

- Umuyobozi w'Intara y'iburasirazuba,
- Permanent Secretary, Sharon Haba
- Our dear Founders, Partners and Friends of Rwanda,
- Umuyobozi w'ikigo,
- Abaturage ba Gashora,
- Abakobwa bacu,

Mwiriwe Neza?

Nishimye kubana namwe uyumunsi, ariko nagirango mbanze mbasabe nshimire abaturutse hanze mu rurimi bumva.

I am delighted to be here with you in celebration of a beautiful dream come true - Gashora Girls Academy of Science and Technology. This specialized institution was founded by Rwanda Girls Initiative to **'educate girls, inspire the community, and transform a nation' (school motto)**. Let us give special appreciation to Mrs. Suzanne Sinegal McGill and Mrs. Shalisan Foster and your team for this important investment. I think you would agree that at last the numerous trips back and forth from the shores of Lake Washington to Lake Mirayi have been well worth it.

Rwanda Girls Initiative's contribution to quality education represents a significant step in our journey toward paving the way for a brighter future for Rwandan girls. As a nation, we are accustomed to setting ambitious goals. Our modest accomplishments thus far have been made possible through a

combination of committed partnerships, innovation, creativity, and the best from our culture.

I am pleased to note that the Rwanda Girls' Initiative listened to the needs of the community and local partners. Indeed, the community lies at the heart of every initiative.

Bavandimwe ba Gashora, iki gikorwa dutashye uyu muni ni amahirwe mugomba kubakiraho, kugirango mugere ku iterambere rirambye. Murasabwa kandi kugira uruhare runini mu gufata neza ibi bikorwa remezo. Abanyeshuri bazajya bigira hano ni abanyu, ni abana b'aba nyarwanda. Mwabonye yuko banabageneye inzu mberabyombi bise 'Urumuli rwa Gashora' community centre. Ibi ni ibigaragaza ko mudahejwe muri iri shuri. Ndabasabye rero kuzaba Urumuli rurenze urwa Gashora mukaba urwa Bugesera yose.

Byumwihariko babyeyi murerera muri iki kigo, iyo turebye iri shuri, aho ryubatse n'uko ryubatse na gahunda batubwiye rifite, biduha icyizere ko abana banyu bazavamo ibitanganza. Mu mbuto tubita 'Inkubito z'Icyeza' koko. Ndabasaba rero kudatererana abarezi babo ahubwo, mukomeze kubafasha no kubakurikirana kugirango aya mahirwe bafite azabahe kuba indashyikirwa.

Bakobwa bacu namwe,

All the hard work and careful attention that has been dedicated to this school was done for one purpose, and that is you. It is because we believe in you and as parents; we know that if you have exceptional teachers, strong values, and a supportive community, you will excel in your personal and professional lives.

At this school, you have the unique chance to expose your minds to the extraordinary and innovative world of science and technology. During your 3 years here you will gain technical knowledge and invaluable skills. Use what you learn to introduce practical and positive change in your families and communities.

Did you know that for many years' women have been instrumental in many interesting and important inventions? Can you give me a few examples of these inventions? **Electric hot water heater (Ida Forbes), disposable diapers (Marion Donovan), dishwasher (Josephine Cochran), Liquid Paper – white out (Bessie Nesmith), medical syringe (Letitia Geer), windshield wiper (Mary Anderson) Dr. Eliane Ubalijoro (professor in faculty of agricultural and environmental sciences at McGill University; research and innovation in food technology)**

In a few years time I would like to hear about some inventions from the girls who studied at Gashora Academy. This is certainly achievable. However, it requires focus, persistence, discipline and creativity. There is a saying that goes '*Necessity is the Mother of Invention,*' but I wish you young ladies to be the true mothers of invention.

Always remember that as young women, you are the ‘engines’ behind your families and communities. From this prestigious school, the combination of excellence in research, with commitment to family and community is what you need to position yourselves at the forefront of Rwanda’s social and economic development.

As the first group of girls receiving an education from this academy, remember that you are pioneers. You are here to set the tone for your younger sisters who will follow you in a few years. One of the challenges for you will be to think beyond your routine assignments, and reflect on your responsibilities to your peers and to those who are younger than you.

I wish you end by remarks by leaving you girls with this homework:

- How would you like to be remembered after you leave Gashora Girls Academy? What legacy will you leave behind?
- What example can you set to encourage your sisters to take up science and technology just as you did?
- What contributions can you give toward inspiring your communities and building the future of your country?

Thank you for your kind attention.