

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



PARLIAMENT

MODTAGET
LEDELSESSEKRETARIATET

Dato 4-5-2010 Kl.

April 14, 2010

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Honorable Speaker
Parliament of Denmark (Folketinget)
Christiansborg
DK 1240 Copenhagen K

Dear Honorable Speaker:

Subject: **Invitation to the International Forum on the Role of Leadership in Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, May 17 - 18, 2010**

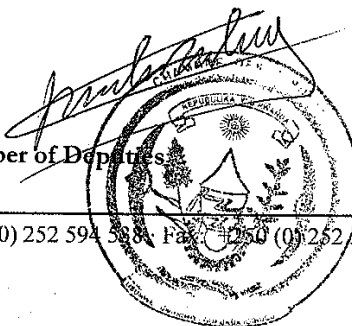
It is with great pleasure and honor that we invite one representative of your Parliament to Kigali on the 17th and 18th of May 2010 to celebrate the advancement of women. As the country with the highest percentage of women parliamentarians in the world and as part of a fresh commitment to promote, accelerate and sustain gender equality, Rwanda is hosting an **International Forum on the Role of Leadership in Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**.

The **International Forum** coincides with the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the 15th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the 10th anniversary of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, the 5th anniversary of the African Union's Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, and the implementation of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region.

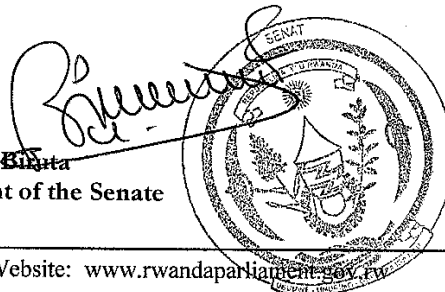
Four hundred prominent international leaders from parliament, government, business, international organizations, civil society, media and academia, as well as representatives from the Great Lakes region, will meet to assess the role of leadership in promoting, accelerating and sustaining gender equality and women's empowerment. Delegates will share good practices, identify gaps and draw important lessons from new and innovative strategies. During the two day interactive forum, leaders will develop and commit to a new Gender Agenda; forge new strategic alliances and strengthen partnerships; as well as launch the Regional Center of Excellence for Women's Global Leadership.

We have attached for your information the aide memoire and provisional programme. For any inquiries about the Forum, kindly email them to forum.secretariat@parliament.gov.rw. We look forward to welcoming you to Rwanda. Please accept the assurances of our highest consideration.

Rose Mukantabana
Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies



Vincent Bihuta
President of the Senate





UNITY, WORK, PATRIOTISM

International Forum on the Role of Leadership in Promoting Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment

Provisional Programme At A Glance

Kigali, Rwanda 17 -18 May 2010

Venue: Kigali Serena Hotel Conference Center

Sunday, 16 May

Arrival and registration of participants

One Million Women's March for a Better Future

Monday, 17 May

9:00 - 10:00

Official Opening Ceremony

Chair: **Hon. Louise Mushikiwabo**, Rwandan Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

Welcome drum repertoire and poetry recital by young girls

Welcome remarks by **H.E. Vincent Biruta**, President of the Rwandan Senate

Keynote Address by Special Guest **H.E. Hillary Rodham Clinton**, Secretary of State of the United States of America

Address by **H.E. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf**, President of Liberia

Address by **H.E. Paul Kagame**, President of Rwanda

Address by **Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al Missned of Qatar**

Address by **Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah, Queen of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan**

to be followed by Group Photo

10:00 - 10:30

Tea & Coffee Break

10:30 - 12:00

Morning Plenary Session

Short Film on Rwandan Best Practices

To be followed by Statements:

Dr. Donald Kaberuka, President, African Development Bank, on **Women's Economic Empowerment**

Mrs. Sara Brown, Patron, White Ribbon Alliance on **Safe Motherhood**

Dr. Margaret Chan, Director General, World Health Organization on **Women's Health**

Mrs. Graca Machel, President, Foundation for Community Development on **Women's Education**

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Nobel Laureate, on **Peace & Justice**

Margot Wallström, Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, on **Women & Security**

Maria Eitel, President, NIKE Foundation, on **The Girl Effect**

Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Managing Director, World Bank on **Sustaining African Women's Economic Empowerment**

Prof. Wangari Muta Maathai, Nobel Laureate on **Gender and the Environment**

Ms. Helen Clark, Administrator, UNDP

Mr. Muhammed Yunis, Founder, Grameen Bank on **Micro-credit and Women's Economic Empowerment**

Ms. Inés Alberdi, Executive Director, UNIFEM on

"Gender and Accountability: Who Answers to Women"

12:00 - 14:00

Lunch

14:00 - 17:00

Afternoon Plenary Session

Thematic Discussions

19:00 - 21:00

Dinner hosted by the Government of Rwanda

Tuesday, 18 May

8:30 - 11:00 am

Field Visits - Best Practices & the Launch of the Centre of Excellence for Women's Leadership

11:00 - 11:30

Break

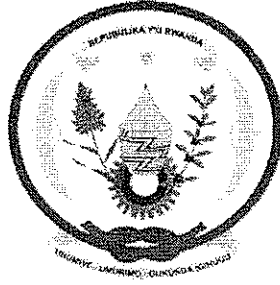
11:30 - 12:30

Plenary Session & Official Closing Ceremony

Signing of the Kigali Charter on Leadership

12:30 - 14:00

Lunch



**INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP
IN PROMOTING, ACCELERATING, AND SUSTAINING
GENDER EQUALITY & WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT**

KIGALI, RWANDA

MAY 17 – 18, 2010

AIDE MEMOIRE

Introduction

As the country with the highest percentage of women parliamentarians in the world and as part of the continuous commitment to promote, accelerate and sustain gender equality, Rwanda is hosting an **International Forum on the Role of Leadership in Promoting, Accelerating and Sustaining Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment** on the 17th and 18th of May 2010 in Kigali.

The International Forum coincides with the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the 15th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA), the 10th anniversary of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, the 5th anniversary of African Union's Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA), and the implementation of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region.

With dynamic sessions and interactive panels, the forum will offer an important opportunity for regional women leaders to find solutions to problems facing the ordinary woman in their respective communities; for global players to share best practices in advancing the gender agenda; and for all participants to identify obstacles to reaching collective goals. The gathering will be a rare occasion to re-double our overall commitment to advancing the cause of women, inspired by Rwanda's progress in that sector.

Why Rwanda?

Under President Paul Kagame's stalwart leadership, Rwanda has emerged as a global leader in the fight for gender equality. Women hold several leadership positions across key public institutions and community based organizations. For example, the nation has the highest percentage of female parliamentarians in the world (56%) - with a woman Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies; 52% representation in the judiciary with a woman as the President of the Supreme Court; over 30% representation in the Cabinet, leading some of the most important posts, including the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Trade & Industry, Agriculture, and Gender & Family Promotion; and 54% representation in local government.

Women also lead other key institutions, including Rwanda Revenue Authority, Human Rights Commissions, the Gacaca Court, National Commission on AIDS, Auditor General, Rwanda Environment Management Agency, and the Gender Monitoring Unit. The inclusion of women in public life has been critical to promoting peace and reconciliation as well as rebuilding a social fabric left in tatters by the genocide.

In Rwanda, however, gender equality is not simply about people, it's also about policies. The creation of a special Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion has led to the enactment of important new laws on property rights and gender-based violence. Such violence – which both the Rwandan government and UN Security Council have rightly identified as a security threat – has further been reduced through the establishment of gender desks within both Rwanda's national army and police force.

Taken together, these achievements have made Rwanda a case study in gender equality and women's empowerment as a means to social and economic transformation. It is within this

context that Rwanda is organizing the **International Forum on the Role of Leadership in Promoting, Accelerating and Sustaining Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment.**

Purpose

Using Rwanda as a launching point, the forum will build upon the progress made in implementing CEDAW, BPFA, UNSCR 1325, SDGEA and the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region. The Forum will further generate new ways of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and realizing the promise of UNSCR 1820 which confronts sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Themes

The programme will focus on sharing experiences, lesson learned and best practices along the following four areas:

1. Governance, Peace, Justice and Security
2. Women's Economic Empowerment
3. Gender and the Environment
4. Women's Health and Education

Specific Goals

1. Build upon the progress in implementing CEDAW, BPFA, UNSCR 1325, UNSCR 1820, SDGEA and the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment;
2. Presentation of the regional action plan on the Great Lakes Protocol on punishment and suppression of sexual violence against women and children in the Great Lakes Region countries;
3. Measure the progress in implementing the 2007 Kigali Declaration on Gender, Nation Building and the Role of Parliament;
4. Share experiences, lessons learned and best practices in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment;
5. Identify challenges and define ways to accelerate progress towards gender equality, women's empowerment and the elimination of violence against women;
6. Take stock of emerging issues that have an impact on gender equality and women's empowerment and promote partnerships to build and sustain change towards a gender equitable society.

Expected Outcomes

1. Leaders commit to promoting, accelerating and sustaining gender equality and women's empowerment.
2. Leaders commit to accelerating the implementation of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region.
3. Develop a Gender Agenda for Promoting, Accelerating and Sustaining Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.
4. Strengthen and build new strategic alliances and partnerships to move the gender agenda forward.
5. Launch the Centre of Excellence for Women's Leadership.

Format

The two-day forum will feature an opening event, followed by a series of high level plenary sessions tailored to foster collaboration and interaction among a diverse group of participants. Documentaries and films on best practices will be viewed. These sessions will be followed by field visits which will afford participants a firsthand look at how Rwanda's efforts to promote gender equality are being implemented.

Main Events of the International Forum

1. **International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) workshop** was held in Kigali on the 26th of March 2010. The member countries developed a common agenda, harmonized regional action plan on women, peace, security and development, and agreed to work together on accelerating and harmonizing the implementation of regional and international instruments (e.g. UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security) and will be presented at the International Forum on the 17th and 18th of May 2010.
2. **'One Million Women's March for a Better Future'** is a major event on the eve of the International Forum, 16 May 2010, in which women across the country will march in celebration of the advancement of women, and to show their support for the continuous commitment to promoting, accelerating and sustaining women's empowerment and gender equality. The march, which is expected to draw a million women, will symbolize the steps the leadership and Rwandans are taking, and galvanize action towards a better future.

Documentation

The Forum conveners will prepare working documents based the five themes and made available to the participants during the meeting.

Participants

Some 400 participants representing a cross-section of international, regional and national stakeholders are expected to attend, including

- Heads of State and Government
- High Level Government Representatives
- Eminent Persons and Prominent Women Leaders
- Members of Parliament
- Representatives of the United Nations System
- Representatives of Local and Regional Women's Groups
- Business Leaders
- Representatives of International Organizations
- Development Partners
- Friends of Rwanda
- Civil Society Leaders from international, regional and national NGOs
- Media
- Academia
- Youth Leaders

Organizing Committee

The Organizing Committee is chaired by the Rwandan Parliament (Senate and Chamber of Deputies) and includes representatives of the following partners:

1. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation
2. Rwanda Women Parliamentary Forum
3. Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
4. Ministry of Local Government
5. Gender Monitoring Office
6. Inter Parliamentary Union
7. National Women's Council
8. International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR)
9. UNIFEM
10. UNDP
11. Pro-Femme *Twese Hamwe* (Rwanda's Women Umbrella Organization)

Languages

The working languages of the conference will be English, French and Spanish.

Venue

The forum will be held at the Serena Hotel & Conference Center in Kigali, Rwanda.

Point of Contact

Rwanda Women Parliamentary Forum

Attn: *Secretariat of the International Forum on the Role of Leadership in Promoting, Accelerating, and Sustaining Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*

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