



OPENING SPEECH AFRICA WOMEN LEADERSHIP SUMMIT 2022

Our dear distinguished guests of the **Africa Women Leadership Summit**, it is my absolute honour and pleasure to welcome you to our Summit for 2022. This year, our theme is **A Seat At The Leadership Table**.

Last year under the theme **Be More Do Less**, we agreed that **WE are ALL Leaders** and for us to effectively lead in our various forums we need to begin by ensuring that our cups are full and overpouring so that those we lead can take a drink from our saucers.

Allow me to suggest that we begin with condoning with those who mourn by taking a minute of silence to first remember those who have passed away in the past year since we met (*Quite count to ten*). **May their souls rest in peace and may God comfort and grant His peace to those who grieve.**

We are also called upon to rejoice with those who rejoice. So let us give ourselves a big hand clap you see in his book **Developing the Leader Within You**, My Mentor Papa John C Maxwell correctly observes that **Leaders See More and Before**. In my view, this simply means that as ***“Leaders we see more and before when we invest in ourselves so that we effectively enlarge our tents.”*** whether your more and before is resources in terms of time or the treasure you have struggled to find to ensure that you got your seat at the AWLS2022 Leadership Table, that is not the material fact today. What is of utter most importance is the fact that **YOU voted on YOU**. Betty and I are very proud of you. So, sit back and enjoy your seat at whatever place you have chosen to call your Leadership Table for participating in AWLS2022.

For those joining us for the first time this year, allow me to state for you the vision and foundation on which the **Africa Women Leadership Summit is founded**. The AWLS was **created by woman for woman on the continent and beyond**. So whether you are a woman in the corporate suite or you are enjoying the challenge of running your own enterprise or business or you are currently working at home or in your community there will always be a seat for you at the AWLS.





As I shed light on these three categories of the women, we currently serving permit me to profile three women that I hope you will be able to identify with. We start from the Southern part of the Continent where I currently call home and travel to Zambia to meet a Lady I fell in love with after reading her book ***Braving the Odds: A Memoir on Perseverance, Finances and Faith.*** Mrs Mizinga Melu wears hats that we can all relate to she is a ***daughter, wife, mother, a woman of God and an African Businesswoman.*** Her motive for writing her memoir is to inspire women and girls around the world not to let anything stand in their way. To say that her mission has not been achieved would be telling a lie because I stand here and start that on my bucket list as I call this side of the continent home is to one day have a cup of tea or coffee and a good laugh with Mizinga.

Mizinga continues to enjoy the corporate suit in the banking sector. She has called many countries home and has done what I believe many women **do not consider as very successful which is getting to the Leadership Table through a long, eventful and challenging journey.** Mizinga leaves nothing out as she shares her failures and subsequent triumphs in her memoir. Allow me to read a few excerpts pg74, 78, 79

As you prepare to move with me across the Atlantic to meet our second teacher today I have a question I would like you to consider. You see any good Coach never allows the Client to leave without homework. It is when we purpose to do the work of transformation that we get the results we crave.

The question is **as you occupy your seat in the corporate suit what parts of your story are you hiding?** You see Benjamin likes to remind me and the children that **“when you live an authentic life you never have to worry about hiding anything”.** I hope you will join me and Ephraim and Esther-joy as we live out this life lesson.

For those who attended AWLS2021 this woman is not new to you. You sat as she as the Keynote Speaker for our inaugural AWLS introduced us to her grandmother’s pea soup. **Darlene Drew is indeed a world Changer.** Born and raised on the South Side of Chicago in a family that many of us can relate to, all the odds were against her. However, because we are Creatures of the Creator I am coming to believe that **“there are some mothers who see a certain trajectory in their families and whisper a deep and authentic prayer to the one who gives us the gifts of**





Children” I believe like Mayi Rhoda Kakayi Mutete Darlene’s mother belongs to this category of mothers. Today, My MO like I refer to her is authentically and unapologetically building a Business as an **Executive Coach of the Maxwell Certified Leadership Team**. Not only this but she puts into effect the advice our Mentor John C Maxwell gives us when we attend Seminars or Summits like this one. He advises that we follow the **ACT Method**. Darlene effectively follows this method as she **A applies** what she learns not only in her life but in that of others as well. **C changes** she lives a life where she is constantly ready to unlearn and then put into practice the new lessons. Finally she **Teaches** others. As a **Faculty Member** of the Maxwell Certified Leadership Team, Darlene has taken on a role of helping new Coaches in the team to navigate the new waters and overcome the **fears and doubts that threaten to drown us all** as we purpose to embrace our Calling and let go of the ropes that may be binding us.

Perhaps like me you hear Darlene’s story and as we say in Uganda *akikola ata* in English “*how does she do it*”. As your Coach today, allow me to give you your second piece of homework and ask you **what do you have to openly admit is holding you back from living your full purpose?** You see in my case it was **Self Doubt**. I remember when I knew it was time for me to come out and confront this giant. The person I first told was Betty. Benjamin had witnessed it and he kept asking “*Rosette why do you get so worked up you have done this before or but you know this audience etc*”. Betty being the person who does **three things for me, she believes in me more than I believe in myself, she challenges me and finally she makes me laugh**. Betty asked a deep question which we should all ask **Rosette why?** she then proceeded to list my achievements. This was not enough for me and so I did what some of you are doing today, I made the decision to bait on myself and hire a Coach. Although my journey to concur self-doubt continues what is for sure is I am not where I was when Betty asked me the why question.

As you prepare to come back with me to the African Continent and hear the work that is being done in my Country Uganda in the place my parents and some of my siblings were born, allow me as your Coach to pose another question for you. **Who is your Betty as you journey into your purpose?**

I met **Olivia Ekayu a few months ago but it feels like I have known her for years**. You see Olivia like me is an Expatriate Spouse her Husband Peter was my Classmate in Law School. She quit her corporate job where she was building a career





in Purchasing and Supply Chain. In 2012, she finally started the expatriate journey and joined Peter who was working in Ethiopia with the United Nations in 2008. As is the case with most Expatriate Spouses who **know they have more to give than** Olivia knew she heard the *still small voice* call her **seven years** ago to start a **School with a difference in Mbale in Uganda in East Africa**. The challenge though was where would she get the funds to bring this dream to fruition? Like me she is blessed to have a husband who knows that she too deserves to be recognised and honoured for the seat she occupies at the family table. Peter gives Olivia an allowance and it is that she used as a seed for her dream. However, the allowance was not enough to fulfil the big dream Olivia was building on her kitchen table. Olivia who I admire greatly now since hearing this **started a go fund me page**. Peter being the wise man that he is decided there was fertile ground in Olivia's dream, and he needed to plant his seed. In **2019, the Dawn Preschool was opened**. We all know what happened in 2020 and this affected this young institution.

Olivia did not let the dream die, she kept her hopes up because in the words of the Late Desmond Tutu, **“Hope is being able to see the light despite the darkness.** As Olivia allowed the light inside her to guide her, as she seated at her kitchen table in Geneva asked friends in Mbale to find her premises to reopen the school at the beginning of this year when schools would finally open in Uganda.

You see when you focus on **holding onto your dreams and release the ashes to the giver of the dream**, He expands the dream. With Peter's generous help of paying the rent for term one of 2022, **The Dawn School opened on 10th January 2022 in a bigger and better way as a Full School from Kindergarten to Grade 12**. The number of students is immaterial because the key is to **focus on the impact you leave on the people you are called to influence**. Today Olivia has visited the school and as a student of leadership is communicating the dream and vision to those who raised their hands to partner with her as she brings a new dawn on the education in my home town Mbale.

I cannot help but pose a question to myself **Rosette what is your excuse?**

To my fellow work at home mothers, I ask what step have you taken to show your husband the commitment to move him to sow into your dream?

Distinguished guests of **AWLS2022**, as we prepare to partake of the Spread on the Leadership Table of AWLS2022, Betty and I hope that you will remember that as





Leaders we all have different Leadership Tables we sit at. That you will **purpose to make use of the opportunities you have to make a difference where you are called.** That you will focus on investing **in and not on yourself so that you are bigger on the inside than on the outside and make use of your Seat at the leadership Table.**

As you reflect and prepare to **learn, unlearn and relearn,** it is with great joy that I request that you enjoy the seat you have chosen for this Leadership Table, by the grace of God, I declare the **Africa Women Leadership Summit 2022** officially open.

Thank you.

