



ADDRESS

BY

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

ON THE OCCASION OF

**THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE EPWORTH
MAGISTRATES' COURT**

27 MARCH 2023

Director of Ceremonies;

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

Chief Justice, Hon. Justice L. Malaba;

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

Minister of Justice and Parliamentary Affairs,
Hon. Z. Ziyambi;

Other Ministers here present;

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

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

Senior Government officials;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Comrades and Friends.

It is my singular honour and privilege to be officiating at this historic occasion to mark the opening of the Magistrates' court here in Epworth. I want to congratulate the Judicial Service Commission and other stakeholders in the justice delivery system for this achievement. Congratulations Makorokoto, Amhlophe.

The construction of this Magistrates' court is yet another milestone which attests to my Administration's commitment towards the decentralisation and devolution of essential services. It further guarantees enhanced access to resources and services, including courts of law, by the majority of our citizens in all parts of Zimbabwe.

The fight for independence, democracy and self determination meant increased access to services, including access to justice. The Second Republic is delivering and walking the talk, prioritising the empowerment of vulnerable members of society.

As a united and independent people we are marching forward and building the Zimbabwe we all want; brick by brick, stone upon stone and step by step.

The completion of this court also serves as a reflection of our commitment to take justice closer to the people. This is in keeping with our development mantra which entails implementing development programmes and projects which leave no one and no place behind.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

A strong, efficient and well-functioning judicial system plays an important role in underpinning economic development and improvement to the quality of life of our people. It also entrenches confidence, creates certainty and reliability as well as gives assurance to both domestic and foreign investors. Resultantly, this has a far reaching impact on the growth of our economy.

I, thus, commend the Judicial Service Commission for the infrastructural developments that are taking place through the construction of various court stations around the country. The modernisation of our courts, including through equipping them with information, communication technology tools as well as the digitisation of documentation and processes. These developments are set to improve the success of litigation, resolution and deposition of cases. Well done.

Access to quality judicial services remains an important pillar in our endeavour to realise Vision 2030. In line with the Constitution, the Judicial Service Commission must scale up the facilitation and promotion of transparent, effective and efficient justice delivery in Zimbabwe. In this regard, you are assured of my Government's support.

Under my Administration, the integrity of the judiciary remains key towards deepening constitutionalism, the rule of law and ensuring functional as well as productive

communities. Hence, let us continue to foster a corrupt free, proficient, efficient and effective judicial system, which we are all proud of.

I urge judicial officers and legal practitioners, among others, to keep the halls of justice clean by shunning and resisting corruption in all its facets.

The offices of judges and magistrates are sacred. Integrity, fairness and probity of these officials should thus, always inspire the confidence of our people. The Judicial Service Commission's uncompromising position on zero corruption and unacceptable behaviour by judicial officers is most welcome.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

The opening of Epworth Magistrates' Court heralds our determination to establish similar courts in areas where the majority of our people reside. Similar courts in Cowdray Park and Emganwini in Bulawayo, Mkoba in Gweru, Mucheke in Masvingo, Sakubva and

Dangamvura in Mutare as well as Glen Norah, Mabvuku, and Budiriro here in Harare, should be speedily established.

After all, it is in these residential areas, where our country's great luminary leaders made the critical revolutionary decisions that changed the landscape of our country. Additionally, such courts will also help fight the temptation by communities to resort to the practice of 'self-help' and mob justice.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

The surge in cases of drug and substance abuse in our country, which cuts across all generations, has negative effects upon the young people on whom our future depends. Undesirable trends such as increased criminal cases are worrisome and destroying the moral fabric of our communities. We must, therefore, at every level act proactively and decisively to eradicate crime and deviance in all its ugly forms.

The courts have a very important and critical role to play in the fight against abuse of drugs, among other criminal vices.

As you are aware, the 2023 Harmonised Elections are fast approaching, I therefore, call upon all our people, including political parties, civil society organisations, religious institutions, and the media to always promote peace. Where we differ, violence must not be an answer or strategy. We are all Zimbabweans first and foremost, brothers and sisters and we must never inflict violence upon ourselves in the name of diverging views. Let us sustain the prevailing peace, unity, love and harmony, focused on nation building.

Our courts, which are designated to deal with violence, are called upon to deal decisively without fear or favour any cases, including those who seek to incite or instigate disorder, mayhem and chaos.

Our national institutions which promote peace-building such as the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission together with our traditional leaders are urged to equally play their part.

Going forward, I urge the Judicial Service Commission and the judiciary to enhance accessibility of the courts through the adoption of information communication technologies. Mainstreaming of the already existing electronic case management system will definitely assist in reducing backlog of cases, hassles as well as save on time.

In conclusion, I want to commend the Judicial Service Commission, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works and the Ministry of Justice Legal and Parliamentary Affairs for their collective commitment and unity of purpose demonstrated in establishing this court.

It is my expectation that this new courthouse and related facilities such as the cell block, consultation room, as well as offices for the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Service will enable the expeditious resolution of cases brought before the court.

I once again congratulate the Judicial Service Commission for this latest achievement and wish you all great success in the unfolding legal year.

With these remarks, it is now my singular honour and privilege to declare Epworth Magistrates' Court officially open.

God bless you.

God bless Zimbabwe.

I thank you.