

**Honourable ministers,
Valued Partners and Donors,
Business Executives,
Esteemed Guest speaker,
Youth Connekt Champions and Young Rwandan Achievers,
Distinguished guests,**

Good evening.

I am pleased to welcome you to this special evening, honouring our young Rwandan change-makers, along with companies and organisations that are making a difference in the lives of our youth.

Tonight marks the 5th edition of Celebrating Young Rwandan Achievers. It also introduces the beginning of a promising partnership with the Ministry of Youth and ICT, as we inaugurate the YouthConnekt Champions award to companies and organisations that have demonstrated their commitment to opening new horizons for the youth.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

At Imbuto Foundation, we strongly believe in supporting and helping young people to find the tools needed to truly become empowered. Similar to the *nudge theory*, we rely on positive reinforcement to encourage young people to shine in the activity of their choice. In

fact, we have seen this method yielding great results, sometimes more effectively than when providing them with a set of instructions on the path they should pursue.

It was in 2007, that Imbuto Foundation launched CYRWA, as part of its Youth Empowerment and Mentorship Programme. To date, this biennial celebration has seen close to 30 young professionals rewarded for using their boldness, curiosity and innovation to bring to life ideas that improved our society.

Young men like **Pergeurin Duhungirehe**, who was awarded in 2009 for tapping into his artistic side and successfully creating employment for vulnerable women in his community by developing their tailoring skills.

Young women like **Epiphanie Nyirabarame**, an accomplished runner, who was awarded in 2011 and went on to win marathon prizes in various countries.

Or, **Esther Mbabazi**, awarded in 2013, for challenging traditional roles to become the first Rwandan female pilot, and inspiring many others to venture into new fields, irrespective of their gender.

As well, **Clarisse Iribagiza**, another 2013 awardee, who launched a mobile development company called HeHe Limited, and was named this year by Forbes Africa, one of the continent's 30 most promising young entrepreneurs.

These are just a few examples of the talented people who have been nominated by their community over the years, and have received recognition beyond our borders, for standing out and showing that hard work, passion and commitment go a long way to help one realise their dreams.

Esteemed guests,

By initiating **CYRWA** , we believed that the youth who were making a difference in their communities, needed to be recognized for their great accomplishments. This platform also helped to encourage others who may have either felt that their ideas were not realistic or didn't know if there was a support system that could nurture their skills.

As this year becomes a stepping stone to our new partnership with MYICT, we look forward to the greater number of people and institutions we will be able to reach, and their ability to inspire more people to be in the vanguard of what our society stands for.

Iki gikorwa cyo “Gucyeza indashyikirwa mu rubyiruko rw’Abanyarwanda” gikunze kubanzirizwa n’Ihuriro ry’urubyiruko akenshi duha insanganyamatsiko ituma rutekereza ku ruhare rwabo mu kubaka u Rwanda no guharanira agaciro kacu.

Ku muni w’ejo rero twagize ihuriro ry’Urubyiruko rukora imirimo inyuranye. Twaganiraga ku ngingo igira iti “**What do you stand**

for?” ngenekereje mu rurimi rwacu iki kibazo kirabaza buri wese kiti “ **Ni iki ukomeye ho ?**” mu rugendo rwo kubaka u Rwanda.

Rubyiruko bana b’u Rwanda dukunda, dushimishwa no kubona ibikorwa by’indashyikirwa nka bimwe mubyo tugiye kubona mu mwanya. Ibi ngibi bituma twebwe abakuru, tugira icyizere ko uru Rwanda rwavutse bwa kabiri, rufite aho rugeze kandi ko hari n’urubyiruko ruzakomeza rukarinda ibyagezweho.

Aha twagirango tubibutse ko mufite igihugu, ingufu, ubwenge, n’ubushobozi bwo gukora, kugirango u Rwanda dufite uyu muni ruhore rutera imbere kandi bikoze n’abanyarwanda.

Mwagize urugero rwiza rw’urubyiruko nkamwe rwubatse umusingi w’igihugu dufite uyu muni. Inyiturano isumba izindi twaha urwo rubyiruko ni **ugusigasira ibyagezweho, kugira u Rwanda rwunze ubumwe rukaba igihugu gikungahaye; ariko cyane cyane kurinda no gukomera ku Gaciro k’Abanyarwanda.**

Ladies and gentlemen,

As I conclude my remarks, I would like to congratulate our nominees; the young men and women, but also organisations and company selected among hundreds, for developing creative solutions through which they deliver products and services that greatly benefit our communities.

Young nominees: My wish for you, is that this award continues to sustain the wonderful work you are doing. To the organisations and

companies may this recognition also serve as an encouragement for you to keep on uplifting the lives of young people.

To all of you, your remarkable work has touched many. It is our aspiration that you will keep on investing time and energy to impact more lives with your vision.

Thank you for your kind attention and enjoy your evening.