



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

**BY**

**THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
ZIMBABWE AND MINISTER OF HEALTH AND CHILD  
CARE, HON. GEN (RETD) DR. C. G. D. N CHIWENGA**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE EIGHTH EDITION OF  
CONTINENTAL AFRICA PUBLIC SERVICE DAY  
COMMEMORATIONS: 21-23 JUNE 2021**

**AT**

**ELEPHANT HILLS HOTEL**

**VICTORIA FALLS, ZIMBABWE**

## **SALUTATIONS:**

Director of Ceremonies;

Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution,  
Matabeleland North **Hon. Richard Moyo;**

Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, **Hon.  
Prof. Paul Mavima;**

The African Union Commissioner, **His Excellency Amb.  
Bankole Adeoye;**

The Minister of Public Service Management and Good  
Governance for the United Republic of Tanzania and STC Chair,  
**Hon. Mohamed O. Mchengerwa;**

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

Senior Government Officials here present;

President of the Zimbabwe Confederation of Public Sector

Trade Unions, **Ms Cecilia Alexander;**

All Public Servants;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my honour and privilege for me to officiate at this historic occasion to mark the 8<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Africa Public Service Day commemorations here in our majestic city of Victoria Falls.

It is gratifying that my country was selected to host this event at the last edition of the Africa Public Service Day, held in Nairobi Kenya from 21-23 June 2019.

**Director of Ceremonies,**

Zimbabwe's hosting of this hybrid event is an affirmation of the confidence the African Union places on our Government and its people.

Our commemorations today, fulfil the visionary aspirations demonstrated by the African Ministers of Public Service and Administration at the Pan African Conference of Public Service Ministers held in Tangier, Morocco in 1994. Among other resolutions this conference adopted was that the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June each year be set aside for commemorating the Africa Public Service.

In line with the objectives of this day, we congregate here once again to celebrate the contribution of the public service in spearheading national and continental development, in line with the aspirations of our forefathers and fulfilment of Vision 2063.

Nearly three decades after the Tangier Conference, we continue to commemorate this day religiously, mindful of the expectations which are placed on our national Governments, whose processes and developmental programmes are steered by a committed and dedicated public service workers, whom we recognise and celebrate today.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Africa Public Service Day Commemorations is historic in that it is the first time it is being convened virtually as a consequence of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The selection of the venue for this event could not have been anything less than this amazing resort city, which allows us to strategize while we appreciate the vast array of tourist attractions in this city.

It is incumbent upon us as African Governments to continue to have a clear and coherent vision to ensure that the public service is well motivated to enable it to continue to deliver quality services for our citizenry. We should be our own champions, driving the developmental path, which should improve the lives and well-being of our people.

### **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentleman,**

The city of Victoria Falls is of great significance in our historical and cultural heritage. Apart from the Victoria Falls, also known as "*Mosia-Tunya, the smoke that thunders,*" the Matabeleland region is also home to two other World Heritage Sites which are the Khami National Monument and the Matobo Cultural Landscape. Indeed, this is a demonstration of the symbolism which this part of Zimbabwe offers as a strategic destination for tourism.

### **Distinguished delegates,**

It is unfortunate that this event comes at a critical time characterised by an environment which has been enveloped by the **COVID-19** pandemic which continues to threaten mankind. More than 3 million lives have been lost globally, in a devastating trail which adversely impacted on livelihoods and of course service delivery in the public service. While some positive stories were recorded, including the high recovery

rates outside hotspot areas, these were however diminished by the unprecedented loss of lives.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly transformed the way of doing business in both the private and public spheres. This has clearly redefined the African Public Service, which has over the past thirty years, been a subject for reform.

Our convergence here, allows us to chart our own destiny, as it affords us another opportunity to reflect about the Public Service of yester year and its new tentacles being redefined by technology and even more recently the COVID-19 pandemic. The outbreak of the pandemic has presented us with an opportunity to embrace and adopt Information Communication Technology in conducting business within the Public Service

The sight of our people queuing for basic services is clearly an anathema to the ideal way of doing business in the new world order.

The pandemic has also resulted in the need for re-orienting our public service towards the digital economy. Let met hasten to express that, our contemporary environment calls for continued public-private partnership which is desirable for national growth. This event today, affords us an opportunity to interact with the private sector so that the public sector can tap into knowledge and skills which improve service delivery.

Despite the complex environment which our Governments have endured, I am glad that the African Union continues to anchor its successes on calling for effective, efficient and strengthening of public administration systems.

In the past 18 months, our professional public service demonstrated its capabilities in managing the Covid-19

pandemic. During the first wave of the pandemic, we fared well, as we implemented the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines on social distancing, hand sanitization, avoiding public gatherings and other raft of measures which we put to curb the spread of the disease.

Like most of the countries across the continent, we however, witnessed a resurgence of mortalities which claimed some of our frontline workers and our dear colleagues. To this effect, I salute all the gallant Public Service workers who have remained committed and dedicated to their work in the fight against the pandemic despite the associated risks to them and their families. Our thoughts and prayers are with those who lost their lives while executing their duties as Public Servants.

In a bid to curtail the menacing effects of the second wave, my Government has in the past few months embarked on a massive vaccination campaign which was launched in phases and targeted at our frontline workers who included our nurses, doctors, social workers, law enforcement officers and media practitioners among others. The roll-out of vaccines presents our best foot forward in the fight against the pandemic. May I urge all our Governments to take vaccination seriously and avoid listening to misinformation peddled on social media platforms.

I am pleased to highlight that our workers resolutely stood by our people, again demonstrating the purpose-driven leadership which is responsive. It is also important to highlight that beyond this epidemiological threat, the public service has showcased its ability to handle natural calamities. You will recall that, in early 2019, Zimbabwe along with Malawi and Mozambique were devastated by the Tropical Cyclone Idai. This resulted in the loss of property, lives and infrastructure.

Notwithstanding the impact of the Tropical Cyclone, I am glad to highlight that our public service workers minimised the threats, by evacuating our citizens, in an effort which was coordinated by the Civil Protection Department (CPU), working in collaboration with other stakeholders who include the Department of Social Development, housed under the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare. This dovetails with the African Union's thrust for having a purpose driven leadership in the context of crises, which are surely not limited to the Covid-19 pandemic alone. Our efforts are a clear testimony of "***Building the Africa we want through embracing an ethical culture that underpins purpose driven leadership in the Context of a Crisis***" which I believe every nation is pursuing.

Let me also take this opportunity to assure all delegates at this conference that your safety is guaranteed in Zimbabwe which is well known for being a haven for peace within the continent and the world. I encourage all of us here to observe the Covid-19 protocols.

Delegates may wish to note that the Government of Zimbabwe seriously considers the preserves and values of African culture. During the last agricultural season, Zimbabwe adopted the successful conservation agricultural programme known as Pfumvudza, a modernised zero tillage agricultural practice by our fore-fathers which ensures the efficient use of resources on small pieces of land but with higher yields. Our subsistence farmers who have embraced this cultural method have been rejuvenated as they have produced beyond expectations.

The agricultural divide plays a crucial role in terms of providing food security, which is our top priority considering the

attendant vulnerabilities exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic and drought.

To ensure and maintain an ethical public service administration, the Government of Zimbabwe has put in place strategies through the five year National Development Strategy (NDS) 1 that seeks to guide on the development thrust of the country.

The Government of Zimbabwe continues to embrace measures to ensure the improvement of conditions of service for our public servants and the promotion of the decent work agenda at the workplaces. This is being done through the awarding of monetary and non-monetary rewards as a way of motivating the workers. We are all aware, that a disgruntled and disheartened employee is less productive and is likely not to deliver quality service. My Government is on an elaborate programme to improve the remuneration of all its workers through social dialogue platforms.

However, it will be remiss to ignore the issue of corruption which continues to be a threat to national development across Africa. Corruption has become endemic in our culture and need to be weeded out in our public systems of the public service. Zimbabwe has adopted a zero tolerance to corruption approach and has instituted arrests of perpetrators, some of whom have already been convicted and are currently serving their sentences. I am pleased that the African Union continues to emphasize the importance of ethics within the public sector, which should be people-centred. In this regard let me call for a corruption-free Africa to ensure that resources are devoted and channelled where appropriate and for the benefit of the public.

Another area that has proved to be of crucial importance, is the use of ICTs that has proven to be a useful game changer in today's world as it provides opportunities to improve service



delivery with limited human interface. May I urge our African governments to progressively adopt the use of ICTs as a way of improving public service administration. This will significantly revitalise the face of our service delivery to our people. Our citizens are now accustomed to conducting their businesses online and as Government we have swiftly switched to emulate this epochal digital driven environment, as part of our efforts towards facilitating the ease of doing business.

In line with the Continent's endeavours, the Government will continue to leverage the use of ICTs in terms of improving the ease of doing business across all sectors of the public service. The fact that a handful of countries have gathered here while the rest are following deliberations online signifies the changing environment which also presents opportunities at the same time.

To all distinguished guests, ladies and gentleman participating from various parts of the continent, although we are not together physically, we are indeed bound in one accord by the digital technologies as we move towards achieving Agenda 2063 towards transforming Africa into a global powerhouse.

**Distinguished guests, ladies and gentleman,**

It is also worth to note that this year's commemorations of Africa Public Service Day have clearly placed the arts, culture and heritage as integral to our collective pursuits as a continent. This event is being held against the backdrop of the African Union theme for the year ***"The Arts, Culture and Heritage; Levers for Building the Africa We Want."*** My Government has taken elaborate steps to recognise the role which cultural heritage plays in our societies. Indeed a nation without a culture has no foundation. As a country we are doing all we can to preserve our history through honouring our

distinguished personalities who stood and fought for a just and free Zimbabwe.

It is therefore no coincidence that the eighth commemorations are anchored on the recognition of the role which cultural heritage has in terms of showcasing our values, identity, aspirations and even our diversity as an African people.

### **Distinguished guests,**

Our Africa Day commemorations were historic as they coincided with the unveiling of the Mbuya Nehanda Nyakasikana National Monument, at one of our busiest intersections in the capital, Harare. This National Monument which is a representation of the early anti-colonial sentiment at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century showcases the link between the First and the Second Chimurenga, which ultimately led to the attainment of our national independence on 18 April 1980.

Just recently, I graced the Bulawayo Arts Festival (BAF), in which I got the opportunity to tour Bulawayo's famed Urban Heritage Corridor characterising the city's rich tapestry of history. This platform also provided creativity with a grand opportunity to showcase people's talents.

Given the youth demographic, my government continues to put in place measures that empower youths in all sectors of the economy.

Allow me to end this address once again, by thanking the African Union Commission and all nations here present and those following us virtually for bequeathing this honour to Zimbabwe to host the 8<sup>th</sup> Edition of Africa Public Service Day Commemorations.

May I urge all our delegates to spare a moment and visit the majestic Victoria Falls which is one of the world's seven wonders and the Hwange National Park, which provides one of Africa's famed gaming experience. Our esteemed public service administrators will be at your service at these sites.

Enjoy your stay and remember to stay safe!

**May God Bless you all**

**May God Bless Africa!!**

**I thank you**