Prime Minister Justin Nsengiyumva on Sunday urged graduates of the University of Global Health Equity (UGHE) to play a leading role in transforming health care systems in Rwanda, across Africa and globally, as the university marked a decade of training health professionals in the country.

Speaking at a graduation ceremony held at UGHE's campus in Butaro, Burera District in northern Rwanda, Nsengiyumva said the discipline and commitment demonstrated by graduates during years of rigorous study reflect their readiness to take on responsibility at a time of growing pressure on health systems.

"This milestone represents years of hard work, integrity and service," Nsengiyumva said. "Today, you move from preparation into responsibility."

The ceremony coincided with celebrations marking 10 years of UGHE's operations in Rwanda and saw 78 students receive degrees in various health-related fields. Among them were 30 medical doctors who completed more than six years of training after enrolling in 2019. Graduates hailed from seven African countries and one European country.

Nsengiyumva told graduates they were entering the workforce as health systems face mounting challenges, including emerging diseases, shortages of skilled professionals and financial constraints. Addressing these issues, he said, requires skills beyond clinical practice.

"Solutions demand an understanding of policy, governance, data and implementation," he said, urging graduates to serve not only as health practitioners but also as leaders and decision-makers.

Attending the ceremony as the president's representative, the prime minister praised UGHE's contribution to strengthening Rwanda's health sector and building regional capacity. He said Africa's development depends on resilient health systems supported by skilled and accountable professionals.

He also paid tribute to the late Dr. Paul Farmer, a co-founder of Partners in Health and a key figure in establishing UGHE, crediting him with advancing the principle that health care is a human right.

UGHE President Philip Cotton said graduates are equipped to improve health outcomes in Rwanda and beyond, thanking the Rwandan government and partners

including Partners in Health, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Mastercard Foundation for their continued support.

Speaking on behalf of the graduating class, Dr. Heritier Mfura said all 30 students who began the medical program together completed their studies. “We were taught that health care is a human right,” he said.

UGHE Chancellor Jim Yong Kim congratulated the graduates, calling their work critical to the future of health care in Africa.