



ADDRESS

BY

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
ZIMBABWE**

HIS EXCELLENCY, CDE E.D. MNANGAGWA,

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE
STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS**

AND THE

OFFICIAL OPENING

**OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE
NINTH PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE:**

18 SEPTEMBER, 2018

**Madam President of the Senate,
Mr Speaker, Sir,
Honourable Members of Parliament,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Comrades and Friends.**

I welcome you all to this official opening of the First Session of the Ninth Parliament of Zimbabwe. This Session is significant in that it is my inaugural address to this august House as President of our great country and occurring at the dawn of the Second Republic.

As per my promise, the recently held Harmonised General Elections, whose outcome constituted this new Parliament, were peaceful, free, fair and democratic. Allow me, Honourable Members of Parliament, to take this opportunity to congratulate you all for having secured the mandate to represent our people for the next five years. Congratulations! Makorokoto! Amhlophe! Parliament is a sacred institution. Collectively, we carry our people's hopes, dreams and aspirations. A great

deal of trust has been placed in each and every one of us. It is therefore incumbent upon us, to work tirelessly as servant leaders, in love, unity and harmony; to deliver a more prosperous Zimbabwe for all our people.

I wish to also pay tribute to all the people of Zimbabwe, from across the political divide, for heeding my call for peaceful political contestations; and for contributing to the peaceful environment we continue to enjoy. We can stand proud as a nation that our democracy has matured. Let us continue on the onerous journey we have begun to entrench constitutionalism, and democratic practices and values.

The isolated, regrettable and unacceptable incident of violence which occurred on 1st August 2018 should not deter us from the bold course of peace we have begun. I have announced a seven member Commission of Inquiry, consisting of eminent persons, whom I will be swearing-in tomorrow, Wednesday 19 September 2018. I am confident that their ultimate report and

recommendations will help put closure and finality to the matter.

Madam President,

Mr Speaker, Sir,

My Administration has committed to prioritise economic development as a strategic response to the pressing need to leapfrog our economic development in line with our national aspirations as well as the regional, continental and international trajectory. As such, this particular period in our country's history and the advent of the Second Republic herald brighter prospects and resolutely focuses towards rapid modernisation and industrialisation of our country's economy.

United by our vision to be a Middle Income Economy with a per capita income of USD3 500, increased investment, decent jobs, broad based empowerment, free from poverty and corruption by 2030; we must all individually and collectively put shoulders to the wheel and play our part in the rebuilding of our great country.

My Government, cognisant that the world is not one basket and encouraged by the goodwill and support we have received to date, will continue to accelerate the international engagement and re-engagement policy, underpinned by mutual respect, peaceful development, shared principles and common values.

Comprehensive plans will be put in place to expedite the desired outcome towards the external debt arrears clearance strategy, under the LIMA Plan.

In a bid to ensure that the nation realizes value from its external relations, my Government is with immediate effect revisiting all MOUs signed with other Governments which are idle, gathering dust and unimplemented by various ministries.

In addition, Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements will be reviewed to promote investments from across the world.

Though we have made some progress over the last ten months, some challenges still however continue to face our country's economy. I urge us all, the Executive, Legislature and the public and private sectors alike to be partners. Partners in bringing about economic order and growth; job creation; an end to corruption; improving our social services; and in the provision of requisite infrastructure, water and sanitation, education, healthcare and good environmental practices. This is a goal we must all share.

My Government will accelerate ongoing effort towards stabilising the macro- economic environment, creation of fiscal space; currency reforms and enhancing foreign currency availability; improving liquidity; increasing the country's investment attractiveness; reducing the budget deficit and ensuring gradual growth of all sectors of our economy.

My Government shall however continue with the use of the multi-currency system up until the current negative economic fundamentals have been addressed to give credence to the introduction of the local currency. The economic fundamentals that need to be met are a sustainable fiscal position, foreign currency reserves of between 3 to 6 months of import cover and sustainable consumer and business confidence. These economic fundamentals are yet to be met to justify the introduction of our own currency.

In order to bring sanity in the foreign currency market, my Government through the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, has negotiated a number of foreign exchange facilities amounting to USD 500 million that are intended to meet the growing demand for foreign currency by business and the public in general. Some of these facilities shall be disbursed this week to meet the expanding demand for foreign currency that continues

to be sustained by fiscal imbalances which my Government has made a great commitment to redress.

Furthermore, my Government will, with renewed urgency, continue to drive a high performance culture within all public entities. All public servants are hence forth required to change their work ethics to ensure the efficient and prudent use of public resources; responsiveness, accountability as well as timely, impartial and equitable delivery of goods and services to our people.

The lethargic and non implementation of Government policies, projects and programmes will not be acceptable. Our bureaucrats must be committed to deliver. We will vehemently fight bureaucratic red tape and bottlenecks.

Equally, state owned enterprises have an obligation to operate profitably and cannot continue to be a burden to the fiscus. We will therefore be implementing the

Cabinet decision to streamline some of our public entities to bring about greater focus, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, ease and cost of doing business and better service delivery to our people.

To this end, the creation of a more competitive and business friendly environment must be given greater impetus by all relevant institutions. We will not pay lip service to this matter. Reforms must be real. Meanwhile, I challenge the private sector to be honest, ethical and honourable in their business dealings.

Madame President,

Mr Speaker, Sir,

Agriculture remains a key sector in the resuscitation and growth of our economy. The restructured Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water, Climate and Rural Resettlement will have an accelerated, more coordinated and composite approach to the modernisation and mechanisation of our agriculture sector. As we quest to achieve maximum land utilisation for increased productivity; there is need for

strategic and concise planning, development and use of our water bodies throughout the country. We will be pursuing further investments and cooperation in this respect.

We note the ongoing increased production of maize, wheat and cotton. In line with our industrialisation agenda, the revival and development of vibrant agro-based industries along the various agro- value chains, such as cereals, cotton, vegetables, horticulture, fruits, meat and dairy products, among others, will be encouraged.

Government remains aware of the challenges that face our manufacturing sector. We are committed to ease this pressure through increased foreign currency disbursements. Meanwhile, we must continue to scale up the value addition and beneficiation drive to ensure Zimbabwe enters the regional, continental and global value chains.

The mining sector remains yet another key component of our economic recovery programme. The production performance of gold, platinum and chrome sub- sectors are encouraging. My administration will facilitate further revival of the sector and broaden the range of minerals exploited. Government will continue to facilitate the acquisition and use of appropriate modern, efficient and adaptable technologies by our small scale miners to increase efficiency and output, especially in gold production.

We must take full advantage of our country's lithium and Coal Bed Methane reserves to seek cooperation and investment and become a centre for research, development and the manufacturing of green energy solutions.

The development and mordenisation of our roads, railways, airports, energy and ICT infrastructure will be accelerated. This must however be in sync with our

domestic realities as well as the on-going quest by SADC and Africa as a whole, for enhanced connectivity and integrated infrastructure.

The tourism sector continues to make notable improvements. There is need, however, to improve tourism infrastructure, product range, quality and pricing of our products to make them more competitive. Stakeholders in this sector are encouraged to leverage on partnerships with other successful tourist destinations in the region, to jointly market products available in our country.

Cities such as Bulawayo are challenged to consider marketing the opportunities around ‘meeting and event tourism’, taking into account the presence of the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair facilities.

SMEs, women and youth have an important role to play in the modernisation, growth and subsequent industrialisation of our national economy. These groups

are equally essential in increased job creation, innovation, environmental sustainability and more inclusive growth.

My Government will hasten the improvement on the institutional regulatory framework for this sector, through deliberate and sensitive policies which tap into the entrepreneurial zeal and business dynamism of these important groupings. We will be consolidating their access to finance through the Zimbabwe Women's Micro- Finance Bank and Empower Bank, among other instruments.

The need for modern education and health infrastructure cannot be over emphasized. We will seek incremental investments in our social services sector to achieve our desired goals. As our economy grows, we shall ensure that the requisite social safety nets are in place for the more vulnerable members of our society.

The Constitutionally enshrined provisions of devolution of Government powers and responsibilities will be implemented. I urge us all, however, to use this opportunity to drive economic development and inclusive growth within our respective localities. Provinces must strive to have diverse economic activities and seek to have distinct Provincial GDPs.

Sustainable development cannot be achieved without a good, clean society. As Government we will continue to entrench, transparency, accountability and good governance in all public entities and institutions.

As I stated in my inauguration speech; No person or entity will be allowed to steal, loot or pocket that which belongs to the people of Zimbabwe. No one is above the law. I urge us all, as public officials, to lead by example and be beyond reproach.

Madame President,

Mr Speaker, Sir,

In view of the above; the Legislative Agenda of this Ninth Parliament must therefore seek to give greater impetus to our ambitious and yet achievable economic agenda. A cross section of Bills will be tabled, debated and enacted. These include the following;

- The Companies and Other Entities Bill, which will overhaul the Companies Act.
- The Regional Town and Country Planning Amendment Bill, which seeks to reduce the time and procedures for processing construction permits.
- The Zimbabwe Investment and Development Agency Bill, which seeks to consolidate various pieces of legislation on investment which are presently spread under various Acts. The Bill will also provide for the establishment of a one-stop investment centre, the Zimbabwe Investment and Development Agency.
- The Citizenship of Zimbabwe Act and the Immigration Act shall be amended.

- The Mines and Minerals Amendment Bill will be re-tabled to address some inadequacies therein and will further provide for online registration of mining rights and title.
- The Gold Trade Bill and the Precious Stones Trade Bill, which seeks to curb leakages of precious minerals, will also be tabled.

Madame President,

Mr Speaker, Sir,

- The Bill to establish the Institute of Education Research, Innovation and Development will be tabled to align with the programme on value addition and import substitution strategies.
- A Consumer Protection Bill shall be introduced to protect our consumers from unfair trade practices and abuse by suppliers of sub- standard goods.
- In line with our determination to further open up our media space, the Bill for the establishment of a

Zimbabwe Media Commission, and an Amendment of the Broadcasting Services Act, shall be tabled.

- To mitigate the security risks and cyber crime related threats, a Cyber Crime and Cyber Security Bill shall be tabled before this Parliament. This shall also be supported by the introduction of the Data Protection Bill as well as the Electronic Transactions and Electronic Commercial Bill.
- The Labour Amendment Bill will be brought to this House for discussion and approval. This must be in tandem with the ongoing ease and cost of doing business reforms; and equally seek an intricate balance between labour productivity and workplace harmony.
- The Cooperative Societies Amendment Bill will be tabled to strengthen the regulation of cooperatives in the country.
- The Tripartite Negotiating Forum Bill, which aims to facilitate participatory development by fostering greater collaboration between all social partners, will

also be brought for consideration by this august House.

Madame President,

Mr Speaker, Sir,

The alignment of our laws to the Constitution, which became necessary as a consequence of the adoption of the current Constitution, remains work-in-progress, notwithstanding the strides made in the previous Sessions.

This Parliament is thus expected to, *inter alia*, consider the following;

- the Coroner's Bill, which provides for the establishment of the Coroner's Office;
- The Constitutional Court Bill which, among other things, seeks to confer additional responsibilities to the Constitutional Court.

- The Customary Law and Local Courts Bill, which provides for the exclusion of harmful cultural practices from Customary Law.
- The High Court Amendment Bill, which will provide for clear appeals and referral procedures from the High Court to the Constitutional Court and establish their jurisdictional matters.

Furthermore;

- The Rural District Councils Bill intended to give Rural Councils greater autonomy, as enshrined in the Constitution, shall be tabled in this august House.
- The Traditional Leaders Act will be amended to bring it into line with the Constitution and more particularly, to provide for the establishment of Provincial Assemblies.
- The Provincial and Metropolitan Councils Bill, will facilitate the devolution of governmental powers and

responsibilities to Provincial and Local Authorities. Through this Bill, Provincial and Metropolitan Councils will be reconfigured in accordance with Chapter 14 of the Constitution. This will further seek to facilitate enhanced coordination between Central Government, Provincial Councils and Local Authorities, within the context of the decentralisation and devolution programme.

- In addition, the Public Finance Management Act will be amended to facilitate the allocation of sufficient resources for basic social services and economic development at the local level.

Meanwhile;

- The Forestry Amendment Bill, will be tabled for consideration by this Parliament to provide for measures to effectively foster the sustainable management of the country's forestry resource.

My Government will bring for ratification by this Parliament;

- The Kigali Amendment to the Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Stability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Bio-Safety.
- The Accession to the Additional Protocol to the Agreements between States and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the Application of Safeguards.
- The Accession to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management.
- The Accession to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.
- The Accession to the Convention on Assistance in the case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiology Emergency and,

- The Accession to the Convention on the Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident.

Madame President,

Mr Speaker, Sir,

Our society continues to face the challenges associated with human trafficking. To help deal with this social ill, my Government has already endorsed some protocols which now await ratification by this Parliament. These include;

- The Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air and,
- The Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts, Components and Ammunition.

This Parliament is also expected to consider;

- The Child Justice Bill and the Marriages Bill, which seeks to provide a child justice system and to outlaw child marriages, respectively.

- The Mandatory Sentencing for Rape and Sexual Abuse Bill shall be considered by this Parliament.

Madame President,

Mr Speaker, Sir,

My Government stands committed to deepen its democratic values and aspirations for the prosperity of our country. We will continue to engage all cooperating partners to harness our full potential. The ongoing reopening of lines of credit from cooperating partners will undoubtedly help the retooling of our industries and creation of more jobs across various sectors of our economy.

On its part, Government will continue to ensure policy consistency, transparency and predictability, underpinned by fiscal discipline, hard honest work and a responsive bureaucracy.

My Government, is indeed gravely perturbed by the current outbreak of water borne diseases such as cholera and typhoid in some parts of the country. It is regrettable that this has resulted in the wanton loss of

life. Let us, as a nation commit to permanently eradicate these medieval diseases, mainly through addressing the challenges related to clean water and sanitation provision as well as sustainable waste management practices.

Going forward, Government and local authorities will be seized with this issue. In this regard, the enforcement of the Public Health Act, which I recently assented to, shall be imperative.

Madam President,

Mr Speaker, Sir,

The election period is decisively behind us. It is time for us, as Members of Parliament and political leaders, to exert our efforts towards delivering on the pledges we made to the electorate.

Our people have reposed their trust and confidence in us, with the firm hope that we can bring a positive difference to their livelihoods. It is incumbent upon us all to unite our citizens and galvanise them towards the attainment of economic prosperity and Vision 2030.

As this august House settles down to serious work, I wish to implore all members to always act in the national interest and preach the gospel of peace, love, harmony, tolerance and hard honest work. Let us all, unflinching commit to the rebuilding of our nation, as one people, united by one Flag and one national Anthem.

I exhort you all to undertake the legislative task before you as servant leaders, emboldened by the people's mandate which you each carry. History will judge us harshly, should we renege on the sacrosanct duty to uplift the livelihoods of our people.

Madam President,

Mr Speaker, Sir,

I now, therefore, with honour and humility place these matters before you and declare the First Session of the Ninth Parliament of Zimbabwe, officially opened.

God bless you all.

God bless Zimbabwe.

I thank you.