

**Her Excellency Mrs Jeannette Kagame
Remarks,**

Girls' Education Side Event

Kigali, 25 June 2022

Dear Guests,

Today I want to speak to you about a wealth that is hardly common enough: Education, and to be specific, Girls' Education.

Every girl, whose access to education, is compromised by systemic forces, is failed by her society, and indeed the world.

We, have brilliant, educated girls here in Rwanda.

There are brilliant, educated girls across the Commonwealth.

Their successes and contributions to society, are a testament to the benefits of female education, not just for one gender, but for the entire society.

Just two days ago, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, referred to Rwanda as a leader in female empowerment.

His Royal Highness's recognition was both heartwarming, and deeply motivating, in keeping up the fight in promoting Girls' Education.

Honourable Guests,

I bear a personal attachment to the fight for Girls' Education. I have been blessed to Found and Chair Imbuto Foundation.

Even when the Foundation was still seeding- Imbuto means "**seed**" in our language- the challenges ahead seemed to merge into each other.

The issue of Women's Health in Rwanda, shortly after the Genocide, spilt into the issue of Girls' Education, which was worsened by women's economic subjugation.

The idea that a sole solution needed to cater to all these problems, in order to truly resolve any ONE of them, was intimidating.

If all these issues were interwoven beyond our influence, a real way forward in Girls' Education, needed to be supported by similar policies of empowerment, capacity building, skills training and other service provision; a solution was needed in all branches of the lifecycle.

Thus, the life cycle approach, from early childhood transitioning to Adolescence towards a strong, informed and responsible adulthood, became the Foundation of the Girl's Education.

Perhaps in an alternative reality, we, the people who had born a hope named Imbuto Foundation, would have given up there and then.

But in this reality, **in this Rwanda that never gives up**, the challenging, remains the humanly possible.

So try, we did.

We worked with a resolute, daring, and highly self-accountable Ministry of Education, that helped us to design programmes, ranging from the Edified Generation to the Best Performing Girls Scholarships. Along our journey, countless fantastic partners have supported us.

Since then, our Early Childhood Development programmes have also enabled Imbuto Foundation, to cater to the education of young girls at their most lively and magical learning stage: the stage of early education. The progress has been wonderful, and truly gratifying, to witness.

Dear Sisters, Dear Advocates and Trailblazers, Dear Partners and Allies, Dear Commonwealth Friends,

If we want to improve girls' access to education around the world, our leadership choices must be a testament to our goals:

- We must elect leaders that defend the vision, where girls and boys are equally able to access the classroom, and equally empowered and equipped, to thrive in it.
- We must agree that as a developmental issue, investment in Girls' Education, is an investment in Commonwealth countries' economies and progress.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Developing nations are set to gain two dollars and eighty cents, for every dollar that they invest in Girl's Education!

Programmes that balance out inequities, in access to Education, can and must, be created in the empowering spaces, where sustainable development by 2030, for Commonwealth Nations, is a key priority.

Commonwealth Family,

The Education of Girls across the Commonwealth is a duty, that everyone must bear responsibility, for contributing to.

If not for yourself: do it, for the future of the entire world.

Access to writing itself, must remain the priority.

Thank you for being here today. I encourage you to keep discovering Rwanda, the faces that make this nation, and of course, the Faces of Imbuto!

Good day to you.