

Acceptance Remarks
by First Lady Jeannette Kagame
UNAIDS Town Hall Meeting

Friday, 7 December 2018

Kigali, Rwanda

- **Executive Director of UNAIDS and Under-Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Michel Sidibé,**
- **Right Honourable Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, Mrs. Donatille Mukabalisa,**
- **Honourable Ministers,**
- **Resident Coordinator of ONE UN Rwanda, Mr Fodé Ndiaye,**
- **Valued Partners,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good Morning.

It is my great honour to share this moment with you today.

To be named **Special Ambassador of Adolescent Health and Wellbeing**, by an institution committed to see healthier communities around the world, is something that I cannot take lightly - and for that, I am humbled and sincerely grateful.

This recognition goes beyond highlighting my efforts in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Rwanda; and ensuring the health and wellbeing of our adolescents. It also honours the

stakeholders and partners, with whom we have been able to achieve the progress highlighted, in the video we just watched.

Distinguished Guests,

My involvement in the fight against HIV/AIDS, as well as contributing to the health and wellbeing of our biggest asset – our youth, was inspired by my deep desire, and duty, to leverage my position as a First Lady, to effect the change we needed.

The journey I embarked on, along with my team, since 2001, was one rooted in the conviction to see all Rwandans, educated, and living a dignified and prosperous life, as I believed that it was what they deserved.

It is what we all deserve.

Indeed, through this journey we have witnessed tremendous positive change. This is reflected in the lives of hundreds of thousands of our people, as they grow more knowledgeable about their health; but also, demand better quality services, while holding their leaders accountable on issues, that matter most to them.

Esteemed Ladies and Gentlemen,

This progress could not have been possible without Rwanda's sound and visionary leadership.

Indeed, we have seen effective ecosystems emerge, through relevant development strategies and strong frameworks, thus allowing my organisation, and others working in the field, to amplify our impact.

This being said, however, we cannot sit back with the satisfaction that the worst is behind us.

As the face of HIV/AIDS continues to change, we must remain vigilant, in order to respond to emerging challenges, in a timely manner.

We must also be deliberate in strengthening our defence against HIV/AIDS, and equip all men, women and children, with the resources to live safe, and healthy lives.

Dear UNAIDS Family here today,

In humbly accepting this recognition, I recommit to strengthening my efforts and playing an unwavering role in advocating for, and pushing towards, the elimination of AIDS by the year 2030.

Most importantly, I recommit to the elimination of its risk among youth and adolescents in Rwanda, and across the globe.

Thank you for your kind attention.