



REMARKS OF HER EXCELLENCY MRS JEANNETTE KAGAME

Global Fund Women Deliver Side Event



KIGALI
18 JULY 2023

Honorable Donatille Mukabalisa, Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies,

Honorable Chief Minister of Jersey, Kristina Moore,

Honorable Dignitaries Present,

Senior Representatives from the United Nations and Our co-hosts, The Global Fund, Her Voice and Rwanda NGOs Forum on HIV/AIDS & Health Promotion,

Financial Leaders, Allies and Advocates of Gender Equality,

Distinguished Guests, All Protocols Observed,

Good afternoon.

- Thank you for having me here, and for creating spaces of engagement, between those committed to gender equality, from all walks of life, from diverse institutions, and from different origins.

- Firstly, I wish to raise a few questions.
- What is the financial value of a woman's health? The truth is, gender equality is invaluable.
- But what, on the other hand, is the real cost to the world, of societies failing to address the need for women's empowerment?
- The World Bank estimates the loss in human capital wealth due to gender inequality to be at least \$160.2 trillion, or twice the global GDP.
- Yet we know, deep in our cores, based on our respective expertise or exposure, that it would take much, much less, to develop self-reliant systems for female empowerment, and achieve gender equality at last.
- So why spare any available, necessary resource in this quest?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- The Global Fund has been a strong, valued partner to Rwanda, and to non-profit organisations such as Imbuto Foundation, which I chair.
- Rwanda has secured commendable progress in the health status of our communities, significantly shrinking its rates of HIV infection.
- Mother to child transmissions have been almost non-existent, for the past few years.
- To all those that fought to get us here, thank you.

Dear Guests,

- For all our advancements, as is the case around the world, our journey to equality is taking longer than expected and I think, longer than necessary. The Gender Gap, our opponent in this fight, is way ahead.

- That it should take **well over a century** to earn women the parity to which they are entitled, in a world with growing resources and developmental tools such as technology, increasing knowledge and expertise and, I believe, a rising commitment to social justice, is unacceptable.
- By the time these years have passed, several generations of women will have been repressed, overlooked, exploited or even abused, by a world that failed to prioritise their empowerment, early and decisively enough.
- What will it take to stop this socio-economic lapse in its tracks?
- We hold more power in our hands to speed up the necessary change, than I believe we necessarily recognize or realise.
- And indeed, power is most deserved, when it facilitates the empowerment of those that must be served.

- Only then, does a leader prove themselves worthy of the authority they are given, by those that entrusted them to lead.
- In this room, are leaders in their respective fields.
- In this room, are people with the reach to steer considerable funds towards this good fight.
- So I pray that in this room, there is the unwavering will, to put our hearts and yes, our funds, where the needs of our populations, of women and girls, reside.

Esteemed Guests,

- As I close my remarks, allow me to share my position on aid, resource mobilization, and non-profit partnerships.
- I understand how, particularly in times of costly crisis recovery, there can be a general fatigue, regarding the funding of charitable or even developmental endeavours.

- Some may even wonder if for all their good intentions, funding is actually helping, in the long-run.
- But the truth is, unless past efforts are to go to waste, current efforts must be maintained.
- I can assure you that those receiving support bear sentiments that align with yours.
- I can assure you that they too, dream of a world of self-reliance for all our communities, a world in which the systems that empower and protect them can sustain and strengthen themselves.
- This is where our investments are going; towards the building of socio-economic conditions for self-empowerment, autonomy and most importantly, dignity for all.
- **I believe that there are few worthier causes.**
- Thank you for your presence, time and attention.