



**ADDRESS**

**BY**

**HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT,**

**COMRADE R. G. MUGABE,**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL  
OPENING OF THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE**

**7<sup>TH</sup> PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE,**

**30<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2012.**



**HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE  
COMRADE ROBERT GABRIEL MUGABE.**

Madame President of the Senate,

Mr Speaker Sir,

Honourable Members of Parliament,

I welcome you all to this Fifth Session of the Seventh Parliament of Zimbabwe, which draws us closer to the end of the Inclusive Government. Thus, the Session is likely to be an abridged one. I must, however, acknowledge that after faltering starts and stops, there has been some growing mutual collaboration and commendable efforts at togetherness, which are values we should continue to build upon. It is time we believe in our capacity to confront our challenges, without the mischievous external hand that always comes to distort the magnitude and nature of our challenges.

The 2nd All Stakeholders Conference held from the 22nd to 23rd of this month was a significant event and marked one of the final stages in the current Constitution making process. By all accounts, the Conference was a major success as it provided



a platform for Stakeholders to freely express their views and comments on the COPAC Draft Constitution so as to align the Draft to the views expressed during the Outreach programme conducted last year. Our expectation as Principals is that the next stage will proceed with haste so that this process is concluded expeditiously. The Select Committee of COPAC should work frantically to produce a Report of the Conference summarizing the views expressed by the Stakeholders, in particular the divergent views, and submit the Report to the Principals in Government who will take the necessary steps to set up an appropriate mechanism to build the required consensus on the way forward, mindful always that our major objective remains the holding of the next Harmonised Elections in March, 2013 under a new Constitution.

I take this opportunity to thank and commend the Select Committee of COPAC for spearheading the Constitution making process over the last three and half years. I also commend the Management Committee for giving guidance

to the process. In terms of Article VI of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) the Constitution making process was to have taken 18 months to complete. Instead it has taken more than  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years to get us where we are now. Be that as it may, the fact that it has taken this long indicates that the process was indeed a difficult one. There is now the need for government to assume the management of the process leading to the holding of a Referendum. Should the people express their affirmation of the Draft Constitution, then Parliament would be asked to pass it as the fundamental law of our country. Elections will then become a necessary sequel.

This Session comes at an historic time when Zimbabwe and its brotherly northern neighbour, Zambia, are working towards co-hosting the 2013 United Nations World Tourism Organisation General Assembly, which event will take place in our twin border towns of Victoria Falls and Livingstone. Apart from firmly placing our countries on the world tourism map, this auspicious world event should also provide fresh



impetus to the growth and development of our tourism industry.

Madame President,

Mr Speaker Sir,

The Attorney General's Amendment Bill, which seeks to amend sections of the Attorney General's Act that potentially infringe upon the independence of that office, enshrined in the Constitution, shall be tabled for debate during this Session. Furthermore, to correct the irregularities detected following an audit of the Constituency Development Fund, a Constituency Development Fund Bill, which will strengthen accountability in the Fund's management shall be brought for debate by Parliament during this Session.

Madame President,

Mr Speaker Sir,

The country's economy continues to grow at a slow pace owing to depressed industrial activity, tight liquidity conditions, low international commodity prices, shortages of affordable lines of credit, illegal sanctions and underperformance in both the agriculture and manufacturing sectors. This negative picture has led to a downward revision of the country's Gross Domestic Product growth rate from the initial projection of 9,4 per cent to 5,6 per cent. In spite of this transitory setback, the country's economic growth is still within the sub-Saharan average growth rate of 5 per cent.

We have an urgent need to redouble efforts in the implementation of initiatives to attract investment and stimulate economic growth as contained in the Medium Term Plan. As part of this thrust, the Zimbabwe Investment Authority Bill, which seeks to enhance the country's competitiveness as an investment destination, will be tabled before this august House during this Session. Through the multiple voices of SADC, the African Union and the

Zimbabwe-European Union dialogue, we will continue the call for the unconditional lifting of the illegal sanctions imposed on the country. These cruel measures undermine our people's efforts to turn around the economy.

Madame President,

Mr Speaker Sir,

Needless to say, agriculture remains the country's leading economic sector, contributing between 15 to 18 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product, 40 per cent of national export earnings, 60 per cent of raw materials to industries, while also providing the largest formal and informal employment. Accordingly, the sector should be accorded priority treatment in terms of planning and the provision of resources. The sector's performance has frequently been undermined by adverse climatic conditions, unavailability of affordable inputs, product market distortions, unaffordable finances and high transaction costs. These challenges have to be



addressed in an incisive manner in order to fully unlock the sector's potential.

With regard to the issue of marketing, the operationalisation of the Commodity Exchange of Zimbabwe, which is expected to commence soon, should engender efficiency in the marketing of agricultural produce, among other commodities, thereby ensuring fair returns for farmers.

Madame President,

Mr Speaker Sir,

The drought experienced in several parts of our country in the 2011/2012 agricultural season has brought about acute food shortages in the affected areas. As always, Government remains committed to ensuring that no Zimbabwean dies of hunger and that food is distributed to all needy persons. A decision has already been taken to distribute maize to needy households under the Extended Grain Loan and the

