



WELCOME REMARKS

BY

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR HARARE METROPOLITAN

PROVINCE

ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE COMMERCIAL

DIVISION OF THE HIGH COURT

ON 6 MAY 2022

SALUTATIONS.

YOUR EXCELLENCY, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is indeed an incredible honour to welcome you to the opening of the Commercial Division of the High Court. Some of you have travelled far and wide to be here with us, we are grateful and extend the warmest of welcomes. What we are endorsing today is an enormous accomplishment for justice. I am delighted that this is being done in Harare Metropolitan Province. The Commercial Court is a jewel and a credit to the Chief Justice of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Judicial Service Commission, and to the province. We all look forward to the benefits it is sure to bring to the nation of stable and predictable commercial law, and the investment opportunities that it is surely to bring in tow.

Through careful consideration, the Government of Zimbabwe identified devolution as one of the vital pillars to achieving upper middle income economy status by 2030. Devolution, as a principle, involves the de-concentration of power to lower tiers of government.

This economic devolution model intends to transform provinces and districts into economic hubs to grow local gross domestic product.

The idea of decentralisation and devolution, having been drawn from the Constitution, is key to the nation's economic development. Where possible, delegation of responsibilities to local authorities capable of carrying them out effectively should be done. This transfer of powers has been identified as instrumental because it certifies that decisions are made closer to the local people, communities and businesses they affect.

Justice and accessibility must be synonymous, and must be two sides of the same coin, in order for either of them to have value in a democratic society such as this one. This explains why the Judicial Service Commission is tasked with, and embraces the duty to, ensure that justice reaches the places that need it. The JSC has thus, with the assistance of various stakeholders, fought tooth and nail for this right of the people through infrastructural development, and other reforms. They must be commended for this.

The Judicial Service Commission has been on a mission to realize the national goal of devolution for the court system. This has been characterized by the building of different courts in a number of areas. This tells us that the placing of courts has been in strategic furtherance of their organizational mission and policy to attain world class justice, and do so for all. Some of the courts that have preceded this one, I am told, are Magistrates' Courts established in suburbs such as Budiriro, Epworth, Glen Norah, Entumbane and Nkulumane. In addition, there is also the establishment of Chinhoyi Court Complex, which houses a number of courts, and was commissioned last year. We are proud as Harare Metropolitan Province to boast of the presence this first-of-its-kind Court, located in the busy Central Business District. We are but the pioneering province, and are sure that in no time, many Commercial Courts will be located all over the country.

YOUR EXCELLENCY, the ingenuity demonstrated by the Commission, aligns perfectly with the overarching goals of the Government of Zimbabwe. These are laid out in **Vision 2030**, an embodiment of our hopes as a nation, and the **National Development Strategy**, which lays out the attainment of that goal. These important national documents

place emphasis on economic development and the attainment of a prosperous and empowered upper-middle income society by the year 2030. In order for us to pave the way for this bright future we are anticipating, these key issues and policies need to be implemented here and now. This is why the Judicial Service Commission's contribution is invaluable.

YOUR EXCELLENCY, the Supreme law of the land imparts on the Judiciary the means by which they can effectively discharge their mandate. It is a great pleasure to witness the fact that the Commission is unwavering in their subscription to and observance of values such as independence and impartiality.

The Second Republic considers the Rule of Law crucial in attaining sustainable social and economic development. This is why there can be no compromises when it comes to the adherence to principles such as these. The Rule of law, where it prevails, assures every individual that their fundamental rights are not only guaranteed, but valiantly protected. Knowing this simple fact alone injects a confidence boost in the potential of investor protection and

prosperity in a Zimbabwean market. The courts, as the custodians of the law, have the herculean task of guarding against the erosion of any and all human rights and freedoms. Achieving this makes an effective, highly efficient, and independent Judiciary that the people can trust.

I have been informed that we are celebrating a number of milestones. The Integrated Electronic Case Management System (I.E.C.M.S.), which has been in the works for some time, was successfully launched. This Court will be paperless. These words at some point seemed inconceivable, and yet today, the inconceivable has become a reality. Sincere gratitude is extended to those who put in the work, regardless of trials aplenty, to make this day a reality.

Though the effects of Covid 19 seem to be dying down now, at some point they were a devastatingly brutal frontal attack on what we perceive as "normal life." As distressing as it was, it was also a call to rally, a call heard from within and without every individual. Every person with a role to play in ensuring our survival. The Judicial Service Commission clearly took that call and rallied indeed. The I.E.C.M.S. is

a stellar example of that. Adversity was quickly turned into an opportunity to discharge their mandate, and now we can say with pride, that access to justice is no longer limited by geographical location.

I would like to single out and extend my gratitude to, not to the exclusion of all the other key stakeholders, the Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and all officers of the Judicial Service Commission. They managed to coordinate their efforts in a seamless manner, put effort that is above and beyond what was expected, and produce a work of art in the form of this Commercial Court. May this kind of dedication to justice continue to be fostered and watered, until it bears many more fruits. I believe I speak for everyone here when I say a win for justice showcased here today, is a win for justice in every corner of Zimbabwe.

All the efforts that the Judicial Service Commission has put towards the consistent justice for all cannot go unnoticed. By their nature, the steps taken demand to be felt, lauded and appreciated. The

Executive will always do whatever it can to support this noble exploit. There is no doubt in my mind that the Judiciary has exceeded expectations, and has more than risen to the occasion in a bid to deliver world class justice. The doors of the Commercial Court are open, maybe even more open than ever before, as their reach extends into the comfort of those seeking justice, wherever they may be. I appeal to everyone, to emulate the massive contribution that the Judicial Service Commission has made to the development of our nation.

Lastly, I welcome each and every distinguished guest gracing this occasion to the Commercial Division of the High Court. Justice has already triumphed by the fact that this Commercial Court has been established, and it can only go uphill from here. Taking the lead of the economy being open for business, commercial justice is now ready to be delivered. In anticipation of attaining Upper Middle Income and the corresponding economic boom, Vision 2030 is now closer than ever.