you, **is** the burden to fintech.

And instead, Women in Finance, Girls in ICT,

- **Yes**, to being mentors, and sources of inspiration for your fellow women, and to younger girls for whom you have paved the way.
- **Yes**, to demanding accountability from the regulatory frameworks tasked with your inclusion.
- **And yes** to speaking out in rooms, where you might be the minority, but where **your expertise and experience**, make your voices worthy of being heard.

(PAUSE)

- We have learnt so much from the covid pandemic.
- Indeed, at a time when many were left struggling to make sense of the ‘new normal’, women as natural multi-taskers, admirably juggled the many demands of their home life and professions, gracefully playing their parts in technical fields.

- Whatever the future holds, both male **and** female innovators have developed crucial tools to help us manage future challenges, akin to what we have overcome.
- For this, and for your commitment to a more inclusive tech space, we thank you.
- I wish you all a great session, and thank you for your kind attention.