First Lady urges govt on girl education

By John Kimenuka

The First Lady Mrs. Jeannette Kagame has urged the government, parents and donor agencies to promote girl child education in a bid to attain sustainable development and to lay a foundation for future generations in the country.

Mrs. Kagame made the plea Saturday, while addressing a conference that brought together government officials, students from different schools in the country and other stakeholders in girl education campaign.

"We should fight against all things that deprive girls of education and this will help the country to attain sustainable development," Mrs. Kagame said during the function organized by the Protection and Care of Families Against HIV/AIDS, PACFA.

The First Lady decried the tendency of creating an imbalance among children in favour of boys, adding that PACFA will support the education of girls especially those from the disadvantaged families.

"We have had your message thought the poems and songs, on behalf of the parents we shall continue to help you in your education," she assured the students present and urged the girls to take up sciences.

She urged the parents to support their children, adding that poverty should not be the cause for the girl child to contract HIV/AIDS.

The State Minister in charge of Primary and Secondary Education Dr. Jeanne d'arc Mujawaramiya noted that girl child education is in line with the government policy of Vision 2020, and pledged her ministry's continued support their education.

The UNICEF Country Representative Ms. Keita Bintu told the participants that her organisation will continue to support girl education to spearhead development. She called upon the private sector and other non-governmental organizations to support girls' education. Bintu also urged the girls to exhibit a high level of discipline.

"We shall continue to bear all challenges that girls face but we need your contribution as students, it terms of behavior and good performance at school," she implored and urged teachers to promote gender balance in schools.

In her presentation the students' representative Pauline Mutumyinka of Greenhills Academy noted that education is the only way through which to combat social maladies such as poverty and HIV/AIDS.

She urged the parents, donors to fully support girl's education especially those from poor families and decried the culture of boys inheriting family properties.

In an effort to promote girl child education, PACFA awards the best performing girls at the different levels of education.

Started last August, PACFA is an initiative of the First Lady that works in collaboration with various organisations and agencies like UNICEF, the ministries of Education and Gender and Women Promotion, Fawe, Pro Femmes Twese Hamwe and various Individual role models to sensitize parents and educationists to invest in the education the girl child.