On Tuesday, Rwanda’s First Lady Madam Jeannette Kagame participated in discussions bringing together over 500 education stakeholders, including ministers from the education sector and representatives focused on African early childhood education (from pre-schools to children in grade 3), known as *Flex 2024*.

This is the second edition of the conference, which serves as a platform to share knowledge and insights on education, especially primary education across the African continent.

This year’s meeting is focused on establishing strategies to address challenges in education, particularly the fact that nearly 90% of children in Africa cannot read or comprehend what they read. The conference is aimed at exploring solutions to bridge this gap.



Rwanda shared its experiences in enhancing teaching standards and improving educational outcomes with other countries. Under its *National Strategy for Transformation 2* (NST2), Rwanda aims to increase the enrollment rate in primary education from 39% to 65%.

In the next five years, the country plans to eliminate the half-day schooling system in primary schools, with students attending full days and teachers focusing on smaller groups of students to improve educational quality.

The First Lady highlighted that reading and comprehension skills remain a significant challenge for many children under 20 years old in many African countries, as they grow up unable to read properly, write correctly, or perform basic arithmetic.

She emphasized this during her remarks on Tuesday morning, November 12, 2024, at the International Conference on Foundational Learning, which includes reading, writing, and math for primary school children.

She said: “Reading and understanding simple texts remain a challenge for 9 out of 10 children under 20 in many African countries. This is a serious problem; we need to reduce the number of children who cannot read, write, or do basic arithmetic.”

She also noted that the role of early childhood development continues to be critical in advancing foundational skills in reading, writing, and mathematics.