



SPEECH

BY

THE PRESIDENT, HIS EXCELLENCY

DR.E.D.MNANGAGWA

AT THE

**OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF TOURISM FACILITIES IN VICTORIA
FALLS**

8 DECEMBER 2021

I am delighted to have been accorded today's honour of touring and officially opening of the Nkosi Guest Lodge, the Zambezi Boutique Hotel and the Palm River Lodge, here in the City of Victoria Falls. Just last week, I was here to officially open the Victoria Falls Stock Exchange and celebrate the listing of Caledonia Mining Corporation Plc onto the Victoria Falls Stock Exchange Official List. The concurrent completion of these three new tourism facilities is the first of its kind for this resort city.

The entry of these tourists' accommodation facilities is a welcome development which is set to increase the competitiveness of the tourism sector as well as the range of tourism products offered in Zimbabwe. Today's event, read together with the launch of the Victoria Falls Stock Exchange is a clear testimony that the Second Republic has ushered in a new era of unprecedented economic growth and that Zimbabwe is indeed a safe investment destination.

On behalf of Government and indeed on my own behalf, I congratulate proprietors of the Nkosi Guest Lodge, the Zambezi Boutique Hotel and the Palm River Lodge for these milestone achievements, more so in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Distinguished Guests;

My Government recognise that tourism is one of the key pillars of our economy, alongside agriculture, manufacturing and mining. The tourism sector is also an essential vehicle for economic growth and development, as well as a key contributor to the country's foreign

currency earnings. It provides an effective tool for broad based empowerment and job creation towards lifting many into prosperity, through linkages with upstream sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, fisheries, the creative cultural industries, media and film, among others.

As we journey towards vision 2030, I commend the tourism sector for its continued focus towards the realisation of the outcomes outlined in the National Development Strategy -1 and in particular the US\$5 billion Tourism Sector Economy by 2025.

I am pleased that players in the tourism sector continue to demonstrate unwavering confidence in the future of our country by initiating and successfully completing new investment projects. This will go a long way in accelerating the recovery of the sector.

The target of a US\$5 Billion Tourism Economy by 2025 Strategy is achievable as evidenced by the tourism investments we continue to witness. These will undoubtedly provide a competitive, market driven and diversified product range, which is cognizant of the need to guarantee environmental and cultural conservation.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

In August 2019, at the side-lines of the Launch of the National Tourism Recovery and Growth Strategy, I was here at Palm River Lodge for the ground breaking ceremony, marking the commencement of construction of the exquisite Lodge. Less than

two years later, the hotel was fully completed at a total investment of about US\$18 million. Congratulations, this is indeed in keeping with the culture of the Second Republic and the new Zimbabwe.

The additional rooms from this facility will contribute to the total room stock in Victoria Falls. The decision to add more rooms over and above those which the investor have under the Ilala Group attests to the potential tourism business growth in the City. This further bears testimony of the conducive and enabling business environment in our great country.

Zimbabwe remains open for business and my Administration welcomes more investor in this and other sectors of the economy. The second Republic is on course with regards to improving the ease and cost of doing business. We are determined to ensure that our country is an investment destination where capital feels safe.

Clean and reliable supplies of enablers such as water and power are critical elements to a vibrant tourism sector. My Government is therefore supporting the use of clean renewable energy as their main source of power. Going forward, I encourage more investors in this beautiful resort City to adopt renewable energy and turn Victoria Falls into a leading Green Tourism destination.

The Zambezi Boutique hotel, with its high-end luxury suites was constructed under 12 months, beginning in November 2020, at a cost of US\$900 000. The Commitment, determination and the speedy

completion of this project is applauded and in keeping with Government's vision to grow our tourism economy. Congratulations for a job well done.

Distinguished Guests;

The need for a smooth movement of people and adequate provision of state of the art highways, airports and utilities to support tourism growth cannot be over-emphasised. On that note, my Government has initiated major road rehabilitation and modernisation projects which include the Beitbridge-Harare Highway. I urge tourism and hospitality industry operators along that corridor, to spruce up and prepare for unprecedented opportunities which will become abundant, upon the completion of the highway.

The upgrade of the previously treacherous Hells-Gate section along the Chirundu Highway has been completed. This now entails easier accessibility to tourist resort areas like Mana Pools as well as the Chirundu Border Post into Zambia. Government has also begun the process for the widening, rehabilitation and modernisation of the Beitbridge- Bulawayo to Victoria Falls Highway. In the same vein, processes have begun for the modernisation of the Victoria Falls-Kazungula Road and the border post, to meet regional standards.

At National level, I challenge the tourism sector in general to develop new products and attract more investments leveraging on the opening up of new tourism resorts in areas around the Gwayi-

Shangani Dam, Tugwi-Mukosi Dam and the emerging Binga, Bumi Hills and Kanyemba tourism corridor, among others throughout our country's provinces.

Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies stand ready to facilitate investments for increased accommodation and conferencing amenities in existing Tourism Development Zones.

Whilst, the sector has been affected by the global COVID-19 pandemic, I, however commend the local tourism operators, for resilience and adapting to the new normal.

Until the recent travel restrictions by some Western countries, it was pleasing to note that major airlines have resumed flights into our great country. I urge all relevant national institutions to develop strategies that will attract additional trans-continental flights to our beautiful nation. I welcome other initiatives to improve our air accessibility such as the recently launched introduction of MackAir Airline from Botswana which is plying the Victoria Falls-Kasane and Livingstone route, thereby ensuring seamless connection of the three destinations.

Distinguished Guests;

In the face of the fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, we join the world in calling for global solidarity in the fight against this global

health menace. In our prevention and mitigation strategies, it is imperative that there be greater reliance on science as the basis of our decisions.

The tourism sector in our region is challenged to embark on a more coordinated approach in handling the COVID-19 pandemic. This is most critical, given the numerous people who rely on travel and tourism for livelihoods, Zimbabweans included.

As we continue to attract more investments, I call upon all stakeholders to be ecologically sensitive and to pay attention to environmental protection. Biodiversity conservation will indeed allow our destination to manage, maintain and generate sustainable economic benefits from natural resources as well as enhance the benefits from natural resources as well as enhance the competitiveness of our destination.

In conclusion, I would like to encourage greater collaboration between all local authorities and Zimbabwe Investment Development Authority among other government stakeholders in developing robust strategies that will further attract investment. More so as we continue to deepen the implementation of our devolution and decentralization agenda and entrench equalised development that leaves no one and no place behind.

With these remarks, it is now my singular honour and privilege to declare the Nkosi Lodge, Zambezi Boutique Hotel and Palm River Lodge officially launched.

God bless you all.

God bless Zimbabwe

I thank you.