



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. WILLIAM SAMOEI RUTO, PhD, C.G.H, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCES DURING THE 64TH ZIMBABWE INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR

APRIL 27TH, 2024

BULAWAYO, ZIMBABWE

Your Excellency Dr Emerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe

**Excellencies, Business leaders, captains of industry,
entrepreneurs and innovators,**

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Before I proceed any further, I thank you most sincerely, my dear brother, Mr President, for making it possible for me to not only join this distinguished gathering of leaders and visionaries from various sectors but to address you as your chief guest.
2. I appreciate with deep gratitude the warm welcome you extended to me to visit this beautiful, abundant land of such great promise, as well as the wonderful reception accorded to us on arrival in Bulawayo and the gracious hospitality we have enjoyed throughout our stay. We do not take your consideration for granted, and on behalf of the people and government of Kenya, I thank you once more.
3. One thing that has been difficult to ignore from the moment we stepped on Zimbabwean soil is the unmistakable energy of a country going places, a people facing forward and a nation entering a new chapter in its development history. Upon observation and reflection, I have a good idea about the source of this infectious air of optimistic expectation that fills up every space in this great country.
4. We all know that Zimbabwe has waged its share of struggles, faced its share of challenges and undergone a great deal of setbacks and pressures.



It has been inspiring to witness the resilience and fortitude of the Zimbabwean nation and the people, who, though not the authors of their country's tribulations, refused to be victims of it, and did not give up, slow down or lament in despair. Instead, they endured and forged on, with the confident patience of a people who have prevailed against formidable adversaries and won daunting battles time and again.

5. Under your leadership, Mr. President, it is evident that this indomitable spirit has received a shot in the arm. This explains the positive changes that are taking place in many parts of the country and demonstrates Zimbabwe's readiness to transform its abundant potential into opportunities for all sectors of its economy to make their contributions towards poverty reduction, employment creation, wealth generation and reduction of inequality, thereby ushering in economic development and inclusive prosperity.
6. As a result of your government's policy of agricultural revitalisation, by which it invests in the provision of access to inputs, technology and markets, together with its strategy of supporting farmers to enhance agricultural productivity and achieve food security, the seeds of transformation have been sown in Zimbabwe's farmlands. Its first fruit will be a major uplift in livelihoods across the country, leading to rural wealth and employment creation. Afterwards, the maturing of various agro-industrial value chains will attract investments into expansion in manufacturing and growth in exports, creating even more jobs and wealth.
7. The restoration of agriculture as the cornerstone of economic growth, and of Zimbabwe as a famous breadbasket is at hand.



8. The second visible effect of Zimbabwe's commitment to embark on a new ambitious journey of development is infrastructural development which has enhanced Zimbabwe's transport, energy and ICT sectors, bolstering domestic and regional connectivity, increasing productivity, promoting trade and attracting investment. This connectivity, underscored by the two Trans-African highways which traverse Zimbabwe: Cape Town to Cairo, and Beira- Lobito highways, in conjunction with the strategic pursuit of regional integration through membership of such bodies as the Southern African Development Community, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and the Africa Continental Free Trade Area, clearly demonstrate that Zimbabwe is determined to catalyze domestic, regional and Pan-African trade.
9. The third intervention which confirms Zimbabwe's commitment to economic recovery and transformation is its government's decision to introduce a new currency, the ZIG, which is backed by gold and other asset reserves. This radical revitalisation of Zimbabwe's monetary policy will contribute greatly to the country's economic resurgence.
10. Taken together, these bold decisions by the government of Zimbabwe constitute a bold and radical economic recovery, revitalisation and reform agenda based on a coherent, ambitious vision to steer the nation to prosperity and sustainability.
11. On the basis of these facts, I am strongly persuaded that Zimbabwe's commitment to transforming its immense potential into sustainable abundance is robust and driven by irrevocable intentionality. I am also convinced that this intentionality is closely connected with the vision and theme of the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair.



12. It is well known that economies that possess technologies get much more out of their resource endowments than those without. It is also a fact that innovation is the secret recipe for transformation. It produces new inventions, transforms existing technologies and enables every sector to produce more, faster, better and surer out of every unit of input.
13. Innovation empowers technologies and processes to achieve more in terms of volume and variety, making it easier to satisfy demand and offer choice. It reduces waiting times, leading to higher levels of satisfaction and enables producers to attain and maintain higher standards. Finally, it guarantees both consistency and security, making both consumers and producers surer about their expectations. An economy anchored on innovation-driven efficiency becomes and stays competitive and guarantees high returns to investors.
14. In terms of potential, Zimbabwe exemplifies Africa's best-case scenario. With a median age of just under 18, it is a young nation and, owing to one of Africa's best literacy rates at 89.85%, it is populated by well-educated, highly skilled young people whose drive and motivation are unmistakable and compelling.
15. Zimbabwe's natural resources are diverse and plentiful, ranging from renewable energy potential, including hydro, wind and geothermal as well as arable land and carbon sinks, to substantial reserves of coal, cobalt, copper, gold, iron, lead, limestone, lithium, nickel, phosphate, platinum, silver, tantalum, tin, tungsten and zinc. There is no doubt that these reserves represent tremendous wealth, and it is appropriate that they should be deployed to back the national currency. More critically, technology-enhanced by innovation will certainly deliver far greater value for Zimbabwe's economy from these natural resources.



16. You will agree with me that in the case of a country endowed with such excellent human and natural resource potential as Zimbabwe, whose government is committed to sustaining investments in infrastructural connectivity, and is inspired by a bold, coherent vision of national economic transformation, the sky is the limit if it pursues innovation as a catalyst of industrialisation and trade.
17. Innovation will enable every sector of our economies to harness the power of automation and robotics, as well as digitisation, artificial intelligence and machine learning which are revolutionising productivity and redefining the future of work every minute. Additionally, innovation will simplify transactions, enhance financial inclusion, generate fintech and promote e-commerce.
18. This way, innovation will introduce our economies to the possibilities of the digital economy, increase intra-Africa trade and accelerate regional integration, because with innovation, barriers become bridges, borders transform into portals, and challenges turn into opportunities.
19. There is no doubt that the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair represents this country's preparedness to usher in a new era of development driven by the country's human and natural resources. Equally certain is that the theme of this year's fair is a bold signal of Zimbabwe's resolve to deploy technology and innovation to exponentially transform its potential into shared abundance for its people.
20. The level of coherence and alignment evident in Zimbabwe's new development strategy is indicative of an underlying policy of structural reform to produce the set of conditions necessary for transformation to take place.



This further suggests that potential investors must start paying close attention to reforms related to trade and investment, lest they miss out on highly beneficial incentives. I believe this is the primary purpose of an event like this.

21. On that note, I encourage all participants and visitors to take advantage of this event and undertake some vigorous networking in order to forge partnerships, collaborate and exchange ideas about the most innovative means of achieving mutual benefit. Just as innovation has been defined as the catalyst of industrialisation and trade, I encourage you to make the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair your catalyst of more inspired engagements. I wish you success in all your endeavours and wish the people of Zimbabwe prosperity in the near future.

**Thank you very much,
May God bless you,
God bless Zimbabwe,
God bless Africa.**

