

**First Lady Jeannette Kagame's Remarks  
At The  
11th Pan-African Parliament Conference on Women's  
Rights  
"Pan-African Parliament Fights Against Corruption"**

**Kigali, 31 October 2018**

**Excellency Roger Nkodo Dang, President of the Pan-  
African Parliament,  
Right Honourable President of the Senate,  
Honourable Chairperson of the PAP Women’s Caucus,  
Honourable Chairperson of the African Union Advisory  
Board on Corruption (AUABC),  
Excellencies, Speakers of National Assemblies from  
Member States,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Representative of the ONE UN,  
Honourable Members of the Pan-African Parliament,  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Good morning.**

Permettez-moi de commencer en exprimant ma sincère gratitude aux organisateurs de cette ‘**11<sup>e</sup> Conférence sur les droits des femmes**’, mais aussi pour cette invitation à partager avec vous tous, ma position sur le rôle très pertinent, que les femmes parlementaires pourraient et devraient endosser, face à cet inquiétant fléau.

Accueillir le Parlement panafricain au Rwanda pour cette toute première fois, est un honneur et un gage de votre confiance, pour lequel je vous remercie, tout en espérant que ces derniers jours passés parmi nous, vous ont permis de développer de nouvelles amitiés, et que vous considérez

maintenant le Rwanda, comme votre deuxième pays, dans ce bel esprit de panafricanisme.

En effet, cette conférence du Parlement panafricain est encourageante et vient à point nommé, car elle nous permet d'examiner de nouveau la responsabilité des parlementaires de lutter contre la corruption via leur influence, la législation, et la supervision du gouvernement.

### **Excellencies and Honourable Guests,**

Corruption is the antithesis of sound leadership. It violates the foundations of ethics, upon which good leadership is built. According to Professor (Emeritus), Dr. Petrus van Duyn, "corruption is a decay in the decision-making process, in which a decision-maker consents to deviate or demands deviation from the criterion, which should rule his or her decision-making, in exchange for a reward or for the promise or expectation of a reward".

Corruption takes different forms, presents itself at all levels of society and across sectors, and in both developed as in developing countries. It has dire consequences on the economy, among which are the fact that it could erode public coffers, forcing government to increase its debt burden. Indeed, according to a recent World Bank, corruption, if

unchecked, could reduce economic growth by up to 0.5 to 1% per annum.

Corruption also discourages investment. No one wants to invest their money where it is not safe. What this does, then, is to further deepen poverty, with the most affected being women, who due to historical factors (including lower education, fewer job opportunities, and unequal pay) are more prone, to suffering the negative consequences of corruption on the economy.

Corruption hinders effective service delivery, especially in the areas of health, infrastructure, water and sanitation, education, and other social sectors, which mainly affect women and children. In a 2012 UNDP Survey, it was found that 76% of the women interviewed, had been prevented access to public goods and services, because of corruption.

To make matters worse, because of the lure of glamour and short-term gains from corruption, some youth see no incentive to work hard and scrupulously.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Several studies suggest that women are less corrupt and that companies with a higher number of women in decision-making perform better in terms of resource management, and maintaining a zero-tolerance level for corruption. If this is

the case, it goes without saying that women's leadership plays a vital role in curbing corruption, and securing our economies.

In Rwanda today, the priority is to strengthen legal and institutional frameworks and mechanisms that reinforce accountability and ensure that the principles of equity and equality, are consistently addressed in all areas of our public and private spheres.

**Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,**

One of the objectives of this conference and the role you have assigned me is to advocate for women in African Parliaments to be more pro-active and become social agents of change in overseeing government policies, programmes and budgets allocated to institutions in charge of monitoring, and reinforcing the fight against corruption in all its forms.

As President Kagame once said: "We know that corruption will not entirely be eroded from our society, but the measures we enforce will be so severe that you will think twice before engaging in corrupt practice". This should be your goal in order to protect the poor and weak in society, and salvage our economies.

Indeed, organizing this women's Conference, in line with the African Union's theme: **'2018 Year of anti-corruption:**

**Winning the fight against corruption, a sustainable path to Africa's transformation,'** holds you to an even higher standard, as the institution in charge of overseeing government programmes and expenditure, in the interest of the Nations and the people you serve.

As I conclude my remarks, allow me to reiterate that, together, we must demonstrate an urgency and resolve to uproot this social evil that is corruption, by building sound policies and systems, that are grounded in a culture of integrity and informed by the principles of ethics and accountability.

Together, as women leaders, decision makers, and concerned citizens, we must take on the fight against corruption in our spaces – without fear or favour - because our continent's growth and survival, our security and, indeed, the future of our children depend upon it.

I thank you for your kind attention and have no doubt in my mind that your leadership on fighting corruption will be the game changer for our continent and our economies.

Thank you indeed.