**ADDRESS BY HON. RETIRED LIEUTENANT GENERAL DR. S. MOYO TO THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS ON THE 6TH AUGUST ON THE OUTCOME OF THE HARMONISED ELECTIONS 2018**

* The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps – Ambassador Mawapanga Mwana Nanga,
* Your Excellencies Heads of Diplomatic Missions here present
* Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade,
* Senior Officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
* Members of the Press,
* Ladies and Gentlemen.

Let me begin by quoting “Harold Wilson” whose observation that “a day is a long time in politics” is aptly descriptive of the phenomenal political developments in our country since we last met (if I am correct barely two weeks ago).

Our most anticipated harmonized elections have passed (water under the bridge) and by all accounts, they have passed muster.

It is not my intention to bore you with every little detail of how those elections were conducted and the outcome there from, for I know that you all followed these with keen interest. I would like rather, to underline some very important features of those harmonized elections.

Firstly and fore mostly, this was a new experience in the management of our elections since 1980. It was a first time that an electoral body (ZEC) was created by multiparty Parliament process to manage the whole electoral cycle. Previously this mammoth task had involved more than two entities and this often led to unnecessary contestation of the results post elections.

This was again the first time that the independent electoral body (ZEC) has used new electoral tools, the Biometric Voters Registration (BVR) and polling station-based voters’ roll/registration lists. This phenomenon is the most transparent there is today the world over and encompasses the most recently acknowledge international best practices. One would not be more transparent vis a vis the outcome than that.

Again, for the first time, eligible voters and registered voters were given ample time to verify their personal data prior to the elections themselves. Twice during the post – BVR registration, ZEC followed up to notify eligible voters of their registration details. All this was meant to expunge alleged “ghost voters” from the voters’ roll.

These just ended elections attracted the biggest voter turnout with a staggering eighty four (84%) of the registered voters of the 5,6 million going to the polls. The election also attracted the biggest number of foreign observer Missions and international media. All these developments could not have been possible without the open invitation from Government and the “Zimbabwe is open for Business” policy of the new political dispensation. We truly are in a new era.

A record 10985 polling stations were established and were fully functional on election day 30th July 2018. All polling stations were manned by ZEC officials, at least 3 agents from each political party, teams of international observers, press and police. The modalities and operations of the polling stations were clear to all.

Perhaps it would suffice at this juncture to underline the peace enjoyed before and during the actual day of polling, a fact universally acknowledged by both local and foreign observers.

Another point to note is that at the close of polls, all persons who turned up to vote were allowed to fully exercise that right and all polling stations reported having cleared all potential voters and that none were turned away before closing the stations. This was indeed a remarkable feat for ZEC which was using a completely new voting system.

An otherwise flawless election cycle was only marred by developments of the 1st August 2018, in the Capital Harare where rowdy protesting people turned extremely violent and started attacking “all and sundry” with hand held missiles which include among other things stones, empty bottles and cans and homemade petrol bombs. No one was spared in the melee that ensured, including civilians, property belonging to political parties and private citizens. Foreign observers and media were not spared either.

For some considerable time, the law and order arms of Government watched and tried to reign in the marauding crowds but this was all to no avail. The ZRP then called for reinforcements from their sister security forces, the army, as prescribed in law, to merit, POSA Chapter 37(1).

We in Government are deeply remorseful that force was used which regrettably resulted in the loss of at least 6 human lives and injury to others.

Excellencies,

I now want to address the matter of reports of alleged abductions, rape and beatings of people by alleged members of Zimbabwe security forces.

We have heard that soldiers have beaten up people in Chitungwiza, Kuwadzana and Dzivaresekwa areas. On investigations, the head of Chitungwiza hospital has informed us that they were never any fifty people who had been treated there following alleged beatings by security agents. To the contrary, some MDC-Alliance activists turned up at the hospital on 1st August 2018 and beat up security guards there. When reinforcements were called to the hospital, these activists rushed into the hospital and caused chaos.

In Kuwadzana and Dzivaresekwa, Government is not aware of any beatings or abductions.

Today, we have heard of alleged rapes along the Mukuvisi river and of beatings and rapes in Murewa allegedly to induce people to release V11 forms .

We unreservedly deplore and regret this sad development which detracted from the images of otherwise very peaceful elections. We applaud those authorities, both local and foreign, who have consoled our nation over those sad developments.

At this crucial time, I should like to let you know that the opposition led by the MDC-Alliance wants to behave with the intent to discourage investment into Zimbabwe. You must know however, that H.E. President E.D. Mnangagwa has succeeded to unite all the people of Zimbabwe for the purpose of creating a vibrant country which is focused on development to middle income status by 2030. Reasonable members from the same opposition are welcomed by H.E. the President to contribute to the success of the new Zimbabwe.

I should like to pay tribute to Your Excellencies whose Governments sent observers to our elections. Many were here before election day, on the day itself and, indeed, some remain among us. Their presence and that of international non-governmental organization observers gave us joy in that that presence of the international community gave substance to our claim that we have nothing to hide. We continue to receive their assessments, critiques and recommendations on how we could have our plebiscites conducted better.

With the conclusion of the electoral processes and in particular the announcement of the winner of the Presidential race, we expect the previously prevailing peaceful normalcy to return and allow our nation to move on. There is a lot to be done to rebuild this nation. The country will now move on to continue to re-engage with members of the international community. The revival of the economy is the priority as we seek inclusive growth which manifest in better livelihoods and better service delivery. This is a peaceful country in which FDI and foreign persons are safe. We welcome them all.

Again, we are touched and heartened by the congratulatory messages H.E, President E.D. Mnangagwa has received from across the entire globe including from some of your countries. Those who challenge his victory should choose the legal route, not the mob on the streets.

As a nation we are humbled by his acceptance speech in which he again exuded his usual humility and unique qualities to unite the nation beyond elections onto a new developmental trajectory, in absolute peace and tranquility should be the norm. I want to concluded by another quote and this time from President “Edee” himself. **“The voice of the people is the voice of God”.** Letus all heed it, but in particular, we Zimbabweans.

May the Lord bless our country as we move on into the future.

I thank you for your attention and again Good day.