



ADDRESS

BY

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

AT

**THE 2024 PRESIDENTIAL INNOVATION FAIR
AND AWARDS CEREMONY**

HARARE

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

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

Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development, Prof. A. Murwira;

Other Honourable Ministers here present;

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

Senior Government Officials;

Vice Chancellors and Principals of Colleges;

Captains of Industry;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my great pleasure and honour to address this Second Edition of the Presidential Innovation Fair and Awards Ceremony. Innovation, anchored on a robust science, technology, research and development ecosystem has become a fundamental reality that must be prioritised to drive the modernisation and industrialisation of our beloved motherland, Zimbabwe.

The current era of the 4th Industrial Revolution, characterised by both digital and technological transformation, further gives urgency to our national endeavours in this regard. It is through innovation that sustainable economic growth can be realised, the quality of life improved and scientific discovery scaled up.

The competitive global markets also demand innovative models to enhance profitability and value for money for end users of products and services. By investing in innovation, the nation's competitiveness is gradually enhanced.

It is with this background that outstanding milestones have been recorded since the implementation of the Heritage Based Education 5.0 philosophy. As we march towards Vision 2030, the nexus between the theoretical and practical aspects of our ongoing national development thrust are indeed more evident. Further, the linkages between basic to applied training and the specialist skills required by our ever-expanding industries are taking shape.

I congratulate our institutions of higher learning throughout the country, for taking up the challenge, head-on and running with the vision that has revolutionised our education system.

Your collective dedication, hard work, adaptive mindsets and intellectual dexterity have transformed the calibre of learners being churned out by our education institutions.

Makorokoto, Amhlophe.

Going forward, let us now expand our paradigm for disaggregated results, sector-by-sector, towards creating specific niche based on the resources we have. It is not enough for us to talk about having abundant minerals and other natural endowments without translating these into tangible products.

Distinguished Guests;

Just over two years ago, I observed that many innovations were coming from our talented young people, mainly in institutions of higher learning. This Innovation Fair, therefore, allows us to keep stock of the progress we are making. The competition associated with this National Fair celebrates and rewards innovators spanning across a broad spectrum of society, from all ten provinces. These include universities, tertiary institutions and Government agencies and the private sector as well as individuals and students.

The physical infrastructure supporting innovation, such as Innovation Hubs, Industrial Parks, Agro-innovation

Parks, Centres of Excellence and factory plants at State Universities, Colleges and Scientific Agencies across the country's 10 provinces, have proved invaluable in the innovations registered to date.

I am pleased that the products, goods and services being developed are answering to the needs of our communities and the economy as a whole. Well done, this is commendable.

Through the innovations we are witnessing, you have distilled the meaning of **“Nyika inovakwa, inotongwa inonamatirwa nevene vayo/ ilizwe lakhiwa, libuswe, likhulekelwe ngabanikazi balo.”** These must help the nation unlock value from our abundant natural resources. Additionally, we stand to enhance value chains in mining, agriculture, drug discovery and advanced technologies, among other areas, including in social service delivery.

Of note is the increasing number of businesses and state-owned enterprises that are seeking solutions from universities and colleges. The incremental number of patents, copyrights and trademarks, being registered in our institutions of higher and tertiary learning, is commendable.

This has resulted in an increased number of start-up companies emanating from our innovation hubs and industrial parks.

Appropriate investment in science and technology, coupled with bold adoption of our own home-grown innovations will undoubtedly see Zimbabwe developing, modernising and industrialising at an accelerated pace.

Let us continue to take pride in our collective national ingenuity and the revolutionary path we are taking, across all sectors of the economy. We are masters of our destiny; As Zimbabwe we are running our own race for the benefit of us, the people of this great nation. This is

the rich legacy bequeathed to us by our forefathers, and the Great Emperor Munhumutapa.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

My Government will continue to provide a conducive operating environment for start-ups and industry in general, through fostering a vibrant innovation ecosystem. This includes supportive legislation as well as support for venture capital through stimulating venture capital markets.

I am enthused that our universities and colleges are playing their part in the development of rural industry systems. Communities are now benefitting from supplying the requisite feedstock for processing plants for various new industries such as Marula, Masawu and Baobab Juice Making, among others.

Going forward, ideas and products being produced at our various innovation hubs and industrial parks should graduate from the concept and prototype stage, to fully

commercial products which are readily available in our local shops and those in the region. The market penetration and visibility of your products should speak louder than words. The people of Zimbabwe are indeed ready to consume more made in Zimbabwe products.

The private sector is welcome to take advantage of the supportive environment and networks offered by the Innovation Hubs and Industrial Parks. It is in the best interests of industry to continually innovate for increased competitiveness in a globalised environment.

Further, partnerships with other higher learning institutions and industries, from the region and beyond, should be strengthened towards expanding our horizons and learning best practices.

Turning today's Innovation Fair, I am pleased that due recognition is being given to institutions, students and the private sector players among other categories who are leading in the innovation landscape through the

Presidential Innovation Awards. It is my hope that these Awards will encourage, motivate and inspire many more of our people to break new ground for the benefit of our country now and into the future.

To those institutions and individuals who will be honoured today, I heartily congratulate you all. Well done. Those who did not win this year, continue to work hard. The efforts you are making, individually and collectively are appreciated and contribute to the broader national good.

Going forward, I assure you that the current policies of my Administration will be scaled up towards supporting the transformation of our heritage-based education system into goods and services. The goal remains focused on modernising and industrialising our country, while also improving the quality of life of our communities, leaving no one and no place behind.

Finally, allow me to commend the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development along with other stakeholders for organising this successful and well subscribed event. Well done to you all.

With these remarks, it is now my honour and privilege to declare the Second Edition of the Presidential Innovation Fair and Awards Ceremony officially opened.

God bless you.

God bless Zimbabwe.

I thank you.