



REMARKS OF HER EXCELLENCY MRS JEANNETTE KAGAME

APF AGI DINNER LAUNCH



24 OCTOBER 2022

Your Excellency Graca Machel, Founder Graca Machel Foundation,

Your Royal Highness, Queen Sylvia Nagginda,

Professor Senait Fisseha, Director of Global Programmes at the Susan-Thompson Buffett Foundation,

My Dear Sister, Tsitsi Masiyiwa, Chair of the African Philanthropy Forum,

Honourable Guests,

Good evening.

How gratifying to be with you all, this evening in Kigali.

You embody the pulse of African Philanthropy, and looking at you all,

I believe that social injustice stands no chance against the resolve of our continent's children.

However, not to dampen the mood, **Ladies and Gentlemen,** but I'd like to begin by sharing with you a somewhat regrettable story. Picture this with me:

It is about a girl. She was a normal, sweet child, with great ambition. Like many African children, her boarding school was quite far from her home.

While the bus drove others to the school, it dropped her off about halfway into the journey. She would then walk, come rain or shine, and got to her destination depleted, feet blistered, shaking with cold under sometimes wet clothes.

One day, she cut her feet on splintered branches on her trek to school.

She soon developed a fever, and had to be hospitalized. The infection was so advanced, that she was in need of lengthy treatment.

But she was only prescribed half the treatment. The doctor claimed she was simply not entitled to the other pills, despite needing them greatly. Some say the fever took her in her sleep; others that it drove her insane.

The details matter not, for we all know enough of this child's unfortunate story.

Her name is Gender Gap, and she bears the face of a woman.

The McKinsey Global Institute reported that the African Gender Parity Score now stands at 0.58.

The Gender Gap is older than all of us, and is set to outlive us all. The Economic Gender Gap is forecast by the WEF, to close in 150 years, or long enough for currently unborn children, to have borne great, great, great, grandchildren.

We can only imagine how many women by then, will have known a cycle of poverty and powerlessness, from income disparity, and financial dependency in their homes.

How could we possibly tolerate a future so unwelcoming?

The gender gap, like all structural oppression, can and does kill - literally and metaphorically.

But fortunately, with dedicated advocacy and financial resources, with tireless efforts for greater education, with equal empowerment of our boys and girls, this gap can shrink to nothingness.

To echo the words of my friend, Professor Senait, said in this very room this morning, we must invest in individuals, institutions, and systems.

This is the groundwork to the real revolution in gender parity that we require;

the sustainable impact that might allow us to dream of a world, where philanthropy will only be about the love for people, and no longer the need to save people.

Dear Guests,

Today, this country refuses to allow its women and girls to be unloved, unprotected or unheard. Rwanda grants equal land ownership and inheritance, to women in legal marriages, and equal inheritance rights to daughters and sons.

But we know the journey ahead is lengthy.

This awareness has led to many gains for women's rights; for instance:

- 30% female quota in all decision-making positions.
- 61% women legislators in Parliament.
- 58.6% women civil servants.
- 50% female judiciary.

Gender-responsive budgeting in both the Public and Private sectors.

Today in Rwanda, equality as a principle, and GENDER equality in particular, has been an important mitigator of the Gender Gap.

Therefore, I believe that many of you may understand, that the beginning of my Foundation, Imbuto Foundation, had to draw inspiration from the new dawn of our nation.

We have, together with our partners, come a long way in providing, some effective solutions to these issues, and I daresay more.

From our very first day as a Foundation, we had the fortune of living in a country, that had traced its pathway to success; to a more inclusive, progressive, harmonious and equal society.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear friends,

The \$50 million that the African Gender Initiative aims to raise over the next decade is to be applauded and could even be exceeded - why not? There is no price tag to the liberation of women, and in particular, their financial freedom.

Today, we can build a time machine together. We can bring 2172, the year where women are economically equal to men at last, to a much nearer and a more immediate future.

It may seem like an ambitious ask, but it is possible.

- With appropriate policies and legal framework;
- With determined political will;
- With collaboration between philanthropies and governments;
- With beneficiary involvement at the core of strategy design;

When we gather again, 10 years from today, to celebrate the impact of the African Gender Initiative, I guarantee you that our commitment will have been worth every single effort.

Congratulations dear Sister, Tsitsi, Chair of the APF for showing unwavering commitment in bettering the future of our daughters. Your kind words this morning, showed that underneath your fiery passion for female empowerment, exists pure love for your sisters. In your determination, all of us here can draw faith that gender parity is ours to claim, ours to live.

Thank you, and the APF board, for having me here to join you in this crucial initiative of the AGI to secure the financial future of women, and by extension, of society.

I wish you a wonderful evening, and a lovely dinner.