



STATEMENT BY
HIS EXCELLENCY EMMERSON DAMBUDZO
MNANGAGWA,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE,
AT THE
GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 73RD SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY,
NEW YORK, USA:
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Your Excellency, Ms Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garces, President of the 73rd Session of the General Assembly,

Your Majesties,

Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,

Your Excellency, Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations,

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour and pleasure to deliver my maiden statement in this august Assembly. Allow me to congratulate you, Madam President, on your election to preside over this 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly. As only the fourth woman to hold this important position in the history of the United Nations; your election is indeed most appropriate in terms of addressing gender equality in our organization.

The theme which you have chosen, “*Making the UN relevant to all people: Global leadership and shared responsibilities for peaceful, equitable and sustainable societies*” resonates well with the mantra of Agenda 2030 namely to leave no one behind. The theme is a timely reminder for us to keep the momentum going three years after the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Madam President,

Also at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a promise to end all forms of poverty. This shared vision and common destiny requires us to put all our hands on deck in order to meet the ambitious targets and create a better world. For us, in the developing world, the eradication of poverty is at the top of our agenda priorities.

Development must equally be placed at the centre of the work of the United Nations, as it plays an important role

in preventing hunger, deprivation, food insecurity, disease and ultimately conflict. The inclusion of the interests and views of women, the youth, children and vulnerable members of our societies should be integral and essential components in all our programmes.

Madam President, Distinguished Guests,

I am pleased to report that Zimbabwe has made substantial progress in the implementation of some of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular with regards to ensuring food security. Through our people centered policies and planned programmes, complemented by private sector financing and investments; farmers receive inputs, equipment and technical support.

In a bid to improve nutrition and broaden income opportunities, we have also extended support to grow the livestock, fisheries and wildlife sectors. We are confident

that these multi-pronged programmes will accelerate Zimbabwe's re-entry into the global economy and associated value chains.

This is one example of innovation, creativity and home grown solutions in addressing key developmental and economic challenges in spite of the continued illegal sanctions imposed on our country. We call for their immediate and unconditional removal. Meanwhile, we look forward to the first overall review of implementation of the SDGs to be held under the auspices of the General Assembly in 2019.

Madam President,

Peace, security, stability, democracy and good governance are essential ingredients for sustainable development. In view of the fact that elections as an integral element of democracy, my country held the much anticipated Harmonised General Elections on the 30th July

2018. Following my deliberate and conscious decision to open up the democratic space and emphatic call for peace, unity and tolerance of divergent views amongst our people; political contestations, election campaigning, voting and counting processes were conducted freely, peacefully and transparently.

In the spirit of transparency and openness, a broader spectrum of international observers and global media houses were accredited to observe our elections. The exceptionally peaceful pre and post electoral environment represented the maturing and entrenchment of democracy in Zimbabwe.

We are grateful to the UN and other Member States for sending Election Observer Missions and for the Technical Assistance received by our Election Management Body. The recommendations will be taken into account as we deepen our democratic and electoral processes.

We shall continue to entrench constitutionalism, democratic traditions and norms, peace unity and harmony; for it is indeed under such conditions that sustainable development, inclusive economic growth and prosperity can occur.

The isolated and unfortunate incident of the post election violence that occurred on 1 August 2018 is regrettable and most unacceptable. The Commission of Inquiry comprising eminent persons of national, regional and international repute has now begun its work in earnest. Their ultimate report and recommendations shall help us bring closure to the matter and assist in the improvement of our institutional governance.

Madam President, Distinguished Guests,

Now that the elections are behind us, my country is now focusing on economic development as we seek to leapfrog the modernisation and industrialization of our country.

The Land Reform Programme is behind us and is irreversible.

Emboldened by the dreams, hopes and aspirations of our people, and in tandem with the United Nations Agenda 2030 and the African Union Agenda 2063, we have outlined our vision to become a middle income economy with a per capita income of about USD3 500. This will bring on board increased investment, decent jobs, broad based empowerment and a society free from poverty and corruption by 2030.

Zimbabwe is open for business and we are presently undertaking a raft of economic and political reforms to ensure an environment that facilitates inclusive and sustained economic growth. We have put in place institutions and instruments that maximize land utilization and increase agriculture productivity.

Equally, strategies are in place in the various sectors of our economy, to enable my country to enter the global value chains.

The development and modernization of our roads, railways, airports, energy and ICT infrastructure is being accelerated in line with our regional and continental quest for enhanced connectivity and integrated infrastructure.

Madam President,

Zimbabwe looks forward to playing a positive and constructive role as a free, democratic, transparent, prosperous and responsible member of the family of nations. We are committed to strengthen dialogue, cooperation and partnerships, underpinned by mutual respect, common values and shared principles.

The prevention of conflict must be a frontline strategy. My country remains committed to strengthening multilateralism and peaceful resolution of differences. In

this regard, we should address the root causes of conflict which includes poverty, inequality, deprivation, disputes over land and resources, as well as struggles for self determination.

Peacemaking and peacekeeping must be complimented by peace building efforts to prevent recurrence and relapse into conflict. Zimbabwe continues to make its modest contributions through the deployment of its personnel to various United Nations peacekeeping and peace building missions.

Madam President, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,
The United Nations and its organs require to be democratized. We join the call for Africa to be represented in the permanent category and to have increased representation in the non-permanent category.

This position is indeed justified, in view of the need to correct the historical injustice which has left the African

continent on the periphery of all major global decision making processes.

We emphatically call for the review and reform of the Bretton Woods institutions and other International Financial Institutions.

Trade is an engine for development if conducted fairly and in accordance with agreed rules. We therefore call for negotiations under the World Trade Organisation which foster inclusive and shared economic growth; and further advances the global development agenda.

Madam President,

In the spirit of leaving no one behind, our efforts to promote global partnership for peace and development would never be complete unless we address the plight of people living under occupation. It is most saddening that some of us continue to turn a blind eye to the suffering of the people of Palestine.

It is high time the Security Council fulfilled its Charter obligations and duties by implementing all its Resolutions; including Resolution 181, 242, 338 and 2334.

On the African continent, it is equally disheartening that the people of Western Sahara are yet to exercise their inalienable right to self determination. We call on the Security Council to insist on the holding of an independent referendum for the Sahrawi people without delay, in compliance to the relevant decisions of the African Union and the resolutions of the United Nations.

Furthermore, it is imperative and urgent for the Council to work tirelessly to strengthen its cooperation with the African Union Peace and Security Council in the search for a just and fair solution to the issue of Western Sahara.

Madam President,

Climate change presents a threat to all of humanity and its impact respects no borders. We therefore call for collective action and responsibility on the matter. As a developing country, we seek support in the areas of adaptation, mitigation, technology, finance and capacity building as envisaged in the Paris Agreement.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm Zimbabwe's commitment to the principles of the United Nations Charter and pledge to continue to work with other nations in promoting and strengthening multilateralism for the good of humanity.

Now more than ever before, the United Nations must stamp its authority and work harder for peace in a world where might is increasingly being regarded as right. Let us work together in harmony to ensure that the United Nations and all its organs, truly serve the collective interests of all Member States.

As global leaders, we have a shared and onerous obligation to transform our societies and create a more peaceful and inclusive world, for present and future generations.

I thank you!