



ADDRESS

BY

**THE PRESIDENT, HIS EXCELLENCY,
DR. E. D. MNANGAGWA**

AT

**THE CULTURE MONTH NATIONAL
CELEBRATIONS**

BARBOURFIELDS STADIUM

21 MAY 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;

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

Minister of State for Bulawayo Metropolitan Province, Hon. J. Ncube;

Minister of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture, Hon. Lieutenant Gen. (Rtd) Amb. A. N. Sanyatwe;

Other Honourable Ministers;

President of the Chief's Council of Zimbabwe, Hon. Sen. Chief M. Khumalo and other Traditional Leaders;

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

Senior Government Officials and Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Captains of Industry, Comrades and Friends.

It is my singular honour and privilege to address you all at the launch of the 2026 National Culture Month Celebrations, being held here in the City of Bulawayo, **lapha, Emagumeni**, the Barbourfields Stadium.

This City has an identity, which is rich in our culture, and national history. As such, Bulawayo is a befitting venue for the national celebrations of the World Day for Cultural Diversity; Dialogue and Development.

The theme of this year's culture month, "**Creativity and Diversity: Advancing Vision 2030 through Cultural Expressions,**" is timely and dovetails with our aspirations outlined in the National Development Strategy-2.

Today, we gather to celebrate our way of life as an independent and sovereign people. This important platform also affords us the opportunity to transmit our rich and diverse culture, to future generations.

After all, culture is the foundation upon which economies are constructed; it is a frontier that forges social cohesion and the fabric upon which dignity, integrity and identity of a people is derived.

As our country joins the international community to promote, and celebrate the world's diverse cultures, we re-affirm that cultural diversity is not a source of division. It is a well-spring for human ingenuity and mutual understanding. It cements unity, peaceful co-existence and propels sustainable development.

It warms my heart that across the ground, people from all our ten provinces, have united together, speaking all our languages, dressed in varied attires and adornments, sharing food, music and dance. **Well done, Zimbabwe. Well done, Bulawayo.**

This is a testament of who we are as Zimbabweans. We stand with our heads high as a magnificent-diverse people, united under one indivisible and unitary state. From Plumtree to Mutare, Zambezi to Limpopo,

we are one; **Simunye, sibambene, tirivamwe, takabatana.** We sing one National Anthem, under one National Flag.

Comrades and Friends;

Globalisation is a reality, which brings both opportunities and challenges. Despite the major risk faced by our societies, often occasioned by the tendencies of some cultures around the world, which ride on ICTs to erode other cultures, we will remain vigilant and never look down upon ourselves.

The National Culture Month commemorations, stand as a bold declaration that we will continue to protect and preserve our heritage. This includes our languages, dances and ceremonies, as well as cuisines, norms and traditions, that make our Zimbabwean civilisation unique and very special.

I commend creatives and artists throughout our nation, who carve masterpieces from stone and wood; musicians who fuse lyrics, **ngoma**, (*ingu-ngu*), **mbira**, **hosho**, (*ama-hlwa-yi*), among others.

We also celebrate, the poets, **vadetembi**, (*im-bho-ngi*), our word-smiths, who summon the wisdom of generations into verse and rhyme; and our chefs who transform the produce from our land into ingredients for our indigenous gastronomy to feed and nourish the nation.

The abundant creativity and talent of our country is a source of national pride. These all constitute a cultural and national inheritance, bequeathed to us, as products of our civilisation, which must be treasured.

To-date, Zimbabwe takes pride in the many officially recognised national languages. We are a nation of diverse peoples who have chosen, generation after generation, to build a shared future together, brick by brick and stone

upon stone. The diversity, we are celebrating today, must forever remain our strength and the glue that unites us.

Comrades and Friends;

To accelerate the attainment of Vision 2030, we must harness our unique cultural expressions, as critical instruments for national development. The ingenuity of our people is an economic asset. To this end, my Government is putting in place enablers for us to exploit and commercialise creativity so that our people earn decent livelihoods. Through cultural tourism, and the creative industries, we shall continue to project a confident, modernising and industrialising Zimbabwe, to the world.

I challenge those who represent our beloved motherland, Zimbabwe at the global stage, across various sporting fields and sectors, to always carry with them, gifts and artefacts that showcase our distinct heritage and culture.

Our beloved motherland, recognises heritage and culture, as an enabler that safeguards and guarantees a prosperous future for all people.

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

I want to specifically recognise the resilience, hard-working nature, as well as respectfulness, discipline, love and compassion which are characteristic of all Zimbabweans, no matter where there may be in the world. These traits must be nurtured, more so, among our children and young people. The warrior spirit within-us must be kept alive, for generations to come.

Meanwhile, I thank you, our Traditional Leaders **Ngiyabonga Zinduna-zethu; Ndinotenda Madzimambo edu;** for your stewardship over the country's cultural heritage. Your role as the custodians of our traditions, languages and belief systems is irreplaceable.

I appeal to you, to collaborate with stakeholders in the Culture and Creative Industries, to ensure that the sacred knowledge systems, ceremonies and values we hold dear, are documented and protected.

I, further, recommend, that Cultural Festivals be held among communities to entrench the unique norms, values and traditions of your respective societies.

My Fellow Citizens, Ladies and Gentlemen;

The importance of fostering social cohesion and national unity through arts and culture cannot be over-emphasised. In a world where diversity is often weaponised, we must choose the progressive path of unity, peace-building and peace-making.

This has its roots in our long-standing African philosophy and communal tradition of **Ubuntu-Hunhu**, embedded in the adage ‘**umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu**’; ‘**I am because we are**’. It is my expectation that celebrations such as this one, will remain a living epitaph of this philosophy.

It is on this background that under the Second Republic, my Government, recognises that culture is inseparable from the ongoing socio-economic development, modernisation and industrialisation agenda.

I have, therefore, directed the National Arts Council and Local Authorities, to reduce registration fees and renewal levies for artists, promoters, venues and creative organisations. These should be in sync with the ease of doing business reforms so that players in the Cultural and Creative Industries can spur growth of the sector.

Additionally, my Administration continues to invest in infrastructure to help preserve our heritage, as well as improve incomes and livelihoods at the community level.

The Isizinda Culture Centre in Maphisa, Matobo District in Matabeleland South Province, which was recently commissioned by the First Lady, Amai Mnangagwa on the eve of the 46th Independence Anniversary, is one such example.

I applaud Zimbabweans, including those in the diaspora who are establishing community-based tourism products that advance our heritage and cuisines. Culture is good for business. Cultural tourism, creative industries, events, and cultural exports remain priority growth areas that are beckoning for investment.

I invite the corporate world to partner Government and invest in the Cultural and Creative Economy sector. Synergies in this regard, must see us create enabling infrastructure for increased professionalisation, skills training and creation of employment opportunities for talented youths.

On their part, practitioners in the Creative and Cultural Industries are challenged to collaborate for the production of authentic, ethical and uniquely Zimbabwean content. Your creative, artistic and high-quality products, should enable you, to walk tall and proud, at regional and international festivals or exhibitions.

Similarly, your performances, displays and products must earn our country a befitting reputation for ‘**Brand Zimbabwe,**’ with the associated economic benefits.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Culture Month is a call to action and participation; an invitation to the celebration of our culture; speak our languages; cook and eat our nutritious indigenous food; and to wear our Zimbabwean apparel; as well as to sing and dance to our songs.

Let us, equally, tell our children the stories of yester-year, told to us by our grandparents. We are also called upon to have our own conversations and speak from our own narratives, through Zimbabwean films, books and cultural dialogue.

I challenge the media, to sustain the objectives of the Culture Month, beyond a one-day story. You carry a national obligation to promote Zimbabwean content.

These one-Month long commemorations, afford you the opportunity to fulfil that responsibility with innovation and pride.

To our young people, you are the inheritors and innovators of our culture. You must never perceive culture, tradition and modernity as polarised enemies. Great innovators and creators of every generation have been those who draw deeply, from their roots, while reaching boldly towards new horizons.

I urge you, the youth of our great motherland, Zimbabwe to know our culture and be proud of who we are as African people. Never apologise for our unique heritage and national traits.

In all that we do, let us jealously guard our unity, and peace. We are one people, one country and an indivisible-unitary state. No clan, tribe, or province is superior to another.

Let us love and respect each other in our diversity, as we carry forward the responsibility to build our beloved Zimbabwe, brick by brick, step by step and community by community. No one and no place should ever, be left behind.

In concluding, I congratulate the Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture and the leadership of Bulawayo Metropolitan Province, for the manner in which you have organised these commemorations.

I thank you all for coming and for the breath-taking displays we have witnessed today. Once again, **well done, Bulawayo omuhle. Siyalibonga.**

With these remarks, it is now my singular honour and privilege to declare the National Culture Month commemorations officially launched.

Happy National Culture Month Zimbabwe. Long live our unity, peace and development.

God bless you all.

God bless Zimbabwe.

I thank you.