



ADDRESS

BY

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE,
HIS EXCELLENCY, DR. E. D. MNANGAGWA**

AT

**THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 7th ANNUAL
SADC INDUSTRIALISATION WEEK**

HARARE

31 JULY 2024

Director of Ceremonies;

Vice President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Hon. Gen. (Rtd) Dr. C. G. D. N. Chiwenga;

Vice President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Hon. Col. (Rtd) K. C. D. Mohadi;

Minister of Defence and Chairman of ZANU PF, Hon. O. C. Z. Muchiguri-Kashiri;

Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution, Harare Metropolitan Province, Hon. C. Z. Tavengwa;

Minister of Industry and Commerce, Hon. N. M. Ndhlovu;

Other Honourable Ministers here present;

Executive Secretary, SADC Secretariat, H. E. Elias, Magosi;

His Excellency Wamkele Mene, Secretary General of the African Continental Free Trade Area;

Chief Secretary to the President and Cabinet, Dr. M. Rushwaya;

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

Your Excellences, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Senior Government Officials here present;

Executive Director, SADC Business Council. Mr Peter
Varndell;

UNIDO Deputy to the Director General and Managing
Director, Directorate of Global Partnerships and External
Relations, Ms. Fatou Haidara;

Captains of Industry and Commerce;

Other Development Partners with us today;

Distinguished Investors and Exhibitors;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of the Government and people of Zimbabwe,
and indeed on my own behalf, it is my singular honour
and privilege to officially welcome you, to this
7th Annual SADC Industrialisation Week, being hosted

under the theme, *‘Promoting Innovation to Unlock Opportunities for Sustainable Economic Growth and Development Towards an Industrialised SADC.*

This event, which is a precursor to the SADC Heads of State and Government Summit, and the largest public-private engagement platform, aims at fostering new opportunities for intra-African trade and investment in the Southern Africa region.

I congratulate the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat, the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI), and the SADC Business Council, along with the responsible Ministries, Departments and Agencies of the Zimbabwean Government, for putting together an exceptional and transformational showcase.

Given the vast natural resource endowments and youthful population on our African continent and the SADC region in particular, it is a misnomer that we continue to lose substantial revenues through exporting unprocessed goods.

It is on this background that ten years ago, we resolved here in Zimbabwe, to front-load the SADC Industrialisation Agenda. It, therefore, beckons all of us, Governments, industry and development partners alike, to give impetus to the accelerated development of industry.

Through our unity of purpose, complementary and intertwined strategies, we are determined to realise rapid socio-economic development and a higher quality of life in our countries and region, that leave no one and no place behind.

This is in line with targets of the African Union's Agenda 2063, which include transformation and enhancing overall productivity for the growth and industrialisation of African economies.

Further, this year's Industrialisation Week amplifies the urgent need for Member States to embrace innovation as a way to boost industrial productivity and competitiveness. Individually and collectively, we have a duty to spur sustainable growth through a sound and diversified industrial base with wide-ranging new products and jobs for our people.

Distinguished Guests;

Modernisation and industrialisation of our economies is no longer a luxury but a matter of necessity for the future we all want and deserve.

The rich liberation heritage of our region reminds us how unity and singleness of purpose realised political independence and freedom. Presently, the contestations for neo-imperialist subjugation of our countries are being fought in the economic domain. We must, therefore, never fall asleep.

The present generation has a duty and obligation to foster environments and synergies that leap frog industrialisation, create more jobs, produce value added goods, as well as increase exports and export earnings. Equally, we must improve efficiencies in our resource allocation and create the requisite linkages across all sectors of our economies to drive this noble and urgent agenda.

For the SADC region to propel the industrialisation initiative, we cannot work in silos, both in terms of in-country and cross border cooperation.

Hence, by and large, there is need for our national development strategies to be in sync with the broader development agenda. As such, agriculture and agribusinesses, along with our regional energy, water, transport and port infrastructure, as well as trade routes should be developed in a collaborative manner. Greater commitment must be demonstrated by all stakeholders to the full implementation of our policies such as the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan.

As it was during the liberation struggle, we are separate countries but one region, with one common future.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Our SADC region has immense potential to accelerate the structural transformation of our economies, anchored on increased production and productivity. It is critically important, therefore, to scale up the domestication of regional value chains towards our entry into global value chains.

As an outcome of this event, we must see clear benchmarks and targets. Key in this regard is the need to expand production possibilities through enhanced cross-border utilisation of natural and human capital resources of our region.

To ensure the successful implementation of the SADC Industrialisation Strategy, member states must increase investments in technology, innovation, as well as research and development.

In this regard, we must re-purpose our yester-year institutions to be more relevant for the world of the future. Fundamentally, our education systems should be re-purposed to bridge the technology gap and current global trends to enable the SADC region to be more competitive. Let us be deliberate, systematic and surgically focussed to graduate from being factor-driven to investment-driven and ultimately knowledge-based economies.

This can never be magical, but an incremental step by step, brick upon brick, and stone upon stone process.

In the case of Zimbabwe, we have ushered in a new education philosophy, through the adoption of the Heritage Based Education 5.0 Policy. This focuses on science, technology and innovation and the production of goods and services as the bedrock of our national development agenda.

This has seen innovation hubs and agro-industrial parks within our institutions of higher learning producing a new range of products for both the local and export markets. I challenge the private sector, small and medium enterprises, along with development partners, both in our country and the region at large, not to be mere spectators but to have confidence in the capabilities of our young people by supporting the commercialisation of innovative products, prototypes, and new ideas.

Backward and forward linkages must see the creation of centres of excellence in science and technology which enable sound research for modern industrial processes and accelerated industrialisation.

Further, the private sector and other stakeholders must move beyond policy and advocacy towards increased support for African based entrepreneurship. We look forward to a time when the private sector engages Government on assistance with regards promoting locally produced technologies, machinery and equipment. Blended with our need to realise healthy rewards, must be the due inclination to support and fund Research and Development for capacity-building programmes that equip local people with skills for emerging industries.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Over and above revamping our education systems, it is imperative for member states to fully embrace the global ICT revolution.

As Africa and the SADC region, ICT penetration must not merely be celebrated for enabling social interactions, but transcend to every sector of the economy. We must see greater efficiencies and cost savings in our modernisation and industrialisation processes through modern ICT hard and soft infrastructure.

On its part, my Government continues to provide an environment that encourages a conducive ICT and innovation ecosystem. ICT training has been mainstreamed into the whole continuum of our education system from primary up to tertiary level. Meanwhile, the development of advanced ICT infrastructure; as well as support for innovation and the development of new ICT software by our young entrepreneurs is on-going.

I urge member states and stakeholders across our region to scale up transformation of our domestic industries.

Let us not shy away or delay embracing latest developments in emerging industries underlying

the Fourth Industrial Revolution. These include artificial intelligence, robotics, biotechnology and the use of renewable energy, among others.

Greater innovation must be deployed to lower the unit costs of production, enhance information exchange, and lower transaction costs to further help our economies to develop new value chains, while strengthening existing ones. The time has come for industry to become mature and cease the “cry-baby mentality.”

However, it is an acknowledged reality that the industrial sector in Africa faces challenges in accessing affordable and long-term finance. This has in turn curtailed and retarded the modernisation of Africa’s industrial base. For us in Zimbabwe, limitations in this regard have been worsened by the illegal economic sanctions imposed on our country.

Given the scale of finances needed to ensure the success of our regional industrialisation agenda, we must think outside the box for innovative financing models. Focus must remain on what we have and what we control; this being the use of our domestic resources to propel our industrialisation and development agenda. The weighty obligation to build, develop and industrialise our economies lies with us; the people of this region, SADC, and the continent.

The need to formalise and operationalise the SADC Regional Development Fund has become urgent. Similarly, domestic pension funds, Sovereign Wealth Funds and other Public-Private Sector frameworks, must be deployed to play a more pivotal role in the implementation of our industrialisation agenda.

In addition, the financial services sector is called upon to provide responsive financial packages that facilitate our collective quest for an industrialised SADC region.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

As the current crop of leaders within the SADC region and Africa in general, we are committed to the industrialisation agenda and intra-African trade. We will, therefore, continue to create an enabling fiscal policy and regulatory environment, with a particular focus on cross border infrastructure and efficient trade.

Under the Second Republic, the ease of doing business has tremendously improved and bureaucratic red tape drastically reduced. This has seen us realise unprecedented economic growth and Foreign Direct Investment, while nurturing entrepreneurship, especially among youth and women led SMEs and start-ups.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Regional integration is a cornerstone of our SADC Industrialisation Strategy. As such, member states are called upon to fast-track the ratification of our SADC Protocol on Industry.

Through working together, within SADC and other Regional Economic Communities, we will undoubtedly realise win-win benefits under the African Continental Free Trade Area for the shared prosperity of the peoples of our great continent of Africa.

In conclusion, as we continue with the 7th SADC Industrialisation Week, we look forward to active dialogue and collaboration, as well as concrete trade deals. From a Government point of view, after this week-long event, we stand ready to receive observations and recommendations from this Forum on the bottlenecks and possible remedies to accelerate our industrialisation drive.

Finally, I exhort us to remain vigilant towards growing investments that will spur our industrial development agenda to achieve the **‘SADC we all want.’**

With these remarks, it is my honour and privilege to declare this year's 7th Annual SADC Industrialisation Week officially opened.

God bless you all.

God bless Zimbabwe.

I thank you.