



REMARKS OF HER EXCELLENCY
MRS JEANNETTE KAGAME

Green Hills Academy Graduation 2023



JUNE 17, 2023
KIGALI

**Honorable Minister of Education, Senator Hadidja
Chairman of the Board of Green Hills Academy,
Green Hills Head of School, Principals, Deans,
Members of the Faculty and Staff,
Dear Parents, Students and Alumni,
Good afternoon!**

- Thank you for having me here to celebrate you, **Indashyikirwa** graduating students!
- Green Hills Academy has given us 20 cohorts of talented, ambitious and hardworking graduates thus far.
- To have our pride, joy and optimism boosted once more, as they have been every year for the past two decades, is indeed a wonderful sentiment.
- But foremost, congratulations are in order!

Dear Graduates, give yourselves a highly deserved pat on the back.

- I am confident that for you all, this is one of many successes to come.
- You have completed one of the most comprehensive secondary school courses offered in the country, and in the region.
- You have been blessed with exposure, to a number of cultures and backgrounds, and the wealth that this exposure has nurtured in you, will enable you to thrive anywhere in the world.
- Wherever your bright future takes you, remember to use every skill you have been granted, to make the world around you better, starting with your communities.

Students of Green Hills Academy,

- This community here, has seen firsthand how impactful you have been, when involved in its wellness.
- I commend you for being great, beyond solving complex equations, or drafting essays, or excelling at sports, in your time here.
- Your efforts have paid the school fees of a Rutunga school student and thus, arguably improved their life. You have helped to keep our environment clean, as you diligently partook in our Umuganda.
- The GHA Mutuelle, for which you have carried the mantle this year, is a testament to a Rwandan and African fundament of cohabitation: what is **for** the community, must be achieved by **the community itself**. Where wealth will help you walk, compassion and siblinghood are the wings, that will grant you flight.
- So, whether Rwanda is to you a native home, or a second home, do not stop watering its garden.

Green Hills 20th Graduating Cohort,

- The fact that your class, which is made up of 17 nationalities, is celebrating dozens of admissions to top universities across the world, speaks for your identity as global citizens.
- But the world is a big place, and you will now be experiencing it differently.
- Indeed, you are closing the enchanting chapter of carefree childhood, and engaging on the adventure of adulthood.
- And, demanding this adulthood can be, even in youth!
- You have come to crossroads, where celebration will be yours in case of successes, and shame and guilt will be too, in case of failure and misbehavior.
- The courts of public opinion, will begin to observe your actions as your own, and no longer attribute them to the choices of your parents.

- Sooner than you think, you will be decision-makers and opinion leaders, like the long line of high-achievers that once sat where you sit today, in their graduating gowns, and now stand at the forefront of our development.
- You will perhaps eventually, also become parents yourselves. No pressure.
- This is a defining time for you, in terms of your choices.
- You are never too young to make the right choice, for these choices are seeds that will sprout, throughout the rest of your lives.
- I have found that three reminders can make decision-making easier, in testing, trying or tempting times.
- The first is that in the long run, only **hard and smart work pay off**. In the end, talent or privilege pale in worth, compared to that of dedication and discipline.

- The second is that **decency is owed to us all, but respect is earned, through moral and ethical choices**, through consideration for one another, through vision and positive ambition. It is up to you, and no one else, to become a person worthy of respect. I urge you to act every day, as if you wouldn't mind the world watching, and judging your actions. Who knows, one day, it might. On that day, your admirable character, will not only speak volumes about yourself as an individual, but also serve as a praise of your upbringing, and schooling.
- And finally, the third tenet, is that you must always **remember that tomorrow is not promised; it is built, brick by brick**. You are the architect of your fate. You are the author to your story. Let us read, as we watch you thrive, a story of success.
- Every day beyond this one, I urge you all, cherished GHA 2023 cohort, to make us, through your good judgement, through your ambition, through your hard work, as proud as you have rendered us today.

To dedicated educators,

- Yours is one of the most precious gifts. You build ladders for our children to climb, as they soar to new heights, carrying with them the dreams of their parents and those before them, those who fought to see them thrive.
- To our top performers, we admire your brilliance and resolve, and hope you remain aware, that we have been rooting for you at every turn. Do not forget how devoted your teachers, your parents and your communities, have been to getting you here.
- I wish to extend my sincere gratitude for your commitment, all education stakeholders, all the friends that believed in the GHA mission, to provide world-accredited, first class education here, at the heart of our hilly capital.

- Know that our next generations of skilled, creative, innovative young Rwandans – and all those who found a home in Rwanda - will be your victory too.

And finally, Dear Parents,

- The young graduates you have raised so gracefully, now embody the ultimate pride of a nation.
- You have truly done us all a service. I applaud you, this country values you, and please: do give yourselves a pat on the back too.
- Thank you all for your work, thank you for having me here, and happy graduation!

I wish you all a wonderful afternoon!