

- **Honorable Ministers,**
- **Our dear youth, mfura z'u Rwanda dukunda,**
- **Ladies and gentlemen,**
- **Distinguished panelists,**

Good afternoon,

As we come to the close of the year, we felt it was necessary to host one last youth forum to begin the festive season energized and on a high note.

We understand how intense Saturday nights can be for young people, so we decided to be considerate and host our forum in the afternoon. At the same time, let us hope that the youth is slowly exiting that wild phase.

At the Foundation, we have challenged ourselves for the last seven years, to think of different avenues through which we can engage and inspire young people like yourselves, and others in the country. Believe me it is no easy task; however, we understand that it is our duty to do so and I think Minister Philbert will agree with me, that at least, it keeps us young at heart.

During different forums, we have discussed the seeds of leadership; supported young people to navigate the pathways of life and select the ingredients that lead to success. We have encouraged the youth to become ambassadors of change and to begin their journey with the end in mind. I hope the tools for Financial Fitness are still etched in the memory of those who attended the last forum we held.

We are optimistic that the fire to push the boundaries of excellence, innovation and creativity has been ignited in you, 22 forums later.

One of the key things we have learned through our experience, is that the fire dies down shortly after our interactions. We want to encourage a more long-term outlook on the important issues we take on.

When we look at where our country is today, much has been achieved in terms of innovative solutions to address our challenges. We have embraced Agaciro (self-worth) and are driving towards self-reliance (Kwigira).

The building blocks are in place, but we find it difficult to sustain the energy and commitment levels we started with. Perhaps even on a personal basis, some of us may have experienced the excitement of starting something, but it is more demanding, yet even more important to keep the momentum going.

Today's forum is therefore, intended to help us think and act "***Beyond this Moment'***". We want to appreciate what it takes to build endurance and perseverance. If I can use an analogy, the main reason we are here today is to learn how we can be long distance runners, ones who can run for a long time while overcoming hurdles – together.

Dear youth participants,

This forum is about you, it is for you and it is because of you. We want the young people in this room and in Rwanda to take a leading role in the country's development process. In the audience today, we have youth from all

walks of life: civil society, business, public service, social entrepreneurship or maybe even a combination of these.

We converge today as youth who want to make new connections, with like-minded people interested in contributing even more to the advancement of Rwanda. This convergence is important if we are to sustain more impressive outcomes for Rwanda.

Allow me to remind the audience of our ambitious plan to become a knowledge driven, middle-income economy by 2020. In order to achieve this, we need many different dots to connect, various ideas to come together, and efforts to be pooled together: it is a case of *one front, many struggles*.

Rwanda is at a stage where we know that almost anything is possible. We know this because we continue to see sparks of innovation, moments of brilliance in all of you. To be more impactful, we need to cultivate the spirit of connecting the good work we do at different levels, building confidence based

on knowledge and sharing our knowledge with others. What we mostly have is a solid foundation, but we cannot remain at the foundation level, we need to aspire for more and for better. We look to the youth to raise the bar.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

We selected a group of panelists who we believe personify the spirit, values and knowledge we wish all Rwandan youth to embrace. We invited them so that the audience can draw lessons and inspiration from their experience. Join me in thanking them for honoring our invitation.

Without revealing too much, we look forward to the presentations on how to become a global thinker, while simultaneously engaging in national issues. We would like for the youth to understand their responsibility and know how to position themselves within this dynamic.

We will also hear from our panelists what it takes to develop a problem solving mindset, and the type of opportunities available for the future.

As I close,

I want to thank our partners for their support over the years. I trust that you can see that it is worth the effort to invest in young people.

We know sometimes the youth feel like we push them too hard and challenge them too much. We have so much hope in you; we see your potential to grow, we see your dynamism and willingness to learn.

As the saying goes: “The hardest battles are given to the strongest soldiers”. So with this few remarks, it is my wish that this forum will turn you all into Rwanda’s warriors of change.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New 2015,

Thank you.