

**REPUBLIC OF RWANDA**



**OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER**

**SPEECH OF THE RT. HON. PRIME MINISTER,  
A. MUREKEZI,  
AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF  
THE ADVANCING WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP FORUM FOR  
AFRICA AND ASIA**

**Kigali Convention Centre, August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

- **Honourable Ministers,**
- **Mrs. Lydia Nsekera, Member of the International Olympic Committee, and Representative of the IOC President to this Forum,**
- **Mrs. Izeduwa Derex-Briggs, UN Women's Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa,**
- **LT. General Syed Arif Hassan, Vice-President of the Olympic Council of Asia,**
- **Mr. Mustapha Berraf, Vice-President of the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa,**
- **Ambassador Valens Munyabagisha, President of the Rwanda National Olympic and Sports Committee, RNOSC,**
- **Distinguished Representatives of National and International Sports Bodies here present,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**1.** On behalf of H.E Paul Kagame, The President of The Republic of Rwanda, I am honoured to preside over this opening Ceremony of the Advancing Women in Leadership Forum For Africa and Asia, that is taking place here in Kigali, Rwanda.

**2.** I would like to start by conveying to you all, warm greetings from our President Paul Kagame, who is also a well-known Supporter of sports and a Champion of promoting gender equality. He wishes you a nice stay in Rwanda and fruitful deliberations during your three days Forum. He assures the International Olympic Committee, that He will continue to support your good initiatives.

- **Honourable Ministers,**
- **Excellencies,**
- **Distinguished Guests,**

**3.** The Government of Rwanda sincerely welcomes all Delegates to this important Forum. You are all most welcome. Our Country deeply thanks The International Olympic Committee (IOC) and its Partners, for having selected Rwanda to host this Advancing Women in Leadership Forum For Africa and Asia.

**4.** We would like to use this opportunity to inform the Organizers of this Forum that aims at Advancing Women in Leadership, that they share the same determination and commitment with the Government of Rwanda.

**5.** Indeed, one of the six Fundamental Principles and Home-grown Solutions as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003 as revised in 2015, states that our Country is committed to building a State governed by the rule of law, a Pluralistic Democratic Government, equality of all Rwandans men and women which is affirmed by women occupying at least 30% of positions in Decision-making Organs.

**6.** To date, Rwanda is the Country with 64% of Parliamentary Seats occupied by women. This trend is also seen in almost all Decision making Organs of the Country.

**7.** In 2015, our President, H.E Paul Kagame was among the World Leaders that championed the launch of the HeforShe Campaign. At that official launch, He said, I quote:

“Women and Men are equal in terms of ability and dignity, and they should also be equal in terms of opportunity”. Rwandans, as a global community, we need every member of our society to use his or her talents to the fullest”. End of quote.

**8.** In addition, when He was receiving the Prestigious Gender Champion Award for His tireless efforts towards championing women rights and empowerment on the Continent, H.E President Paul Kagame said:

“Our men should be warned that when you try to marginalize women and don't want them to be side by side with you, you are really losing something big. You risk being confronted with powerful women not only in terms of their quality but also in their numbers.”

- **Honourable Ministers,**
- **Distinguished Guests,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**9.** Despite the fact that Rwanda has done a lot in promoting gender equality and sports, we still have gaps in representation of women in sports leadership. Currently, the number of women in the Rwanda National Olympic and Sports Committee is at 42,8%; but in the National Sports Federations, they are only 16%.

**10.** Rwanda actually shares the same situation with other Countries, especially African and Asian Countries. Indeed, despite all efforts that were made to increase the number of women in governing sports bodies, we still experience inequalities between women and men in the sport world.

**11.** The 2017 statistics that were released by the International Olympic Committee show that on average, women represent only 17% in the National Olympic Committee General Assemblies and 20.7% in Executive Boards.

**12.** This has to change. Women, especially African and Asian women, do not deserve this poor treatment. The world has changed. Men and Women have to be treated equal in all domains.

**13.** I therefore urge you all participants to this Forum, to advise African and Asian Countries on how better to advance women in sports leadership and participation. Our Country, Rwanda, with its commitment to international engagements, is ready to implement your recommendations.

**14.** I would also like to request all women to enhance their leadership skills and empower themselves so that they will be able to compete for leadership positions in sports, and become Mentors for Young Men and Women seeking to work in sports activities.

**15.** With these Remarks, on behalf of H.E Paul Kagame, The President of The Republic of Rwanda, it is now my pleasure, to declare the Advancing Women in Leadership Forum For Africa and Asia, officially open.

**Thank you,**

**God Bless you.**