***SPEECH OF INES’ VICE CHANCELLOR***

***INTERCULTURAL DAY, third Edition***

***24th February 2023***

**Salutations**

* Vice Mayor of Musanze District
* Representatives of High Commissions and Embassies
* Distinguished Guests,
* Dear students,
* Ladies and Gentlemen, all protocol observed.

It is our pleasure to be with everyone in this gathering, and we thank you very much for having responded to our invitation. You are most welcome, and we wish you to enjoy this super event.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Guests,

By this 3rd celebration of intercultural day, INES-RUHENGERI is confirming its identity of an international university with more than 700 international students from 17 countries plus international staff.

This is a great opportunity to welcome all international students and international staff, especially the ones who joined INES from March 2023 up to date.

You are welcome in this Catholic University, in this University of Applied Sciences, in this International Community, in this smart campus. Feel at home. We are celebrating because in this university we are not isolating science and knowledge from values and events. This is our identity and we wish that all those who are passing here be marked by this brand.

Today, we are celebrating science, culture and values. This is our best way to mark our present and our future. As we know, the labour market is always claiming knowledge and professional attitude. There is no doubt that this international community that we are celebrating today will be an added value for all of us because it is increasing our capability of adaptation and our sense of creativity and innovation which are mandatory for the todays landscape of business.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

International community is not possible if nobody is leaving his/her country to join others. With social media, with platforms on internet we may form a kind of international community. But cultures and values need to meet physically. Here we are learning from each other. The communities surrounding INES-Ruhengeri learn much from international students and vice versa. Meeting people from other cultures opens our minds. Yet our country, Rwandans are offering excellent conditions to this purpose: peace and security.

Congratulations to you, international students for your good choice.

We are thankful for your presence at INES-Ruhengeri. I am here to recognize your decision to join INES-Ruhengeri. I am here to extend our gratitude to your respective countries and families which allowed you to travel until INES-Ruhengeri.

It was really most important to be registered at any university because it is the mandate of all universities to open the mindset of students, but you decided to join INES-RUHENGERI. Congratulations on your good choice.

It was confident and reassuring to live in your respective countries near your families, but you decided to break all barriers, to cross a number of borders, to fly over the skies for meeting other people, for being on the exposure of different cultures at INES-RUHENGERI. Congratulations for your good choice. Please always have in mind all these efforts made by you and by your families when you were leaving your respective countries. Work hard, get knowledge, build new relationships, get new experiences. For you, the only ceiling is the sky!

Dear Rwandan students and staff,

Having this growing number of international students is a blessing for us, it means that we are trusted. But at the same time, it is a big challenge for us: we have to constantly show more hospitality, we have to be sensitive to inclusiveness. This is through details of life including the language that we are speaking, our attitude towards others, and our readiness to learn something new from other cultures.

To all students and staff, I have to remind that we have to make effort in the use of English. Otherwise, it will be a Tower of Babel, both in our integration and on the side of quality education. I know that every people enjoys to speak his/her mother tongue, but let us built a scientific community where our *lingua franca*, our common language*,* is English.

Our diversity is an opportunity for all of us to learn a new language but specially to increase our communication skills in English not only because we need to communicate among ourselves, but also because it is the medium of education and because it has become the language of the World.

My dear students, international and Rwandans,

There is no doubt, the world of your future will require you to deal easily and often with people from other countries. The world is and will be increasingly globalized, in terms of trade and relations between countries, and the collaboration needed for clever and innovative businesses.

And here you are already learning a new life, and culture, mixing with new people, sharing ideas, and being strong and independent by living thousands miles/ Kms from your home village or by living with people from a very new culture for you.

These things will put you in a good place to be a global citizen, whether living in your home country or living in another country elsewhere. We are all the citizens of the World.

On the other side, for everything that you are gaining from this experience, Rwandan students and the surrounding community are equally benefiting from your presence.

Creating this win-win situation requires from all of us, to be responsible for our acts. That is why I invite everyone here to respect others and to be grateful for the presence of each other. Our behaviors are certainly conditioning our integration, and they will later impact our professional lives. So, we need to avoid bad behaviors, indiscipline cases, and crimes. Let us give priority to our studies, let us build friendship. You are not here for touristic purposes, you are not here for doing business, you are not here for founding hidden families, you are here for studying. This requires regularity with academic regulations, regularity with national laws and policies, especially security and public order for all, and regularity with immigration for international students,…

We know that for some people it is difficult to adapt. But these are the days to be strong and learn. Then, the Management of INES-RUHENGERI is ready to assist you in all this, through the office of Dean of students, the Office of Internal Security Officer, the Office of International Affairs. Your respective Departments are also ready to help you. Our Government through local governance organs is making all efforts to keep good environment for all people living in Rwanda. May I take this opportunity to sincerely thank the police for providing to our international students and staff the needed security in order to study and feel safe at INES and in Musanze Town.

**To conclude, I once again thank everyone here, especially our distinguished guests for having honored our event by your presence.**

**From the bottom of my heart, I have to confess that I enjoy this intercultural community. This is really helping us to achieve the missions and vision of INES- Ruhengeri. Enjoy this non-border partnership.**

**Thank you very much. God bless you!**