



ADDRESS

BY

THE PRESIDENT, HIS EXCELLENCY,

DR. E.D. MNANGAGWA

AT

**THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE MOUNT
MERU MILLERS EDIBLE OIL REFINERY PLANT**

29 JUNE 2022

MAHUSEKWA

Director of Ceremonies;

Vice President and Minister of Health and Child Care,
Hon. Gen. (Rtd.) Dr. C. G. D. N. Chiwenga;

Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution,
Mashonaland East Province, Hon. A. Munzverengwi;

Minister of Industry and Commerce; Hon. Dr. S. I.
Nzenza;

Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and
Rural Development, Hon. Dr. A. Masuka;

Other Ministers here present;

Ambassador of the Republic of India, Your Excellency,
Mr Vijay Khanduja;

Chairperson of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on
Industry and Commerce, Hon. J. Sacco;

Members of Parliament here present;

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

Senior Government Officials;

The General Manager, Mount Meru Millers,
Mr. A. Pareek and staff;

Members of the Media;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am honoured to be back here in Mashonaland East Province; this time here in Mahusekwa, to officially commission the Mount Meru Millers Zimbabwe Edible Oil Refinery Plant, valued at US\$20 million. Today's visit follows the recent commissioning of the Central Registry E-Passport Office in Murewa District as well as Radnor Mine in Makuya, Mudzi District. To date, other notable projects have completed under the Second Republic such as the Muchekeranwa Dam, the Mutoko Royal Fruit and Vegetable Processing Plant, along with road, health and education infrastructure across the various districts of the Province.

This is commendable and a reflection of the inroads you are making as a province towards the growth of your Provincial GDP.

Investment is vital for economic growth and indeed, the nature and levels of Foreign Direct Investment witnessed since the advent of the Second Republic are unprecedented. These are a clear testimony of the success of our “Zimbabwe is Open for Business” philosophy and the Engagement and Re-engagement Policy adopted by my administration.

In this respect, the investment by the Mount Meru Group is further evidence of the prevailing conducive environment for doing business progressive. It also highlights the strong diplomatic ties which exist between the Republic of India and Zimbabwe. We stand ready to welcome more investments from the Republic of India into new large scale industries as well as other sectors of our economy.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Edible oils are an indispensable nutritional resource for human health and are a key dietary item around the World. They are a key source of fats, making them the second most important food group after cereals. As such, the coming on board of Mount Meru Millers brings to nine, the number of edible oil processing plants in our economy. Our country and Mashonaland East Province, is set to benefit from Mount Meru Group entry in to the food processing value chain, leveraging on the company's wealth of experience drawn from their presence in more than 15 countries on the African continent.

The new processing plant, which has a capacity to produce 250 metric tons of soya edible oil per day, will undoubtedly help increase supply of oil on the local market. It is also set to augment the Local Content Policy and the ongoing campaign under the

“Made in Zimbabwe; Buy Zimbabwe and Build Zimbabwe” initiative.

It is my expectation that the increase in processing capacity in the edible oils sector, will nurture healthy supply chain and guarantee availability of products at fairly priced and competitive rates for the benefit of consumers. I am optimistic that the raw material requirements of this processing plant will enhance the economic participation of our communities, not only here in Mashonaland East Province but the country as a whole.

To this end, I call upon the edible oil value chain players to support the production of soya bean, cotton, and sunflower by contracting local farmers towards guaranteeing a consistent availability of raw material. This should in turn see a decrease in our reliance on imported crude edible oil to boost our national requirements, while at the same time supporting small-holder farmers.

This multipronged strategy has become imperative, more so as climate change and mandatory bio-fuel production in major edible oil producing countries and have disrupted edible oil availability and supply chains. Additionally, global shocks have exacerbated the need for self-sufficiency in the production of feed-stock into edible oil value chains.

I, thus, urge our local farmers to take advantage of the National Enhanced Agricultural Productivity Scheme, to access inputs for strategic crops such as soya beans, sunflower, cotton, maize, wheat, and other cereals. On its part, my Government is accelerating the construction of dams and rehabilitation of existing irrigation schemes across the country to increase the amount of land under irrigation, some of which must prioritize strategic crops.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Consumers are becoming more health conscious and prefer to consume healthier edible oils, I therefore, challenge Mount Meru Millers to respond accordingly to this emerging market trend. You are encouraged from the onset to invest in research and development for the production of high quality, low cholesterol edible oils.

The by-products of edible oil production such as soya meal, cotton meal and sunflower meal are used in the production of stock feeds, soya milk, textured vegetable protein products, cosmetics and health supplements, among others. This should result in additional empowerment and entrepreneurial opportunities for women and youth through the creation of upstream and downstream linkages and manufacturing enterprises.

Ultimately, the widening of scope for a positive increase in the GDP of Mashonaland East Province must continue to propel all your initiatives. Linkages also exist in the local production of packaging and labelling materials, some of which are currently being imported.

As we register steady and assured progress towards food self sufficiency, other Provinces that are yet to fully take advantage of the NDS-1 must take a leaf from the successes of Mashonaland East Province.

Distinguished Guests;

In line with our engagement and re-engagement efforts, we continue to call for investors to come and invest in Zimbabwe in all spheres of the economy, leveraging on the abundant natural resources endowments. My Government, will continue to pursue the Ease of Doing Business reforms to attract more investments, focusing on the rural areas, in line with our developmental thrust of leaving no-one and no place behind.

At national level, investments are being facilitated with greater ease, guided by the Whole-of-Government Approach. I implore Local Authorities in this Province and across the country to play their part for the accelerated establishment of rural industry systems, and the modernisation and industrialisation of our economy. Appropriate land and infrastructure as well as realistic fees, and licences charges must advance this agenda. The provision of residential stands must be in sync with that of industrial land. The present mis-match is unsustainable and must be redressed to ensure decent work and employment opportunities for our people, where they live.

Distinguished Guests;

As I conclude, I call upon other investors to take advantage of opportunities that exist in agriculture, manufacturing, mining, textiles, food processing, education, health, energy and water, among others.

Let me also urge Mount Meru Millers and other players in our productive sectors to be outward-looking, and go beyond the Zimbabwean market.

You already have an enlarged market at our doorstep in the form of the African Continental Free Trade Area, SADC and COMESA, among others. As a country, we are part of these Regional Economic Communities; hence, you should reap the benefits arising from the increased investment opportunities, and widened market access of over one billion people that is on offer.

I also exhort Mount Meru Millers and other entities operating in Zimbabwe to scale up their Corporate Social Responsibility programmes and play their part in the development and upliftment of local communities.

With these remarks, it is now my honour and privilege to declare the Mount Meru Millers Zimbabwe Edible Oil Refinery Plant officially commissioned.

God bless you.

God bless Zimbabwe.

I thank you.