



ADDRESS

BY

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

AT

**THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 32nd JUNIOR
PARLIAMENT AND COMMEMORATION OF
THE DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD**

**MT. HAMPDEN
3 JULY 2024**

Director of Ceremonies;

Your Excellency, the Junior President, Pious Lwandile Nleya;

Speaker of the Junior Parliament; Hon. Sitabile Ntigo;

First Lady, Amai A. Mnangagwa;

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

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

Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Adv. J. F. N. Mudenda;

President of the Senate Hon. Amai M. M. Chinomona;

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

Minister of State for Harare Metropolitan Province,
Hon. C. Z. Tavengwa;

Minister of Youth Empowerment, Development and
Vocational Training, Hon. T. Machakaire;

Other Ministers here present;

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

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

Senior Government Officials here present;

Members of the Junior Parliament;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Comrades and Friends.

Madam Speaker;

It is a great honour and privilege to once again address these Commemorations of the Day of the African Child and to Officially Open the 32nd Junior Parliament.

I thank you for warmly welcoming me.

Further, I congratulate you all for winning the highly contested elections, in your constituencies. I particularly commend and congratulate you, the Child President, Your Excellency, Pious Nleya for your success in the Presidential elections. **Makorokoto, Amhlophe.**

May you all have an exciting and successful term of office.

Madam Speaker;

The last 32 years, since the establishment of the Junior Parliament have seen this gathering become a strategic institution among the youth of our country.

The Junior Parliament has not only served as a leadership development and advocacy arm, but also a vehicle through which representatives of the youth from all provinces can participate in the governance of our great country. Under the Second Republic we say **‘Nyika inovakwa, inotongwa, inonamatigwa nevene vayo/Ilizwe lakhiwa, libuswe, likhulekelwe ngabanikazi balo’**.

As such, we believe that you, our young people have a role to play in building our motherland by bringing to our attention, the challenges faced by the children of Zimbabwe.

Hence, the convening of the Junior Parliament must, therefore, not be taken lightly. You have made history by meeting for the first time, here at the New Parliament Building, which will also be hosting the SADC Summit in August.

It is also critically important that you use this opportunity to also learn about the policies and developmental projects that are happening in our country. Additionally, the experiences you gain from here should enhance your patriotism, skills, humility and sensitivity to a wider range of issues as you learn the principles of servant leadership. This will help you to better understand and explain various issues to your peers.

The Government is committed to developing you, our young people, into productive citizens and responsible leaders of tomorrow. I commend the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Development and Vocational Training as well as other stakeholders for continuously enhancing this programme.

It is worth noting that this year's 32nd Session of the Junior Parliament has been expanded to include a Junior Senate which is made up of former Child Parliamentarians. This has enriched the quality and scope of debates within the August House. Well done.

Madam Speaker;

The manner in which the Junior Members of Parliament have presented the various issues is commendable. As per the responses given, I want to assure you that my Government will give due attention to the concerns and ideas raised during this session.

As you all grow as leaders, I urge you to always remain yourselves as Zimbabweans. You are the Descendants of the Great Emperor Munhumutapa. Do not be swayed from our rich heritage, moral values, norms, culture and identity.

The Second Republic will continue to ensure that our children and young people are empowered with the right

skills for the future world; especially ICT and scientific knowledge. We want you to be able to stand shoulder to shoulder with your peers from across the world.

Madam Speaker;

The Day of the African Child is a day that the continent of Africa has set aside to remember the three-day Soweto Massacre which took place from the 16th to the 18th of June 1976. On that day, hundreds of unarmed school-children were massacred while holding a peaceful protest against the oppressive apartheid system. This sought to use education and other oppressive practices to suppress the freedom and independence of the black majority.

Our African philosophy of Ubuntu/Hunhu underscores that **“I am because we are”**. Therefore, the young people of Africa should remain inspired by this rich philosophy.

In that same spirit many young people, across our Southern African region, took up arms to fight protracted

liberation wars for independence, freedom and sovereignty. Through such acts of bravery, they stood for the freedom, dignity and the wellbeing of the black majority.

We belong to a region with a rich liberation heritage and vast natural resources. Take pride in this history which you should never forget as the young people of Africa, and Southern Africa in particular. The rights you enjoy today, the dignity we have as black people, the quality of life you are experiencing, and this opportunity to be involved, as the Junior Parliament, in the governance of our country, did not come on a silver platter.

I call upon you to always honour and respect the youth of yester-year, some who were as old as many of you, by loving our motherland, Zimbabwe. Remain proud of being a Zimbabwean, an African child and an African youth.

It is pleasing that you have read the documented uprisings and massacres that took place throughout the country and across our borders. These include Pupu, Kamungoma, Chindunduma, Chimoio, and Nyadzonia, among others. At these sacred places, many of our people, including women and children were killed, tortured, and injured. That is our painful past. A past you must never ever forget.

I am proud that you have learnt from us, the older generation, and committed yourselves to making the voices of children and young people, heard. Well done.

Madam Speaker;

This year's theme, "**Education for all Children in Africa: The Time Is Now**", speaks to the memories of that fateful day of the Soweto Uprisings. While we are proud of the milestones achieved so far, in our education sector, Government is still scaling up the implementation of very good education policies and projects for the benefit of learners at every level.

Education, science and innovation as well as vocational training and skills development are indeed major tools for sustainable development. Your access to quality, inclusive and equitable education is important for the attainment of our national Vision 2030.

The Second Republic continues to roll out a learning system based on digital and other ICT related platforms. As a result, more children now have access to a wide range of educational material and information, including access to specialised teachers, that way guaranteeing improved pass rates.

My Administration is also implementing commitments made during the Transforming Education Summit held at the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2022. The recent commissioning of the 17 schools funded by the OPEC Fund along with the ongoing construction of many schools under the devolution and decentralisation agenda shows that my Government values quality and relevant education for our children.

Meanwhile, in response to the El-Nino-induced drought, the school feeding scheme has been rolled out to various schools, throughout the country to ensure the nutritional well-being of children from vulnerable communities.

The Heritage Based Education Framework 2024-2030 which we adopted is taking root and helping transform the education system. Now our learners are equipped and able to produce goods and services for use in our communities and within the economy. The training and upskilling of teachers, especially in mathematics, science and technology-related fields, is ongoing.

Madam Speaker;

The education transformation agenda also includes putting in place strong laws and regulations for inclusive education policies. Technical and vocational education is being strengthened to go hand-in-hand with the requirements of an education system of the 21st Century.

More than 2 million youths have the potential to be empowered with relevant skills through Vocational Training Centres. These can in-turn help grow, modernise and industrialise our economy. Many more young people must be given the opportunity to learn and acquire trades to improve their livelihoods. No one and no place must be left behind.

I, therefore, urge the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Development and Vocational Training to accelerate the transformation of vocational training centres in terms of both the quality of facilities and skills offered. The National Youth Act must be speedily finalised to facilitate the promotion of youth empowerment, development and wealth creation.

As we move close towards the achievement of a prosperous and empowered upper middle-income society, all the people of our motherland, including our young people, must be committed to hard honest work.

We must continue producing hardworking and innovative graduates, with relevant skills, competencies, applied knowledge, as well as the right values and character, which are key to advance our national development goals.

In another positive development that affects the youth, recently I was pleased to launch the Youth Service in Zimbabwe Programme at Nhakiwa Vocational Training Centre in Uzumba, Mashonaland East Province.

I invite more young people to enrol for this programme. This will instil discipline, patriotism, the ethic of hard honest work, as well as the spirit of **Ubuntu/Hunhu**, while encouraging volunteerism and service to the community and nation. **‘Nyika inovakwa, inotongwa, inonamatigwa nevene vayo/Ilizwe lakhiwa, libuswe, likhulekelwe ngabanikazi balo’**.

Madam Speaker;

It is heart-breaking that a notable number of our young people, together with their families, are being negatively

affected by the menace of drug and substance abuse. At Government level, a National Committee and a Multi-Sectoral Drug and Substance Abuse Plan is in place to coordinate our national response. I challenge you, the young people, to raise your voices and scale-up your activities to fight and reject Drug and Substance Abuse.

You must be in the forefront of developing youth-friendly activities, music and messages that help echo our calls for **“a drug free Zimbabwe”**. I call upon the youth to report, to adults and responsible authorities, those who deal and peddle drugs.

Use your positions as young leaders and influencers at your schools, universities, churches and across communities to encourage morally upright living and behavioural transformation, among your peers.

As I conclude, I thank you, Madam Speaker, the Child President, Junior President of the Senate and Junior Members of Parliament for the fruitful deliberations,

wide-ranging views, ideas and the experiences you have shared with us.

I urge you to go back to your provinces and use the information gathered from the responses given by our Government Officials, for the good of your communities and the constituency of young people.

Your individual and collective energies, as young people, must be channelled towards community and national development. Remain exemplary and good ambassadors of servant leadership, among your peers.

With these remarks, it is now my honour and privilege to declare the 32nd Session of the Junior Parliament officially open. I once again wish you success during your tenure in office and memorable commemorations of the Day of the African Child.

God bless you all.

God bless Zimbabwe.

I thank you.