



THE PROSECUTOR GENERAL’S SPEECH (GUEST OF HONOR) ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE MUTARE ANTI-CORRUPTION COURT

First of all, let me thank the **Chief Justice Honorable Luke Malaba and the Judicial Service Commission** for giving me the honor of being here today as the guest of honor on this auspicious occasion. The opening of this anti-corruption court is yet another milestone of great significance in the fight against corruption.

As we all know, the need to defeat corruption meaningfully and to strengthen the rule of law is even more pressing now, as we seek to ensure that **vision 2030 towards a middle-class economy** is achieved. **His Excellency the President Honourable Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa** has clearly stated that fighting corruption is a priority in the Second Republic of Zimbabwe. This therefore means that this government takes the eradication of corruption and prosecution of corruption cases very seriously. The Judiciary is also taking anti-corruption very seriously that is why there is yet another anti-corruption court being opened here today. I am also here today, as **Prosecutor**

General to reassure you that as the **National Prosecuting Authority of Zimbabwe**, we will not compromise on corruption.

The scourge of corruption is a threat to our livelihood, it chokes our hopes and aspirations as a nation, to the extent that it undermines the peace and security of our people. Everyone is agreed that corruption in Zimbabwe has reached alarming levels and is affecting service delivery, foreign direct investment, the economic turnaround and social order. The cost of corruption ultimately, is development denied to our citizens and our youth robbed of a brighter future.

It is also trite that our people's freedoms, their ability to make informed choices and the opportunities presented to them, are continuously undermined and eroded by corrupt practices that distort income distribution and public expenditure decisions. Corruption erodes the peoples' confidence and trust in the justice delivery system, as well as in the legitimacy of political, economic and other government institutions.

The **2030 United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development** has established that the fight against corruption, is a global imperative on which hinges the achievement of all sustainable development goals.

Goal number 16 which is the main focus for justice delivery actors, is premised on the protection of human rights, **and the strengthening of justice delivery institutions**. The establishment of anti-corruption courts such as this one shows that the Ministry of Justice and the Judicial Service Commission are committed to the achievement of goal number 16 (**to strengthen institutions in the justice delivery sector and ensure equal access to justice**). Similar courts were opened in Harare and Bulawayo. Corruption is everywhere. It is not in Harare only. It is all over the country. That is why we have another anti-corruption court being opened here today.

The Mutare anti-corruption, presents us with yet another opportunity to advance the anti-corruption agenda as envisioned by His Excellency as well as the 2030 United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development. Fighting corruption is a global fight and Zimbabwe will not be left behind.

As the Chief Justice aptly said at the beginning of the legal year, this fight involves the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary. The Chief Justice particularly emphasized that the Judges/Magistrates, Prosecutors, Court staff and all sectors of the State's legal apparatus such as the Police, Prison Services and the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission, have a role to play in safeguarding the nation against corruption. The Chief Justice also said that the crime of corruption is

no ordinary crime. And I agree. Corruption cases are usually committed by sophisticated individuals using sophisticated means resulting in complex clandestine transactions. It is for these reasons that all these justice delivery actors (whom I have just mentioned), need capacitation and continuous skills training in order to combat corruption effectively. We also need an improvement in conditions of service to ringfence the personnel involved in stamping out corruption.

Furthermore, we need every actor to be adequately resourced in order to enable everybody and every department involved, to deal with these matters professionally and swiftly to restore public confidence in the system. Sophisticated crimes should be investigated using sophisticated means, sophisticated technology and highly trained sophisticated personnel. We already have a sophisticated court here in Mutare thanks to the Judicial Service Commission. Let me assure you that we at the NPA are working very hard, to deliver sophisticated world class and cutting-edge prosecution which we want to bring to bear on all cases including corruption cases.

We want to deliver more than anything, on our constitutional mandate to combat crime and corruption effectively.

As the National Prosecuting Authority, we have ensured that there is a deliberate shift of policy to enable us to make meaningful inroads to fight corruption, and to restore respect to the profession; to foster a more robust, more focused, more accountable and transparent, result oriented prosecutorial service.

The NPA is currently dialoguing with the Ministry of Justice, Treasury and the Civil Service Commission to align the conditions of service and the remuneration of the Prosecutors and non-prosecutorial members of staff, with the other players in the justice delivery sector. This is because we are aware of the need to capacitate and to ring fence the Prosecutors. Prosecutors like all other relevant actors in the justice delivery sector must be well remunerated so that they are single mindedly focused on the task at hand. They are the custodians of the system that we depend upon to stamp out corruption. They must have the proper tools of trade, from computers, the internet, furnished offices as well as a clean and safe environment to work from. Vehicle loans and housing loans are also on the agenda. Prosecutors cannot continue to come to work using public transport or lifts from accused persons. That is a crying shame and opens up the Prosecutor to all kinds of interference, ridicule and lose of esteem and dignity befitting their esteemed office.

These measures will be put into place to ring fence Prosecutors are to protect the Profession and to thwart corruption within the justice delivery sector. This does not mean that we should condone acts of corruption or suspected acts of corruption, within our own ranks because people are poorly remunerated. **NO**. We will act against those that are suspected to have committed acts of corruption and we will not spare anyone. No one is above the law. Corruption is a cancer that should be nipped in the bud and corruption must be stamped out wherever it takes root. We believe that in this way we can contribute effectively towards improving the quality of the justice delivery sector's performance and its integrity. We need to deliver quickly on these reforms to restore public confidence in our justice delivery sector.

The courts themselves, I must emphasize are the last line of defence in the fight against corruption. Having said that, the courts alone will not win the fight against corruption. This is because the most important player in the fight against corruption is nowhere near the courtroom. That player is the citizen out there.

Combatting corruption is not simplistic, it is a robust process that involves engaging the citizen of this country at all levels. The citizens are the vanguard that holds the fort against corruption. We need to educate the citizens about the evils of corruption, and the power that they have, to put an end to corruption. Zimbabwe will be corruption

free the day our citizens refuse to pay bribes for services that should be free from government officers, we will have won the fight, the day every citizen decides to live a life of integrity.

For us to get there, this calls for deep introspection and a re-examination of the way we live our lives. I humbly call upon the citizens of this country to shun corruption and embrace the pride and ethos of clean living for the development of our country into a business powerhouse and citadel of good living. If we can all say **NO** to corruption, then the fight is already won.

I would also like to appeal to members of the public to continue reporting cases of corruption to the Police and to the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission as well as the Special Anti-Corruption Unit. Members of the public can also make use of the suggestion boxes found at government institutions all over the country, social media platforms or email. Please report all incidents of corruption. Whether it be at the passport office, at the Police roadblock at the courts where the Prosecutor, Magistrate or any other court staff asks for a bribe. We need our citizens to expose all corrupt elements whether big or small.

The NPA also welcomes complaints from the public. Please feel free to write to the Prosecutor General if you are not satisfied with the way

your matter has been handled. I would like to emphasize that not all acquittals are a result of corruption. It is however your right, as an interested party to have issues surrounding the discharge or acquittal of an accused person in a corruption case, (or any other case for that matter) ventilated. Where an investigation is warranted, we undertake to do just that. We want to ensure that our services are transparent and we are accountable to all our stakeholders and the people at large.

Let me take this opportunity once again, to thank the Chief Justice, The Judicial Service Commission, The Ministry of Justice And their partners for a job well done.