

**President of the African Development Bank,
Dr. Motsepe-Ramaphosa, Spouse of the Deputy-
President of South Africa,
Executive Director of UNFPA,
Co-Founder and Vice-Chairman of the Motsepe
Foundation,
Head of Public Engagement and Foundations at
World Economic Forum,
Community Lead at the Schwab Foundation,
Honourable delegates,
Esteemed social entrepreneurs,
Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening.**

It is my great pleasure to share this special evening with you, on the opening day of the World Economic Forum on Africa, hosted for the very first time in Rwanda.

I would like to start, by extending a warm welcome to those of you visiting our nation for the first time, and wish an enjoyable stay to all of you, so pleasant, that it will make you want to come back, and see more of what Rwanda has to offer.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

Our coming together tonight, to recognize the social entrepreneurs of 2016, is a moment to be truly celebrated, for the immense contribution, these men and women bring to our lives both economically and socially.

It is quite interesting to see that this field of entrepreneurship, so often perceived as a means to make one richer, can also be such a powerful tool to uplift others, as tonight's laureates have shown us.

Whatever the means used by their organisations for this purpose, be it new technologies to provide wider access to jobs; innovative solutions to energy challenges; or tools that support literacy, information technology and train tomorrow's leaders, these special entrepreneurs have in common, a strong desire to change things for the best, around them.

This urge to better lives, is one that profoundly resonates with me. When Imbuto Foundation was launched many years ago, it was with this

worthwhile goal in mind: How could we provide optimal responses to the most pressing needs of our societies? How could we empower young men and women to make good use of their potential and design creative solutions, to positively impact lives around them, while enriching their own?

Much like tonight's awards, one of our answers to these questions, has been the recognition of young Rwandan achievers, who had excelled in a particular field, while uplifting their community. We believed that this kind of acknowledgement would be a **source of motivation** for awardees and a **source of inspiration** to their peers.

Esteemed organisers,

Events like this one serve as an important reminder, that all of us do indeed, have the power to make a difference around us. We live in a world where wealth disparities are still very evident, and as such, one can see the importance of cultivating a spirit of solidarity and care for the less fortunate.

The different people recognised this evening, were all able to identify a specific need around them, and took it upon themselves to advance a solution to address the imbalance they saw. This kind of dedication should inspire many others to walk in their footsteps, for I passionately believe that there is strength in the ability to do something for someone else, not because you want them to pay you back, but rather because you believe in empowering them to fulfil their right to a dignified life.

Honourable guests,

As I conclude my remarks, allow me to congratulate all the recognised social entrepreneurs present tonight. May your inspiring work further evolve to reach more people and wider audiences.

To organisers from the Motsepe and Schwab Foundations, thank you for hosting this important event in our country, which firmly believes in upholding the various values, promoted through the different interventions carried by the individuals we recognize this evening.

I thank you for your kind attention, and wish you a pleasant evening.