



Republic of Rwanda
Ministry of Education

Welcome Remarks by Minister of Education Hon. Nsengimana Joseph

Africa Foundational Learning Exchange (FLEX)

Kigali, 12th November 2024

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- **Your Excellency, First Lady of the Republic of Rwanda and Guest of Honour for this Foundational Learning Exchange (FLEX),**
 - **Honourable Ministers of Education from across the African continent,**
 - **Excellencies Ambassadors here present,**
 - **Delegates from Ministries of Education and other visiting Government officials,**
 - **Development Partners,**
 - **Government of Rwanda officials present,**
 - **Civil Society organisations represented,**
 - **School Head teachers, teachers, and students here today,**

Good morning,

1. On behalf of the Government of Rwanda, it is both a great pleasure and an honor to warmly welcome all of you, especially our distinguished guests and delegates, to the opening ceremony of the Africa Foundational Learning Exchange (FLEX) 2024, here at the Kigali Convention Centre.
2. We are gathered here today, united by our shared commitment to enhancing foundational learning and addressing learning poverty across Africa. Building on the success of the first FLEX in Sierra Leone in February 2023, we are honoured to host such a diverse group of Ministers from across the continent.
3. FLEX brings together delegates from varied backgrounds, underscoring the critical importance of the need to equip our young learners across Africa with foundational learning skills. With Education declared the Theme of the Year for 2024 by the African Union, FLEX 2024 stands as one of the continent's most impactful educational events.



4. We are truly honored to host this gathering, which serves as a key platform for laying the foundations necessary to achieve our collective educational goals.

**Your Excellency, First Lady,
Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

5. I would like to acknowledge the presence of Ministers from the following countries present here today: Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Malawi, São Tomé and Príncipe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Tanzania, The Gambia, Uganda, Zanzibar, Zimbabwe, and Zambia.
6. I also recognize the Heads of Delegations from the Burkina Faso, Botswana, Central African Republic, Cameroon, , Congo Brazzaville, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Senegal, Somalia and Togo.
7. Let me extend a warm welcome to our development partners who played an important role in organising this FLEX and thank them for their continued partnership:
 - [The World Bank Vice President for Eastern and Southern Africa](#)
 - [UNICEF's Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa](#)
 - [USAID's Deputy Assistant Administrator and Acting Senior Coordinator for International Basic Education](#)
 - [The Association for the Development of Education in Africa \(ADEA\), Executive Secretary](#)
 - [The Hempel Foundation's Executive Director](#)
 - [NewGlobe's CEO and Founder](#)
8. A warm welcome as well to the Global Coalition for Foundational Learning members participating in FLEX 2024. On behalf of the Government of Rwanda, we extend our sincere appreciation for your contributions in supporting foundational learning in Rwanda and across Africa.
9. We are also pleased to have other key partners and agencies here, and I would like to acknowledge their presence:
 - [The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Global Education Director](#)
 - [Her Excellency, the British High Commissioner in Rwanda](#)
 - [The Global Partnership for Education, High-Level Envoy and Advisor for Education](#)

- UNESCO’s Senior Education Advisor
- The African Union, Head of Division, Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation
- Her Excellency, the EU Ambassador to Rwanda
- Human Capital Africa’s Vice President for Africa and Founder

**Your Excellency, The First Lady
Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

10. I am grateful for the opportunity to share the progress Rwanda has made in prioritising the health and education of our future generations. Through substantial investments in prenatal care and early childhood development, we are laying the foundation for a healthier, more successful generation of children.
11. We’ve also implemented a national school-feeding program, which has significantly improved student health, boosted attendance, and reduced dropout rates, ensuring that more children stay in school and continue their education.
12. Although challenges remain, we focused on the empowerment of *young girls*, which is why we have established *Girl’s Rooms* in schools, providing dedicated spaces where girls receive the support they need to excel academically and socially. This initiative helps ensure that all girls have the opportunity to succeed, regardless of their background.
13. Although Rwanda has increased teacher salaries substantially over the past two years, teacher salaries remain another area of concern. To address this, Rwanda has introduced financing schemes through **‘Umwalimu SACCO’ (Teacher saving Cooperative)** that offer preferential loan rates to teachers, improving their living standards and encouraging them to continue their vital work.
14. Additionally, we have fully integrated remedial learning into the primary school timetable across the country, ensuring no student is left behind. We have also expanded our focus on foundational subjects, particularly language and mathematics, increasing instructional time in these critical areas.
15. Rwanda’s education system now guarantees 9 and 12 years of basic education for all, and this has been achieved through strong community involvement driving this progress in a relatively short time.

Ladies and Gentlemen

16. The FLEX event aligns seamlessly with our vision for education in Rwanda, which is to ensure equitable access to quality education for every child. By bringing together representatives from across the continent, we have the opportunity to exchange knowledge, track progress on foundational learning outcomes, and foster collaborative engagement.
17. We extend a warm welcome to all delegates, education stakeholders, policymakers, and opinion leaders gathered here today.
18. I also encourage you to make the most of your time in Rwanda, both inside and outside of this FLEX event. We are delighted to host you at the Gala dinner this evening, and I look forward to engaging with all of you throughout this event, as we work towards a successful and impactful meeting.
19. It is now my distinct honor to introduce the Guest of Honour for the Foundational Learning Exchange 2024, who will deliver the keynote address.
20. We are honoured to have the First Lady of the Republic of Rwanda.
21. The First Lady of the Republic of Rwanda is a respected advocate for Education for All, not only in Rwanda but across the African continent. She has been a tireless champion for Early Childhood Education, recognizing it as the cornerstone of children's development.
22. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming the First Lady of the Republic of Rwanda.

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