



**ADDRESS TO THE BOTSWANA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**BY**

**HIS EXCELLENCY CDE. E. D. MNANGAGWA,**

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE**

**ON THE**

**OCCASION OF A STATE VISIT**

**TO THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

**12–13 FEBRUARY 2018**

**GABORONE, BOTSWANA**



**HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT AND  
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ZIMBABWE  
DEFENCE FORCES,  
COMRADE EMMERSON DAMBUDZO MNANGAGWA.**



Your Excellency the President of the Republic of  
Botswana, Lt. Gen. Dr. Seretse Khama Ian Khama,

The Speaker of the National Assembly, Honourable  
Gladys K. T. Kokorwe,

The Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly,  
Honourable Kagiso Molatlhegi,

Leader of the Opposition, Honourable Duma Boko,

Honourable Members of the Botswana National  
Assembly,

Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Honourable Government Ministers and Members  
of the Business Delegation from the Republic of  
Zimbabwe,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Comrades and Friends.

It is a great honour for me to be in Gaborone, and to interact with representatives of the people of Botswana in this august House. I am deeply grateful for the warm reception that my delegation and I have received since our arrival in this beautiful country. Indeed, this warm welcome was expected, given the warm invitation extended to me by His Excellency President Ian Khama to pay a State Visit to Botswana.

**Madam Speaker,**

I come here today to reaffirm our old and enduring friendship. Zimbabwe and Botswana have a special relationship that has been strengthened by shared history, heritage, culture and geography which



bind our two countries and peoples together, like Siamese twins.

As such, that relationship is often analysed and over-analysed for the slightest hint of stress or strain. Of course, all relationships have their ups and downs. However, we have worked together to overcome the challenges.

Let me say, in as much as our past laid the foundation of our special relationship, I am here to herald the present, and gaze with optimism into the future.

**Honourable Members,**

Needless to say, Parliamentarians are a pivotal part of democracy. Each nation gives life to democracy in its own way, and in line with its Constitution. More often than not, Governments

that respect the will of their own people are more prosperous, stable and successful.

**Madam Speaker,**

Parliaments now represent informed societies, especially with the advent of the internet riding on social media platforms which are opening new doors for improved dialogue between citizens and their elected representatives. The two way communication channel can stimulate dynamic public participation in a healthy democracy. It is up to the representatives of the people to exploit the new Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) to improve on the transparency of the decision-making processes and to dialogue with citizens, in particular, through social networks which are capable of providing feedback in real time.



**Honourable Members,**

I am encouraged by the close cooperation between the legislatures of our two countries, not only at the bilateral level, but also at regional, continental and international levels. The bilateral exchange of visits at the level of Members and Staff has aided the sharing of experiences and ideas with the aim of adopting best practices and bench-marking, to consolidate the role of Parliament in national governance.

The two legislatures are active members of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, a platform that affords our national Parliaments the opportunity to play a meaningful role in promoting regional integration, good governance, peace and security in our region. That has been done through the Parliamentary Forum's Standing Committees,

election observation and the development of model laws: the first being the Model Law on Eradicating Child Marriages and Protecting Children Already in Marriage, which was adopted at the 39th SADC Parliamentary Forum's Plenary Assembly in June 2016. I was honoured to be the one to launch the Model Law at the 40th Plenary Assembly in Zimbabwe, on 12th November 2016.

The Model Law is instrumental in assisting member states harmonise their national laws to prevent child marriages, in support of the African Union Campaign to end Child Marriage in a Generation. The Pan African Parliament has been making similar efforts to develop model laws to address the pressing issues of development, peace and security on the African continent to complement the work of the African Union.



Our two legislatures have worked through the SADC and African Parliamentary groups at the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly to discuss and coordinate positions on issues of mutual concern. However, the success so far achieved should not lull us into complacency. I therefore exhort our legislatures to redouble their effort to deepen and enhance cooperation for the benefit of our two countries and peoples.

At the international level, your voice as Parliamentarians is the collective conscience of the nation. When Parliaments pronounce themselves on the burning issues of our time, be it the Saharawi people's right to determine their destiny as a sovereign nation, or the right of the Palestinian people to live in their own

sovereign space, and not under occupation, the scourge of terrorism, racism or xenophobia, it is the compelling voice of the People that is heard.

### **Honourable Members,**

Today's address comes at a time when my country recently witnessed political change. I was elevated to Head of State and Government following the resignation of our former President, Comrade Mugabe. The transition was very peaceful, and I must say, democracy was the ultimate victor! It will be remiss of me not to acknowledge and appreciate the unflinching support we received from Botswana and other SADC countries during the transition.

My Government is committed to maintain the prevailing peace as well as to consolidating



democracy. In this respect, Zimbabwe will hold elections by July 2018, as prescribed by our Constitution. Preparations for the elections have been going on smoothly, with more than 5 million eligible voters, already registered by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC). Our elections will be guided by the SADC and AU principles and guidelines.

SADC and AU Member States are always welcome to observe our elections. We are also open to inviting other regional bodies across the world.

**Madam Speaker,**

My Government's thrust is economic growth, re-engagement with countries and international organisations we had misunderstandings with

before, as well as consolidating long-standing friendships.

My administration is working hard to attract Foreign Direct Investment in order to revive and grow the economy. In that regard, we have been working on improving the investment climate in the country. We have amended the Indigenisation and Empowerment Act, which now limits the 51/49% shareholding structure to only two minerals, that is, platinum and diamonds. My administration is also improving the “ease of doing business” as instanced by the reduction in the time required to register companies and by the guaranteed repatriation of profits by investors.

I know that, in your various constituencies, you host many Zimbabweans. I wish to express my



appreciation for the hospitality and opportunities you have extended to them. It is in this spirit of togetherness and *Ubuntu* that you have opened your doors to my countrymen and women during the time of our need. These noble deeds will forever be etched in our hearts and minds. As our economic prospects improve, we shall be expecting and receiving them back home, many of them in the company of their Tswana spouses!

### **Honourable Members,**

My Government will continue to work tirelessly to create a peaceful and stable political and socio-economic environment which will enable us to move forward as a prosperous nation that will afford each and everyone of us an opportunity to realise our full potential. As we pursue these objectives, I shall count on your solidarity and goodwill.

**Madam Speaker and Honourable Members,**

The strategic importance of the relationship between Zimbabwe and Botswana can never be over-emphasised. The two countries have great potential to work together to provide peace and prosperity to our people, as we stimulate exchange in business and other spheres.

In conclusion, allow me to thank, you once again, Madam Speaker, for affording me this invaluable opportunity to interact with this great institution, the Parliament of beautiful Botswana!

**I thank you!**

**Ke a leboga!**