

Madam Jeannette Kagame urged Rwandan women and girls on Sunday to practice self-love, self-discipline, and self-care as essential tools for personal growth. Speaking during **International Women's Day 2026** celebrations, the First Lady encouraged women to balance caring for others with caring for themselves, particularly their mental health.

“Happy Women’s Day! As we celebrate women today, I urge you to cultivate self-control in your emotions, behavior, and habits,” she said. “Just as you care for others, you must care for yourselves. Self-love and self-awareness are not luxuries—they are tools for empowerment.”

In Rwanda, the day also highlights women’s contributions to family and national development, with programs focused on building skills and promoting gender equality. The theme for 2026 is **“Women are Valuable.”**

International Women’s Day dates back to the early 20th century, when women in Europe and the United States demanded voting rights, equal pay, reasonable working hours, and social equality. In 1910, German activist **Clara Zetkin** proposed an International Women’s Day at the International Conference of Working Women in Copenhagen, Denmark.

The United Nations officially recognized the day globally in 1975. Today, it serves as a reminder of women’s achievements worldwide and the ongoing pursuit of gender equality and empowerment.