

INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS FOR WOMEN

New York, 22 September 2016

Dear Sisters,

Bloomberg Philanthropies,

Dear Friends,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening.

It is a great pleasure for me to be here, with so many good friends, in this celebration of philanthropy, and the important role of women in achieving development and prosperity.

We are inspired by all of you, who work hard to harness the power of innovative partnerships, to transform lives.

Allow me to convey special appreciation to Michael and Pattie, for your untiring efforts to create new opportunities for women entrepreneurs, in partnership with African governments.

Your actions are great illustrations of why we should choose partnerships, for the vast potential of Africa is best exploited when social enterprises, the private sector, and governments come together.

Indeed, that coming together is the path to a sustainable development, and a critical game changer, where growing economies, healthy communities, thriving businesses and well-regulated environments become altogether intertwined.

The US-Africa Business Forum held by Bloomberg Philanthropies and the US Department of Commerce yesterday, where you announced millions of dollars worth of support to women coffee farmers in Rwanda and the DR Congo, illustrates your actions in favor of this integrated development model.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Africa is a continent of givers. Even the poorest amongst us, always find something to share, with those even less fortunate.

Our recent history is a testament to this approach.

The liberation of Rwanda was made possible by Rwandans who gave what they had: young men and women gave their lives for this country; businessmen gave cash; farmers gave cows; grandmothers gave socks and sweaters.

In fact, the spirit that Rwandans share today was sparked, deepened and became culture, by countless acts of sacrifice and generosity.

This is another way of understanding the concept of dignity, or ***Agaciro***, that we refer to so often.

Dear guests,

To the question of why choose philanthropy in this quest for true development, I would say that for us, the relevance of these philanthropic partnerships is that all parties involved are winners. **Investors** are attracted to this model because they can tap into new markets while honoring their social responsibility; **recipients** develop new skills and expertise, including managerial capabilities, to eventually grow their own businesses and invest in other ventures; **and governments** win on all ends,

with new investments fuelling countries' growth and people shifting from dependency to self-reliance.

Dear guests,

To the question of why invest in women, I would humbly respond that meaningful partnerships must include women and girls, as investing in them has a lasting impact on communities and economies. In fact, they will use the knowledge and skills acquired, to better their lives and those of their families in the larger sense.

Rwanda's gender mainstreaming efforts are also demonstrated through this country's leading position in the UN Women's **'He for She' campaign**, which aims to engage men and boys to achieve true gender equality and women representation at all levels; and has gained notable support from our private sector.

For us, creating sustainable opportunities for women is deeply embedded in their historical central role in decision-making within their communities, as

expressed in our traditional saying ***'The woman is the heart of the home'***.

Distinguished guests,

Let me conclude, by taking this moment to acknowledge the many philanthropists, who have become part of the story of Rwanda. We thank you for investing with us in a brighter future, by using your resources, your talents, and above all your hearts.

The multi-layered partnerships woven by every single one of you, friends of Rwanda, started with the belief in creating life-changing opportunities for our countrymen and women, via deeply humane, and culturally sensitive initiatives of high standard, as developed over the years, by committed individuals like you Verna, and the group of women you work with, who have visited Rwanda several times over the past years.

As well-said said by Rwanda's very own poet **Angel**

Uwamahoro:

“If there is no trace of me...

If the people and the things say they do not know

me;

Then it’s probably because I didn’t live to the fullest;

It’s probably because I didn’t change the world in

the capacity I was given;

I didn’t make a difference...”

I thank you for your kind attention.