

**Co-chair of the World Economic Forum,
Senior government officials,
Honourable delegates,
Esteemed partners,
Distinguished speakers and panellists,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

Good morning.

It is my great pleasure to welcome every single one of you to this youth forum, to engage in a forward thinking conversation on the endless opportunities of African entrepreneurship. With this World Economic Forum on Africa hosted for the first time in Rwanda, I believe this important topic to be perfectly suited to a lively discussion with and among the young shapers of tomorrow's Africa.

Young delegates,

We have come to understand, as a continent with a rich mosaic of people, that our greatest source of progress and wealth will continue to be African men and women themselves, notably the youth and the

untapped resources of their creative and innovative minds.

Indeed, ladies and gentlemen, this disturbing paradox of our continent as one of the wealthiest in natural resources, yet struggling with extreme poverty in its different regions, is one that has been going on for way too long.

I humbly believe that some of the answers to sustainable change on this continent lie in the strengthening of our education base, and introducing more entrepreneurial reforms, so the next generations can take full advantage of science, technology and other innovations, that will firmly ground them in this 4th industrial revolution.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

As our nation continues to forge its path forward and remains committed to further connect investors, scholars, and innovators, we see this Forum as a very exciting opportunity for Rwandans to continue learning from one another, how to strategically

‘Connect Africa’s resources through digital transformation.’

Through the different delegations joining us from all corners of this world, to share views and pick each other’s brains, we fully intend to grow solutions that can be replicable and scaled up throughout Africa.

We are also obviously glad to see an increasing number of young people venturing into this world of entrepreneurship, which rewards originality and boldness.

As a matter of fact, all the panellists you see here today have been making a significant impact in a variety of fields, ranging from finance, communications and energy, to architecture; and let me also say for the record, that they have been widely recognized and acclaimed for it.

It is our hope that the conversation between these beautiful minds will ignite a spark, or sustain that innovative flame in you, the aspiring entrepreneurs present in this audience. We want you to feel encouraged to also step out of your comfort zones,

and create life-changing opportunities not only for yourselves, but also for your communities.

Esteemed guests,

Through the topic of the day, we also wish for everyone in the audience, to gain a better understanding of how inter-connected we all are in this world. Of how trailblazing ideas that made an impactful difference in one place, can do the same in another, given adaptation to local realities.

We must understand that an innovation in Nigeria is more likely than not, to be relevant to Rwanda; and that in turn, someone like Rwanda's very own Ashish, can successfully export his entrepreneurial ideas to Ghana, by learning to understand the contextual differences and utilise the right networks.

Entrepreneurs of tomorrow,

We want you to grasp the inner workings of the financial world and what dictates the movement of capital, so you can create products and concepts, that are attractive to investors.

Be conscious of connecting the dots between your calling and what you were meant to bring to your communities so that you never operate in a vacuum.

Learn the rules of this economic environment, so you too can defy them when needed, as the Government of Rwanda has been doing over the years, for us to truly beat the odds, and go beyond what was expected of this nation.

Honourable participants,

I know you cannot wait any longer to hear from the speakers and panellists of the day, so I would like to conclude my short remarks, by wishing us all fruitful discussions. The kind that will be inspirational to each and every one of you; the kind that will translate outside of this meeting room, in business plans and concrete applications that bring along social change – and open wide the doors of success for the next generation of African entrepreneurs.

I thank you all for your kind attention.