

**SPEECH BY H.E. Mr. KAZUYA OGAWA, AMBASSADOR OF
JAPAN ON THE OCCASION OF THE GLOCAL INNOVATION
CONVENTION AT SERENA HOTEL ON 11th NOVEMBER 2014**

- Honorable Jean Philbert Nsengimana, Minister of Youth & ICT
- Honorable Francis Gatare, CEO Rwanda Development Board
- Mr. Patrick Kabagema, Chairman Rwanda ICT Chamber, PSF

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mwaramutse, Good morning,

I am pleased to be here at this Glocal Innovation Convention, and glad to see that more than 50 companies and 300 participants are gathered at this event. With such high attendance, it is an occasion to reconfirm that much attention has been paid to the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Rwanda and Africa. This convention is a follow up of Smart Rwanda of last year which I attended as well as Transform Africa Summit 2013, and I wish this convention a great success.

As you may know, the Rwandan government has been putting efforts into ICT and has a goal to become a regional ICT hub. H.E. President Kagame often emphasizes the importance of ICT and the way it fuels economic growth through deeper financial inclusion, innovation, job creation for the youth, as well as empowerment for women. The president has also stressed that an entrepreneur is not the one who alleviate poverty but creates wealth.

ICT is a key prerequisite sector for transforming Rwanda and African society more convenient and smarter. And it contributes to create knowledge-based economy which leads to sustainable development. I absolutely believe that ICT has the enormous opportunities and unlimited possibilities. There are much more investable markets still undiscovered in the world, and it depends on your imagination, creativity and originality to find and explore these universes.

For instance, M-Pesa, mobile money as a smart payment solution which is speedy, available, accessible and affordable to settle payments at all times, everywhere and to anyone is already here in Rwanda. This mobile service was invented by one Kenyan student, and now it is spreading even beyond Africa, to developed countries as well. Thus, Reverse Innovation has been begun. In developed countries, the banking system is well developed and everyone has their accounts. In Africa continent, sometimes a poor banking system forces people to use mobile money. And now we started to understand ironically that this mobile money is often more speedy, easy to handle than existing banking system. ICT applicable areas are really unlimited. ICT would extend not only in money sector but also energy like a smart grid, transportation like car sharing, eco-drive and even in the field of arts such as music, theater, film and animation.

Ladies and gentleman,

Allow me to say a few things about the Japanese Government contribution to ICT in Rwanda. As you may know, K-lab which is an open space for IT entrepreneurs to collaborate and innovate was supported by JICA, Japan International Cooperation Agency, and RDB together. Today, 11 Rwandan young people are studying at Kobe Institute of Computing in Japan through Japanese Government scholarship programme named “ABE initiative” and JICA training Scheme. I visited this university last month and met some Rwandan students. They are all enjoying their practical studies and of course their lives in Japan. Moreover, there is a scholarship called Japan-Africa Innovator Scholarship Challenge funded by the Japanese Government, and three competition winners will be announced during this convention. They will be given the chance to study at Kobe Institute of computing for two years.

Rwanda has a young population, and innovation always comes

from young generation. The new generation will be able to bring and create new innovative business ideas. I wish you all entrepreneurs present here to find good insights from this event and effectively utilize these opportunities.

Thank you so much for your attention. Murakoze cyane.