



**ADDRESS**

**BY**

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

**AT**

**THE 9<sup>th</sup> ORDINARY MEETING OF THE AFRICAN  
DIAMOND PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION  
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS**

**VICTORIA FALLS  
14 MARCH 2024**

Director of Ceremonies;

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;

Chair of the **African Diamond Producers Association** (ADPA) and Minister of Mines and Mining Development, Hon. Z. Soda;

ADPA Vice Chair and Deputy Minister of Mines and Mineral Resources Republic of Sierra Leone, Hon. U. N. Koroma;

ADPA Ministers and Experts here present;

ADPA Executive Directorate;

Chairperson, Parliament Portfolio Committee on Mines and Mining Development, Hon. R. Matangira;

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

Senior Government Officials;

Captains of the Mining Industry;  
Traditional Leaders here present;  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is with great pleasure that I once again welcome you all to Zimbabwe and to this beautiful City of Victoria Falls for the 9<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the African Diamond Producers Council of Ministers.

I trust that you have found the arrangements conducive for fruitful engagements. The Republic of Zimbabwe is honoured to have been Chairing the African Diamond Producers Association since 2023 and we hope to end our chairmanship this year, on a high note.

It is most opportune that this meeting is convening at a time when we continue to reflect on the multiplicity of emerging global realities, challenges and opportunities.

These entail that we must jolt our respective countries and the Continent as a whole, to re-imagine the new measures and strategies we should deploy to realise the “Africa we all want”.

In the context of the mining sector, diamonds, which are a store of wealth and an expression of love and glamour, are transforming livelihoods across Africa through increased economic growth and the improved wellbeing of our communities.

Our mother-continent, Africa contributes more than 60% of global natural rough diamond production. This makes us a key source of the mineral commodity. I challenge you as the representatives of our countries to assert the African position on matters of diamond production, trade and pricing. We are an independent Continent and those from overseas must talk to us as equals. The proposed unilateral restrictions on the trade of natural diamonds being imposed by some market players are unacceptable.



The benefit and interests of our peoples should be the guiding key when it comes to the exploitation of our abundant natural resource endowment.

It is commendable that key decisions have been made at this forum, especially on the backdrop of current challenges associated with new diamond export protocols and declining rough diamond prices.

Our collective voice must be heard and greater collaboration, cooperation and partnerships remains the panacea to win-win benefits and prosperity within the diamond mining sector.

In the case of Zimbabwe, the diamond sector has been on an upwards growth trajectory in terms of both production output and revenue generation.

The current focus on increased compliance to international best practice and standards will undoubtedly contribute to enhanced complementarity between mining companies and our communities who live in mining areas. To this end, policies, regulations and responsive strategies are being constantly sharpened so that benefits accrue to communities and the economy as a whole.

However, given that mining is ecologically disruptive, mining entities are challenged to balance profitability with good environmental management practices, as well as socio-economic sustainability. Work environments must be safe and the local environment protected. Deliberate measures should also be put in place to attract and retain the best as well as appropriate skills to grow and modernise the sector.

Meanwhile, the deployment of science, technology and contemporary innovations must be equally encouraged for greater efficiencies and competitiveness.

At the global level the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 12 enjoins you as a sector to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, with regards how mining operations are conducted. As the African Diamond Producers, we have an obligation to guarantee sustainability in the manner we exploit our natural resources. This is good for us and is in our interest.

The maintenance of high ethical standards, good extractive practices and peaceful co-existence with communities are essential to protect and retain the viability of our Continent's diamond industry. Those that use the diamond sector, and mining sector in general to divide our communities should never be condoned.



As the peoples of Africa, we must move beyond narratives where it is questioned whether our rich natural resources are a blessing or a curse. We must be awake and leverage on our natural resource endowments to build our beloved continent, brick by brick; stone upon stone and step by step.

Further, given that our diamonds are a finite resource, we must not accept trinkets but corporate social investment projects that have far reaching impacts on the productivity and quality of lives of benefitting communities. These must dovetail with our broader national and Continental development agenda.

Communities where mining takes place should be empowered to sustain their livelihoods long after mining activities have ceased operations. After all, it is the host communities, which give the mining companies a social licence to operate. As the Government of Zimbabwe we take pride in the good relationships that exist between diamond mining companies and communities.



Additionally, the growth of the sector should benefit downstream industries such as suppliers, employees and customers alike.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

It is most regrettable that the prices for natural diamonds have been declining from peaks recorded prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The situation has been worsened by the increased competition from man-made diamonds, macro-economic headwinds and tighter liquidity conditions on the global market.

Specifically, it is alarming that the share of man-made diamonds, which was just 2.4% in 2020, rose to 9.3% in 2023 a rise of about 6.9% over three years. You as our technocrats and players in the African diamond mining sector, must think outside the box and help mitigate such risks towards protecting the natural diamond sector.

Let us all take charge of the future of the sector more so given the numerous benefits natural diamonds bring to our communities and economies. Nothing can be comparable to the beauty of mother nature's diamond derived from the belly of earth.

Through the whole of society approach, the development of African economies should be accelerated to the extent that the peoples of Africa enjoy the value-added products from our own natural resources. I exhort us to change our mindsets and take pride in the consumption of value-added products from our gold, diamond, lithium, cobalt, cocoa, natural oils and leather products, among many others. We must be consumers of our products and not merely producers.

As the Government of Zimbabwe, we continue to advance key policy initiatives in the diamond sector towards increasing the quota policy for local diamond beneficiation and value addition.

The aspiration of a modern and industrialised Africa, will become a reality through incremental beneficiation, resource by resource as well as investing in the requisite technologies, innovations and skills particularly among our young people.

It is only through the cutting and polishing of diamonds, which is the most complex stage of diamond production, that as Africa, we will be able to unlock more value, get access to new technologies as well as capacitation of local staff in the trade.

The time has come for Africa to translate our vision to grow our local cutting and polishing industry to increase the value from export proceeds of our diamonds. This must be highly prioritised, with set targets of increasing these thresholds.



Going forward, this should be complemented by the opening of new mines, benefiting from ongoing exploration projects, expansion of existing projects, and increased capacity utilisation.

I challenge fellow member states to also use modern technological advancements which are now at our disposal to continuously explore for new minerals of the future, for the benefit of Africa and our respective countries. Through our unity, collaboration, partnerships and solidarity, the “Africa we all want” shall become a reality.

In conclusion, may I invite you all to create time to enjoy the beauty that Zimbabwe has to offer, including the Victoria Falls, Mosi-oa-Tunya, the Smoke that Thunders. This God-given heritage is for us all, the peoples of Africa to enjoy. We, thus, look forward to the growth of intra- Africa tourism as we scale up our quest for Africa to enjoy its own rich natural resource endowments.

I anticipate insightful and transformative recommendations from this meeting.

With these remarks, it is now my honour to declare the 9<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the African Diamond Producers Association Council of Ministers officially opened.

**God bless you.**

**God bless Zimbabwe.**

**I thank you.**