

## PRESS RELEASE

**Kigali, 07<sup>th</sup> March 2025**—Rwanda Stock Exchange, a member of the Sustainable Stock Exchanges (SSE) Initiative, in partnership with IFC Rwanda, joins Securities Exchanges worldwide to celebrate International Women’s Day 2025 and host the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Ring the Bell Ceremony for Gender Equality.

The 2025 Ring the Bell event for Gender Equality marks the 9<sup>th</sup> year of partnership between RSE, the IFC, Sustainable Stock Exchanges (SSE) Initiative, UN Global Compact, UN Women, and the World Federation of Exchanges. The Ring the Bell ceremony aims to bring attention to the pivotal role the private sector can play in advancing gender equality to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and raise awareness in closing the gender inequality gap.

The UN Women’s theme for International Women’s Day 2025 - **“Ring the Bell for ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment”**. The objective is to raise awareness about the importance of gender equality and women’s empowerment in the workplace, marketplace, and community and the benefits of doing so.

In his welcoming notes, **Mr. Pierre Celestin Rwabukumba, RSE Chief Executive Officer** stressed the role stock markets worldwide must play in advancing gender equality. Mr. Rwabukumba added that: “as platforms deeply involved with businesses and society at large, financial markets must intervene. Investors, shareholders, and CEOs must call for and implement policies that guarantee inclusive workplaces, equal pay for equal work, and leadership development opportunities. This can be achieved through measures such as gender-neutral recruitment processes, transparent pay scales, and mentorship programs. We cannot simply speak of change but deliver it—through mentoring, advocacy, and accountability”.

In her remarks, **Mrs. Janice Ryu, IFC Resident Representative for Rwanda and Uganda**, She re-emphasized that ringing the Bell is more than a tradition; she said: "this bell ringing is a powerful call to action! At IFC, we believe that Gender Equality is not just the right thing to do, but the smart thing to do for sustainable economic growth". Mrs. Jiyeo also called on the participants to break barriers, drive inclusion, and create equal opportunities for all.

**Mrs. Tikikel Tadele Alemu, Programme Management Specialist and Head of Programmes, UN Women Rwanda**, came back on the remarkable history of women empowerment. She recalled: "that this year is especially meaningful as we commemorate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a landmark global commitment for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. Beijing set a bold agenda, one that envisioned a world where women and girls are free from discrimination, violence, and inequality, and have access to opportunities for full participation in social, economic, and political life".

In the keynote speech, **Mrs. Mireille Batamuliza, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion**, Stress the meaning and importance of gender equality celebration.: "that in Rwandan culture, we ring the bell to alert people, to call everyone's attention to something important. It is like "kutoa azana". The Permanent Secretary mentioned that on a national level, we celebrate under the theme: "**Empowered Women, stronger nation**", which reflects the reality from the past 30 years, where women have increasingly been pioneers and agents of change in all spheres of life". She also commanded all partner in this agenda: In this transformation journey, the partnership with like-minded organizations has catalyzed the sustainable development we see today. We appreciate everyone's contribution! Together, we can shape a more inclusive and equitable future for all.

Also present, **Honorable Nelly Mukazayire, Minister of Sports** in her motivational remarks to young girls at the event she challenged them: “Just like in sports, Gender Equality requires teamwork, dedication, and breaking barriers. Today, we ring the bell to champion equal opportunities for women and girls in every field, business, sports, and leadership. Together, we can win the fight for inclusion”.

**END**

### **About RSE**

The Rwanda Stock Exchange (RSE) Limited was incorporated on 7th October 2005 with the objective of carrying out stock market operations. The Company was officially launched on 31st January 2011. Currently, the RSE has 10 listed companies, 5 of which are domestic companies, and 5 are cross-listed companies from Kenya and South Africa, and a standalone fixed income board.

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