



**ZIMBABWE**

**46<sup>TH</sup> INDEPENDENCE DAY SPEECH**

**BY**

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF ZIMBABWE, HIS EXCELLENCY,**

**DR. E. D. MNANGAGWA**

**MAPHISA, MATABELELAND SOUTH PROVINCE**

**18<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2026**



**HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT AND  
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ZIMBABWE  
DEFENCE FORCES,  
COMRADE EMMERSON DAMBUDZO MNANGAGWA.**

Director of Ceremonies and Minister of Local Government and Public Works, Hon. D. Garwe;

First Lady, Amai Dr. A. Mnangagwa;

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

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

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

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

Members of the ZANU PF Central Committee and Politburo;

Leaders of other Political Parties;

Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Adv. J. F. N. Mudenda;

President of the Senate, Hon. Amai. M. M. Chinomona;

The Chief Justice, Hon. L. Malaba;

Honourable Ministers;

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

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

Commander, Zimbabwe Defence Forces,  
Gen. E. Matatu;

Service Chiefs;

Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic  
Corps;

**Izinduna Zethu, lapha eMatobo, lezinye  
Izinduna esilazo lamuhla, Madzimambo edu;**

Senior Government Officials;

Veterans of the Liberation Struggle;

Fellow Countrymen and Women;

Comrades and Friends.

Today, marks another historic milestone as we celebrate our 46<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary, under the theme, **‘Zimbabwe at 46, Unity and Development, towards Vision 2030.’**

I extend greetings to my fellow countrymen, women, boys and girls physically gathered here and at numerous centres across our beloved motherland, Zimbabwe and those following the ceremony from the Diaspora. I say to you all, Happy 46<sup>th</sup> Independence Day.

Congratulations, **Amhlophe, Makorokoto, Mapwanya; Ndi a vhuyelela; twakabomba, twakatandabala.**

**Comrades and Friends;**

Matabeleland South Province is of sacred significance in the history of our country. Many areas saw brutal protracted and indeed defining encounters, such as the Ratanyana Battleground and war monument,

where ZIPRA liberation war fighters fought the racist Rhodesian troops. Along with Zezani, Manama, Minda and Thekwane Missions, these zones stand as haunting and yet heroic reminders of the cruelty suffered by our people.

The landscapes of Matabeleland South, mission halls and many schools tell of a rich past. They continue to be symbols of unity, pronouncing to present and future generations the enduring truth, that the struggle for Independence was executed by all Zimbabweans, who transcended ethnic and regional lines. Their courage, resilience and fortitude saw us realise the Independence, freedom and democracy we enjoy today. We shall forever honour and salute them.

Matobo and other Districts in Matabeleland South Province, gave birth to many distinguished sons and daughters of the soil, who dedicated their entire lives to the liberation and Independence

of Zimbabwe. The towering Father Zimbabwe, uMdala Wethu, ‘Chibwe chitedza’ the late Vice President, Dr. Joshua Mqabuko Nyongolo Nkomo, and uMama-Mafuyane; together with other late National Heroes such as Comrades; Alfred Nikita Mangena; Lookout Masuku; George “TG” Silundika; Steven Jeqe Nkomo and Simon Khaya Moyo, among many others, hailed from this Province.

Their patriotism and selfless sacrifice for our motherland, Zimbabwe, remain a source of inspiration to us all. **Tinokutendayi, Siyalibonga** Matabeleland South Province, for giving our nation many gallant heroes and heroines who helped to liberate our land from colonial bondage.

Today, we own and produce from the land, they fought to reclaim, after nearly a century of colonial subjugation. We salute all our Veterans of the Liberation Struggle for their heroic acts,

bravery, courage and commitment to the birth of a liberated and united nation, singing one national anthem, under one national flag. From Plumtree to Mutare and from Beitbridge to Chirundu, **Ilizwe ngelethu, Nyika ndeyedu.**

While some freedom fighters lived to see the fruits of their sacrifices, others were not so fortunate. Our nation shall always remember and cherish their contribution.

**Fellow Zimbabweans;**

The economy has registered commendable growth anchored on a stable macro-economic environment. Foreign currency reserves now stand at more than US\$1.2 billion, on the strength of a favourable gold sector.

Following a raft of reforms, our country achieved a single-digit annual inflation rate of 4.1% in January 2026, thereby anchoring long-term stability of our ZiG currency.

The exchange rate stability benefitted from increased foreign currency inflows, which exceeded US\$16 billion, mainly due to rising exports of gold, tobacco, Platinum Group of Metals and Diaspora remittances.

***Baya-thu-me-za imali, abantwana bethu aba-phe-tshe-ya, siyababonga.***

**Varikutumira mari, vana vedu, varikunze kwenyika, tinovatenda.**

With regards the ease of doing business and enhancing Zimbabwe as a favourable investment destination, the review of taxes, fees and levies, has been effected across critical sectors of the economy.

I commend our banking sector for reverting back to their core business. However, more must be done to ensure full financial inclusivity.

This year's celebrations are being held in the midst of yet another successful agricultural season. The 2024/2025 summer season produced 2.4 million tons of maize and close to 635 000 tons of traditional grains, exceeding the national annual grain requirement.

Similarly, the 2025 winter wheat harvest surpassed 640 000 tons, against a national requirement of 550 000 tons. This achievement, underscores the impact of the wheat-based food security strategy. The Strategic Grain Reserve continues to guarantee the country National food security and sovereignty.

Modern Artificial Intelligence-enabled grain silos are under construction in Bindura, Gokwe, Guruve, Kwekwe, Lupane, Macheke, Marondera, Masvingo, Mhangura, Mutare, Mvurwi, Plumtree, Raffingora and Rutenga.

This trend demonstrates that Zimbabweans are a great and productive farming nation. **Amhlophe. Mokokoto.**

Government, is scoring unprecedented progress with regards to climate proofing our agriculture sector through de-linking food production from rainfall dependency. Regrettably, some areas continue to experience climate change induced flooding and mid-season droughts which negatively affect yields.

As per tradition, measures are in place, including the **Isiphala seNkosi/Zunde raMambo**, to avail food assistance to affected communities and households. No one and no region will starve.

Going forward, under the Second Republic, the agriculture sector is becoming a net exporter of value-added produce. The sector will further diversify, grow the country's industrial base and

enhance global competitiveness towards increased foreign currency inflows as well as sustainable levels of earnings, for our farmers.

Together, as a united, hard-working and focused people, we are achieving Vision 2030, for a prosperous, modern and industrialised, Zimbabwe, we all want.

### **Fellow Zimbabweans;**

- **Ilizwe lakhiwa, libuswe, li-khu-le-ke-lwe ngabanikazi balo.**
- **Nyika inovakwa, inotongwa, inonamatigwa nevene vayo.**
- **Hango inobakiwa kakale inotembezele-gwa nebeni bayo**
- **Shango likho-robhe-lelwa lapfhatiwa ngabane balo**
- **Tiko ri-akiwa havinyi varona**

- **iNyika inobakwa nabeni bayo**
- **iChisi chiyakwa beni bacho**

**Alleluya.**

The Rural Development 8.0 Model, that includes the Village Business Units and Schools' Agriculture Business Units are transforming rural livelihoods, leaving no one and no place behind. These are also improving household incomes and the overall quality of life of our people, while accelerating rural industrialisation and sustainable agriculture value chains.

The Presidential Household Tick Grease Management Scheme has positively impacted the control of Januaria Disease and reduced cattle deaths by over 60%. Our nation is determined to attain vaccine self-sufficiency to sustain the viability of the livestock sector and promote

downstream enterprises, such as the leather industry.

Zimbabwe, remains Africa's largest producer of the golden leaf. Tobacco production reached record breaking levels in the 2024/2025 season, achieving 355 million kilogrammes and generating over US\$1.2 billion in earnings.

New participants continue to benefit from the progressive policies implemented by my Government. It is pleasing that tobacco was grown in non-traditional areas, including Matabeleland North and Midlands Provinces.

Horticulture exports now exceed US\$140 million, driven by blueberries, macadamia nuts, citrus and avocado. I commend Matabeleland South Province and other provinces throughout the country for this success milestone.

Policy and technical support will be broadened to further grow this sector.

Meanwhile, Government has intensified research, development and innovation, towards agriculture modernisation and mechanisation.

Since the advent of the Second Republic, the mining sector has posted exceptional growth and is projected to reach 6.3% in 2026. Government resolved to unlock the full potential of Zimbabwe's rich mineral endowment, for the benefit of all citizens.

Measures, which include the controlled export of raw minerals, will now see increased local value addition and beneficiation.

So far, Prospect Zimbabwe Limited in Mashonaland East Province, is set to commission its lithium sulphate plant. Lithium Mining Companies in

Gwanda, Bikita and Kamativi, are also establishing beneficiation plants.

As we celebrate 46 years of independence, the vision towards restoring, modernising and upgrading our national infrastructure is ongoing. The opening up of economic development corridors, to build local capacities and create more employment opportunities are on course.

Roads are an economy. As such, road construction, routine rehabilitation and maintenance, have been rolled out, following the aftermath of flooding and associated destruction of our road network.

In view of the dire state of bridges through-out the country, a specialised unit will be set up to specifically attend to bridges.

The completion of Beitbridge-Masvingo-Harare Highway; rehabilitation and upgrading of the Beitbridge-Bulawayo and Bulawayo-Victoria Falls Road; construction of the Harare-Chirundu Road; construction of traffic interchanges; and upgrading of our Border Posts, will be accelerated.

In line with our quest and responsibility to enhance regional integration, my Government has taken concrete steps to upgrade the country's border management systems. A notable milestone under this initiative has been the installation of e-gates at Beitbridge Border Post, in Matabeleland South Province. This allows for faster, convenient and the automated clearance of travellers, reducing congestion and facilitating efficient regional trade.

The Rural Electrification Programme; Dam Construction, Rehabilitation and De-siltation Programme, together with the Presidential

Borehole Drilling and Rural Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Programme, are receiving additional Treasury financing.

The tourism sector continues to realise unprecedented accomplishments. In 2025, the industry recorded a remarkable 10% annual growth, generating US\$1.3 billion in receipts and attracting US\$194 million in investments, including in the scenic Matobo Hills as well as at Mosi-oa-Tunya, Great Zimbabwe and the Eastern Highlands. Deliberate focus will be made to grow the Hospitality and Tourism sector along the Zambezi valley, particularly Kariba and Binga.

On the global stage, Zimbabwe was recognised by Forbes Magazine as the World's Best Country to Visit in 2025. That Award, among others, together with new products such as gastronomy tourism, re-affirms the strength of 'Brand Zimbabwe'.

## **Fellow Zimbabweans;**

Government is accelerating the absorption of graduates of the National Youth Service into the public sector. Technical as well as vocational education and skills training are being scaled up, as a critical path way for youth empowerment and development. To this end, the Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo Vocational Training and Youth Service Training Centres, are being constructed at Nyongolo Village, here in Matobo District.

As Government, we are aware that among other rural provinces, Matabeleland South Province is notably enduring high numbers of cross-border migration across all age groups. To reverse the trend, deliberate empowerment initiatives, including Village Business Units, such as the Sekusile Makorokoro Business Unit, will continue to be established to improve household incomes and livelihoods.

I want to commend Small and Medium Size Enterprises, particularly Women and Youth led businesses, for their contribution to national employment and the economy as a whole.

The fight against drug and substance abuse needs the participation of all of us. I appeal to communities and families to support current rehabilitation and integration efforts, including education and awareness programmes, for the affected young people.

To guarantee equitable opportunities for our children, we must deliberately redress biases and stereotypes to create an environment where both boys and girls excel in all aspects of education and social endeavours. It is pleasing that more students are now studying Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

The National Action Plan for Children, will improve access to inclusive basic social services, such as education and health as well as ending violence against children.

Turning to the health sector, my Administration is committed to the establishment of modern, and well-stocked health facilities throughout the country. Here in Matobo District, the refurbishment of Maphisa District Hospital, Kezi Rural Hospital and procurement of diagnostic machines, are set to improve access to quality health care services, for surrounding communities.

Further, Government, continues to prioritise the delivery of specialised medical services. We are developing a stronger health workforce through the recruitment, training and retention of skilled personnel. The re-opening of the Primary Care Nurse Training School, at Maphisa District Hospital, is being speeded up.

On the housing front, I applaud stakeholders in the real estate sector for achievements we have made under the National Development Strategy, where over 800 000 housing units were availed by both public and private sector players.

The Devolution and Decentralisation Agenda and the Minimum Service Delivery Standards are a cornerstone for all our Local Authorities with regards executing their functions.

We are establishing functional, inclusive and resilient human settlements, in both resettlement and communal areas. All resettlement areas will now be under the authority of Traditional Leaders, through the resuscitation or upgrading of Chieftainships that were abolished or downgraded by the racist colonial settler regimes.

The Liberation Struggle was waged so that we attain full economic emancipation, inclusive of ownership of the means of production.

In this regard, the Presidential Title Deeds and Regularisation of Settlements Programme as well as the Farm Title Deeds Programme are progressing well.

**Fellow Zimbabweans;**

The widening of broadcasting services is an important pillar for keeping our citizens, informed, educated and entertained. In Matabeleland South Province, the installation of the Radio Zimbabwe FM transmitter in Plumtree, is a welcome and long overdue development. Additionally, an FM transmitter is now beaming signals across Matabeleland North Province.

The Bayethe Community Radio Station, covering Maphisa and surrounding areas, was licensed and capacitated.

Community and campus radio licences have been awarded, thereby assuring the public of timely, accurate and locally relevant information.

Significant strides are being made towards ensuring that our 46 years of independence are in tandem with technological advancements. Robust and forward-looking innovation and industrial ecosystems, are evident across the economy. These incorporate transformational science and technology projects as well as research and development initiatives. We are enjoying products out of the innovation hubs dotted across the country.

My Government launched the Zimbabwe National Artificial Intelligence Strategy, marking a critical step in the country's efforts to integrate advanced, emerging technologies, into key sectors of the economy.

Policies and mechanisms to guarantee ethical and responsible use of ICTs and various media platforms, are being accordingly reviewed.

I, note with grave concern the increasing abuse of social media by some unscrupulous persons and groups.

The recording of road traffic accidents and the subsequent distribution of such material, is totally unacceptable, inhumane and against the values of Ubuntu. My Administration will, without apology, protect our citizens, especially children, as well as our culture, beliefs and way of life, from the hazards of media and new technologies.

As we celebrate our freedom and independence, the welfare of Veterans of the Liberation Struggle is a key priority. We are not going back on our quest to accord due dignity, to our liberators. Programmes towards uplifting their living standards are underway.

Projects to revamp and commission sacred liberation sites, not only here at home, but also in

Angola, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia are being resourced.

My Government will continue to ensure that Zimbabwe's rich heritage is freed from the hostage in Western museums, public spaces and private galleries.

The cultural heritage of Zimbabwe belongs to the people of our beloved motherland. We celebrate the recent repatriation of the Zimbabwe soapstone bird, the Chapungu, along with other ancestral human remains, previously held in South Africa. These are part of our shared identity and their return to our motherland, provide closure and cultural restoration.

We are grateful to the Government and people of the Republic of South Africa for facilitating this act of restitutive justice.

We salute and honour the Zimbabwe Defence Force for their steadfast protection of our territorial integrity. **Siyabonga mabutho elizwe. Tinotenda mauto eNyika.**

**Fellow Zimbabweans;**

Our Vision to attain an upper middle-income society is now 5 years away. It is, therefore, urgent and critically important that our people be serviced by public sector officials who are devoted, patriotic, loyal, professional and agile, for impactful results and the speedy implementation of people-centred projects.

Government is strengthening the Integrated Results Based Management System, underpinned by Performance Contracting. The cocktail of reform measures, will result in timely service delivery within Government institutions, in line with people, and market needs.

A comprehensive Remuneration Framework for civil servants is now in place, while an all-inclusive Retirement Planning Programme was introduced. This will adequately prepare public sector workers, for dignified retirement.

With regards the broader labour market concerns, the recently adopted National Formalisation Strategy should promote decent work, strengthen labour law compliance and enhance the protection of workers operating outside the formal economic system.

On the international relations domain, Zimbabwe is **‘a friend to all and an enemy to none.’** Our country is deepening and broadening relations with other jurisdictions, across Africa, Asia, Middle East, Europe, and the Americas, as well as the recent addition of the Caribbean and Pacific Island States.

In October 2026, Zimbabwe will be honoured to host the COMESA Summit and assume the

Chairmanship of that august regional organisation. I am confident that Zimbabweans will display the usual exceptional hospitality.

Engagements are progressing well in our campaign for election for a non-Permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, for the 2027 to 2028 term.

In concluding, I wish to commend all the people of our beloved motherland, Zimbabwe. Province by Province, District by District you are uplifting our country, the economy and our communities. Your hard work, resourcefulness, entrepreneurship and resilience, is paying off.

Throughout the country, we are demonstrating a high sense of duty and responsibility, in the best interest of our nation. Let us continue to defend, safeguard, and preserve this hard-won freedom and independence. This is the only country we call home, given to us by

Almighty God. No-one else will build our country Zimbabwe for us. That duty lies with us all.

**Ilizwe lakhiwa, libuswe, likhu-le-ke-lwe ngabanikazi balo/Nyika inovakwa, inotongwa, inonamatigwa nevene vayo.**

Zimbabwe is a mature, people-centred democracy and sovereign nation.

As we commemorate our 46<sup>th</sup> Independence Celebrations, we once again reaffirm that we are one, united people. ***Si-nga-bantu banye. Simunye, Si-ba-mbe-ne. Tirivanhu vamwe chete. Takabatana.***

We are patriotic and loyal to our motherland, Zimbabwe. From Plumtree to Mutare; from Beitbridge to Chirundu, we shall be persistently, vigilant and on guard to protect and defend this

Independence, which was paid for by the sacred blood of many sons and daughters of the soil.

Thank you, Matabeleland South Province; thank you Matobo District; thank you Maphisa, for receiving the nation here on these sacred lands, as we celebrate our Independence. Thank you for turning out in your large numbers. **Siyalibonga, Si-li-tsha-ye-la ihlombe.**

**Tinokutendayi, tinoku korokotedzayi. Magona. Amhlophe.**

With these remarks, it is now my honour and privilege to wish all Zimbabweans here at home, and those in the Diaspora, a happy and memorable 46<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary.

**Long live our Unity and Peace.**

**Long live our Independence.**

**Long live our Freedom.**

**Long live our Zimbabwe.**

**Congratulations, Makorokoto, Amhlophe  
Zimbabwe.**

**God bless you all.**

**God bless Zimbabwe.**

**I thank you.**