



41st INDEPENDENCE DAY SPEECH

BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY, THE PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE,
CDE. E. D. MNANGAGWA**

18th APRIL, 2021

The First Lady, Amai Auxillia Mnangagwa;

Honourable Vice President and Minister of Health and Child Care, Gen. (Rtd) Dr C.G.D.N. Chiwenga;

Chairman of the Ruling Party ZANU PF and Minister of Defence and War Veterans' Affairs, Cde OC.Z. Muchiguri- Kashiri

Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Advocate J.F. Mudenda;

President of the Senate, Hon. Amai M.M. Chinomona;

Minister of State for Harare Metropolitan Province, Hon. Oliver Chidawu;

The Chief Justice, Honourable Luke Malaba;

Honourable Ministers;

Members of Parliament;

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, Hon. D. Mwonzora;

Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Service Chiefs;

Veterans of the Liberation Struggle;

Families of the Heroes of our Liberation Struggle;

Traditional Leaders;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Fellow Zimbabweans,

It is my singular honour and privilege to address all Zimbabweans at home and abroad on this virtual platform, as our nation celebrates the forty-first anniversary of our Independence. This year's celebrations are being held under the theme: **“Zimbabwe at 41: Together, Growing our Economy for a Prosperous, Resilient and Inclusive Society”**.

As a sovereign nation and people, the occasion of our Independence Day is a constant reminder of the need to preserve, safeguard and protect our liberation war heritage and the rich history of our country. This is the foundation and hallmark of our nation, today and forever. I

say Makorokoto! Amhlophe! Congratulations Zimbabwe!
God Bless Zimbabwe.

Fellow Zimbabweans,

We are holding this year's celebrations with jubilation as our nation continues to register successes on many fronts. In line with the spirit of devolution, you will recall that we hoped to celebrate this year's event in Bulawayo, the City of Kings, following the postponement of public celebrations last year. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 public health requirements entail that we enjoy this very important national event, yet again, from our homes. When it comes to human life, we take no risks. The time shall come for us to physically gather and celebrate together in Bulawayo Province, once the COVID-19 pandemic is behind us.

The pandemic has sadly seen our nation lose many of our beloved citizens, including decorated heroes and heroines of the liberation struggle.

Lessons continue to be learnt from this global health emergency and our country is emerging stronger in the fight against the pandemic.

Zimbabwe is grateful for the financial and material support and solidarity from friendly nations and development partners in our efforts to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. I also commend the local private sector, individuals, institutions of higher learning, churches and other stakeholders for their support.

The dedication and sacrifice of frontline workers and security services is equally applauded. I congratulate you, our citizens for abiding by the National Lockdown regulations and measures. The accomplishments we have made to date are due to the unity of purpose and spirit of oneness we have all shown.

On 18 February 2021, Government launched the National Vaccination Programme to contain the spread of the deadly

virus and ensure herd immunity. Allow me to take this opportunity to thank various partners and friends of Zimbabwe including the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation and the Republic of India, for their support to our vaccination programme.

Citizens are assured that the efficacy of the vaccines we have rolled out has been duly considered and approved by the Medicines Control Authority of Zimbabwe. I, therefore call upon the people of our great nation to go out in their numbers and get vaccinated. No one is safe until everyone is safe.

Fellow Zimbabweans,

As the Second Republic, we will never betray that which made the many sons and daughters of our motherland to wage the protracted liberation struggle, paying the supreme sacrifice. We will always protect the significance and sacred spirituality of our land.

Therefore, the signing of the Global Compensation Agreement on 29 July 2020 is a re-affirmation of the irreversibility of land as well as a symbol of our commitment to constitutionalism, the respect of the rule of law and property rights. As Zimbabweans, we must now all work together for increased production, productivity and profitability of the agriculture sector.

Following successive seasons of drought, it is encouraging that the 2020/2021 summer cropping season was characterised by normal to above normal rainfall. The swift implementation of the Presidential Climate Proofed Pfumvudza/Intwasa Programme, Presidential Input Support Scheme, Command Agriculture, Presidential Horticulture Programme and respective initiatives by farmers have yielded commendable results. These interventions, coupled with timely provision of extension services, will see the country attain a bumper harvest this season.

Treasury has set aside ZW\$60 billion for the timely payment of farmers by the Grain Marketing Board. The usual grain collection depots will be complemented by mobile and fixed collection points throughout the country.

Pertaining to livestock, the Presidential Climate Proofed Livestock Scheme will see the increase of the national herd through an intensified artificial insemination programme, distribution of tick grease and the wide spread renovation of dip tanks across the country.

Government continues to facilitate agricultural mechanisation for our farmers at affordable cost, towards the success of our agriculture revolution, improving production, productivity and profitability.

As a result of the good rains, there has been significant improvement of water levels in dams across the country. This gives impetus for the implementation of the National Accelerated Irrigation Rehabilitation and Development

Programme as well as the Smallholder Irrigation Revitalisation Programme. To this end, we are speeding up the rate of completion of dams, with Marovanyati and Causeway dams having so far been completed. Gwayi-Shangani Dam will be completed by year end.

Fellow Zimbabweans,

Despite altered economic growth projections due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the reform agenda under the Transitional Stabilisation Programme realised indisputable successes. The successor programme, the National Development Strategy 1 (NDS 1), is now underway. The translation of NDS1 into 16 languages will enhance national vision sharing and robust implementation of the NDS 1 strategy.

My Government continues to realise budget surpluses. Inflation, which had become a major source of macro-economic instability, is being contained. The foreign currency auction system has also enhanced transparency

and accountability in the distribution and use of foreign currency. I call upon Zimbabweans to exercise prudence and discipline towards the attainment of broader financial and economic stability in our country.

The manufacturing sector has remained resilient to the pertinent shocks presented by the imposition of illegal sanctions, natural disasters and now the COVID-19 pandemic. Locally produced goods and commodities now constitute a larger share of our country's market shelves.

In line with Government's private sector led development we applaud Industry for its positive response to the Local Content Strategy. This is reflective of the positive national sentiments on our economic growth potential, anchored on the Second Republic's consistent and predictable policy environment.

The resuscitation of strategic industries such as fertilizer, iron and steel, pharmaceuticals, textiles and clothing,

leather manufacturing, as well as food and beverages is being accelerated. In order for Zimbabwe to penetrate global value chains, efforts are underway to structurally transform the economy from an exporter of predominantly primary products to higher nodes of industrial development.

These positive developments come at a time when the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) has come into effect. It offers vast opportunities for the country to intensify its trade and exports drive. The introduction of the Border Efficiency Management System will see reduced congestion and enhanced efficiencies at our ports of entry. In addition to the above, my Government will continue to facilitate market access across all sectors as well as increased participation in our economy, by the Zimbabwean Diaspora.

The mining industry is projected to rebound by 11% this year. Guided by the Strategy to achieve a US\$12 billion

mining industry by 2023, programmes that include increased exploration, expansion of existing mining projects, resuscitation of closed mines, opening of new mines, mineral beneficiation and value addition are being prioritised.

Provinces and communities are urged to maintain a keen interest in these mining development projects to prop up Provincial GDPs, create employment and improve the quality of life of our people.

Fellow Zimbabweans;

Since 2020, the Energy and Power Sector has witnessed relative stability in the supply of electricity and liquid petroleum products. Our quest to realise energy sufficiency is, therefore on course.

At the Hwange Power Station, the expansion project of Unit 7 and Unit 8, which is set to add 600 MW to the national grid, is now at 61% of completion. Meanwhile, a

280 MW capacity will be restored into the national grid when the overhaul of Unit 3 and refurbishment of Unit 6 are completed. Following the approval of a US\$310 million Facility from India Exim Bank, work to extend the lifespan of the Power Station is expected to commence in earnest. With regards to hydro power generation, the significant water inflows into Lake Kariba are set to guarantee adequate power availability from the Kariba Power Station.

Informed by the Renewable Energy Policy and Bio-Fuels Policy, my Government is promoting private sector investments in the sector. To this end, an Independent Power Producer, Zimbabwe Zhongxin Electrical Energy is working on a 50 MW thermal power plant in Hwange, which is now 97% complete.

In addition, eleven renewable energy projects have been commissioned and are feeding power into the national grid, with eight others generating power for own consumption.

The construction of a 6 million litre Ethanol Storage Facility and a 500 metric tonne LPG Depot in Mabvuku are underway.

Our country is encouraged and optimistic about the immense possibilities as a result of oil and gas exploration in Muzarabani. This project will broaden the country's energy matrix and have far reaching benefits to the economy as a whole.

Fellow Citizens;

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a dire effect on the country's tourism sector. However, the ongoing National Vaccination Programme offers hope for revival. Incentives are being offered to increase domestic tourism under the Tourism ZimBhoo Campaign, including the provision of a Government Guarantee to improve access to finance, for further development of the sector. New tourism resorts and a wider array of tourism products are being rolled out

in line with provincial comparative advantages and endowments.

The protection of the environment remains a key policy thrust of the 2nd Republic. The preservation of wetlands, Zero Tolerance to Litter, curtailment of pollution, and sound legislation to stop the decimation of forests, remain critical. Zimbabwe has managed to grow its wildlife population. However, Government is concerned about the increasing number of cases of human wildlife conflict. Consultations are underway with the view of developing a comprehensive policy on this matter. The quest by our country to trade wildlife resources for the benefit of communities is ongoing.

Sound national infrastructures are essential building blocks for sustainable economic development and growth.

With bolts and bars, brick upon brick and stone upon stone, we are rebuilding our great country. We are harnessing and effectively deploying our local resources and human capital to upgrade and modernise the country's infrastructure.

The heavy rains received across the country have taken their toll on our roads, bridges and other infrastructure. In response, Government has launched Phase 2 of the Emergency Road Rehabilitation Programme for the urgent rehabilitation of roads throughout all provinces. The upgrading and expansion of the Harare-Beitbridge highway as well as rehabilitation, improvement and widening of sections of the Chirundu highway are progressing well. Government is continually replenishing the ZUPCO fleet towards the resuscitation of the public transport sector.

As we move towards Vision 2030, air connectivity is equally important. Hence, the rehabilitation, refurbishment

and expansion of airstrips such as Binga in Matabeleland North and Chapoto in Mashonaland Central provinces, among others, are ongoing.

Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) are an integral part in our country's drive to become a knowledge-based economy and indeed in the fourth industrial revolution. The COVID-19 pandemic has precipitated the need for our country to urgently enhance its competences and capabilities in this sector.

All sectors are therefore urged to leverage on the recently launched National Data Centre to further spur innovations that increase operational efficiencies and improve service delivery.

Fellow Zimbabweans,

The provision of health, water and sanitation, education and public transport, among others, remain at the core of our country's social development policies. Accordingly, my Government's health sector reforms have resulted in

improved regulation, accountability, transparency and work ethic within the sector.

Devolution funds have enabled the construction of suitable Primary and Secondary Health Care and education facilities throughout the country. Work is underway towards establishment of specialist medical facilities, including in prime tourist resorts.

Under the Second Republic, a relevant education system remains key to sustainable socio-economic development and the achievement of Vision 2030. Informed by our heritage based philosophy, unique country needs and realities as well as the broader global perspectives, the study of science related fields is being encouraged. To date, Innovation Hubs and Industrial Parks within our tertiary institutions are producing goods and services with far reaching national and economic implications.

Programmes to cushion vulnerable members of society, certain sectors of the economy and food insecure households in both rural and urban areas continue to be availed. Furthermore, disability mainstreaming must be pursued across all sectors as informed by the National Disability Policy. This includes seeking greater inclusion and empowerment of persons living with disabilities and the realisation of their improved quality of life.

The licensing of six privately-owned television stations and six language-based community radio stations is a demonstration of my Government's commitment to uphold the constitutionally guaranteed right to freedom of expression and freedom of the media. It is my expectation that these new players will project the much-needed diversity and plurality in the broadcasting sector. I further urge the new entrants to always advance national identity, patriotism, peace, unity, production and productivity towards the prosperity of our great country.

Our devolution and decentralisation agenda is gaining traction and changing the landscape of many districts. It is pleasing to note that devolution funds in excess of ZW\$1 billion have been disbursed to Local Authorities for various community projects which cascade down to the Ward level.

Women, youth and SMEs have a pivotal role in society and are emerging as important players in sectors such as agriculture and mining. Their empowerment and financial inclusion remains a priority. However, Government notes with concern the spike in gender-based violence, child abuse and other heinous social crimes. Perpetrators have no place in our society, and must be duly and timely punished by our justice system. Citizens across Provinces and Districts are urged to take advantage of the decentralised Court system to access justice delivery within their communities.

Regarding youth development and empowerment, Government successfully reviewed the National Youth Policy and has reintroduced the National Youth Training Programme. These provide a broad framework for the empowerment of youth in a comprehensive, coordinated and multi-sectoral manner. The new focus will see the nurturing of young people who are technically skilled and knowledgeable, patriotic, honest and hard-working. It is envisaged that the refocused programme will inculcate a sense of national identity and the spirit of volunteerism among the youth, for the good of the country.

I would like to commend the First Lady, Amai A. Mnangagwa and the Angel of Hope Foundation for implementing various humanitarian programmes and projects across the country, towards nurturing respect, discipline and greater appreciation of our culture and heritage, among the youth. Her work with regards to tourism and health advocacy is equally appreciated.

Sports, arts, culture and other recreational activities contribute towards improved livelihoods, well-being, health, education, inclusion, peace and national cohesion. The country celebrates the notable milestones registered in the sporting fraternity, including repairs to the National Sports, Harare and Sakubva Stadia; qualification by the National Soccer Team the Warriors to the 2022 African Cup of Nations, and the winning of the African Boxing Union title, among others. Stakeholders in the sporting sector are challenged to pursue innovative and robust methods of financing and development of the various sporting disciplines.

Fellow Zimbabweans,

Commemoration of our National Independence Day is in essence a celebration of the victory attained in the liberation struggle fought by our gallant sons and daughters of the soil. The importance of protecting the gains of this hard-won Independence can, therefore,

not be over-emphasised. It, therefore, comes as a befitting honour to construct the iconic statue of Mbuya Nehanda in Harare.

The monument will be a permanent reminder and towering statement of motivation for future generations on the importance of serving the country wholeheartedly and defending it with unflinching patriotism and loyalty. In the same tone, the Liberation War Museum will be constructed.

On the Arts and Recreation front, Government is implementing the Cultural and Creative Industries Strategy in partnership with various stakeholders. At the Continental level, Zimbabwe takes pride in having launched the Africa Fact Book, in September 2020, which is the first-ever publication that tells the African story from an African perspective. The country is also honoured to be the home of the Museum of African Liberation.

Fellow Zimbabweans,

Government has introduced Performance Contracts for Heads of Ministries to ensure accountability, transparency and the speedy attainment of targets set in the NDS1. Performance Contracts will also be rolled out to State Enterprises, Parastatals and Local Authorities. Meanwhile, Government remains committed to improving the working conditions of its valued workers in the public sector.

In line with section 212 of the Constitution, the Zimbabwe Defence Forces, together with other members of the security sector, is commended for their vigilance and unwavering commitment to the protection of our national sovereignty, security, interests and territorial integrity.

Under the National Development Strategy 1, our foreign policy remains deeply rooted and informed by our national interests and the Engagement and Re-engagement as well as the Pan-African ethos. My Government is pursuing economic diplomacy for the advancement and economic prosperity of our country. Our

arms remain outstretched to be a friend to all and an enemy of none, as we strive towards the realisation of a more peaceful, united and prosperous world.

Fellow Citizens,

As we commemorate this year's 41st Independence Celebrations, let us look back at the previous years with great pride and joy. More importantly, however, let us look forward to the years ahead with a bright flame of hope for the next generation. We have begun this new decade of our Independence with greater determination, resolve and confidence to achieve the Vision we set out for ourselves. A Vision of an empowered people with a higher standard of living. A Vision of a thriving and prosperous economy, which plays its part within the comity of nations.

Together, let us unite in our purpose, collate our potential and walk together hand-in-hand towards our common destiny. Through hard honest work and our trust in God

Almighty, there is no limit to what our country can achieve, as we build the Zimbabwe we all want.

I once again congratulate all Zimbabweans at home and abroad, on the occasion of this, our country's forty first Independence Day. Congratulations, Makorokoto, Amhlophe.

Long Live Our Independence!

Long Live Our Unity, Peace and Freedom!

Long Live Zimbabwe!

God bless you all.

God bless Zimbabwe.

I thank you.