



---

# REMARKS OF HER EXCELLENCY MRS JEANNETTE KAGAME

---

Panel Opening Message – The Interlinks Between Family Dynamics and the  
Perpetuation of Poverty – Qatar Foundation Summit



30TH OF OCTOBER

DOHA

**Qatar Foundation Representatives,  
Esteemed Panelists, Experts and Advocates,**

- Good Day.
- Thank you for platforming such a crucial conversation. It's a pleasure to be here today.
- This year, as Qatar Foundation marks the 30th International Year of the Family, may the countless lives empowered, offer a testament, to the necessity of caring for human welfare beyond our borders, and the global impact of authentic philanthropy.
- 2024 is also a celebration of 3 decades of rebuilding our newly liberated Rwanda. We eagerly anticipate to draw from the experiences and good practices of our friends, to fortify our steps in eradicating, at last, intergenerational poverty.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

- Today's exchange calls for reflection, but also experience, on the transformative journey that can successfully take a people from deprivation, to prosperity.
- While I look forward to sharing Rwanda's story, I believe that a few questions must be raised first. I worry that without questioning certain notions, the scales may always be skewed **against** those deemed poor.

- Indeed; in order to break the intergenerational wheel of poverty, we must examine the **root cause** of extreme poverty, assess and quantify the full extent of its damage to humanity, and reflect on the dynamics through which deprivation prevails.

### **Honourable Guests,**

- We are all familiar, with world history.
- How far, has the African continent truly been set back, by extensive and systematic resource extraction, compounding debt, and foreign economic policies of austerity, that impede national development?
- How can we truly eradicate extreme poverty, when it remains controversial, to raise questions on the lack of accountability and urgency, of the global institutions mandated to secure that change?
- The words “poor” or “poverty” are, regrettably, often used to define the identity of those who, for me, would instead better be described by their resilience, and drive to prevail over the exploitative politics of the Old World.
- Must we, I wonder, **necessarily** quantify and qualify everyone’s productivity, in terms that may benefit some, but not others?

- If “poor” or “rich” are to be pertinent qualifiers of human development for entire nations, shouldn’t there be a more accurate and culturally-sensitive barometer, of the quality of one’s well-being, than the one that we currently uphold?
- It is my belief that GDP per capita and other measures of Human Development Index can be biased or limited, and do not provide a full and complete picture of a people’s standards of living....particularly, in instances of significant inequality.
- One may deliver service with every cent. Another may choose to misuse every full dollar. So much may occur in between acquiring funds, and actually putting those funds to good use. This gap is bridged by good leadership, strong institutions, and an engaged people. However, these markers of performance, like many more, often go undervalued.
- In the case of Rwanda, security, national unity, and the pride to have emerged, dignified and free, from the ashes of a once failed and divided state...**for us**, this, is hard-earned capital.
- **Honourable Guests**, victimhood could never be a badge of honour. States, can no longer be disenfranchised, when measures are taken to, quote on quote, empower their people. Indeed, the time has come to revisit development cooperation dialogue, for a sincere and mutually beneficial relationship.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

- A healthy and prosperous society produces healthy and prosperous families and in turn, healthy and prosperous families, sustain a thriving society.
- Our country embraces a people-centered model of governance, with a social protection policy enshrined at the core of our development efforts.
- Yes, MDG 1 - eradicating extreme poverty - remains a challenge. However, the Framework of Sustainable Development Goals, provides a promising path to eradicating poverty by 2030 (SDG1).
- And yes, we are also aware that considerable obstacles may threaten our progress, namely population distribution, climate change, conflict and moral apathy.
- Nevertheless, by implementing solutions that account for these threats; solutions mindful of our own historical, cultural context, we have been able to trace our own way forward - this is reflected in our soon to be implemented National Strategy for Transformation (NST2).

## **Esteemed Guests,**

- Allow me to briefly illustrate the results of Rwanda's developmental endeavours thus far, in a few examples.
- Rwanda has implemented Universal Healthcare (Mutuelle de Sante, covering over 98% of Rwandans), Universal Primary Education, and Shelter for All. Homegrown solutions such as our Integrated Model Villages, provide decent homes to over 8000 vulnerable families, including those impacted by Climate Change, as well as a package of end to end services. And this, is just the beginning.
- Since 2000, the Rwandan economy has multiplied more than 7 times and Rwandans' life expectancy has increased from 47 years on average, to 70 years now, and rising.
- 99% of our girls are enrolled in primary school, and child marriage, remains illegal in our country. School feeding has been implemented nationally.
- Indeed, we will avail every effort, to maximising school retention.

- We take this opportunity to celebrate the solid partnership between the Government of Rwanda and Qatar Foundation. The Zero Out of School Project, spearheaded by Education Above All, offers an encouraging prospect that no child shall miss school, by re-enrolling all dropouts. Thank you for committing to this noble cause.
- Access to electricity has increased from 6% to 75% in the past 15 years. 50% of this electricity is now produced by renewable resources. At the end of 2024, the cumulative connectivity rate in Rwanda will be 80%.
- Through the use of drones, Rwanda delivers medical supplies quickly and safely, to our most remote areas, saving numerous citizens.
- The digitalisation of services intended for the public has increased its efficiency substantially. Our digital government services platform, “Irembo”, hosts over 40 different services, deriving from 6 different government agencies, removing the hurdles of bureaucracy in public service access.
- We look forward to the development of our six secondary cities, which will create a functional network of development poles that center green growth, and offset the social cost of rapid urbanization.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

- It is imperative that we assure a generational mindset shift on our continent and beyond; the kind that makes us rethink the term “poor country”, the realities behind it, and the breadth of efforts necessary to achieve prosperity.
- For this, we are fortunate enough, to access rooms like these, where our efforts can be fed by the wisdom of the experts beside me.
- My parting words, are, **Dear Guests**, that behind facts and figures, behind statistics, analysis and reports on poverty-related deaths in Africa, are real families, with aspirations and desires similar to everyone else’s: the health and success of our children. A life of dignity and security.
- We must note that the futures of those who have abundance, are closely connected with the lives of those in need. Economic challenges arising from poverty and insecurity, even when distant, will eventually permeate all of our homes.
- The global inflation we’ve experienced in recent years, influenced in part by geopolitical conflict, has deepened our understanding of this connection. In many ways, our fates are interconnected.



- So, we must all ask ourselves: Will this generation, at last, be the one to end extreme poverty? We are equipped with the resources, incentives and I dare hope, humanity, to do so.
- Will we make the only acceptable and rational choice?
- Let us note that history, and specifically our children, will judge, whether we chose to be active opposers, or passive enablers, of the biggest of thief of human life, of the 21st century.
- Be assured, **Ladies and Gentlemen, Honorable Guests**, that Rwanda will always be open to partnerships and networking, to knowledge-exchange, with everyone that shares our ambition, for a world of empowered families, where no one is left behind.
- May integrity, fortitude and expertise guide our steps.
- I thank you for your time and kind attention.