



ADDRESS

BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY, THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC
OF ZIMBABWE**

AND

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ZIMBABWE DEFENCE FORCES,

CDE E. D. MNANGAGWA

ON ZIMBABWE'S 38TH INDEPENDENCE

CELEBRATIONS,

18 APRIL, 2018

Hon Vice President, Retired General Dr. Costantino Chiwenga and Amai,

Hon Vice President, Comrade Kembo Mohadi,

Honourable President of the Senate, Mai Edna Madzongwe,

Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly, Advocate Jacob Mudenda,

Honourable Minister of State for Harare Metropolitan Province, Mai Miriam Chikukwa,

The Chief Justice, Honourable Luke Malaba,

Honourable Members of Parliament,

Service Chiefs,

Families of the Heroes of the Zimbabwe Liberation Struggle,

War Veterans, War Collaborators, Ex Detainees and Restricttees,

Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Our Traditional Leaders

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Citizens of Zimbabwe.

It is my pleasure to warmly welcome you all to these **historic** National Celebrations, marking 38 years of our hard-won independence.

This year's celebrations have renewed significance, as they are the first under the new dispensation. **The first in the new Zimbabwe.**

Today we remember all the heroes and heroines of our Liberation Struggle, who paid the ultimate sacrifice so that we may enjoy our freedom and national self-determination today.

We honour and salute them for the independence and freedom that they left us. May their memory live on through the achievements and aspirations of our great nation. May their souls rest in eternal peace.

Friends,

Five months ago, the people of Zimbabwe took to the streets in a peaceful revolution. They called for freedom, progress and a new way of doing things. Like the heroes before them, they called for a new Zimbabwe.

We have heard their voice.

We share their vision.

We are committed to delivering it.

Together, we are embarking on a new journey of nation building, irrespective of creed, language, age, religion or political persuasion.

In unity, peace and harmony; guided by the love of our country and informed by a desire to build a better tomorrow, we are rekindling the pride in being Zimbabwean.

We have raised high our national flag.

Our national anthem reverberates throughout every corner of our great country, a constant reminder of our identity, and a prayer to God Almighty to abundantly “bless our native land”.

I call on all Zimbabweans, at home and abroad; let us proudly celebrate the past and boldly stride forward, arm-in-arm, towards a brighter future.

Our thirty eight years of independence have not been without their challenges. Mistakes have been made. Opportunities have been missed. In recent years, progress has not been as smooth as we would have liked.

But today, thirty eight years after we declared our independence, and five months into our new Zimbabwe, **we say Makorokoto! Amhlope! Congratulations Zimbabwe! God Bless Zimbabwe!**

Fellow Zimbabweans,

At my inauguration, in recognition of the challenges facing us, I underscored the urgent need to pursue rapid economic growth and a trajectory of transformation.

In this endeavour, my Administration's focus is on the pursuit of investment-led economic recovery; job creation;
enhancing the ease of doing business;
attaining national food security;
poverty reduction;
construction and rehabilitation of critical infrastructure;
effective provision of social services;
respect for the rule of law;

and the fostering of an environment in which private enterprise is allowed, encouraged and protected.

We have set out our national vision to be a middle income country by 2030, with increased investment, broad based empowerment, decent jobs, and free from poverty and corruption.

The task is great, the pace of change is not always as we would like, and we will not achieve all our goals overnight.

But inspired by this vision, underpinned by unity of purpose, transparency, accountability, dialogue and unswerving discipline, **we shall realise our potential.**

Zimbabwe will rise again!

Comrades and Friends,

One of the most evident changes in the past few months has been the renewed spirit of unity, optimism and determination among our people.

Once again, we are free to dream. To hope. To believe.

This new spirit has spread outside our borders and we are hugely encouraged by the goodwill our country continues to receive from around the world. This renewed domestic and foreign investor confidence has seen our projected economic growth increase from 3.7% last year to 4.5%.

This upward momentum is underpinned by the positive performance in the agriculture, mining, tourism and construction sectors; and further spurred by increased revenue performance following the plugging of revenue leakages.

Comrades and Friends,

My Government, building on past successes of Command Agriculture, is determined to ensure continued food self-sufficiency and increased land utilisation and productivity through mechanisation and modernisation of our agriculture sector.

Command Agriculture, which now also includes cropping, livestock, fisheries and wildlife has seen US\$10 million being availed for beef cattle breeding, starting with livestock-related programmes in Matabeleland North and Matabeleland South, and developing to cover other parts of the country.

In line with sustainable resource utilisation and environmental management practices, my Government has also put in place strategies to resuscitate and protect the forestry industry in our country.

In agriculture, as in all fields, we are strongest when we work together.

We therefore applaud the private sector which has partnered with my Government in delivering these initiatives, in response to our call for a united and collective approach to national economic rebuilding.

We are confident that these ongoing efforts will not only rejuvenate agro-value chain industries, but will also help to improve the livelihood and incomes of our rural communities and equally contribute to the achievement of economic growth benchmarks.

Furthermore, my Government is taking measures to minimise the adverse effects of climate change through the dam construction and the acquisition of requisite equipment to increase our irrigation capacity.

A budget of US\$37 million has been set aside towards the National Irrigation Rehabilitation and Development Programme and other facilities are in place to increase the availability and the purchase of irrigation equipment. In addition, we continue to source modern irrigation equipment from around the world.

Meanwhile, we are encouraging development and investment in the agriculture engineering sub-sector. We are harnessing our human capital competencies in this area, so as to increase our own internal capacity to produce agriculture equipment. To date, Russia and Belarus have made firm commitments to set-up up plants in Zimbabwe and more will follow.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Comrades;

The mining sector continues to be one of the leading sources of investment and export earnings, with a huge impact on employment opportunities and the economy at large.

To stimulate growth, and to send a clear message that this is a new government with a new way of doing things, we have amended the Indigenisation and Empowerment Policy to limit the 51:49% investment ratios to only diamond and platinum mining. **Through this, we have opened up vast areas of our economy to international investment.**

Gold mining, a key contributor to our economy, continues to recover. Platinum, lithium and other minerals have equally witnessed increased investments to date.

However, we appeal to all stakeholders to ensure sustainable mining practices which recognise the need to protect and preserve the environment for future generations.

A comprehensive diamond policy is being formulated to guide operations, development and sustainability in the diamond industry.

Related thereto, the Zimbabwe Consolidated Diamond Company will commence full commercial production of conglomerate diamonds during this second quarter following the installation of a conglomerate processing plant.

The opening of Liberation Mine in Matabeleland North and the re-opening of Eureka Mine in Mashonaland Central, as well as the multimillion dollar Arcadia Lithium Mining development operations in Goromonzi, Mashonaland East, will create thousands of jobs.

In the same vein, the implementation of the recently signed US\$ 4.2 billion investment agreement to create an integrated platinum project, the largest investment in our mining sector to date, will directly create 15,000 jobs, and lead to tens of thousands of additional employment opportunities.

To facilitate the modernisation and retooling of our manufacturing industry, Government will continue its multi-pronged efforts to access lines of credit and affordable long term financing for this sector.

Following definitive local and foreign investment commitments, increased value addition and beneficiation of our primary products is set to commence in earnest.

The anticipated increased growth in the manufacturing sector further gives impetus to the revival of National Railways of Zimbabwe, which is key to our economic recovery strategy.

Equally, the revival of ZISCO STEEL and the iron, steel and chrome industries will further stimulate the manufacturing sector as a whole, creating yet more jobs.

Industry and the manufacturing sector have witnessed a steady increase in capacity utilisation and notable expansions of some manufacturing concerns, such as Nestle Zimbabwe and the establishment of new operations, including Willowton in Mutare.

My Government is attending to various production factors and in this spirit, has cut excise duty on diesel and petrol to bring down prices for consumers and to enhance competitiveness.

In the quest to drive economic growth through innovation, and to nurture our human capital, institutions of higher learning, industry and commerce are now collaborating in the development of competencies, skills and solutions that are addressing the changing economy and harness the immense opportunities in front of us.

Greater partnerships between our institutions of higher learning and their international counterparts are being encouraged so that the country can draw from global best practices in order to move forward.

My Government will equally ensure that international scholarships are available for our best and brightest students, in line with our strategic national needs. They are the leaders and job creators of the future.

Developing ICT infrastructure and harnessing technology driven innovation in all sectors is a key goal for my Government.

We will continue to facilitate the spread and connectivity of our ICT infrastructure across Zimbabwe, through programmes such as the National Backbone Optic Fibre Project.

This technology infrastructure will create the right environment in which our young people will thrive.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Comrades;

My Government realises the importance of infrastructure to economic resuscitation and growth. We are thus vigorously working to establish, rehabilitate and refurbish our road and rail infrastructure to facilitate domestic logistics, and to ensure smooth outbound movement of goods and services.

The implementation of the dualisation of the Beitbridge Chiriundu highway, the Beitbridge to Victoria Falls road, the modernisation of the Beitbridge Border post, and the expansion of Robert Mugabe International Airport, among others, remain key priorities in my administration.

The need to rehabilitate bridges, rural roads and urban roads in our suburbs, is recognised and will be given due priority.

As the economy recovers, the need for energy is steadily increasing.

As such, the commissioning of the Kariba South Extension - which added 300 megawatts to our national grid - was timely and will bring relief to users and reduce our energy import bill.

In the same vein, work on the Hwange 7 and 8 power generation project will soon commence following the commitment by the People's Republic of China to support this project.

Resources have been allocated to ensure the completion of the Gwai - Shangani Dam which will also generate power for the surrounding communities.

There is a need to fully utilise all dams such as Tugwi - Mukosi and it is anticipated that vibrant agriculture green belts will be developed for both the local and export markets.

Meanwhile, following my recent visit to China, the construction of Kunzvi Dam will be accelerated.

With all this new power, the energy future of the new Zimbabwe is brighter than ever.

The Tourism sector continues to witness increased growth marked by tourist arrivals and flight frequency, with new airlines landing in both Harare and at the newly expanded international airport in Victoria Falls.

This upward trend is projected to continue, following measures to boost air connectivity, visa regime reforms and other strategies to boost our attractiveness as a tourist destination.

My Government is currently seized with ensuring that Victoria Falls and other tourist destinations have a wider array of imaginative facilities to cater for the hordes of new tourists and investors flocking to the new Zimbabwe.

Fellow Zimbabweans;

My Government is committed to revitalising the social services sector with a focus on the health delivery system; improving the quality and relevance of education; and the need for clean water and sanitation provision.

We are equally mindful to the plight of the rural populations and the need to develop and create vibrant rural economies.

In this regard, we increased the Ministry of Health and Child Care operational budget by 62% in 2018 and we will continue to facilitate the construction of more hospitals, availability of drugs and the presence of qualified and dedicated health service personnel.

An amendment to the National Disability Act will soon be finalised and will comprehensively provide for the rights and welfare of persons living with disabilities, in line with international protocols and conventions.

My Government also remains committed to implementing deterrent and punitive measures to stamp out abhorrent abuses and practices perpetrated against women and children across Zimbabwe.

In the primary education sector, the construction of 17 new schools has commenced with support from the OPEC Fund for international Development; while continuous improvement of the school curriculum is ongoing.

My Government continues to put in the appropriate safety nets for vulnerable communities in our society, such as the Food Deficit Mitigation Programme, which

has seen over Seventy Thousand metric tonnes of grain being distributed to food insecure households.

In the same vein, over Four Hundred Thousand pupils will be assisted between June and December 2018 by the Basic Education Assistance Module.

With the support of our partners, my Government has expanded the School Feeding Programme for learners among disadvantaged and vulnerable communities.

In addition, the Zimbabwe Harmonised Social Cash Transfer Programme is in place and reaches labour-constrained and food insecure households.

In the new Zimbabwe, let us ensure that nobody is left behind.

Recognising the untold suffering and loss of wealth to the populace and chaotic urban development, brought about by land related corruption, my Government has constituted the Commission of Inquiry into the Sale of State land in and around our urban areas.

With regard to local government, management and urban growth; my Government has directed all local authorities to observe good corporate governance, strictly adhere to urban planning by-laws and facilitate the provision of clean portable water and sanitation infrastructure, among other services and utilities.

Meanwhile, drawing benefits from the upgraded bilateral relations with China, the perennial water challenges experienced in Harare will soon be behind us, as works at Morton Jeffrey pump station are now scheduled to resume and be completed, following the restoration of the facility.

Ladies and Gentlemen; Comrades and friends;

We are well aware of the great hardships caused by the lack of availability of cash. This is a painful and poignant issue for so many individuals and families across the country, and one we are working tirelessly to solve.

We must all recognise that this issue is a significant one, and cannot be resolved overnight. Our job as leaders, is to honestly recognise the scale of the challenges we face, and to create concrete, viable plans to solve them.

To this end, we are accelerating the implementation of measures to resolve the shortage of cash within the economy, by, for example, mobilising foreign finance from regional and international financial institutions; increasing cash and currency importation;

opening up the economy to investment;
and enhancing exports to increase the supply of foreign currency.

While increased capacity utilisation has put positive pressure on the demand for foreign currency, my Government has continued to ensure the financing of critical inputs. In the same breath, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, working with the African Export-Import Bank, has put in place a US\$ 1.5 billion facility, earmarked for both liquidity support and the provision of guarantees for investments coming into the country.

In line with this thrust to be part of the global village, my Government is intensifying the re-engagement process to improve our relations with the international community. I am optimistic that these efforts will not only improve our credit rating, but will equally unlock fresh capital to finance our development agenda.

Locally, the central bank has launched empowerment facilities targeting groups such as women, SMEs and youth to promote financial inclusion. I urge the financial packages sector to create robust financial services that are responsive to the new Zimbabwean economy.

As I have said more than once, the new **Zimbabwe is Open for Business**. To this end, my Government will continue to elaborate legal, institutional and administrative reforms to increase the ease of doing business in Zimbabwe.

Drawing lessons from other countries, concerted and accelerated efforts are in progress to streamline investment procedures and convenience, through the establishment of a truly One Stop Shop Investment Centre.

In addition, the National Investment Policy is now in place; while the Investment and Business Facilitation Bill, which seeks to give legal underpinning to Zimbabwe's commitment to open up its economy is undergoing due legal process.

To improve efficiency, good governance and transparency, and to bolster our crusade against corruption, my Government has established Specialised Anti- Corruption Courts. To date, courts have been set up in Harare and Bulawayo, with more to follow.

Government will also continue to eliminate bureaucratic bottlenecks, public sector inefficiencies and all forms of corruption.

'**Zimbabwe is Open for Business**' in all facets and in every sphere, for all citizens of Zimbabwe. All Government Ministries, Departments, Agencies and State Enterprises must adjust accordingly and adapt to the new reality with a new work culture.

To all workers, I appeal for a new work ethic characterised by determination, honesty and honour. We are cognisant of the plight of public servants which requires attention,

and we remain committed to improving your terms of service, while urging you to continue to exercise patience as we grow our economy's capacity to generate much needed resources.

Fellow Zimbabweans;

We are humbled by the goodwill and support which our country continues to receive in response to our quest to rejoin the global family of nations.

Driven by our national interest, vision and need to accelerate our economic development for the benefit of the Zimbabwean people, I have travelled across the region and beyond; sharing the new Zimbabwean story and our desire for mutually beneficial partnerships.

I have met colleague heads of state; world leaders, potential investors and business leaders from across the world. We have received **concrete commitments** and **extensive support** for our economic development agenda.

In this spirit, envoys were dispatched across the globe to highlight the new Government's willingness to open a new chapter in our international political and economic relations with the rest of the world.

We have in turn received envoys from the US, China, Russia, the UK, Belarus and the UAE, among others. These initiatives have undoubtedly impacted our endeavours to attract foreign investment in order to modernise and grow our economy for the betterment of all the people in our great country.

I recently made a successful State visit to the People's Republic of China, at the invitation of His Excellency, President Xi Jinping.

This visit resulted in the upgrading of our bilateral relationship and saw the conclusion of agreements in the energy, water reticulation, construction, road and rail rehabilitation, tourism, ICT and healthcare fields, to mention but a few.

Significant too, is the convergence stemming out of China's Belt and Road Initiative which resonates with our vision for greater global trade, embedded in our own heritage dating back to the Munhumutapa Empire.

This convergence offers us a window of unlimited opportunities as we grow and develop our economy.

Fellow Zimbabweans;

The surmountable task to rebuild our economy is ours together; whether at home or abroad.

Thus, during my foreign engagements I met and dialogued with our brothers and sisters in the Diaspora.

I took time to explain developments back home, our vision and aspirations in this new era and I heard **their** views and hopes for the future. These interactions were indeed inspiring and insightful.

Back home, in line with my pledge to be a listening President and my desire to hear first-hand the issues affecting our people, I continue to meet with Zimbabweans from across socioeconomic and political spheres.

I have met with captains of industry and commerce, traditional chiefs, church leaders, University Vice Chancellors and senior administrators of Institutions of Higher Learning; and representatives of the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs in Zimbabwe.

Equally importantly, I have met with farmers, labourers, young people, students, people living with disabilities and the unemployed, to hear their voice and their concerns.

I pledge that this culture of dialogue, unity of purpose and open communication will permeate throughout all levels of my administration in order to enhance our accountability to our masters, the Zimbabwean people.

Ultimately, it is through listening to one another and working together that we will achieve our goal of becoming a middle income country, free from poverty and corruption, with opportunities, employment and decent jobs.

Comrades;

The nation applauds the Zimbabwean Defence Forces and all other security services for their unwavering loyalty, commitment and diligence in maintaining and protecting the territorial integrity, security and sovereignty of our beloved country.

We further commend our Defence Forces for all the assistance they render to vulnerable communities in times of national disasters. Their intervention and personnel and logistical support in the implementation of Government programmes such as the distribution of grain to communities, the construction and rehabilitation of schools, roads and clinics is noted and commended.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

In a few months' time, our country will hold Harmonised General Elections.

I urge all leaders of political parties and political actors to heed the call of our national anthem and "be exemplary" during the campaign.

Let us shun and condemn all forms of violence, divisive, hurtful and hateful speech.

My Government has put in place measures for the holding of transparent, free, fair and credible elections.

This is more than a soundbite. It is a personal commitment.

In that spirit, we have invited observers from 46 countries around the globe to witness our democracy in action, and have since received pre-election observer missions from SADC, the AU and the EU.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Allow me to express my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to all our country's friends, from across the globe, who have sent us warm congratulatory messages on the occasion of this, Zimbabwe's 38th Independence Anniversary!

Comrades and Friends, Fellow Zimbabweans;

As we commemorate and celebrate the birth of our nation, let us boldly and proudly sing our national anthem and fly our flag high in renewed hope and unity.

Let us love one another and commit to living in peace, harmony and tolerance with our fellow Zimbabweans.

Let us never forget the sacrifices of those that gave their lives for our freedom, and like them, commit to ensuring a brighter future for our children.

And let us work together. Because together, there is nothing we cannot achieve.

Happy 38th Birthday Zimbabwe!

Makorokoto

Amhlophe

Long Live our Independence and Freedom!

God Bless Zimbabwe!