



SPEECH

BY

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

AT

**THE 5th INTERNATIONAL RENEWABLE
ENERGY CONFERENCE AND EXPO**

VICTORIA FALLS

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Director of Ceremonies and Alpha Media Holdings
Group CEO, Mr K. Mafukidze;

Vice President, Hon. Gen. (Rtd) Dr. C. G. D. N.
Chiwenga;

Vice President, Hon. Col. (Rtd) K. C. D. Mohadi;

Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution,
Matabeleland North Province, Hon. R. Moyo;

Minister of Energy and Power Development,
Hon. E. Moyo;

Other Honourable Ministers here present;

Senior Government Officials;

Mayor of the City of Victoria Falls;

Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Stakeholders and Captains of the Energy Sector;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is an honour and privilege to be officiating at this year's Edition of the International Renewable Energy Conference and Expo in Zimbabwe in this tourist resort city of Victoria Falls, 'Mosi-oa-Tunya'.

The fact that all of you, organisers and participants alike have consistently convened annually over the last five years, is commendable. Congratulations. It attests to your collective commitment to **“Building a Sustainable Energy Future”**, as suggested by your theme for this 5th Edition.

The wealth of knowledge this Forum has unravelled over the last five years must be exhibited in the content of presentations, discussions and subsequent recommendations. All your efforts should ultimately lead to tangible investments, projects and programmes.

Players and stakeholders in the energy sector, have a responsibility to proffer and implement robust solutions to propel the attainment of the 2030 energy sector targets.

As we do so, it is critically important that we remain cognisant of our obligations and commitments at the global level. More so that Zimbabwe joined the comity of nations in supporting the Renewables and Energy Efficiency Pledge as well as the Cooling Pledge at COP 28 held in the United Arab Emirates last November.

The various pledges are indeed key for the realisation of Vision 2030, Sustainable Development Goal, number 7 and increased access to clean and affordable energy.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Zimbabwe being one of the founding members of the Accelerated Partnership for Renewables in Africa, is collaborating and partnering with other African countries in the implementation of sustainable energy programmes and projects. This is set to double our national energy- mix, while contributing to regional energy security and investment opportunities that leaves no one and no place behind.

The multi-pronged challenges of climate change coupled with the urgent need to industrialise our country demand you to be bold and decisive in the type of interventions and investments you make to close the energy gap. We cannot be found wanting and must keep up with the rest of the world.

Conferences such as this and other platforms should critically examine the ongoing transition by incorporating the associated technological and socio-economic dimensions. Aspects related to the human capital development needs, in terms of skills and competencies that must be nurtured should be given due attention.

Youth and gender mainstreaming as well as the concerns of our communities in both rural and urban areas, among other critical aspects, should form part of the discourse around energy transition.

On the part of my Government, we are supporting the ‘Empowering Lives and Livelihoods Initiative’ launched at COP 28. The programme aims to broaden dialogue and partnerships on the nexus around water, agriculture, food systems and health value chains, as these relate to energy transition.

To date, we are grateful for the invaluable partnership and support from the International Renewable Energy Agency, for the development of a Country Programme and Prioritised Strategy. This initiative will sharpen our interventions specifically in relation to access to clean energy by the health sector as well as the agriculture value chains.

Distinguished Delegates;

Our statistics reflect that Zimbabwe is making steady progress in stabilising and increasing total energy output. However, more work must be done to ensure consistent access to clean energy across our provinces, including in rural communities.

We, thus, stand ready to welcome more investors and partners to take up opportunities to promote new energy technologies and smart off-grid systems, across the country, with the Ministry of Energy and Power Development taking the lead.

As we march towards realising energy self-sufficiency, the Second Republic is increasing the share of renewables as we migrate from non-renewable sources. Going into the future, we shall continue to prioritise the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing energy infrastructure over and above new green-field energy projects. Meanwhile, the upgrading of our country's Energy Generation, Transmission and Distribution networks as well as other infrastructure is being scaled up.

In view of the critical relationship between energy, and sustainable socio-economic development, I call upon the sector and in particular, the Ministry of Energy and

Power Development, to enhance energy conservation and efficiency awareness.

In addition, the provision of sound technical and professional services to investors and all stakeholders in the sector, must be guided by the ease of doing business work ethic advanced by my Administration. As Ministries, Departments and Agencies in the energy sector, you are challenged to facilitate and not to frustrate partners and investors.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen;

The negative impacts of climate change remain topical and pressing worldwide. Zimbabwe is not exempt, having been severely affected by this phenomenon, including in the energy sector. This Conference must, therefore, undertake thought-provoking conversations for interventions that advance sustainable growth and a higher quality of life for our peoples; even in the midst of climate change.

The energy sector is also urged to equally shift the discourse so that we chart greener development pathways that do not compromise environmental biodiversity and our pressing need to modernise and industrialise Africa.

On its part, my Government will continue to fine-tune policies and heighten the implementation of flagship projects to manage the uncertainties associated with climate change.

The adage goes; “Alone one can go fast; but together, we can go far”, hence, our unity of purpose and determination to build greater climate change resilience, in the energy sector should result in increased collaboration among stakeholders and investors. Let us work concertedly to achieve net zero targets as outlined in the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC).

The Government Project Support and Implementation Agreement has been developed. The renewable energy targets based on the Nationally Determined Contribution are set to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while positively impacting on the demand and supply trends and maintain affordability of power to end-user consumers.

I call upon manufacturers of green energy solutions and products to be more pro- active and establish factories in Africa. Knowledge sharing around current trends, technologies and financing avenues must be promoted. The centrality of the renewable energy space to the future of the planet entails that we cannot exist or operate in silos. There is need for unity and coordinated efforts.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Zimbabwe is a safe investment destination. In the energy sector, renewable energy sources and technologies are low-hanging fruits for realising the goal of increasing the electrification of rural communities.

Hence, the exploitation of clean energy sources, especially for establishing mini-grid systems, must be supported for accessible and affordable energy for all our people.

Growing agricultural production activities and discoveries of exploitable mineral deposits across the country require solutions that are quick to deploy. I, therefore, challenge investors and other stakeholders to set aside resources for Research and Development towards understanding the needs of rural communities as well as to develop goods and services which give impetus to rural industrialisation and ultimately improve the quality of life of our people.

I invite strategic partnerships for the Rural Electrification Programme so that capacity is increased to roll out rural renewable energy projects and programmes. These include the adoption of new technologies to harness solar, wind and biogas, among others.

To this end, I commend Independent Power Producers and other private players who have taken up the challenge by investing in energy and power projects across all provinces, some of which, will soon be ready for commissioning.

In conclusion, may I once again express my confidence in your collective abilities, as stakeholders, to propel our aspirations in the renewable energy sector. As Patron of this Forum, my door remains open for dialogue towards accelerating our defined targets in terms of both growing the energy mix and realising renewable energy transition in our country.

With these remarks, it is now my singular honour to declare this 5th Edition of the International Renewable Energy Conference officially opened. I wish you fruitful deliberations.

God bless you.

God bless Zimbabwe.

I thank you.