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REMARKS OF HER EXCELLENCY  
MRS JEANNETTE KAGAME

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Inkomoko 10th Anniversary



SEPTEMBER 3, 2022

**Hon. Ministers and Senior Government Officials  
present,**

**Mrs Laurene Powell Jobs, Chair of Emerson Collective,  
Board Members, Founders and Staff of Inkomoko,  
Our Dear Entrepreneurs and Invited Guests,**

What a day, what an invite! Before I let you in on my affection for Inkomoko, I must divulge that I was in fact invited to serve as this event's DJ!

Thank you Inkomoko, for seeing in me potential that painfully few have seen before – although it did take you a ten-year anniversary, to finally acknowledge this talent of mine!

But despite the temptation to be the first “who I am by Day and Disc Joker by evening”, in a famous lounge of our capital, Kigali, I had to politely, but reluctantly, decline this proposition, and opt to share a few words instead, for I am truly happy to be here.

## **Dear Friends,**

Among us are pioneers of new-age entrepreneurship in Rwanda, and legends of international entrepreneurial success.

The accomplishments of those you see here, are undeniably great beyond their years. And this, is what we are here to discuss, is it not?.

## **Friends Dearest,**

**Performance**, is key to successful entrepreneurship. We have all heard the attested accounts, of world-renowned entrepreneurs, who started their businesses on a tiny investment, determination, and an ability to only sleep, a couple of hours a night. Granted, I will not encourage you to emulate the latter, lest any of your mothers be watching.

But what these tales of devotion to one's enterprise tell us, is that in order to be successful, a business must provide "added value", and for that, you, the entrepreneur, must show your own.

At times you will need to prove, how much harder you are willing to work, adding hours of labour to your daily roster.

Other times, your product or service should testify to how much wider, you are willing to stretch your mind, to be receptive, of every bit of information, that could enrich your ideas and practices.

And every time, you will need to show unique courage, and confidence in your vision, beyond what is traditionally taught in school, to drive the success you desire.

I believe you all have added value, and clearly, so does our **Dear Inkomoko.**

Inkomoko, in our native Kinyarwanda translates to “the origin”. My understanding, is that it is a play on the “seed” assistance that Inkomoko has been providing for ten years, in forms of capital, mentorship and networking opportunities, for micro, small and medium-sized businesses.

And speaking of which....**Happiest 10th Birthday Inkomoko!**

## **Dear Inkomoko Family,**

It must be said.

The wonderful work you have put in, is truly a gift to us all, and judging from your model's exportation to Kenya and Ethiopia, you are on the right track to a global presence.

For that, we salute you!

You have shown inspiring, deeply humane inclusiveness in your service provision, and embody the Rwandan effort to overcome poverty, and protect the dignity of not only our citizens, but also those who have sought refuge in Rwanda.

You do your part, daily, in contributing to our National Strategy for Transformation, to achieve the high standards of living we all deserve.

You have earned your accolades.

You may already know this, **Dear Friends**, but small to medium sized-businesses represent 80% of our labour force, and 90% of our private sector.

So next time you hear a little spicy discourse, pointing to the disparity between corporate taxes, and the much smaller proportionate taxing of small and micro businesses, remember this fine, “chilled” evening at Chillax Lounge.

That difference in taxation, my **Dear Friends**, is what we call equity.

It is the humane system that we promised, as we encouraged countless “small business” entrepreneurs, from Mudugudu boutique owners to motorcycle drivers, to make the shift from informal to formal, to help support our economy, and prosper both themselves, and the nation.

To every entrepreneur that has chosen to accompany us on this formidable journey of progress, your transition is welcome and admirable, and you have my sincere encouragement.

But **Dear Inkomoko,**

We have not forgotten that we are here to celebrate you specifically today! May your model become a household name across Africa, as you work towards supporting more businesses to thrive.

## **Valued Friends,**

I believe you understand a core aspect of our President's Pledge and Call to "thinking big"; something we must always remember.

"Thinking Big" is not always about being big, which I hope small and medium businesses understand.

"Thinking Big", is about the greatness of your ideas, the scale of the potential impact, and the highest of standards, that you are willing to perpetually demand, of yourselves.

**Dear Inkomoko,** Here's to wishing you, once again a wonderful 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and many more successful years to come!

And here's yet more celebration and joy!

Thank you for your kind attention, may the battle of the DJs begin!