



**SPEECH**

**BY**

**THE PRESIDENT AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF  
OF THE ZIMBABWE DEFENCE FORCES,  
HIS EXCELLENCY, DR. E. D. MNANGAGWA**

**AT**

**THE 46<sup>th</sup> INDEPENDENCE DAY CHILDREN'S  
PARTY**

**MAHETSHE PRIMARY SCHOOL,  
MAPHISA, MATABELELAND SOUTH PROVINCE**

**17 APRIL 2026**

Director of Ceremonies;

First Lady, Amai A. Mnangagwa;

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

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

Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution, Matabeleland South Province, Hon. A. Nguluvhe;

Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, Hon. Prof. T. Moyo;

Honourable Ministers;

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

Senior Government Officials;

**Izinduna zethu / Madzimambo edu;**

The Child President, His Excellency, Mr Lionel Mazarire;

Boys and Girls;

Comrades and Friends.

I am pleased to be here with you, the children and young people of our beloved motherland, Zimbabwe. This year's Children's Party, is being held in celebration of our 46<sup>th</sup> Independence Day Anniversary. These celebrations are held ahead of the main national celebrations, under the theme, '**Zimbabwe at 46: Unity and Development towards Vision 2030**', here in Maphisa, Matabeleland South Province. As per tradition, it gives us the opportunity to interact and showcase the strides Government is making to better your lives, as the children of our country.

I call upon all of us to always remember that this independence we are enjoying did not come on a silver platter. Many young boys and girls left school, home, parents and friends to go and fight in a very brutal war to defeat the oppressive racist colonial administration. *Basuka ezikolo, basuka emakhaya, be-siya-lwe-lailizwe lethu, empini.* It was not easy, some died, others were injured.

This Province, in particular is home to many departed and living heroes and heroines who fought in the liberation struggle. These include the late Father Zimbabwe, Umdala Wethu, Vice President, Cde J. M. N. Nkomo, uMama MaFuyana Johanna Nkomo, and Cde Jason Ziyaphapha Moyo, among many others. The role they played, for our Independence, freedom, unity, peace and democracy, along with that of other national heroes, must continue to be cherished, by you the children and young people.

**My Dear Young Boys and Girls;**

This gathering, includes representatives from across all provinces and districts which reflects our national unity. As the President, along with other leaders and elders, I urge you all to always value this unity, harmony and the love for our country. We all sing one national anthem and fly one national flag. No matter the province you come from, we are one people, always loving one another and respecting each other's unique cultural heritage and diversity.

Your grand-parents, mothers and fathers, uncles and aunties, fought for national liberation, independence, freedom and democracy. Now it is your turn and duty to work hard for the success, modernisation, industrialisation and prosperity of Zimbabwe.

**Ilizwe lakhiwa, libuswe, likhu-le-ke-lwe ngabanikazi balo/ Nyika inovakwa, inotongwa, inonamatigwa nevene vayo.** As the young people, you are the future of our country.

To make sure that you, our children are ready for the world of the future, Government has put in place various programmes and projects. We are leaving no one and no place behind. No matter where you live, be it in rural or urban areas, we want you to have access to quality education, health, ICTs and other services. We will continue, therefore, to avail the necessary skills and knowledge so that you are able to stand shoulder to shoulder with other children from anywhere in the world on an equal footing.

At present, the Heritage-Based Curriculum was rolled out to help you leap-frog into a broader understanding of our nation, its history, its resources, society and vision for the future. I do not want you to merely speak good English but also want you to be equipped with science, innovation and critical thinking, so that you can create goods and services.

**Angifuni *li-khu-lu-me* isikhiwa kuphela, kodwa li-bekwazi ukulungisa imitshina yalezinsuku eyokulimisa lokusebenzisa ema factory.**

**Handidi kuti mutaure chirungu chete, asi mukwanise kugadzira mishina yemazuva ano yekurimisa kana kushandisa kuma factory.**

I challenge those in the education sector to think outside the box to deliberately ignite passion for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, among our children.

Scaling up investments in STEM, is to guarantee national economic sovereignty in a globalised and technologically driven world, where knowledge is the primary currency.

To date, I am pleased that a number of science laboratories across our country, including here, in Matabeleland South Province, have been constructed and equipped. The programme, is ongoing.

Going forward, more must be done within primary and secondary schools, to encourage innovations. Over and above, the organisation of tours to heritage sites and tourist attractions, I call upon school authorities, to equally expose our children to industry and science-oriented establishments. Learners throughout the country should be exposed to the knowledge and understanding about how our economy ticks.

I challenge, educators to continuously re-skill and upskill in line with modern educational techniques.

In doing so, a balance must be achieved between our rich cultural heritage and new technologies centred around Artificial Intelligence. I expect teachers to be in the forefront of setting up extra curricula activities, competitions and fairs to promote robotics, science, innovations and inventions, among other aspects, right from the primary school levels.

On its part, Government is creating a pipeline for talent development that begins in the classroom and results in high-level innovation, research and development, that dovetails with our national needs as well as the global knowledge economy. I will be commissioning and handing over laptops to schools across the Province towards bridging the digital divide.

So far, the increased internet connectivity is making sure that schools in geographically hard-to-reach areas have access to wider education materials.

Overall, the ‘Internet of Things,’ which is now at the finger-tips of our learners should help to expand the horizons of learners, in line with the fast-changing local demands and global environment. Parents and educators, have a duty to guide and protect children from the ills associated with access to the internet.

**Dear Learners, Boys and Girls;**

I want to remind you, our children that Zimbabweans are a hard-working people. **Asi funi amavila/ hatidi usimbe.** We want children that work and help with duties at home, in the communities and at school.

In this respect, it is my expectation that learners will work hard and learn as much as they can from the Agriculture Business Units, that have been set up in various schools throughout the country, including here, at Mahetshe.

At national level, agreements have been reached to ensure that the School-based Agriculture Business Units, together with Village Business Units, not only produce for local consumption but also for export. School heads are, therefore, directed to coordinate the productivity and sustainability of these entities.

Meanwhile, the construction of classroom blocks and modern teachers' houses at Mahetshe Primary and Secondary Schools, reflect my Government's commitment to quality infrastructure for educators and learners alike regardless of where the schools are located. We shall continue to bridge the gap between urban and rural areas, towards the realisation of equitable social services and development.

**My Dear Boys and Girls;**

As we celebrate 46 years of our Independence, let us remember that unity, peace and love of our country is the fuel that drives our development. The peace we are enjoying today, should be protected.

I challenge you to preserve, and safeguard the fruits of Independence, which were realised because of the sacrifices of gallant sons and daughters of the soil, who fought tirelessly for our beloved motherland.

Today, you our children have many more opportunities, rights and a chance to thrive for a better future. However, the rights are accompanied by responsibilities and duties, which will in the long term ensure that you become productive citizens who actively participate in developing our nation.

My Government, will not tolerate criminal delinquency, such as bullying, abuse and violence of whatever nature. Stay away from drugs and substance abuse.

No child should ever feel afraid, stigmatised and discriminated in schools and places or environments where they must learn and pursue their studies.

Educators, you have a sacred responsibility to protect and nurture our children within the learning environments. Abuses and excesses of any kind will be dealt with. Punitive measures must be meted out against all perpetrators.

I urge you, our children to speak up, we the adults are listening. We stand ready to act decisively and apply the required safety measures to secure and protect your well-being. To augment national and legislative efforts, school institutions are called upon to facilitate the practice of a wider range of sporting codes along with the arts and creatives. This will help not only in terms of talent identification at the grassroots level, but also to curb idleness, delinquency, as well as drug and substance abuse.

Finally, I want to emphasise yet again that you, our children and the young people of our country, are the torch bearers.

You carry the hope for a more prosperous Zimbabwe. Remain proud of your unique Zimbabwean identity.

Work hard in your studies, nurture your gifts and talents to be successful individuals, that contribute to the well-being of your families, communities and the country as a whole. Government will do its part to equip you with the required knowledge and skills.

As you go back to your provinces and districts, carry with you the warm memories of this event. Tell others about the spirit of Independence, and the importance of Unity and the role you must all play for the Development of Zimbabwe.

Study hard, embrace innovation, remain disciplined, and shun drugs. You are not just future leaders, but you are critical building blocks to the social and economic prosperity of Zimbabwe.

Your views, ideas and concerns will always be considered by Government, as we march forward to Vision 2030.

**Linga khohlwa ukuthi ilizwe lakhiwa, libuswe, li-khu-le-ke-lwe ngabanikazi balo.**

**Musakanganwa kuti; Nyika inovakwa, inotongwa, inonamatirwa nevene vayo.**

With these remarks, I wish all the children of Zimbabwe, including those in the Diaspora, a Happy 46<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary.

**God bless you all.**

**God bless Zimbabwe.**

**I thank you.**