



ADDRESS

BY

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

AT THE

**GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 77TH SESSION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, NEW
YORK, USA**

22 SEPTEMBER 2022

Your Excellency, Mr. Csaba Korosi, President of the 77th Session of the General Assembly,

Your Excellency, Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations,

Your Majesties,

Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,

Distinguished Delegates.

It is my singular honour to deliver this statement to this august Assembly. Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election as the President of the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Please be assured of Zimbabwe's full support as you guide our deliberations during the current Session.

I also pay special tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Abdulla Shahid, for leading the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly as the world grappled with a plethora of challenges.

We commend him for the President of the General Assembly Fellowship of Hope initiative towards enhancing youth interest, engagement, and commitment in the work of the UN. This will go a long way towards safeguarding the interests of future generations as embodied in today's youth. Their voices must be heard across our Governments and within the United Nations. Zimbabwe is privileged to be among the pioneering beneficiaries of this programme.

Mr. President,

Delivering the 2030 Agenda remains an urgent priority for us all. Our theme for this Session, “*A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges*” captures the importance of scaling up our actions informed by the state of our world. The number of persons exposed to food insecurity continues to increase.

Meanwhile, the scourges of conflict and climate change have become major drivers of migration and refugees. The ever looming threat associated with the “Triple C Crisis” of COVID-19; Conflict and Climate Change, has placed upon us, an enormous responsibility to confront these interlocking challenges by strengthening multilateralism and solidarity. Terrorism, biodiversity loss, desertification, pollution, and cybercrime among other challenges reinforce the urgent need to implement the inclusive and transformative solutions that leave no one and no place behind.

This 77th Session comes in the wake of debilitating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic that overstretched our healthcare systems and severely exposed the disparities between developed and developing countries, with regards to vaccine access. Africa is among the most affected.

The lessons from the pandemic should inspire and enable the UN General Assembly to urgently scale up means to build multi- pronged capacities that must guide our collective response to future pandemics and other global challenges.

Despite the illegal economic sanctions, Zimbabwe successfully implemented its COVID 19 National Response Strategy, anchored largely by our own internal resources and institutional capacities. The pro-active approach by my administration enabled the country to achieve high vaccination rates, which extended to children up to 12 years.

Meanwhile, our focus on the construction, rehabilitation and modernisation of health facilities across the country, coupled with the enhanced capacities around bio-technology and the pharmaceutical value chain, attests to my Government's determination to realise Universal Health Coverage.

Mr President,

Lifting many more people out of poverty and into a higher quality of life must remain at the core of both UN activities and the programmes and projects of our respective countries. Zimbabwe has made significant strides towards ending poverty and hunger. This has seen the implementation of various policies and programmes to support and empower communal and small scale farmers.

At the household level, the provision of agriculture inputs, equipment and technical support to farmers, especially the vulnerable, has contributed to household and national food and nutrition security. However, in 2022, mid-season drought and tropical cyclones regrettably reduced the overall performance of the agriculture sector.

To this end, the climate change conundrum has continued to be an albatross. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement should remain the primary platform for negotiating our

collective global response to climate change. All measures taken to achieve the targets and commitments set under the Paris Agreement have to be implemented. Furthermore, the principle of “Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities” in light of the different national circumstances must also be reflected.

Financing for climate change has remained inadequate, leaving the scope for effective and just transition to renewable energy among developing countries under serious threat. It is our hope that at COP 27 in Egypt, later this year, the developed countries will deliver more concrete action on climate change, not just for mitigation targets, but also, in relation to adaptation, loss and damage, climate specific finance, technology transfer and capacity building.

In our case, Zimbabwe is making concerted and deliberate efforts to integrate climate action into our national policies, strategies and planning. This includes strengthening resilience and the adaptive capacity of the most vulnerable in our society.

Additionally, my Government is implementing an ambitious programme to increase the number of dams for irrigation. The programme is expected to create greenbelts across the country, as we reduce dependence on rain-fed agricultural activities while enhancing export-led production and productivity.

Our comprehensive Agriculture Transformation Strategy is focused on increasing production and productivity across the agriculture spectrum. This was instrumental in our unprecedented realisation of national wheat self sufficiency as well as increased exports in horticulture.

The provision of technical extension services for improved land and water use has seen widespread adoption of climate smart agricultural innovations, with evident upward increase of incomes among communal and small holder farmers as well as women and youth in agriculture.

Mr President,

Zimbabwe is committed to Agenda 2030 and has to this end mainstreamed the 17 SDGs into our national economic development blueprint, the National Development Strategy. We acknowledge the support of the United Nations in the alignment of this Strategy to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Economic reforms have been implemented resulting in significant progress in sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, mining and tourism.

Our “**Zimbabwe is open for business**” mantra has fostered strong partnership between the Government and the private sector for inclusive and sustainable development.

Massive infrastructure development projects which include dams, energy plants and roads have broadened our national economic asset base as well as production and productivity enablers, while enhancing regional connectivity and integration.

The current global financial architecture has demonstrated its inadequacies to address the challenges that confront us. Increasing and unsustainable debt burden, prohibitive cost of borrowing, illicit financial flows and exploitation of natural resources from developing countries, have all combined to relegate developing countries to the periphery of the global financial system.

There is therefore need for a global financial system which is just, more inclusive and responsive to the challenges we face.

Equally, the international trade architecture, under the World Trade Organisation, has remained largely exclusive and indifferent to the needs of developing countries. The African Continental Free Trade Area is, thus, expected to be the panacea for Africa to trade and stimulate economic growth and development. The AfCFTA must be complimented as we strive to improve production and trade in goods and services. Liberalisation of services and the strengthening of Competition Policy and Intellectual Property Rights; as well as the adoption of digital trade should also be enhanced.

Mr President;

Education is a key driver of sustainable development with a direct impact on SDG 4, SDG 5 on Gender Equality, and SDG 17 on Partnerships for the Goals. Zimbabwe has embarked on reforms based on our Heritage Based Education 5.0 Model which emphasises on science, technology, innovation and industrialisation. These are indeed necessary tools to leap forward the modernisation and industrialisation of our countries in the developing world.

My Government is equally providing quality, inclusive and accessible education through the roll out of a phased free primary school education system. The Transforming Education Summit, during this High-Level Week, is a timely and welcome development which should help revitalise the education sector, more so after COVID -19 induced disruptions.

My country notes that more work needs to be done, globally to close the gender gaps that are often aggravated in times of crises. Opportunities are being created for all Zimbabweans, especially for women and youth, to realise their individual and collective potential. Milestones have thus been achieved in the implementation of SDG 5 on gender equality, leading to expanded empowerment and employment opportunities for both women and the youth.

The proportional representation for women in Parliament is enshrined in the Constitution. Under my leadership, Zimbabwe has legislated reserved youth seats in the National Assembly. To further strengthen participatory democracy and good governance, my government has introduced a 30% quota for women in Local Authorities. This is more important as women bear the brunt of poor service delivery at the local level.

The establishment of Gender and Youth Focal Desks within Government Ministries has helped to mainstream the issues of young people, particularly young women.

Mr President,

Sustainable socio-economic development is an indispensable imperative for the enjoyment of the fundamental rights of any people. The Policy of Devolution and Decentralisation has seen increased budgetary support, directly to the local authorities. Communities right at the village, ward and district levels are now making independent decisions and prioritising their programmes and projects informed by the most pressing needs.

This has seen the rapid construction of schools, clinics, water and sanitation infrastructure and other social amenities, in the most remote areas of our country.

In the same vein, my Government is promoting heritage based rural industrialization to guarantee improved livelihoods and incomes of all communities, based on their respective unique natural resource endowments.

Mr. President,

Zimbabwe is modernising, industrialising based on our local resources and human capital base. Inspired by the historic monument, Great Zimbabwe, from which our country's name is derived, we are building our country brick by brick, stone upon stone, with the support of our friends and partners. As my Government continues to entrench democracy, good governance and the rule of law, we are committed to vibrant, competitive and peaceful political contestations.

Notwithstanding our success, the on-going deleterious effects of the illegal sanctions continue to hamper and slow down our progress and the realisation of sustainable and inclusive development.

Zimbabwe is a peace loving country. We remain indebted to the SADC region and the African Union, as well as other progressive members in the comity of nations for their unwavering support and calls for the removal of these unwarranted and unjustified sanctions. We once again call for their immediate and unconditional removal. My country welcomes the findings of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impact of the Unilateral Coercive Measures on the Enjoyment of Human Rights, who visited Zimbabwe in 2021.

Mr. President,

At the international level, Zimbabwe has adopted an Engagement and Re-engagement Policy.

This Policy is underpinned by the principles of mutual understanding and respect, cooperation, partnership and shared values with other members of the international community. We desire to be **“a friend to all and an enemy to none”**.

My country is greatly concerned that more than 20 years after the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, hate crimes, xenophobia, racial discrimination and intolerance have continued to increase at an alarming rate, including at institutional levels. There is need, therefore, to recommit to fighting these scourges, in all their forms and manifestations.

The spread of terrorism and intensification of old conflicts on the African Continent and throughout the world have been a setback to our quest to **“Silence the Guns.”**

In Southern Africa, we remain seized with insecurity and terrorist insurgency in Northern parts of Cabo Delgado and conflicts in parts of the Great Lakes Region.

Emboldened by our SADC regional philosophy that **“an injury to one is an injury to all”**; we continue to pool our resources to fight terrorism and other threats to peace, security and stability in our region. We appeal to the United Nations to render the requisite support to our efforts to restore peace in the affected areas.

Zimbabwe stands committed to playing its part for the realisation of peace and security, within various United Nations, African Union and SADC peacekeeping and peace building missions.

The scale and gravity of our challenges today cannot be addressed through old structures and old ways of doing business. Zimbabwe subscribes to the Ezulwini

Consensus and the Sirte Declaration as the sustainable approach to the reform of the UN Security Council.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, Zimbabwe reaffirms its commitment to the principles of the UN Charter and multilateralism in the resolution of the complex and intersecting challenges facing our world. The implementation of the inclusive 2030 Agenda remains our biggest hope for the future we all want. There is indeed a more compelling case for enhanced solidarity, cooperation and partnerships if we are to respond effectively to these challenges and ensure our collective survival.

The UN should remain the beacon and source of hope for the global citizenry. As leaders, we have a weighty burden and responsibility to make the UN deliver to the expectations of all the peoples of the world.

I thank you for your kind attention.