



ADDRESS

BY

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

**ON THE OCCASION OF
THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE NEW
CHINHOYI COURT COMPLEX**

3 SEPTEMBER 2021

Director of Ceremonies, Mr W. T. Chikwama;

Vice President and Minister of Health and Child Care,
Hon. Gen. (Rtd) Dr C. G. D. N. Chiwenga;

The Chief Justice, Hon. L. Malaba;

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

Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution,
Mashonaland West Province, Hon. M. Mliswa-
Chikoka;

Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs,
Hon. Z. Ziyambi;

Minister of Local Government and Public Works,
Hon. J. G. Moyo;

Other Ministers here present;

Deputy Ministers;

Senior Government Officials here present;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my great pleasure to preside over the official opening of the new Court Complex here in Chinhoyi, Mashonaland West Province, whose building shell had lay derelict for close to fifteen years. The fact that we are gathered to witness the successful completion of this project signifies my administration's resolve and commitment to deliver on its development oriented policies and programmes. The era of starting projects that never get completed is long gone.

Action, success and excellence is the bedrock of the 2nd Republic's value system and ethos. All projects under way will be timely completed so that our people can enjoy the modern and quality services and goods. State institutions must now seek new achievements and victories as opposed to perpetually basking in accomplishment of yester-year. We are a government and a people on a journey, we have an appointment with destiny in 2030; we dare not miss the mark.

Hence, each institution must play its part for the country to maintain its trajectory and multi-faceted targets set out under NDS1. Everyone must justify his or her employment in the particular capacity that he or she occupies. Our actions and results must speak louder than our words in order to make Vision 2030 a reality to all citizens.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Every nation's infrastructure contributes significantly to the sustainable growth of the economy. It is a measure of the quality of life of citizens in a country. The National Development Strategy 1 identifies infrastructure development as one of the key pillars towards achieving Vision 2030. This is underpinned by the rapid construction and restoration of basic infrastructure services such as roads and other key targeted sectors of energy, water, sanitation, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and housing.

During the course of this week, I was pleased to tour construction works at Robert Gabriel Mugabe International Airport and officiate at the Commissioning of the Marimba Flats Project as well as the National Human Settlement Policy.

I wish to applaud the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, the Judicial Service Commission, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works along with other supporting Departments and Agencies for their collective commitment and unity of purpose towards the improving court infrastructure. The number of courthouses which stand out as Government's flagship infrastructure in many districts across the country is a symbol of Government's unwavering determination to ensure access to justice to all citizens.

I am aware that a notable number of courthouses and judicial infrastructure have been built or rehabilitated throughout the country, since the advent of the Second Republic. These include several Magistrates' Courts, in Mt Darwin, Hwange, Lupane, Mutare and Harare among others. The refreshing feature emerging from these collaborative efforts is that the infrastructure dovetails with our modernisation agenda. The high quality state-of-the-art courtrooms fitted with modern equipment create a world-class ambience for members of staff and litigants alike. We commend the contractor Hualong Construction of China for the impressive quality of works.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises the right to the access to justice as a fundamental human right. This right is a vital ingredient in the protection and enforcement of other human rights. Access to justice is also an enabler for the ultimate realisation of other fundamental rights.

Every person, regardless of gender, colour, race, creed, class or other status, is entitled to the equal protection of the law and to seek and obtain judicial remedies from the courts.

Under the National Development Strategy 1, the overarching objective of the Governance National Priority Area is to improve Justice Service Delivery, among other aspects. Court infrastructure and the effective and unimpeded access to the courts are some of the vital elements in improving justice delivery.

Furthermore, it is imperative that the courts are closer to the people. Hence, the establishment of the High Court here in Chinhoyi is a fulfilment of this requirement. This will reduce distances travelled by litigants and witnesses who used to travel long distances to and from Harare to access the services of the High Court.

The Ease of Doing Business Initiative, which is a key barometer for investors and central to Government's motto of "Zimbabwe is Open for Business" benefits from the quick turn-around times in the resolution of contractual disputes.

All Ministries, Departments and Agencies are reminded that the policy on devolution requires all institutions of Government to be visible and accessible in every Province of the country. The expansion and decentralisation of the court system by the Judicial Service Commission is, therefore, applauded and most welcome. This Complex marks the first one stop Court Complex in Zimbabwe where the High Court, the Magistrates' Court, the Master of the High Court and the Sheriff of the High Court are all resident in one building. It also becomes the fifth High Court seat in Zimbabwe, after Harare, Bulawayo, Masvingo and Mutare.

My Government's decision to construct and open court stations in high density residential suburbs is a turning point in the administration of justice. I exhort the Judicial Service Commission to speed up the plans to decentralise the Magistrates' Court to high density suburbs. This will go a long way towards reducing the alarming congestion which is often witnessed by those seeking justice delivery. Apart from decongesting the existing facilities, such endeavours will also bring justice to the door step of some of the most populated townships in the country.

Honourable Chief Justice, Distinguished Guests,

As we celebrate the opening of Chinhoyi Court Complex today, it is important that the Judiciary remains ceased with the broader mandate reposed to it by the Constitution. When facilities such as this Court Complex have been provided, reports of undue delays in finalising matters in the courts become worrisome. Reports of judgments taking years to be delivered by some of our judicial officers must be a thing of the past.

Judicial independence does not in any way mean doing away with accountability. Every citizen has a right to expeditious delivery of justice without delay. The notion of judicial independence requires that the judiciary tackles such issues using its own administrative mechanisms in line with the policy of self-regulation, in order to remove any perception of interference by the other arms of Government. An effective and efficient justice delivery system serves to assure every potential litigant that they can genuinely have their day in court and their disputes resolved without delay.

Embracing ICT is no longer a luxury but a fundamental requirement for every public institution in our country. It is commendable that the Complex we are opening today has facilities for virtual hearings and video conferencing. The introduction of digital hearings and e-justice will enable the courts to continue functioning normally in the face of the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In that regard, I also wish to assure stakeholders in the Justice delivery system that my Government will continue to support the sector in the digitalisation of the courts and associated services.

Government remains concerned with the reports of drug and substance abuse. The abuse of drugs has the potential to destroy the moral fabric of the society, particularly amongst the youth. I wish to urge all community leaders, the church, political parties, civic organisations, employers and employees' federations, traditional leaders, Universities and other institutions of higher learning to join hands in the fight against the scourge of drug and substance abuse spreading across our nation.

The Courts must play their role by ensuring that adequate attention is directed to cases of possession, trafficking and offences associated to drugs and substance abuse.

On its part, my Government recently established an inter-Ministerial Task Force on drugs to complement the efforts of other State institutions in that fight.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to congratulate the Chief Justice and the Judicial Service Commission for developing the Standard Operating Procedures and Policies for the sector. Public institutions can only become efficient and effective when their operations are uniform and more transparent. I am happy to note that the Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines developed are drawn from the Government's Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, which I launched in April 2020.

Judicial training is indeed the panacea to an independent and efficient Judiciary that dispenses quality justice with minimum delays. It is my fervent hope that the Judicial Training Institute of Zimbabwe which I am launching today, will contribute to the skills development of all your judicial officers.

I applaud all Government institutions and other stakeholders which took part in ensuring that this long awaited One-Stop-Shop Court Complex becomes a reality. You have all proved that justice cannot survive as a cloistered virtue but must be accessible and open to the people. After all, the legitimacy of the courts is derived from the people of Zimbabwe.

Meanwhile, I am encouraged to note that the majority of staff in the Judicial Service Commission have been vaccinated, I urge you all to remain vigilant as you undertake your duties and protect yourselves against COVID-19. My Administration will continue to ensure that adequate doses of vaccines are sourced and are freely accessed by every Zimbabwean.

With these remarks, it is now my singular honour and pleasure to pronounce the Chinhoyi Court Complex duly opened. I further declare the Judicial Training Institute of Zimbabwe and the JSC Standard Operating Procedures Manuals and Policies, officially launched.

God bless you all.

God bless Zimbabwe.

I thank you.