



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

STATEMENT BY

HIS EXCELLENCY

LIEUTENANT GENERAL DR. SERETSE KHAMA IAN KHAMA

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

**AT A STATE BANQUET ON THE OCCASION OF THE STATE
VISIT**

TO BOTSWANA BY HIS EXCELLENCY

MR. EMMERSON MNANGAGWA,

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE

12-13 FEBRUARY 2018



- **Your Excellency Mr. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe;**
 - **Your Honour the Vice President of the Republic of Botswana, Mr. Mogweetsi Masisi;**
 - **Your Lordship, Chief Justice Dibotelo**
 - **The Speaker of the National Assembly, Honourable Gladys Kokorwe;**
 - **Cabinet Ministers from Zimbabwe and Botswana;**
 - **Members of Parliament;**
 - **Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;**
 - **The Mayor of the City of Gaborone;**
 - **Senior Government Officials;**
 - **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;**
1. It is indeed a great pleasure and honour for me, on behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Botswana, to once again welcome you, Mr. President, and your delegation to Botswana and to thank for honouring our invitation.
 2. It has been over a decade since Botswana and Zimbabwe officially exchanged State Visits, a situation that certainly

does not augur well for the promotion and sustenance of the spirit of good neighbourliness among friendly States. We are therefore, very delighted Mr. President, to have you in our midst which is the first time a President of Zimbabwe has paid a state visit during my Presidency, not to mention that I too have never been invited to a state visit to Zimbabwe either. So you came just in time before I end my term of office.

3. Your State Visit to Botswana is therefore historic and provides fresh impetus for the revitalisation and consolidation of the time-tested relations that exist between our two countries.
4. Mr. President, I would like to once more congratulate you, for ascending to the highest office of the Presidency of the Republic of Zimbabwe. You are indeed a representation of the hopes and aspirations of the people of Zimbabwe. This renewed sense of hope was clearly articulated in your message of reconciliation and nation building that you shared with your fellow Zimbabweans during your inauguration and since then.

5. We remain confident that you will provide effective and visionary leadership to effect the much needed socio-economic transformation that will advance your country's development trajectory. It is our desire to see Zimbabwe and Zimbabweans prosper in peace and unity, and we will do all we can to cooperate with you to achieve that.
6. Zimbabwe is a country of immense opportunities, and I have no doubt in my mind that with your policy prescriptions and the economic recovery agenda that you have set forth, they will yield the intended results.
7. In order to achieve this noble task, the people of Zimbabwe will certainly require support, not only from the region, but the rest of the international community, as well.
8. Mr. President, Botswana remains ready to work with you and the people of Zimbabwe, as you embark on this development journey. My participation at your inauguration ceremony was essentially an expression of my personal desire and that of my Government to work closely with you to deepen our bonds of friendship. Equally, my invitation to you to visit Botswana, which you have graciously honoured, was aimed at providing the necessary platform for us to

explore further avenues for strengthening our mutually beneficial relations.

9. Botswana and Zimbabwe share a special relationship, which is not only premised on a shared common border, but also on the existing strong historical, cultural and family ties. These close ties, which were forged during the liberation struggle in the Southern Africa region, have remained a solid foundation for deepening our collaboration, thus taking our relations to greater heights.
10. As neighbouring countries whose economies remain inter-dependant, it is a fact of life that our prosperity as nations depends on each other's prosperity. We therefore, draw inspiration from our common past and cultural heritage, which serve as our moral compass in defining a common destiny.
11. It is therefore, pleasing to note that you brought along several Ministers for purposes of meaningful engagement with their counterparts in Botswana with a view to devise ways and means of fostering and broadening the scope of our bilateral cooperation.

12. Mr. President, our decision to establish a Bi-National Commission to be convened at Heads of State and Government level, is a great step forward in terms of enhancing our bilateral cooperation, which cut across almost all sectors of development.
13. As landlocked nations, it is imperative that we should deepen our strategic partnership through implementation of strategic projects.
14. Your Excellency, although the SADC region remains one of the stable regions on the African Continent, we are cautious of becoming complacent. We continue to be seized with regional efforts aimed at addressing the common development challenges that we are currently facing.
15. I also wish to recognise the efforts that our region continues to make towards the consolidation of democracy, peace and security, as well as, realise a coordinated developmental agenda for the region.
16. At the Continental level, I wish to acknowledge that Africa continues to make steady progress towards the attainment of the socio-economic transformation, as envisioned in

Agenda 2063. However, the current challenges that afflict the Continent such as transnational organized crime, terrorism, human and drug trafficking, radicalization and violent extremism, continue to pose a serious threat to our development endeavours.

17. Equally disturbing, is the trend by some African leaders to change the constitutions of their respective countries to advance their personal interests. We therefore need to recommit ourselves, as African leaders, to enhance our governance architecture and uphold the sanctity of our constitutions, if we are to realize our Continental aspirations.
18. Your Excellency, let me conclude by reiterating that our friendship and cooperation is very important, not only for our two countries, but also for the region. It is in that regard that I wish to reaffirm my personal commitment, and that of my Government, to the cooperation and partnership that we share.
19. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to you, once more, for gracing us with your presence. I am confident that we

will continue to work closely together for the benefit of our countries and peoples.

Your Excellency, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

20. May I now ask you to rise and join me in drinking a toast:

- to His Excellency Mr. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe;
- to the continued friendship, solidarity and fruitful cooperation between Botswana and Zimbabwe; and
- to international peace and security!

Thank you!