

**First Lady Jeannette Kagame's Address at
the Monthly National Prayer Breakfast**

Kigali, Rwanda

10 August 2019

**Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Sisters,**

Good Morning.

It is a great pleasure to join you all here today, at this monthly prayer breakfast. I am especially grateful to the Rwanda Leaders Fellowship for organizing this breakfast and giving us this opportunity to join in fellowship and prayer for our nations.

It is also great pleasure to have my Sisters and great friends of Rwanda with me here today.

Thank you Dear Sisters for visiting us, and for having always been with us, in one way or another.

I value and appreciate your friendship and continued solidarity with the people of Rwanda.

Distinguished Guests,

Your presence here today reflects the extent of your belief in the power of fellowship and prayer, to transform individuals, communities and nations.

The transformation that I am talking about, and that I believe we all aspire to, cannot take place without each of us reflecting inwards, to identify what needs to change.

As a country, this is the path we took to reassemble the pieces that were broken, due to bad leadership, that fostered poverty of minds and hearts, divisionism and hate, that culminated into the tragic Genocide against the Tutsi.

For us to truly uplift ourselves and overcome, what many believed we could not, we had to look back and inspect ourselves, our communities and our country as a whole.

We had to unpack and understand what defined us then; what made us vulnerable to the ideologies and tactics, that resulted in loss of over 1,000,000 precious lives.

This internal critical analysis revealed to us, in many ways, that finding suitable solutions to our challenges, and rebuilding our country required the hands and minds of all Rwandans.

It revealed to us that for sustainable transformation and development to be attained, we needed inclusive systems and structures – We needed reconciliation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Reconciliation for sustainable peace and development goes beyond repentance and forgiveness. It is about sustained cohesion.

True reconciliation is reflected when individuals, communities and countries share a common vision; share a common responsibility to realise their vision; and accept to hold each other accountable.

In Rwanda, it is the strong systems and platforms in place, such as *Umuganda* (community service), *Umushyikirano* (National Dialogue) and *Imihigo* (performance contracts), that allow continuous collaboration and dialogue between individuals, leaders and communities, and reinforce accountability.

I am sure that many of you can think of examples, unique to your own countries and situations, that have made the difference in uplifting and changing the lives of your people.

Distinguished Guests,

We welcome and encourage such gatherings, as they enable us to continue telling our stories and exchanging ideas.

They allow us to forge genuine partnerships and work hand in hand to be each other's keepers.

As we continue to do so, let us ask ourselves these simple questions:

- As leaders, parents, role models and as Christians, what impact do we want to have?
- What legacy do we want to leave?

Asking ourselves such questions will allow us to identify what we need, to ensure sustainable development, and also identify each one's role in achieving it.

Finally, speaking of legacy, I would like to end with this beautiful and wise reflection of Nelson Mandela **“Reconciliation means working together to correct the legacy of past injustice”**.

May the Peace of God be with you.

I thank you for your kind attention.