

**Honourable Minister of Cabinet Affairs,
Chairman of the Board,
Headmaster of Green Hills Academy,
Principals of the secondary and primary schools,
Members of the faculty and staff,
Esteemed parents and students,
Class of 2016 'Indatsindwa',
Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,**

Good afternoon.

It is my great pleasure to be joining you today for the graduation ceremony of the class of 2016, which marks an important step in the life of your child, your relative, your friend and our student.

The time has now come for them to transition into adulthood, where every decision, be it to continue their education, join the workforce or leverage their entrepreneurship spirit, will shape the next years of their lives.

As this class is moving on to new things and new destinations, it is our hope that they will keep at heart the motto '**Towards Excellence**' in all their future endeavours, and that the life lessons taught in this school and the

communities around, will serve as a blueprint wherever they go.

Dear valedictorians,

Having you stand in front of us today, enriched by your experiences and achievements at GHA, is a testament to what Rwanda stands for.

You are indeed, proud examples of our commitment to youth empowerment, not to mention equal access to education, where girls and women are given the opportunity to truly shine alongside their male peers; as demonstrated by the higher number of girls in your class, and both of you belonging to a gender, often underrepresented where it matters most.

We urge you to carry forward this message and continue exemplifying the importance we attach to the empowerment of the young, and that of girls and women, by pursuing opportunities in a diversity of fields, and excelling in your chosen area.

Esteemed Class of 2016,

This journey to your graduation was made of different experiences that came with their own sets of challenges. But

it was also rich of new discoveries about yourselves and the world around you.

You come from different parts of our planet and I believe that because of your diverse backgrounds, the past years have provided precious time for you to learn about one and another, to work with one another, to help each other reach important goals, all the while understanding the importance of surrounding communities, and contributing to improving the quality of their lives.

This has rendered you more aware of the world around you be it far or near, and we trust that wherever you end up pursuing your studies or otherwise, you will fare well.

Valued GHA students,

We would like you take stock of what this year's class has been able to achieve. They took on various projects, ranging from the protection of the environment, to raising funds for students with hearing disabilities and refugees in Mahama Camp, demonstrating that each and everyone at their own level, can make a change for the betterment of our communities. Do take stock and walk in their footsteps!

**Distinguished members of the administration, faculty,
and staff,**

We thank your relentless efforts to educate and guide our precious young minds.

You have been there for our students, and have seen this school celebrate several graduations. Mark my words, when I say that it is with great pride that we all continue to hear about the growing alumni network and their valuable contributions to society.

Honourable guests,

Indeed, our alumni went on to become scientists, pharmacists, engineers, architects, lawyers, entrepreneurs, civil servants, and the list goes on.

Amidst all these interesting paths chosen by our school's former students, what also stands out is the bond between each alumni class, which continues to be nurtured, even kilometres away from Rwanda.

This bond is an enduring one. It goes beyond the social gatherings, as expressed through the care that our former students show, to those that graduated after them. As a matter of fact, these past few months saw the alumni

network come together to raise funds, and support one well-performing and deserving student, complete her studies.

It is this kind of bond and sense of responsibility towards others, that we encourage you to carry forward with you, in all directions that you choose to follow from this day on.

Esteemed students,

Beyond the great education and career paths that will reward your hard work, my wish for you is that you remain connected to one another, and think about students of years to come, as an extended family that can always benefit from your experience, advice and wisdom.

As I conclude my remarks, I would like you to always remember that the beauty of sharing your knowledge is that your own never diminishes.

I wish you the best of luck on the final exams, although I have no doubt that you will do GHA proud in your performance!

Again, congratulations to you, Indatsindwa, and thank you all for your kind attention.