

**3rd Edition of the First Lady's
Half Marathon as part of the
'Beyond Zero' Campaign**

**Remarks by H.E. Mrs Jeannette
Kagame**

Nairobi, 6 March 2016

**Deputy President William Ruto,
My dear Sister Margaret,
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

Ndugu zetu wa Kenya hamjambo.

Salamu nyingi kutoka kwa ndugu zenu wa Rwanda. It is my great pleasure to be here with all of you this morning, for the third edition of the First Lady's Half Marathon, in support of this great cause, the 'Beyond Zero Campaign'.

Some of you may not know this, but Nairobi was once my home for 6 years, and as such it always feels good to be back here!

My dear Sister Margaret,

Our presence here is a response to a call that resonates beyond borders, as with this campaign, you are greatly contributing to the much-needed awareness, about our collective responsibility, to improve the access to basic health services.

Indeed, hearing about the impact of the 'Beyond Zero' Campaign and the lives changed, and saved, thanks to the mobile clinics, speak volume to the power of community involvement.

By bringing these services closer to the people, you have connected the dots between the health providers and users, bringing on board the policy makers, the private sector, and the civil society, in the various counties of this beautifully resourceful country.

Distinguished participants,

It is inspiring to see many of you show this much support, and I am not saying this because this event required real dedication on a Sunday morning. We must build on this momentum to sustain this united front, beyond our national borders, to continue improving the wellbeing of our communities.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As each nation faces its own set of challenges, I believe that the ability to create strategies to counter them, is an aptitude that we should continue to nurture, for it holds the power to bring relevant, successful, and lasting solutions where they are most needed.

This initiative we are supporting today, is similar to one of the locally designed strategies implemented back home, which relies on an army of 45,000 committed health workers, who are entrusted by their communities, to deliver key messages and sensitize for timely antenatal care to pregnant women.

Thanks to this additional assistance provided by these community health workers to health centres, Rwanda continues to see a considerable impact on maternal and neonatal death reduction. Just to give you an idea, through maternal death audit, we have seen an 80% drop, yet, this is still not enough... After all, NO woman should die while giving life.

It is my sincere conviction that it is through these strategic programmes, that are based on consistent advocacy efforts, resulting from strong partnerships between government and civil society, that we will get closer to our ultimate goal of eradicating these preventable diseases, and conditions, that continue to claim the lives of too many of our own.

Dear brothers and sisters,

As this world increasingly resembles a global village, we are all given this opportunity to learn from our neighbours, near and far.

As I conclude my remarks today, I would like to wish much success for the continuation of the 'Beyond Zero' Campaign. Tunashukuru na tumefurayi saana kuwa nanyi leo.

Asanteni, na Mungu awabariki.