**HONOURABLE (RETIRED) LT GEN. DR S.B MOYO, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE: BRIEF TO JOUNALISTS**

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen,

President Trump signed the ZIDERA Amendment Act of 2018, on 09 August 2018.

The Zimbabwe Government was in March 2018 informed by Ambassador Harry K Thomas that Congress was considering this amendment. It was informed not to view this as a worsening of relations but instead to view this recast as a set of achievable conditions to be tabled at a later date.

5 USA senators visited Zimbabwe from 6-8 April 2018 and said they would conclude the Amendment Bill soon.

As you know, travel bans of many Zimbabweans in leadership and some uniformed service senior officials remain, as they are banned from entering US territory; in addition, the assets of many Zimbabweans can be confiscated by the Office of Foreign Assets Control at any time, further impairing the conduct of bilateral commercial relations.

Commerce between the two states remains hampered by non-existent bank to bank relations. Even the amended ZIDERA now acknowledges the economic reforms being achieved by this Government as well the Bill’s noting that the country has paid its debt arrears to the IMF. Both US companies and foreign companies, as well as individuals from Zimbabwe are subject to the penalties. It cannot therefore be naively claimed that ZIDERA is targeted at a few individuals and does not affect trade and investment between the US and Zimbabwe, as the international media has always claimed.

Addressing World Bank and African Development Bank loan arrears remains a challenge; The USA still vetoes new loans to Zimbabwe until those arrears are addressed. The Bill does however, acknowledge some economic reforms already achieved and more in prospect.

ZIDERA remains a challenge in that it is an extra territorial law,as Zimbabwe is not legally bound by another State’s domestic laws. However, some of the issues it raises, eg rule of law and enjoyment of freedoms, have been ushered in by the new dispensation.

Several USA NGOS were among many international election observers for the harmonised general elections of 30 July 2018. The holding of free, fair, violence-free elections answers even more of ZIDERA’s queries of governance in Zimbabwe.

Post-election violence on 1 August 2018 should not be allowed to blemish the peaceful, free, fair and credible elections. Neither should any other events blemish our recent harmonised elections.

Therefore, the recently signed ZIDERA Amendment Act (2018) is unfortunate in that we would rather there were no restrictive measures and sanctions in our bilateral relations with the United States. That said, I wish to point out that there are some progressive aspects to the amended Act as well as some unfortunate and unhelpful ones.

The rule of law, freedom of expression, free and fair elections have already been accomplished in the new dispensation. Reforms of political and economic laws are ongoing endeavours in the new dispensation. The unprogressive aspects of the amended act refer to some issues which are being addressed by the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission. Some regional institutions which were never domesticated by most countries can never be resuscitated and their determinations are now a nullity.

Whilst we regret that ZIDERA continues to exist in any form, we are determined to continue in the re-engagement with the US administration, as we together seek to restore our bilateral relations to normalcy.

I thank you for your attention.

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS & INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**12 AUGUST 2018**