STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE, HON. LT. GEN. (RTD) DR S.B MOYO TO THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE: 8 OCTOBER 2020, PARLIAMENT BUILDING

Chairman of the Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Honourable Kindness Paradza,

Distinguished Members of the Esteemed Committee,

Members of the Press,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning to you all.

I feel greatly honoured to address this very important Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade once again. As always, my Ministry holds this esteemed Parliamentary Committee in high regard, and cherishes the good work that it does to assist the Ministry execute its mandate.

Focus of my presentation

My presentation today will commence on the issue of sanctions, an issue that always raises debate in Parliament and other public spaces. I will start by explaining the general effects of these sanctions on our economy and then explain to you what your Ministry is doing to alleviate the problem.

I will also brief the Committee about Zimbabwe's outstanding International Treaties including BIPPAS, the current status of Rental and Salary Arrears at our Missions abroad, the Infrastructure and Renewal Programme and the status of our Engagement and Reengagement policy.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

As recently as 29 September 2020, the sanctions issue saw tempers flaring in Parliament when the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Honourable David Musabayana, raised a motion on the ratification of the Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPPA) between Zimbabwe and the United States. I will address the subject matter of BIPPAs later in my presentation.

The sanction debate triggered the usual division in Parliament with Members from the ruling party arguing that sanctions were an albatross on Zimbabwe's economic development and should therefore be immediately removed and those from the opposition positing that sanctions were a necessary evil and should remain in place until government implements political reforms to the satisfaction of belligerent Western governments that imposed sanctions on the country. We have always articulated that such a perspective is inimical, spiteful and out of sync with the dictates of state sovereignty, statehood and international relations.

I am happy that the Chairman of this Committee's measured contribution on the motion prevailed. The Chairman was unequivocal that while Zimbabwe-US BIPPA was very important and that Parliament would approve of it, it would be difficult for Zimbabwean companies to trade with the USA because of its imposition of sanctions on the country. He, therefore, called the American Government to remove these illegal sanctions on Zimbabwe and repeal ZIDERA so that Zimbabwe will be able to trade freely with US companies.

Success amidst the overbearing sanctions

While every conversation on sanctions is a narrative of doom and gloom for the country's socio-economic and political outlook, the picture is not always one of total disaster. While those who imposed sanctions wanted our 'economy to scream' and our people to rise up against the government, there are success stories in the midst of the dilapidating effects of sanctions. Zimbabwe, like an orphaned and vulnerable child, has persevered in adversity and isolation. The privation has made the country even more resilient and innovative in the face of misfortunes.

Solidarity from SADC

SADC members have collectively voiced its disapproval of sanctions against Zimbabwe. It set 25 October as a day to commemorate anti-sanctions on Zimbabwe. Individual SADC member states have also pledged to call for the removal of sanctions on Zimbabwe during their engagements with our belligerent countries.

Solidarity from African countries

Zimbabwe has survived the illegal sanctions imposed by Western countries for 20 years because of political and material support received from fellow African countries.

The 75th Session of the UN General Assembly held last month saw the African Union (AU) chairman and South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa reiterating the call for the removal of illegal sanctions against Zimbabwe to allow the government to respond adequately to the covid-19 pandemic.

UN Secretary General add his voice on call for sanctions removal

Zimbabwe has welcomed the move by the United Nations Secretary General António Guterres in calling for the lifting of sanctions on all countries in light of the Covid-19 outbreak.

In March this year, the United Nations Secretary General António Guterres has called for the lifting of sanctions on all countries, including Zimbabwe, in light of the COVID-19 outbreak. Mr. Guterres made the call in his letter to the G-20 member countries arguing that the move would allow for the access essential medical material required to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. The United Nations itself has never endorsed those sanctions and that is why they are illegal. The UN is the only institution in the whole world that can only say this country is causing insecurity to other countries but in this particular case these sanctions are a way to strangle Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe is on a journey, a journey in which we are correcting the mistakes of yesteryears for the betterment our society. While yesterday the economy was totally in shambles, with inflation running wild and exchange rates spiraling out of control, the country has gained control of its budget. Government has managed to decrease spending and equally increased revenues. Amidst the rancorous sanctions, for the first time in recent memory, Zimbabwe is now enjoying budget surpluses. Major milestones have been scored on the reform agenda with macro-fiscal stabilisation now in full force as well as other cross-cutting economic enablers.

To entice investors and enhance ease of doing business the new dispensation has abolished the indigenisation and economic empowerment regulations. This, and other comprehensive reforms, have seen Zimbabwe's 2020 World Bank ranking settling at 140 from the previous position of 155. Essentially, the country has improved by 15 positions and is one of the top 20 on the world and top five in Africa doing business reformers, according to the 2019 World Bank report. Moreover, Zimbabwe is now ranked third in Southern Africa on budget transparency by the Open Budget Survey (OBS) of 2019, with a Budget Index Score of 49, up from 23 recorded in 2017.

The 2020 Mid-term Budget and Economic Review did not give synopsis of despair for the country after all. The country projects economic growth of 3% premised on the expected better rainfall season, increased use of irrigation to sustain agricultural activities; improved electricity supply through imports and other alternative sources of energy such as solar, improved macro-economic environment, fiscal incentives to various sectors of the economy; and improving investments by both public and private sector. There is projected growth of 5.05% in mining, 4.75% in agriculture, 1.95% in manufacturing, 2.3% in construction and 3.3% in tourism.

This is despite the fact that the economy since the beginning of 2020, was confronted with a number of shocks from multiple fronts such as climatic shocks in form of the 2019/20 drought and Cyclone Idai, energy challenges, currency volatility; and the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic.

In the agricultural sector, which is the backbone of the economy, Government is spearheading the mechanisation programme to enhance production and productivity. Despite the albatross of the country risk tag, the Ministry continues to facilitate efforts to mobilise resources from the international community to mechanise domestic farming. Already, Government has managed to secure US$51 million Belarus agricultural facility and another US$51 million for the John Deere Facilities. These facilities are aimed at supporting farmers to access tractors, combine harvesters, planters, and lowbed trucks and will be accessed by farmers through commercial banks namely CBZ, Stanbic and Agribank.

I will delve on the Ministry's reengagement drive later in the presentation, however, it is important to highlight at this juncture that there are many success stories in that endeavour.

Zimbabwe is still in the woods

Notwithstanding the efforts to sustain its economic development, Zimbabwe still has its share of challenges. While Government has put in place measures to address some of these challenges, regrettably access to adequate financial resources on the international market has been severely restricted due to the high risk profile of the country on account of unilateral sanctions imposed on the country by the US and the EU in 2001 and 2002 respectively.

My Ministry remains unequivocal that the US and EU sanctions on Zimbabwe are illegal and unjustified. They violate Article 41 of the UN Charter and infringe upon Zimbabwe's right to economic and social development. We have always said that sanctions are a foreign policy tool of economic coercion, incompatible with international law that discriminate a country from trading freely on the international markets and to access international funding hence adversely affecting the entire economy with far reaching implications for ordinary people and the most vulnerable groups.

Due to sanctions, Zimbabwe has lost over US$42 billion in revenue over 18 years. It lost bilateral donor support estimated at US$4.5 billion annually since 2001 and US$12 billion in loans from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and African Development Bank. The country has also lost commercial loans of

US$18 billion and suffered a GDP reduction of more than US$21 billion to-date.

I will now highlight the effects of sanctions on all sectors of the economy.

Impact on Industry/Manufacturing Sector

Sanctions have affected the country's long term funding and access to capital injections for retooling thereby causing high cost of borrowing, tight liquidity conditions, outdated technology, continued use of antiquated plant and machinery and ultimately poor viability and competitiveness of the sector.

The country's capacity utilization in the industry sector fell from 76% in the 1980s to 10% in 2008. Current capacity utilization is projected to be around 27% in 2020 which is still far below our expectations.

Effects on Balance of Payment and Access to Credit Lines

Owing to sanctions, Zimbabwe's Balance of Payment (BoP) position deteriorated significantly. When access to international credit markets were blocked, the country was forced to operate on hand to mouth leading to significant build-up of external debt arrears and low credit worthiness. It is pertinent to note that Zimbabwe did not get any support from African Development Bank (AfDB) since 1998, International Monitory Fund (IMF) since 1999 and World Bank since 2001.

Arrears Triggered Penalties

As our external arrears rose from US$109 million in 1999 to US$5.4 billion in 2017, the World Bank placed the country in non-accrual status resulting in the country being barred from accessing loans. This crippled our economy because our businesses cannot access offshore lending and when they seldom do, they are accessed at punitive and exorbitant rates.

Going back into history, loan inflows to companies rose from USD$134 million in 1980 to US$480 million in the 1990s. However, after sanctions were imposed in 2001 and 2002 by the US and the EU respectively, loans fell to US$80 million between 2000 and 2008.

Impact on the Financial Sector

Sanctions has led the country's financial linkages with the rest of the world being branded high risk and hence the de-risking interventions by lending correspondent banks. In 2016 alone, 19 de-risking cases were recorded in 10 local banks.

Zimbank was fined US$2.48 million in 2006 by the US Treasury for 159 alleged violations of the sanctions regulations for 2008 -2013 transactions.

ZB bank had funds in all foreign bank accounts and in transit frozen and its contracts with US citizens and corporates abrogated. Its US$5.8 million was blocked and its correspondent banking relationships terminated.

CBZ was slapped with a USD3.8 billion fine by the US violating sanctions. While the fine was suspended this year, it affected the bank's operations since 2008.

The Infrastructural Development Bank was placed under sanctions too. US$3 million SMEs Development Corporation funds were blocked by OFAC.

Impact on International Financial Transactions

Due to sanctions, transactions through international payment platforms are intercepted and blocked. Zimbabwe Fertilizer Company (ZFC) still has its US$5 million frozen to date. State-owned company ZMDC which is responsible for marketing the country's minerals lost over US$30 million in revenue to the US Treasury. The losses are not limited to public companies only. Private companies too are affected by sanctions.

Recently, on 1 August 2020, the U.S. Treasury imposed financial sanctions on Mr. Kudakwashe Tagwirei and his company, Sakunda Holdings for allegations of corruption. Under the new sanctions, all property and interests of Mr Tagwirei and Sakunda Holdings that are in the U.S. or under the control of U.S. nationals are blocked by the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control.

Impact on Agriculture Sector

In agricultural sector, sanctions throttled foreign investment and access to lines credit hence affecting the input support programmes, manufacturing and processing industries. This saw agriculture firms operating below capacity.

Sanctions affected market access for horticulture, sugar, beef and cotton production. The country lost niche and lucrative markets for horticultural produce. Statistics show that our exports grew from

US$32 million in 1991 to US$143 million in 1999, and down to US$40 million in 2009 because of sanctions. Contribution to GDP from this sector fell from about 4.5% before sanctions to current 0.8%.

The country lost its beef and sugar quotas to the EU due to the sanctions. According to the Convention on Beef and Veal Protocol, Zimbabwe's preferential tariff quota allowed it to export 9,100 metric tonnes of beef to the EU. Zimbabwe's preferential sugar tariff quota was 30,225 metric tonnes and could have risen by a further 25,000 metric tonnes under Special Preference.

Sanctions affected our access to vaccines and other animal drugs. That is the major reason why our livestock is dying in greater numbers in rural areas.

Our Cotton industry is failing to access the EU markets directly, but only through middlemen hence losing between 5 to 10% of value.

Impact on the Mining Sector

The mining sector was not spared the wrath of sanctions. The industry finds it difficult to retool and recapitalize owing to sanctions. Most financiers stopped providing lines of credit to the sector and the country failed to receive proceeds from minerals sales. The Minerals Marketing Corporation of Zimbabwe (MMCZ) is a case in point.

Impact on Transport Sector

The Air transport lost 50 % of traffic movements at its airports and airspace. European and American airlines exited the Zimbabwean market due to the unsustainable conditions induced by sanctions. Local airlines were unable to access loans or purchase equipment.

The road infrastructure development was not spared too. Whilst DANIDA discontinued the road support programme of US$48 million, Sweden withdrew US$15.1 million meant to rehabilitate 116 km of roads. The NRZ's capitalization and operations were also hampered because rolling stock was supplied by an American company, General Electric. NRZ now purchases parts through third parties outside Zimbabwe.

Impact on Tourism Sector

The bad perceptions about the country emanating from the sanctions regime has led to reduced tourist arrivals from the West with resort towns Kariba being rendered ghost towns. Zimbabwe falsely perceived as an unsafe and risky country and hence the UK, US, Germany and Australia issued Travel Advisories to their citizens not to visit the country.

It is important to note that while there was 118 tour operating companies in 2000, in 2005 the number had gone down to 56. While between1989-1998, hotel room occupancy averaged above 60 percent, the figures fell to 40 percent in 2000 and 34 percent to date.

Other Socio-Economic Effects of Sanctions

Economic sanctions infringe upon Zimbabwe's right to economic and social development and violate Article 41 of the UN Charter. Sanctions are barely affecting the elite, but the most vulnerable of the country's population. Due to the suspension of foreign aid, a decline in health services and Zimbabwe's rise in infant mortality from 70/1,000 to 132/1,000 by 2005.

Marginalized vulnerable groups are sinking deeper into poverty. In 2011, 72.3% of all Zimbabweans were considered poor. Without doubt sanctions counter SDGs of alleviating hunger and poverty.

Impact on the Region

While Zimbabwe was the bread basket of the SADC region, the Land Reform Programme could not bear optimal benefits due to sanctions. The effects of sanctions saw an increased outward migration of skilled and non-skilled labour force.

Zimbabwe has failed to meet SADC targets like: low inflation, sustainable budget deficits, minimal public debt, equitable current account balances, regional monetary union and region's industrialization agenda.

SADC's average inflation rate fell from 29% in 2002 to 7.7% in 2012.

Rental and Salary Arrears at Missions

I will now apprise the Committee on the specific matters with regards to the welfare of Zimbabwean Diplomats abroad. All these monetary issues cannot be detached to the problems bedeviling the country due to the incapacitating effects of sanctions.

Outstanding cumulative salary arrears for Home Based Staff and Locally Recruited Staff as at 30 September 2020 stood at USD20 million, and the bill continues to balloon. Diplomats are struggling to meet their daily obligations such as payment of school fees for children, medicals and food provisions.

Being a statutory obligation, it is important that these arrears be cleared. The Ministry is faced with litigations particularly from Locally Recruited Staff as they seek redress of their salary arrears. This is embarrassing to the Government and tarnishes the image of the country.

Infrastructure and Renewal Programme

Our Embassies have not been able to carry out routine maintenance and development of the 67 properties owned by the Zimbabwe Government due to erratic reimbursements that have largely and insufficiently focused on salaries and rentals arrears.

Consequently, our staff members have been forced to seek rented accommodation, adding on the rent bill for the government.

The Government's credit rating has been severely affected as Landlords now require large security deposits and advance rentals of at least a year to mitigate the Ministry's ability to pay rentals on time. The rental arrears for Missions as at 30 September 2020 stands at $USD10 million.

State of Vehicles at Missions

A total of 53 vehicles were purchased for various Missions, comprising of 39 representational and 15 utility vehicles. The Ministry had planned to purchase an additional 9 vehicles for the

Missions during this financial year provided Treasury availed the funds.

It is prudent to timeously replace vehicle fleet to avoid high maintenance costs. Many of the vehicles have exceeded their useful life span.

Furniture and Office Equipment

Furniture at Missions is largely obsolete. Due to unavailability of resources, the Ministry has not been able to replace the furniture.

Way forward

The Ministry is working with Treasury and has come up with a plan to clear salary arrears at Missions. Monthly budgetary support of USD4million has been promised.

It is hoped that Treasury will continue to religiously provide this budgetary support towards the clearance of arrears as it did in September 2020. Meanwhile, it has promised to clear all arrears by December 2020, and has directed that all payments for all Diplomats be coordinated through the Ministry.

The Reform Agenda

I will not have done justice on my brief to the Committee if I left out the reform agenda taking place in the country, itself an important subject for the Ministry in its engagement and reengagement drive. Since its inception in November 2017, the new dispensation has repeatedly stressed its commitment to correct the wrongs of the past and move to an open, clean and transparent government. The new dispensation has also committed itself to uphold the rule of law, including property rights, and to entrench and enforce the democratic rights and freedoms in the Second Republic. I will address the issue of property rights in detail later in my presentation. This would be achieved through re-aligning of existing laws to the 2013 Constitution and amending the existing ones to suit the needs of a modern day nation-state.

A raft of comprehensive political and legislative reforms was undertaken by Government in order to fulfill that commitment. These included but not limited to the repeal of Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and Access to Information and Protection Privacy Act (AIPPA) and amending the Electoral law in line with recommendations by the 2013 Election Observer Missions.

Under H.E. President Mnangagwa's able leadership, Zimbabwe has made significant progress and has taken concrete, tangible steps towards improving governance, opening up domestic political space, upholding the rule of law and property rights and generally migrating the country towards the new era promised by the President. The reforms being undertaken are not to appease the international community but for the benefit of Zimbabweans.

However, genuine reforms under any circumstances is difficult. The extent of reforms currently being undertaken in Zimbabwe without any form of support from the likes of the IMF or World Bank, or any bilateral partners, has placed a severe strain on national financial resources. That is the reason the country is calling on the removal of sanctions.

Honouring Property Rights

One of the teething problems that have impacted on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows in Zimbabwe is lack of investor confidence. This emanated from alleged failure by the government to respect property rights and in essence, its own laws. Admittedly, property rights have in some cases been compromised due to the excesses of the previous government.

The new dispensation is correcting that and is breaking from the past by making deliberate policies and choices that demonstrate the country's commitment towards honouring its international obligations.

Since the New Dispensation, my Ministry has been busy building a foundation for international trade to thrive. A case in point is the six of the eighteen outstanding BIPPAs that were approved by Parliament recently. The Ministry is doing it in batches and the remaining twelve are already undergoing internal legal processes with other trade agreements that will be entered with other trading partners.

With this exercise, the Ministry wishes to stress that property rights are the foundation not only for the country's engagement and re-engagement drive but for prosperity itself vis-à-vis the attainment of Upper Middle Income Economy by 2030. Most importantly, the country's supreme law, the Constitution, and its subsidiary laws all protect property rights, the rights of people to acquire, use, and dispose of property freely.

What the Ministry is doing is provided for under section 327 of the Constitution, which states that an international treaty that has been concluded or executed by the President or under the President's authority does not bind the Republic until it has been approved by Parliament and unless it has been incorporated into law through an Act of Parliament. This is the exercise that the Ministry is currently spearheading through the Parliament of Zimbabwe.

The Ministry is pleased that Parliament has already approved the ratification of the following BIPPAs:

- United Arab Emirates (UAE);
- United States of America (USA);
- Sweden;
- Czech Republic;
- Thailand; and
- Republic of Korea.

Your usual cooperation and assistance is greatly anticipated in the three international treaties that await Parliamentary approval. These are the SADC Protocol on Trade, the Bureau on International Exhibitions and the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Agreement. Nine between bilateral agreements between Zimbabwe and DRC, Italy, Indonesia, Croatia, Austria, France, Egypt, Malaysia and Mozambique are going through internal legal process in the Ministry.

It hoped that this would help improve Zimbabwe's image as a good destination for foreign investments. The agreements seek to encourage economic activities that promote the development of the economic resources and productive capabilities of Zimbabwe. Under these BIPPAs, Zimbabwe and the other signatories assume broad obligations for the protection of foreign investments. The agreements encourage the flow of FDI and technology into the country.

Engagement and Reengagement

With the economic stakes so high, and with growing economic interdependence, Zimbabwe is in constructive engagement with the West to end all sanctions and targeted measures, as well as a pragmatic dialogue that recognizes mutual interests and responsibilities. The New Dispensation Government made concerted efforts towards mending relations with the US, UK, the EU and the rest of the international community. As a result, serious and focused dialogue was initiated with key constituent countries, among them the UK, the US, Germany, France, Sweden and Australia and the response has been encouraging.

Engagement with the USA

On 23 September 2020, I held a virtual meeting with the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Ambassador Tibor Nagy. I discussed several issues on Zimbabwe-U.S. relations, including the nagging human rights issues, media attack on the U.S. Ambassador, political and economic reforms, investment opportunities as well as regional security issues. The US Assistant Secretary of State had earlier met HE in Maputo in June 2019.

I emphasized to the US Secretary of State that there was no change on the commitment to implement the reform agenda. I assured Ambassador Nagy that the fundamental right of freedom of speech had been promoted during the New Dispensation era and explained that it was the Government's desire to see freedom of speech and human rights being upheld, although this had been abused in past experiences. I outlined the reform agenda as highlighted above and decried that the US had deliberately not given due recognition to these reforms and urged the US to acknowledge the numerous positive reforms being implemented.

I highlighted that the Zimbabwean economy was on the rebound and requested for US support. I implored the US to strive to restore bilateral relations back to what they used to be in the early 1980s. While I appreciated that the US provided US$300 million for humanitarian programmes, I asked for Government to Government assistance instead of channeling support through Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

Overall, the meeting was cordial and frank that it managed to put re-engagement drive back on track after the previous fallouts.

Government signs agreement with John Deere

In yet another positive development for the country's reengagement drive with the US, Zimbabwe signed a $USD50 million John Deere tractor Agreement and agreed with the US on other positive developments that include the awarding of the Batoka Gorge Hydro Electric Power Project to General Electric Corporation and the Health Galaxy Project proposed for Mt Hampden.

The US Assistant Secretary of State promised to collaborate with our Embassy in Washington to organize an investment conference for

Zimbabwe. He observed that Zimbabwe had great potential and remained a blossoming jewel.

While the US sanctions regime, ZIDERA, continues to be an albatross that constrained and hurt Zimbabwe, the Ministry is happy with the removal of Agribank from US sanctions and the lifting of the US$385 million fine levied on the Commercial Bank of Zimbabwe (CBZ).

It is also worth noting that this is the third time Ambassador Nagy met Zimbabwean authorities, twice with H.E. the President, in September 2018 and June 2019.

Re-engaging the United Kingdom

Since 2018, the Government has hosted a number of UK delegations, while many Zimbabwean delegations visited the UK and Special envoys were dispatched.

On 8 June 2020, I had a virtual meeting with the British Minister for Africa, Mr James Duddridge, where we discussed the normalization of relations between the two countries.

Zimbabwe-EU Dialogue

Zimbabwe continues to engage the EU despite the fact that the grouping still maintains sanction on the country. We successfully launched the formal political dialogue with the European Union (EU) under the Cotonou Partnership Agreement. The first official dialogue at Senior Officials level was launched in June 2019, while the second session was held in November 2019 at Ministerial level. The third and fourth sessions were scheduled to take place in August and

November 2020, respectively. However, the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed down some of the plans.

We are taking advantage of the postponement of Commonwealth meetings to lobby its members to support Zimbabwe's re-admission.

Zimbabwe launches Belarus mechanisation facility

Belarus has become the first foreign nation to be allocated virgin land by Zimbabwe, following HE the President's tour of Eurasia in January 2019, where he established a new economic cooperation with Minsk, centered on agriculture and the supply of agricultural equipment by Belarus to Harare.

Zimbabwe received the first batch of farm mechanization equipment from Belarus that include 163 tractors, 19 combine harvesters and low bed trucks. The machines were commissioned by President Mnangagwa on 30 September 2020 at the Agriculture Engineering Institute in Hatcliffe, Harare, before being distributed to different provinces.

Zimbabwe and Belarus agreed on another deal that will see Zimbabwe getting another tranche of 3 000 tractors. As a result of the tight cooperation between Belarus and Zimbabwe, both governments agreed on the supply to Zimbabwe of machinery and equipment made in Belarus for agriculture and timber industry.

The two countries are developing joint projects in geology, farming and transport, as well as the construction of a solar power plant near Harare.

Belarus plan to build a state of the art dairy farm in Zimbabwe for an initial 1000 cows by the end of 2020. The cattle will be partially brought from New Zealand, and simultaneously, a meat and milk processing line will be launched. Zimbabwe used to produce about 260 million litres of milk in the early 1990s, but the figure has dropped to only 70 million litres of raw milk in recent times against a national demand of 120 million litres.

All these projects are being coordinated by the Ministry.

Conclusion

SADC and the entire African continent continue to feel the strain of Western sanctions on Zimbabwe and it is our hope that the region and the continent will continue to stand with Zimbabwe in its call for the removal of sanctions.

By and large, Zimbabwe has made great strides to improve the country's economy despite the illegal sanction imposed on us. We are not sitting back but we are making concerted efforts to burst these sanctions.

I Thank you!