

STATEMENT BY ZIMBABWE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE, HONOURABLE DR S. NZENZA ON THE OCCASION OF THE TURKEY-AFRICA ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS FORUM ONLINE EDITION: 8-9 OCTOBER 2020

Honourable Ruhsar Pekcan, Minister of Trade of the Republic of Turkey

Honourable Victor Harison, Commissioner for Economic Affairs of the African Union Commission

Mr Nail Olpak, President of Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey (DEIK)

Fellow Ministers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege and an honour for me to participate in the 2020 Turkey-Africa Economic and Business Forum – Online Edition which is running under the theme, **‘Turkey-Africa: Partners in Resilience in Post Pandemic World’**.

Allow me to extend my delegation’s sincere gratitude and thank the Government of Turkey for organising this Forum and inviting us to add value to its deliberations. We equally applaud the Africa Union for fronting the continent’s economic interests and being a partner to such deliberations. The Government of Turkey has actively promoted

trade and economic relations with Africa and this Forum bears testimony to Turkey's pro-Africa foreign policy agenda.

I would like to acknowledge the excellent and warm relations which Zimbabwe and Turkey enjoy as exemplified by the opening of the Turkish Embassy in Harare in 2011 and likewise the opening of the Zimbabwe Embassy in Turkey in 2019. Our strategic aim is to broaden and strengthen our economic and business interactions. The opening of the Embassy has increased my country's visibility to Turkey's business and tourism sectors. The move dove-tails with my President's mantra that Zimbabwe is Open for Business and is part of my Government's engagement and re-engagement programme to international partners.

I therefore encourage Turkish companies, business and individuals to utilise the information available at our Embassy in Ankara on trade and other business opportunities available in most of our economic sectors. We are looking at Zimbabwe - Turkey relations reaching greater heights with concomitant increase in trade, reciprocal official visits and visible projects on the ground.

Trade and Economic Relations

Indeed, Zimbabwe and Turkey should elevate trade and economic relations to cover all economic areas for the mutual benefit of the two

nations. As we engage in our discussions in this fora, we need to explore areas for partnerships.

Zimbabwe has continuously recorded a negative trade balances against Turkey (-\$7 million in 2019). It is anticipated that this forum will work out arrangements that would see exports from Zimbabwe to Turkey steadily improving in the post COVID era.

While Turkey provides a bridge for market access to 65 countries for Zimbabwean products, *Turkey will at the same time get access to the Tripartite Free Trade Area (FTA) comprising the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), East Africa Community (EAC) and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) regions which has a population of over 650million people and an approximate Gross Domestic Product(GDP) of USD1.3 billion.* Zimbabwe is a member of SADC and COMESA and products produced in Zimbabwe can be exported to SADC and COMESA countries duty free. With the coming into force of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), Zimbabwe wants to leverage on this membership by attracting appropriate investors from Turkey.

Zimbabwe has identified the following sectors as critical post-covid and is inviting Turkish companies to invest: agriculture, manufacturing, health, energy and mining.

Agriculture

I am aware that Turkey has advanced agricultural technology which Zimbabwe can tap into to beef up its budding agricultural sector. The majority of Zimbabweans are involved in the agricultural sector and technical cooperation in this area will improve productivity and food and nutritional security at household level. You might want to know that we are implementing the Agricultural recovery program which will ensure that significant value chains in the sector are prioritized as they feed into the growth of industry.

Zimbabwe currently produces 80million kilogrammes of seed cotton (from a peak of 350million in 2012) which converts to about 35 million kilograms of lint. We currently use 8 million kilogrammes and the rest is exported. Investment opportunities lies in converting lint into yarn which means setting up textile mills or partnering companies with mothballed or closed factories. Zimbabwe is a large cotton producing country but would be able to maximise its potential by partnering Turkish companies who have strength in textiles equipment and expertise.

Manufacturing

Zimbabwe has a well-developed leather sector and opportunities exist for value addition of raw hides into finished leather products. The country is in the process of formulating a Leather Strategy which is aimed at developing the leather value chain. Zimbabwe also produces

high quality leather suitable for the manufacturing of high-end products. Cooperation in this sector will create employment opportunities for Zimbabweans and strong synergies for the provision of high-quality raw materials for the leather industry in Turkey.

Health

The Covid-19 pandemic has given my Government renewed interest to revitalise the whole health sector. I am inviting Turkish companies to seize opportunities my Government has made available to investors in the manufacturing of medical equipment and drugs. Turkey can also establish a regional (SADC) health manufacturing centre as well as a distribution and logistics centre in Zimbabwe. My country is ready to partner both Government and/or private sector players who have the capacity to share medical digital technology and experience in that area. There are also opportunities in building private hospitals with local partners and healthcare projects are available for consideration.

Energy

Our energy sector needs urgent revitalisation. Government has put in place new incentives for foreign investors who will bring invest in renewable energy, in particular solar. Zimbabwe has abundant sunshine and that can be harnessed to produce solar energy throughout the whole year. Turkey has managed to power its energy requirements via solar and we believe that Turkish companies can

partner our Independent Power Producers and do business in manufacturing solar equipment and use of solar technologies. We have lots of lithium and a suitable partner is needed to produce lithium batteries in that regard.

Mining

Zimbabwe has set a target of achieving a USD12 billion mining industry by 2023. This, we believe, is achievable basing on investments and output interventions. We are thus inviting companies, individuals and other players in the mining industry to partner us in this journey towards a 12billion dollar mining economy. Zimbabwe has the resources diamonds, gold, platinum, lithium, chrome, iron ore, coal and hydrocarbons. Turkey has a sophisticated mining industry and we believe Turkish companies can share with us their modern technology and know-how in order to help us attain our target.

Building Resilience Post COVID 19

The COVID-19 pandemic led to disruptions to international value chains but it has however shown how innovative Zimbabwean companies can be. Local companies are now producing PPE's which were previously being imported.

There is also scope for extended investment given the country's skilled and trainable labour force. Zimbabwe boasts of high literacy levels of

up to 92%. Investors can take advantage of this to grow their business. Zimbabwe is indeed a country Turkey can increasingly do business with as the two countries seek to grow their economic ties.

In addition, Zimbabwe offers numerous investment opportunities in manufacturing, ICT led innovations and technology upgrade, packaging and 4th industrial revolution among others. In this regard there is a robust program to address the ease of doing business and hence the establishment of Zimbabwe Investment Development Authority (ZIDA).

Turkey has provided leadership in the global fight against Covid-19 pandemic, not only by successfully managing and containing it within its borders, but also by extending much needed medical assistance to some African countries and other parts of the globe.

Naturally we expect Ankara to show the same leadership in spearheading Africa's economic revival efforts post Covid-19 and this Forum is a good basis for that dialogue.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that Africa offers immense opportunities and is a preferred destination for investment, trade and tourism opportunities.

Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen before concluding my remarks, allow me to profoundly thank those countries which have stood by us in condemning and calling for the lifting of the illegal sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe more than 20 years ago. A few weeks ago, at the World Trade Organization Trade Policy Review on Zimbabwe, our host Turkey was unequivocal and supported our view and of others on the negative impact of sanctions on my country's ability to trade. We thank Turkey and others who took the floor in supporting our call for a just and free trading system.

I thank You