

**SPEECH OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE AND PRESIDENT OF UR ALUMNI ON THE
OCCASION OF HEALTH PROFESSIONALS' GET TOGETHER EVENING**

(KIGALI, 13TH DECEMBER 2019)

The Vice Chancellor,
The Deputy Vice Chancellors,
Alumni, Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening!

Speaking the last, it is definitely not easy to find what to say that has not been said by those that spoke before me. However, as the Kinyarwanda saying goes, “*Aryoha asubiwemo* – which loosely translates - words are more delicious and impactful when repeated and emphasized!

Let me first of all say that I am elated and proud to be here in the presence of this gathering of distinguished successful health professionals, who take good care of the health of the people of Rwanda. Your service has enabled Rwanda to be recognized as a leader in health access in Africa and globally. I congratulate you all and ask you to keep up the good work. Our Alma Mater is certainly proud of you and I deeply hope that everyone of you here is, in return, grateful for the role that the University of Rwanda has played in her/his life's achievements. I, personally, shall forever be grateful for the solid intellectual and human foundation that I got from University of Rwanda, which has enabled me to fulfil my duties in various capacities.

Honorable, Ladies and Gentlemen,

More than one hundred thousand (100,000) men and women have graduated from this University of Rwanda and former higher learning institutions that merged into it. These graduates or Alumni of UR have played and are still playing key roles in all walks of life here in Rwanda and in foreign countries worldwide. Some of them like you, are eminent medical doctors and health professionals, other are top lawyers, excellent politicians, academics and

researchers, brilliant engineers, exceptional public servants, successful entrepreneurs, etc., who have made and continue to make tremendous impact in the transformation of our country. Surely with such huge number of Alumni, found in leadership positions in public, private and third sectors, current students of UR should never struggle to get industrial attachment and recent graduates struggle to get internship. They should be the best mentored and coached graduates as they enter the job-market.

Last week, we concluded a successful exhibition on “Made in Rwanda”. Allow me to say that the most valuable “Made in Rwanda” product is certainly the graduates trained by the University of Rwanda. They are the ones who are enabling all other “Made in Rwanda” products by the policies they help formulate and implement in public sector, by the research and development they do or by enterprises they create in the private sector. They are the ones who are moving Rwanda from an impoverished agrarian economy to a fast-developing knowledge-economy!

Therefore, we, the Alumni of this great University, should not only be proud of what it has given us but also be determined to give back to it and contribute to its greatness. We should be proud and dignified Ambassadors of our Alma Mater wherever we are, raising friends, admirers and supporters for it. We should come back to give lectures to its current students, inspire them and role model them. We should be prepared to be part time, visiting or honorary lecturers bringing our industry experience in its classrooms and also contributing to its programs review to make them market relevant. There are definitely many ways in which we can give back to our Alma Mater, including financial one. I am convinced that collectively, the Alumni of this University, represent a tremendous force and a huge resource that should enable it to become one of the greatest universities in Africa.

In particular, we are all mindful that studying at university involves high financial costs related to tuition, accommodation, food and transport and academic materials. Many brilliant but poor students struggle to meet these financial costs and fail to pursue their educational dreams and are thus maintained in poverty. What a waste of opportunity for these individuals and for the country! It is against this background that the University of Rwanda has created a Solidarity and

Development Foundation to serve as a fundraising tool that Alumni and well-wishers can use to assist these students achieve their dreams. Imagine what resources this Foundation can raise if each Alumni who has been successful in life would commit to make a contribution to it. We could enable it to change the lives of hundreds, if not thousands of poor students. We unquestionably have the power to drive change and make a difference, let us commit to do it.

On behalf of the Executive Committee of UR Alumni Association, I should share with you the plan we have to create a vibrant Alumni Association that is able to support UR and its recently initiated UR Solidarity and Development Foundation.

Recognizing that it is almost impossible to gather all the Alumni of UR in one place, we have opted to engage them according to their shared backgrounds or interests, such as belonging to the same profession or having graduated from the same academic programme or school or college, having lived in the same campus, etc. Thus, we have planned to create Alumni chapters, such as that of Medicine and Health Sciences graduates that we are proudly inaugurating today. Chapters of other professionals such as Lawyers, Engineers, Educationists, Scientists, etc., shall soon be inaugurated in upcoming few months.

We also expect to launch a number of flagship projects that will also help our University raise funds to complement the funding from the Government of Rwanda and Development Partners, as it is done by most of other universities worldwide.

Once again, on behalf of the Executive Committee of UR Alumni Association, I thank you for responding massively to our invitation.

As we are nearing the end of the year 2019, let me take this opportunity to wish you all and your families a Merry Christmas and Happy and Prosperous New Year 2020.

May God bless you all and bless our beloved country.