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REMARKS OF HER EXCELLENCY  
MRS JEANNETTE KAGAME

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From Fragility to Resilience Sweden Event



15 September 2022

**Excellencies Ambassadors, Honourable Dignitaries,**

**Researchers,**

**Fellow Rwandans in the Nordics, Friends of Rwanda,**

Good evening!

It is a duty and a privilege, to share the story of recovery and hope, that must forever define the promised land for which we fought – beyond the loss we once endured, beyond the abandonment from most of the world, that we once suffered.

I say most, **Dear Guests**, but not all. I would like to take this opportunity, to recognize Former Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson, for the sheer humanity and rare decency, he displayed in calling out the dangers, of a lack of political will to act in the face of preventable human tragedies, such as the one Rwanda has had to surmount.

Yes. I believe it is necessary to acknowledge both Former PM Carlsson, and Lisbeth Palme, the widow of Assassinated former PM: Olof Palme, who was in the OAU's (now African Union) panel of Eminent Personalities, which investigated on the Genocide against the Tutsi. Considering tonight's Rwando-Sweden context, a recognition of this solidarity and honesty in the face of injustice, feels essential.

(PAUSE)

It is my sincere belief, **Esteemed Guests**, that Rwanda's story could serve as a beacon of hope for all.

Indeed, the choice of tonight's theme, "From Fragility to Resilience" is an appropriate one. Resilience is a word that bears significant weight in Rwanda.

Resilience is in the mother, whose back is strong, whose spine remains sturdy, despite bending endlessly towards an earth, that she was once chased from, but which she now owns - to feed her children.

Resilience is in the returned hero, who, regardless of war or conflict trauma, has refused to wither away, and now treats his community, with the values he has embraced: duty, honour and integrity – to mention a few.

Resilience, **Ladies and Gentlemen**, is in Leadership too often targeted, with intimidation attempts, with double-standards and lazy dismissal, with stereotypes neatly packaged for those that look like us; a Leadership that nevertheless, remains intent on its mission, to deliver to the citizens it loves, the opportunities, the stability, the recognized and defended dignity, that they are entitled to.

For us, Resilience is quite simply the difference between life and death, between regression and progress.

Through discussions such as these, among other constant efforts to eradicate hatred from our societies, we combat the recurrence, of the darkest moments of our history.

**Dear Guests,**

How humbling, how encouraging, it feels to experience each dawn with the determination to overcome, and to be recognized within, and outside of our country, for the notable milestones Rwanda has achieved.

Thank you again.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I must also applaud the speakers and audience who have come from near and far; I understand that some of you have travelled from as far as Norway, Denmark, Finland, France, Belgium, the US, and Rwanda to contribute to this important exchange.

I thank all of you for continuously going out of your way to bring Rwanda's story closer to the people, whether it be, by organizing educational study tours annually, participating in events like today's, or starting a platform to share Rwandan stories on the "Radio Scandinavia" - a YouTube channel initiated by young Rwandans, living in the Nordics.

Your contribution is immense and for that, we salute you.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Rwanda we have today, our united Rwanda, is the product of people-centered leadership, reconciliation, Homegrown Solutions, and National Pride.

Through the efforts of its citizens, our post-Liberation society came together and bridged the gaps that previously divided us, refusing to leave any Rwandan behind.

We share social events, and community service including Umuganda, which occurs on the last Saturday of every month, and our valued Car-Free Day, which takes place bimonthly. Next time you are in Rwanda, **Dear Guests,** I sincerely hope you will join.

### **Valued Friends,**

Our Unity Club is another of our homegrown solutions, which has been a joy to watch grow, for almost 26 years now, into an institution of nationwide impact, a first of its kind historically.

The Unity Club is comprised of 300 female cabinet members, and spouses of male cabinet members. Once a member, always a member; even if you're no longer in cabinet. It was founded with the objective of deconstructing supposed ethno-social rifts, primarily used by past Leadership, to divide and conquer.

Imbuto Foundation, the Foundation I started over 20 years ago, has also strived to do its part in encouraging reconciliation. Our Youth Forums, our mentorship programmes, our consistent collaboration with AERG, a Genocide survivors' association, have been designed to offer mental health programmes for survivors, and, scholarships, healthcare and economic empowerment, among other priorities, to survivors and their families, and all of our vulnerable communities.

This I believe, reflects our Rwandan mission to strive for the holistic wellness and dignity of our people.

## **Esteemed Guests,**

Sweden has been a key contributor to Rwanda's journey with strong cooperation for over 20 years in human rights, democracy, and gender equality; environment and climate; as well as in more inclusive economic growth.

Not forgetting, the tremendous contribution towards Rwanda's development and poverty eradication, through research collaboration between Sweden and the University of Rwanda.

Over the years, we have had over 200 students finish their PhDs here in Sweden, and return to Rwanda to contribute to their country.

Recently, this partnership has evolved, with Swedish companies now recognizing, Rwanda's safety and business friendly environment, and opting to have Rwanda as their base, in the region.

What a beautiful nourishing friendship our countries share!

## **Esteemed Guests,**

So, I would like to close these remarks, **Ladies and Gentlemen**, with a sincere, warm thank you, the Living History Forum, Dignitaries, Devoted Partners, Rwandan Community in the Nordics, and the KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, for organising this beautiful event.

I thank you all and wish you all a good evening.