



ADDRESS

BY

THE PRESIDENT

HIS EXCELLENCY, CDE E. D. MNANGAGWA

AT THE

BURIAL OF THE LATE NATIONAL HERO

CDE OLIVER MANDISHONA CHIDAWU

NATIONAL HEROES ACRE

25 JULY 2022

The Bereaved Chidawu Family;

First Lady, Amai Mnangagwa;

Vice President and Minister of Health and Child Care,
Hon. Gen (Rtd) Dr. C. G. D. N. Chiwenga;

Vice President and Second Secretary of ZANU PF
Col. (Rtd) K. C. D. Mohadi;

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

Members of the Politburo and Central Committee;

Speaker of the National Assembly,
Hon. Adv. J. F. N. Mudenda;

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

The Chief Justice, Hon. L. Malaba;

Other Honourable Ministers here present;

Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Service Chiefs;

Senior Government Officials;

Mayor of the City of Harare,
His Worship Cllr. J. Mafume;

War Veterans, Ex-Detainees, Restricttees and War Collaborators;

Fellow Mourners;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Comrades and Friends.

A dark cloud of sadness and sense of loss hovers over the nation as we gather yet again at this sacred National Shrine, to pay our last respects to a loyal, patriotic cadre and son of the soil, Engineer Oliver Mandishona Chidawu. He passed on, on Tuesday 19 July 2022. I received the news of his sudden passing on, with shock and disbelief, more so that on the eve of his demise, we were together at the National Gallery where we celebrated the return and exhibition of the ‘Stars are Bright’ art collection. Unbeknown to me, it was the last time that I would see the soft spoken Cde Chidawu.

He faithfully served his country right until a few hours before he left this world, to the next life, to be with those who have gone before him. He was an epitome to selfless

service to one's country. The nation has indeed lost a development oriented and humble Minister of Government and servant of the people, who was also a staunch, persistent, consistent and patriotic cadre of our great motherland, Zimbabwe. He will be solemnly missed by us all.

On behalf of the Party ZANU PF, the Government and people of Zimbabwe and indeed on my own behalf, I once again express my heartfelt condolences to the Chidawu family, in particular his wife and the children on this sad loss. The nation is mourning with you for the late Cde Chidawu, served his nation with utmost loyalty, commitment and dedication. May his departed soul rest in eternal peace.

In the passing on of Engineer Chidawu, the nation has been robbed of a practical, intelligent, unassuming, business champion and hardworking man. The late National Hero strongly believed in building a truly Zimbabwean economy that caters for the needs of the

ordinary people of our great country. He not only built a vast business empire, in sectors that have driven the national economy, but also contributed, immensely, to the strategic growth of many entities in both the private and public sectors.

In most cases, he rose to become the lead figure in the corporate governance structures of these enterprises. The late National Hero, we are gathered to inter at this sacred shrine, Cde Chidawu was undoubtedly a pace setter in the endeavours of his life. Equally, he had an amazing ability to intricately balance family, politics and his vast business empire.

Fellow Mourners, Comrades and Friends;

The late National Hero, Cde Oliver Mandishona Chidawu was born in Chivhu Masinire Village, under Chief Mutengwa on 9 August 1954. He did his primary and secondary education in Ntabazinduna Bulawayo and also in the then Salisbury, now Harare. Thereafter, he proceeded to study for a Higher National Diploma in

Electrical Engineering, through the London City and Guilds after which, he trained as a Telecommunications Engineer with the then Post and Telecommunications Company.

Between 1979 and 1982, he worked as a Signals Engineer for the National Railways of Zimbabwe, responsible for the design and implementation of electrical and signalling projects. The versatile Engineer Chidawu resolved to serve in public office and was elected Councillor for Kambuzuma and Deputy Mayor for Harare from 1983 to 1984.

At the age of thirty, in 1984, the late National Hero was elected Mayor of the City of Harare. His visionary leadership transformed the Capital City to earn the accolade, 'Sunshine City'. During his tenure, the Harare City Council provided high quality and reliable services to residents.

It is most unfortunate that the achievements and legacy of the likes of the late Engineer Chidawu have been ruined by the current crop of City of Harare Councillors. These opportunists have no affinity to improve the quality of life of our people and instead continue to abuse their public positions for personal expediency. This trend should not be allowed into the future. Residents in our urban areas must take back their power by voting for men and women with vision, ingenuity and an unwavering passion to service in public office. The current rot in Harare and other local authorities, under opposition parties, must be brought to an end.

The 2023 Harmonised General Elections present a yawning opportunity for rate payers to correct the misnomer of having rogue and insensitive characters running our urban councils. Residents are challenged to end the decadence within our urban local authorities by voting for ZANU PF men and women who are firmly rooted in the people-centred ethos of our colossal mass revolutionary Party.

Comrades;

During his service in the City of Harare, up to 1990, the late Cde Chidawu worked as the Project Manager for the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority, where he managed power development projects and procurement systems. Due to his appetite to always improve himself and his interest in business and commerce, he later studied for a Bachelor of Commerce Degree from 1990 to 1994.

The late Cde Chidawu's academic, business and professional acumen resulted in his admission to several professional associations, including being accepted as a Chartered Electrical Engineer; Member of the Zimbabwe Institute of Engineers; Fellow of the Zimbabwe Institute of Engineers and Founding Member and later President of the Zimbabwe Building Contractors Association.

Despite managing a notable business portfolio, Cde Chidawu was a committed member of our Revolutionary Party, ZANU PF. He began his political

career in the Party's Youth League in the then Mashonaland Province. He served in various Party structures in Mashonaland East and later, Harare Province. In 1989 he was elected Secretary for Security and thereafter, Vice Chairman between 1998 and 2002. Between 1990 and 2000, he served as the ZANU PF Member of Parliament for Kambuzuma Constituency. The late Cde Oliver Chidawu held various positions in the Party and at the time of his death, he was a Member of the ZANU PF Politburo.

Following the advent of the Second Republic, I recognised that Harare Province was in desperate need of a mature, hardworking and visionary leadership to oversee the affairs of this strategic cosmopolitan City. Hence, I appointed the late Engineer Chidawu as the Minister of State for Harare Metropolitan Province and Devolution, with the task to help transform and return stability to Harare. His openness, frankness and predisposition for innovative ideas saw him providing

the requisite leadership towards turning the Capital into a modern city.

It is noteworthy that during his tenure, the New City Master Plan in Mount Hampden began to be rolled out. It was last week, on Wednesday 20th July when I led a high level delegation to tour the completed state-of-the-art New Parliament Building.

This was built through a generous grant from the People's Republic of China, under the leadership of His Excellency, President Xi Jinping, for which our country remains grateful.

On the same day, I also officiated at the ground-breaking ceremony for the construction of the Zimbabwe Cyber City by Mulk Holdings International. It was most unfortunate that Cde Chidawu could not be with us to witness these milestones.

Going forward, more projects will be rolled out towards the modernisation of the City of Harare as well as the development of the New City in Mount Hampden. The

implementation of the New City Master Plan is set to breathe new economic lifelines in Harare and the national economy as a whole. I, thus, call upon the City of Harare Council to ride on these developments to accelerate their Vision for Harare to achieve “World Class City Status by 2025”.

I further challenge those serving in our Local Authorities to implement their respective programmes and projects always guided by the national interest and our collective quest to lift many of our people out of poverty, into prosperity.

Fellow Mourners;

The late National Hero, Engineer Chidawu was part of a crop of young cadres in the early years of our Independence who were conscious of the fact that on its own, political independence was incomplete and needed to be consummated by the economic emancipation of the black majority. As such, the late Cde Chidawu was identified together with his likeminded colleagues to

become part of the front runners in the post-independence struggle to reclaim and indigenise the national economy.

He performed beyond expectation and became a true champion of black economic empowerment and emancipation.

The late National Hero used his professional qualifications in engineering and business to establish companies in the financial, mining and construction sectors. He was instrumental in establishing institutions that empowered many others of our indigenous people to open and run successful businesses.

The late Engineer Chidawu teamed up with fellow Zimbabweans and outside investors in 1995 and established the African Banking Corporation, which later became Bank ABC and listed on the Botswana and Zimbabwe Stock Exchanges. Between 2005 and 2010, Cde Chidawu was Chairman of various companies which were listed on the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange. These

included Star-Africa Corporation, a conglomerate with businesses in southern Africa covering the Democratic Republic of Congo, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Additionally, and drawing from his success as a farmer in Mashonaland West Province, the late Engineer Chidawu was also Chairman of Zimplow between 2004 and 2010. The company was listed on the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange and has a footprint across the Sub-Saharan African region. Between 2003 and 2012, he chaired the Board of Directors of another Zimbabwe Stock Exchange listed company, the furniture retail group Pelhams.

Over and above this, he chaired the Board of Heritage Insurance Company of Zimbabwe between 2005 and 2010 and was also a Director in PG Industries and Bindura Nickel Corporation. He was the major shareholder in Kuchi Construction, Bitumen Construction Services and Rowdrix Group. Partly as a

result of the influence and leadership of Cde Chidawu, these companies, have to date, recorded immeasurable successes and significantly contributed to the socio-economic landscape of our country, especially in infrastructure development.

In spite of the spread of the business footprints of the late Cde Chidawu on the economic landscape of our country, he never abused his positions or used the companies he was associated with to arm twist or manipulate our socio-economic environment, for his own personal gain. He was a dependable and trustworthy businessman.

I, therefore, challenge established and the emerging crop of business persons to learn from the character, ethics, integrity and professional conduct of our late National Hero, Cde Chidawu. Personal wealth should never be sought after at the expense of our beloved motherland, Zimbabwe.

The spirit of the philosophy, “**Nyika ino vakwa nevene vayo**” inspired the generation of the likes of this

National Hero we are laying to rest today. The flame must never die. None but ourselves must build, develop, modernise and industrialise our beautiful country. Those who come to invest must do so according to our plans and terms.

You may be a professional or a successful business person, however, you must desire to be remembered for your service to our motherland, Zimbabwe. Under my leadership, the Second Republic invites you and stands ready to welcome all of you to build Zimbabwe, across all sectors of the economy. Much more work must be done to leap forward and accelerate our country's development and prosperity. The late Cde Chidawu understood the critical role of a patriotic financial services sector as the anchor to sustainable economic development, hence, his role in the establishment of a Bank ABC.

Likewise, we need more men and women of our country who are willing to avail their skills and positions for the

realisation of development that leaves no one and no place behind.

No matter where you are serving, locally or abroad, always think of how you can leverage your networks and skills to develop our country. You are the heroes of today and the heroes of the future; believe in yourselves and play your part.

Comrades, Friends and Fellow Mourners;

Zimbabwe continues to face attacks by our perennial detractors. However, we will never give in to their machinations and heinous quest to establish a puppet regime in our country. No matter the suffering they may try to inflict on our people, our Independence is not for sale; our freedom is not for sale; our sovereignty is not for sale; our democracy, patriotism and dignity as well as institutions and heritage are not for sale! Let those with ears, hear us loud and clear. We are a peaceful and united country. Violence of any form or kind, is not acceptable in Zimbabwe.

The blood of the sons and daughters of this great country remains imprinted in our memories. The brutal war we waged to break free from the chains of colonialism and our rich liberation war heritage reminds us that, none but ourselves are responsible for our future and our destiny.

Therefore, today and into the future, we are forging ahead brick by brick, stone upon stone and step by step towards delivering a better Zimbabwe for all, guided by our national Vision 2030. As we lay to rest this visionary business icon, Engineer Chidawu, I once again make an emphatic call to all Zimbabweans, including those in the Diaspora, to take advantage of the prevailing ease of doing business environment.

It is the duty of all patriotic Zimbabweans to establish and grow successful business across all sectors of the economy. Equally, you must conduct business endeavours in a manner that uplifts and improves the lives of all the people of our country.

My Government stands ready to facilitate the setting up of businesses, entrepreneurial ventures and start-ups that produce goods and services in line with our **“Made in Zimbabwe, Buy Zimbabwe and Build Zimbabwe”** initiative.

Finally, to the late National Hero, Engineer Oliver Mandishona Chidawu, I say; Go well our trustworthy and dependable business champion; Go well our Engineer and professional par excellence. Go well unflinching cadre of our revolutionary ruling ZANU PF Party. Go well true patriot of Zimbabwe.

As you join other long departed luminaries, heroes and heroines of our beloved Zimbabwe; rest in peace and assured that the nation will take your vision forward, guided by the strong foundation of black economic empowerment you and your compatriots bequeathed to us and the generations to come.

**Zororai murugare Gamba rama Gamba; Lala
ngokuthula Qhawe lama qhawe: Hamba kahle;
Fambai zvakakanaka Musaigwa, Hove, Dziva, Sambiri!
Rest in eternal peace our National Hero.**

God bless you all.

God bless Zimbabwe.

I thank you.