



ADDRESS

BY

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
ZIMBABWE, HIS EXCELLENCY,
DR E. D. MNANGAGWA**

AT

**THE OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY OF THE
ICC MEN'S CRICKET WORLD CUP
QUALIFIER**

**HARARE
16 JUNE 2023**

Director of Ceremonies;

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

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

Minister of Youth, Sport, Arts and Recreation,
Hon. K. Coventry;

Other Hon. Ministers here present;

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

Senior Government Officials;

Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Chairperson of the Sports and Recreation Commission
Board, Mr G. N. Mlotshwa;

International Cricket Council Delegates here present;

Chairperson of Zimbabwe Cricket, Hon. T. Mukuhlani;

Participants of the Championship;

Invited Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome all the teams and distinguished guests who have travelled from across the world to our beautiful country for the International Cricket Council (ICC) Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier 2023.

I hope that you all settled in well and have found all other arrangements to your satisfaction.

Allow me to acknowledge the International Cricket Council for their unwavering support and commitment to Zimbabwe and Africa.

This is a vote of confidence from the International Cricket Council in our country as well as in Zimbabwe Cricket as a suitable venue and host to these high profile games.

Just over a year ago, in 2021, I was at the same venue to welcome teams that were participating in the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup Qualifier and last year I

was in Bulawayo, officiating at the opening ceremony for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Qualifier B 2022.

Zimbabwe is indeed honoured to have been afforded the opportunity to host these global cricket events. As a country, we are extremely jubilant that the ICC Under-19 Men's Cricket World Cup and the big event, being the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, will be coming to Zimbabwe in 2026 and 2027, respectively.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I commend the Ministry of Youth, Sport, Arts and Recreation, the Sports and Recreation Commission and Zimbabwe Cricket for the sterling job and raising our country's flag high internationally, while promoting the sport among our grassroots communities.

Through your collective efforts, I am confident that we are set for a memorable event which is bigger and better than the previous events. Indeed, over the next few weeks, the world will witness 10 teams bat it out at

venues in Harare and Bulawayo to take up the two remaining slots at the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 in India later in the year.

I, therefore, invite passionate fans from across the region and beyond, young and old, to come to Zimbabwe to enjoy the game of cricket. Particularly, come and support our Zimbabwe national team, the Chevrons in the warm atmosphere and hospitality, with singing, dancing, jumping and clapping, which is uniquely African. Come and join us as we enjoy the 'gentleman's game' of cricket.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Sport is an investment in better health, education and skills for the younger generations, critical in keeping the youth away from drugs and other illicit substances that are ravaging our societies today.

While we all admire the on-field achievements, sport also has the power to align our energy, passion and

enthusiasm around a collective cause. The magic, potential and hope that sport can create among children in our townships and villages must be harnessed to ensure that no one and no place is left behind across all sporting disciplines.

In this regard, my Government is committed to providing an environment in which more young people realise success and their full potential through their sporting endeavours.

My Administration has, therefore, made sport and recreation development a priority in the country which should ultimately improve livelihoods, incomes and ultimately our economy. Additionally, we are determined to nurture sporting activities as a vehicle for uniting the nation, promoting social cohesion, peace and harmony as well as entertaining the young and old alike.

As I conclude my remarks, I once again welcome the teams and urge you all to enjoy yourselves, compete

fairly with utmost integrity and honesty, as you inspire the whole world with your skills and will-power.

On the sidelines of the matches ahead, I invite the teams and spectators to spare some time to enjoy our many tourist attractions and other facilities which our country has to offer.

With these remarks, it is now my singular honour and privilege to declare the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier 2023 open. Let the games begin, and may the best team win.

God bless you.

God bless Zimbabwe.

I thank you.