



ADDRESS

BY

THE PRESIDENT, HIS EXCELLENCY

DR. E. D. MNANGAGWA

AT

**THE COMMISSIONING OF THE ROBERT
GABRIEL MUGABE INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT VVIP PAVILION LOUNGE**

HARARE

22 AUGUST 2024

Director of Ceremonies;

Vice President, Hon. Gen. (Rtd) C. G. D. N. Chiwenga;

Vice President, Hon. Col. (Rtd) K. C. D. Mohadi;

Minister of Defence and Chairman of ZANU PF,
Hon. O. C. Z. Muchinguri-Kashiri;

Minister of State for Harare Metropolitan Province,
Hon. C. Z. Tavengwa;

Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development,
Hon. F. T. Mhona;

Other Hon. Ministers here present;

The Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to
Zimbabwe, His Excellency, Mr Zhou Ding;

Chief Secretary to the President and Cabinet,
Dr. M. Rushwaya;

Chairman of the Public Service Commission,
Dr. V. Hungwe

Senior Government Officials;

Chairperson of the Airports Company of Zimbabwe,
Adv. J. T. Muhonde;

Your Excellences, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Airports Company of Zimbabwe CEO, Mr. T. Gusha,
Senior Management and Staff;

China Jiangsu Construction Company International
Management and Staff;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Six years ago, in July 2018, we gathered at these grounds at the official ground breaking ceremony to mark the commencement of works on the expansion of this Robert Gabriel Mugabe International Airport. This followed the pronouncement of the Second Republic of our commitment towards infrastructure development in all sectors of the economy to facilitate rapid and wholistic socio-economic growth of our beloved Motherland, Zimbabwe.

The journey is ongoing, and we are celebrating that key milestones which are evident with the completion of numerous projects.

Today, we gather specifically for the commissioning of the Robert Gabriel Mugabe International Airport VVIP Pavilion, which was a portion of the Expansion Project. These involved the expansion of the current apron areas to accommodate more aero bridges; a new fire station and rehabilitation and expansion of the International Terminal Building as well as the modernisation of Domestic Terminal Building.

On behalf of the Government and people of Zimbabwe and on my own behalf, allow me to express my profound gratitude to the People's Republic of China, under the leadership of His Excellency, President Xi Jinping, for extending support under our Comprehensive and Strategic Partnership Framework.

China was with us in our fight for independence and freedom, there are with us in the present as we scale up our quest to improve the quality of life for our people and they shall remain a close and dependable ally of Zimbabwe, into the future.

Earlier today, I was pleased to receive a donation of 1 760 tonnes of rice from the people's Republic of China. This is a demonstration of the nature and pragmatic cooperation between our two countries which transcends across all sectors of the economy.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

My Administration recognises the important role played by air transport in promoting national economic development, particularly through facilitating tourism, trade, investment, business travel and cargo movement, among others. It is essential for accessing world markets, strengthening regional and global integration, as well as attracting Foreign Direct Investment.

The completion of this facility is in keeping with the goal of providing world-class aviation services, to visitors of our beautiful country, Zimbabwe. Concurrently, my Government upgraded the Communication, Navigation and Surveillance/Air Traffic Management systems.

These new systems, being the cornerstone of aviation safety and security, will further guarantee comprehensive coverage and monitoring of the Zimbabwean airspace, in line with global standards.

It is pleasing that the construction of this VVIP Pavilion, as with other sections of the Robert Gabriel Mugabe International Airport Expansion Project were completed on schedule. This was in spite of the delays necessitated by supply disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Congratulations.

From a historical standpoint, we the people of Zimbabwe, are builders, with a high sense of beauty in designs. This spans from the great Munhumutapa Empire, whose architecture is also evident in Khami monuments outside Bulawayo, Matendera in Buhera and Bonsa in Shurugwi, among many others, which have transcended generations.

The architecture of the Pavilion, along with its creative designs, aesthetics and imagery are a refreshing portrayal of the rich cultural heritage of our great country. These correctly capture ongoing efforts to re-imagine our living spaces to tangibly blend built environments with our cultural heritage, societal values, beliefs and traditions.

This Pavilion, therefore, pays homage to Zimbabwe's national identity, with a "whole-glass" structure and a roof forming the initial "Z". Well done.

The Departures and Arrivals shed, adorned with granite pillars and chevron walling, reminiscent of the iconic Great Zimbabwe Monument design, sets the stage for the arrival and departure of distinguished visitors of the state and diplomatic convoys.

Similarly, I congratulate and applaud supporting service providers for high quality complementary facilities in and around the expanded airport.

These include food, beverage and retail outlets, as well as ICT facilities and airport transfer services, among others.

The new modernised airport was put to test during the recently ended 44th Ordinary SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government.

I express my profound gratitude to the various line Ministries, Departments and Agencies, contractors as well as other stakeholders for your concerted efforts towards ensuring that the Summit was a success.

Makorokoto. Amhlophe.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

As we celebrate the opening of this VVIP Pavilion, let us also remember the importance of maintaining and preserving our infrastructure and surrounding environment in a good state. The ongoing beautification of our cities and towns must be accelerated and promoted by all of us, including those in Micro, Small and Medium

Enterprises. We say; “No to littering and the defacement of national infrastructure and facilities”.

Let us work together to ensure that our infrastructure remains a symbol of our renowned Zimbabwean character and a beacon of our nation’s strength and resilience.

With regards to the numerous roads that have been rehabilitated and modernised throughout the country; I am gravely alarmed by the number of road traffic accidents. Let us quickly adapt to the emerging realities associated with our fast-approaching upper middle income society status with a higher quality of life. All of us must be given the chance to enjoy the Zimbabwe we all want. Let us save lives by being cautious on our roads.

In conclusion, may this facility stand as a constant reminder that through unity, hard work, in a peaceful environment we can realise great successes.

We need not merely admire good facilities in other countries, instead, we must build and modernise our country, ourselves, brick by brick and stone upon stone.

With these remarks, it is now my singular honour and privilege to declare the VVIP Pavilion officially opened.

God bless you.

God bless Zimbabwe.

I thank you.