



**ADDRESS**

**BY**

**THE PRESIDENT, HIS EXCELLENCY,**

**DR. E. D. MNANGAGWA**

**AT THE**

**OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE COMMERCIAL**

**DIVISION OF THE HIGH COURT**

**BRISTOL HOUSE**

**06 MAY 2022**

It is my honour and privilege to address you at this historic event which will be entrenched in the history of our country's justice delivery system.

This commissioning of the Commercial Division of the High Court is a significant development for our nation, particularly as it relates to improving the ease of doing business environment in Zimbabwe.

The state of the art facility is a reflection that the Chief Justice and the Judicial Service Commission appreciate the economic trajectory of the Second Republic towards a prosperous and empowered upper middle income economy by the year 2030.

This stand alone Commercial Division of the High Court will undoubtedly enhance the confidence of the public and investors alike, in the justice delivery system of our country. It further dovetails with the aspirations of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the United Nations'

procedures and solutions for business related disputes. It will undoubtedly be one of the leading fora for commercial dispute resolution and, thus, be an asset contributing to our ease of doing business climate in Zimbabwe.

The Commercial Court will be charged with handling complex and high value national and international business disputes. The complexity demands a higher level of personal accountability on the part of the presiding judges.

This is in line with the Second Republic's goal of engendering investment and employment creation through friendly regulations for business growth and development. Our courts are an integral part of the enforcement of contracts, the resolution of insolvency as well as resolving other disputes.

The filing of court processes and documents can now be done from your home or office. You do not need to be at the court physically. The hearing of matters may also now be done virtually without the need for parties participating in the hearing being at the court physically. This is a phenomenal achievement that will make our courts transparent and efficient.

The digitisation of the courts also addresses the issue of court closures that were necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. With this electronic system, there is no more physical contact as hearings are now done virtually. Digitisation of the courts must be cascaded to all the other courts without delay, to bring greater convenience to citizens.

In addition, the system must enhance transparency and accountability by bringing to an end the era where court files and documents would disappear because of corruption.



benefit of the public and the smooth administration of justice.

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

The expansion of the regional magistrates' bench during the past three years is a pleasing development. Serious cases in the magistrates' courts, especially those involving sexual abuse of women and children, must be dealt with expeditiously and the convicted perpetrators punished in terms of the law without delays.

The decentralisation and devolution of the High Court is commendable. This has seen the court now also located in Masvingo, Mutare and Chinhoyi. I now challenge the Judicial Service Commission to accelerate the programme of decentralising the High Court to all the remaining provinces. In this way, our citizens will no longer have to travel long distances to access this very important court.

expect impeccable and ethical conduct from our judicial officers.

The courts through our judges and magistrates are the last line of defence in terms of the protection of fundamental human rights for our people, and should uphold the highest ethical standards. This is the only way that our citizens are assured of fairness and quality justice.

I am deeply concerned by the rising cases of misconduct among Judges that are brought to me in terms of Section 187 of the Constitution. Within a period of three years, we have had tribunals set up in terms of the Constitution to deal with alleged cases of gross misconduct of Judges. To date, three judges have been discharged from service and one other judge has a case pending before the tribunal. This demonstrates the transparency of our processes in our Constitutional democracy.