

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



THE PRIME MINISTER

**Remarks by the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister
Dr. Ngirente Edouard**

**At the 2019 Africa50 General Shareholders'
Meeting**

**Kigali Convention Centre (KCC)
July 10th, 2019**

- **Honourable Ministers,**
- **Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank and Chairman of Africa50,**
- **Alain Ebobissé, CEO of Africa50,**
- **Ambassadors and Heads of Diplomatic Missions,**
- **Shareholders and Board Members of Africa50,**
- **Ladies and gentlemen,**

Good morning!

1. It is my pleasure to welcome you to Rwanda and to open this 4th Africa50 General Shareholders' Meeting on behalf of His Excellency Paul Kagame, the President of the Republic of Rwanda who was not able to attend this meeting. A very warm welcome to you all to Rwanda for the 4th Africa50 General Shareholders' Meeting. We are pleased to have been selected as the host country for this year.

- 2.** I was told that The 4th Africa 50 General Shareholders' Meeting and yesterday's Investment Forum agenda have placed innovation at the center of our dialogue and deliberations. Therefore, we have to work hard to increase our opportunities in technology advancements in all sectors of our economies.
- 3.** As a continent, we need to create, shape and own our agenda when it comes to innovation and technology, among others. This journey will require us to invest across multiple dimensions from connectivity in rural and urban areas to digital literacy to increase adoption, and to prepare our young people to be successful in a digital world.
- 4.** In Rwanda, we started with laying the foundations by investing in infrastructure that led to 95% country fiber network coverage. With the infrastructure in place, we looked to digitize our services, connecting government to citizens through online services to improve service delivery.

5. Today we have over 90 services online on our platform called *Irembo*. We are now looking at universal digital literacy of our young people by 2024 as well as capitalizing on innovation and technology to develop our economy and reduce poverty.
6. Investments like these always require a lot of resources and there is need of collaboration and partnership between governments, private sector and other partners. Therefore, we must keep looking to partners particularly in the private sector to make these investments successful.
7. Africa50 has been a great example – stepping in to partner with the Government of Rwanda in developing Kigali Innovation City, our flagship project to accelerate our innovation ecosystem.
8. Similarly, the Africa Development Bank has been our great partner in different areas including ICT, education and innovation. This demonstrates that the era we live in requires partnership and collaboration with the private sector and our citizens. Our role as leaders in government is to be an enabler to catalyze private sector growth.

9. This is why the Government of Rwanda continuously seeks new reforms to improve the investment climate. As you know, today we are ranked 1st easiest place to do business in the region, 2nd in Africa and 29th globally. In addition, the 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index ranked Rwanda as the 1st least corrupt country in the East African Region and one of the five least corrupt countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

- **Distinguished Guests,**

10. We have a responsibility to ensure that the investments we make are lifting all our citizens out of poverty and not just a few. Even as we invest in technology, let us support inclusive solutions that improve the lives of our people such as solutions that improve agriculture productivity, improve access to healthcare and quality education.

11. These are sectors that have an impact on all our citizens and receive significant public funding, as African governments we need to also challenge ourselves to be agile and open to new

technologies and innovations in our own operations if we are to create sustainable impact.

12. Technology has given us a platform to accelerate how we create value for our citizens and society, therefore let us all continue to work together as partners to find ways to use this opportunity to transform our continent.

13. After these few remarks, dear participants, it is now my pleasure, on behalf of His Excellency, Paul Kagame, the President of the Republic of Rwanda, to declare the 2019 Africa50 General Shareholder Meeting officially open.

I thank you for your attention.