

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY
HIS EXCELLENCY DR. HAGE G. GEINGOB,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE STATE BANQUET IN HONOUR
OF HIS EXCELLENCY
MR EMMERSON DAMBUDZO MNANGAGWA,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE**

25 JULY 2019

WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

Your Excellency and Dear Brother, Comrade Emmerson Mnangagwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe;

Comrade Nangolo Mbumba, Vice President of the Republic of Namibia;

Comrade Hifikepunye Pohamba, Former President of the Republic of Namibia;

Honourable Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation;

Madame Monica Geingos, First Lady of the Republic of Namibia;

Honourable Margaret Mensah-Williams, Chairperson of the National Council;

Your Lordship Peter Shivute, Chief Justice;

Honourable Lt General (Rtd) Dr. Sibusiso B. Moyo, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of the Republic of Zimbabwe;

Honourable Ministers from the Republic of Namibia and the Republic of Zimbabwe;

Your Excellencies, the Ambassadors from the Republics of Zimbabwe and Namibia;

Members of Diplomatic Corps;

Distinguished Service Chiefs;

**Honourable Laura McLeod-Katjirua, Governor of the
Khomas Region;**

**Your Worship Muesee Kazapua, Mayor of the City of
Windhoek;**

Religious Leaders;

Captains of Industry;

Distinguished Invited Guests;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

In Africa, there is a proverb which says, “*In good times friends know you and in bad times you know them.*” The people of Zimbabwe share a deep friendship, a kinship rooted in the spirit of Pan African solidarity, which has flourished and strengthened through good times and bad times. From the difficult days of our struggle for liberation to the triumphant celebration of our independence, Zimbabweans and Namibians have stood together as brothers and sisters.

It is in this spirit of longstanding friendship and camaraderie that I and the First Lady, warmly welcome you, brother, Your Excellency Comrade Emmerson Mnangagwa, and your esteemed delegation to this Banquet, in honour of your State Visit to Namibia. We are indeed delighted and honoured to host you in our country.

I recall that during the maiden visit, we held fruitful discussions on bilateral, regional and global issues of common interest to both countries.

The fact that we met just last month at the successful Africa Wildlife Economy Summit at Victoria Falls, is indeed testament to our strong commitment and desire to further strengthen and deepen the existing bilateral cooperation and friendship between our countries.

Your Excellency,

Your State Visit to Namibia has afforded us an invaluable opportunity to review the progress we have made in advancing our strategic partnership and close collaboration in critical sectors of our respective economies.

I have noted, with appreciation, the steady progress we continue to make in deepening collaboration in areas such as Trade and Investment; Agriculture; Energy; Transport; Defence and Security Cooperation; Education; Health; to mention, but a few.

Equally, I note with satisfaction that the Joint Permanent Commission on Cooperation (JPCC) between Namibia and Zimbabwe, continues to meet regularly, in order to advance the implementation of our agreed commitments.

On this note, I am pleased to announce that we have agreed to elevate the Joint Commission mechanism, which was co-chaired by Ministers, to a Bi-National Commission which will now be chaired by the Presidents of Namibia and Zimbabwe. We look forward to the Inaugural Session in 2021.

Whilst we continue to expand the scope of our bilateral cooperation by signing additional legal instruments, it is critical that we ensure their effective implementation.

Your Excellency,

We should also take practical steps to boost trade and commercial activities, create new employment opportunities and reduce poverty in our communities. This should be buttressed by strong education and training systems to equip our youth with relevant skills and competencies that can enable them to operate innovatively and competitively in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, characterized by the phenomena of artificial intelligence, robotics and the Internet of Things.

Your Excellency,

As a government, we have left no stone unturned in upgrading, expanding and deepening the capacity of the Port of Walvis Bay to serve as a regional logistics hub. Equally, we have spared no effort in modernizing our road and rail network, fully aware that infrastructural development is at the core of stimulating economic growth.

In this context, I look forward to officiating, jointly with Your Excellency, at the inauguration of the Dry Port of the Republic of Zimbabwe in Walvis Bay tomorrow. The piece of land that the Government of Namibia earmarked for the construction of the Dry Port, was done not only as a gesture of goodwill, but to facilitate imports and exports of goods and services, thereby contributing to our regional development and economic integration efforts.

There can be no doubt about the impact that the economic and targeted sanctions imposed by Western countries have on the recovery and growth of the Zimbabwean economy. In this connection, I reiterate my call, which I made earlier this year in my capacity as

SADC Chairperson, for the immediate and unconditional lifting of the sanctions that are causing untold hardship to the people of Zimbabwe. In this regard, we call on Western countries to enter into constructive engagement and dialogue with the new Government of Zimbabwe.

Your Excellency,

Our region has recorded significant gains in our efforts to preserve our peace and security. Allow me to take this opportunity to wish Your Excellency well as you prepare to assume the mantle of incoming Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security at the forthcoming 39th SADC Summit next month. You can count on the unwavering support of the Republic of Namibia in your efforts to further consolidate the maintenance of peace and security in our region.

With these few remarks, I wish to once again, welcome Your Excellency and all our Zimbabwean brothers and sisters to Namibia.

It is now my singular honour to ask you to join me in a toast to:

- **The continued good health of His Excellency Emmerson Mnangagwa.**
- **The lasting friendship and partnership between the peoples of Zimbabwe and Namibia.**
- **To the peace, unity, wellbeing and prosperity of the people of Africa!**

I Thank You!