



ADDRESS

BY THE

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

AT THE

78TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

21 SEPTEMBER 2023

Your Excellency, Mr. Dennis Francis, President of the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly;

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

Your Majesties; Excellencies, Heads of State and Government;

Distinguished Delegates.

I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election as the President of the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. We are confident that under your stewardship, we will make progress on the important global agenda before us. Please be assured of Zimbabwe's support throughout your tenure.

I also pay special tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, for leading the 77th Session of the General Assembly.

We value the role he played to promote science in our overarching goal to improve the lives and livelihoods of all.

Mr. President;

It is imperative that we re-commit to the Charter of the United Nations, multilateralism, solidarity, justice and the peaceful settlement of disputes for sustainable development and a shared future. This calls on us all to respect the sovereign equality of nations, big or small, poor or rich.

By working together, we can harness our expertise and learn from one another to strengthen international institutions for the accelerated attainment of Agenda 2030. The impact of conflicts, terrorism, climate change induced natural disasters, biodiversity loss, and the rising prevalence of disease and pandemics, especially in the developing world, deserve our urgent attention.

Regrettably, progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals has been uneven, while global solidarity has been tested and self-interest superseding cooperation. We have a duty to reignite our commitment to the principles of the 2030 Agenda and rekindle the spirit of multilateralism.

To accelerate action on the SDGs, we must scale up investments in people and communities by ensuring access to quality education, healthcare, clean water, and sanitation for all. The creation of economic opportunities, decent jobs and entrepreneurship, especially among women and the youth, must remain a priority.

Excellencies;

Zimbabwe continues to entrench democracy, constitutionalism, good governance and the rule of law, following the recently held 2023 Harmonised General Elections.

I am pleased to highlight that our country enjoyed peace, before, during and after our free, fair, transparent and credible elections.

Zimbabwe has been under the illegal, unilateral economic sanctions for 23 years, imposed by some Western countries. These sanctions were designed to subjugate the sovereign will of the Zimbabwean people. We, therefore, demand that the unjustified unilateral sanctions be unconditionally lifted, including those imposed on countries like Cuba. We remain grateful for the support and solidarity of progressive countries in the comity of nations.

In spite of these debilitating sanctions the people of Zimbabwe have become masters of their own destiny. This is anchored on a philosophy that as a people, we have the duty and responsibility of developing our country, using our own domestic resources.

Partners and investors are welcome, guided by our own vision and national priority areas.

We are recording unprecedented development and economic success milestones. For the last three years, our country has been the fastest growing economy in our Southern African region. Further, Zimbabwe is prioritizing the eradication of poverty and improving the quality of life of our people, particularly, those in rural areas. The empowerment and capacitation of communal and small-scale farmers has seen us realise food and nutrition security at both household and national level. With effect from this year, our country will become a net exporter of wheat.

Zimbabwe has not been spared from the negative impact of climate change. Hence, my Government continues to make the requisite investment in infrastructure to mitigate

and build resilience towards climate change adaptation. Dams are being built across the country.

In addition, we have begun an ambitious and yet achievable programme to sink solar powered boreholes in each of our country's 35 000 rural villages and schools.

Alongside each of these water points are commercial nutritional gardens for the empowerment of women and youth.

Through the use of our own resources, we have constructed an unprecedented number of schools, clinics and provided other social amenities, throughout our communities.

Mr. President,

Today's realities, across all regions, bring to the fore the importance of global solidarity. No nation, no matter how powerful, can stand alone to realise sustainable and inclusive development.

The High-Level Meetings on Universal Health Coverage, Tuberculosis and Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness, and Response are welcome opportunities to reflect on the importance of maintaining essential services during pandemics and health emergencies. The realisation of affordable and quality health delivery, as outlined under SDG 3 is a key deliverable for my administration.

Science, technology and innovation are essential ingredients to leap frog the modernisation and industrialisation of developing countries. To this end, Zimbabwe continues to reap the benefits of a comprehensive and transformative heritage based higher education curriculum.

The Innovation Hubs and Industrial Parks established within institutions of higher education have refocused young people in our tertiary institutions towards developing and producing goods and services.

Allow me to reaffirm that **“Zimbabwe is open for business”**.

Mr. President;

Building resilience and tackling the adverse impact of climate change should be an urgent priority for us all. In the case of Zimbabwe and the Southern African Region, floods and droughts have affected the livelihoods of many, while hindering progress on national development.

May I express my deepest condolences and sympathies to the Government and peoples of the Kingdom of Morocco and the State of Libya on the recent loss of lives as a result of the devastating impact of climate change.

There is need for concrete climate action, as opposed to mere promises, so that we strengthen our adaption, resilience and mitigation mechanisms.

We must transition to a low-carbon and resilient global economy by increasing investments in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and green infrastructure.

Commitments made under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement must be honoured to deliver climate justice. It is our hope that progress will be made to operationalize the Loss and Damage Fund.

Zimbabwe is implementing a Climate Change Policy and Response Strategy while disaster management and early warning systems continue to be strengthened.

Mr. President;

The need to reform global financial institutions is of essence to unlock funding for developing countries. The current exclusionary architecture, dominated by a few States, is failing to deliver the requisite resources

for countries to finance their developmental priorities and other pressing health and environmental challenges. The short comings in the last round of SDR allocations, should be addressed.

Zimbabwe supports the Stimulus Package proposed by the United Nations Secretary-General. We further call for the long-term concessional loans, increased access to unused Special Drawing Rights, as well as the use of modalities such as debt cancellation and restructuring as stimulus for developing countries to grow their economies and build greater resilience.

We strongly condemn tendencies by some powerful countries who preach peace, human rights and democracy and yet clandestinely fund conflicts and the unconstitutional changes of governments, for their own narrow interests.

We, further, condemn the use of unilateral and illegal sanctions as a foreign policy tool at the disposal of some powerful nations, such as those sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe and countries like Cuba. Such actions hamper the trust, global solidarity and multilateralism we desire.

It is important that we channel our collective efforts towards building peace and driving forward our development agenda, for shared prosperity. There is much more that unites us, than that which divides us.

Similarly, the establishment of a fair and inclusive global security architecture has become urgent. The maintenance of peace and security should never be the preserve of a privileged few. Zimbabwe reaffirms calls by Africa for the reform of the United Nations Security Council in line with the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration.

Mr President,

Allow me to conclude by reaffirming Zimbabwe's commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter as we implement our global Agenda 2030. Collectively, let us restore human dignity, peace security and stability, while safeguarding our planet, for the shared prosperity of present and future generations. Together, in unity and harmony, we are stronger.

I thank you.