

Address by High Commissioner Ruchira Kamboj at the Royal Cape Yacht Club on 5 March 2018

Thank you for being here.

Our six storm riders are here, right next to me. What I would like to say quite simply is that to me, more than anything, these girls exemplify strength, courage & bravery.

This is precisely the point.

Why is bravery not expected of girls? Why are we so surprised when women do tough jobs well?

To look at this at a macro level, the “destruction” of self-confidence begins at an early stage, perhaps with the parents.

When they tell their daughters : ‘Be careful’; ‘Watch out’; ‘No’.

We caution our daughters more than our sons.

What message does this send out to a little girl?

That bravery is not for me. That this is the domain of boys, the other sex.

This script must change.

The *Tarini* girls remind us that this script can be changed.

Let’s face it.

In life, there is nothing where there is no risk. Every aspect of life has some percentage of risk. There is always a Risk to Reward Ratio. And, we have to teach our girls to get the mix right.

Also, don’t forget, bravery is learnt and needs to be practiced. Just like any other skill set.

We cannot disadvantage our girls by not putting the right tools in her box. After all, this is about her life.

And let's face it. There cannot be true progress unless the 50% of humanity is given its chance to thrive in our world of constant acceleration and boundless growth.

So : let's us stop telling our girls '*don't do this*'. Rather, let's encourage them, from the first baby steps to be strong and say instead : '*beautiful girl, you can do hard things*'.

Thank You.