



SPEECH

BY

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

AT THE

**LAUNCH OF THE FRENCH DEVELOPMENT
AGENCY FUNDED IMPROVEMENTS AT THE
GREAT ZIMBABWE MONUMENTS WORLD
HERITAGE SITE**

MASVINGO PROVINCE

30 JUNE 2022

Director of Ceremonies;

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

Vice President and Second Secretary of ZANU PF,
Col (Rtd) K. C. D. Mohadi;

Minister of Defence and War Veterans Affairs, and
Chairman of ZANU PF, Hon. O. C. Z. Muchinguri-
Kashiri;

Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution
for Masvingo Province, Hon. E. R. Chadzamira;

Minister of Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage;
Hon. K. Kazembe;

Other Ministers here present;

Your Excellency, the French Ambassador to Zimbabwe,
Laurent Chevallier;

Our Traditional Leaders;

Chairman of the National Museums and Monuments of
Zimbabwe Board of Trustees, Brig. Gen. (Rtd) E. W.
Kanhanga;

Director of UNESCO Regional Office, Mr. Hubert
Gijen;

Representative of the French Development Agency;

Senior Government officials;

Invited Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my honour and privilege to address you all, as we witness the signing of a partnership agreement between the French Development Agency and the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe, in a project to conserve the Great Zimbabwe Monuments. This development is most opportune and is in sync with my Government's desire to ensure the recovery, growth and ultimately increased contribution of the tourism sector to the overall growth of our country's economy.

On behalf of the people and Government of Zimbabwe and indeed on my own behalf, I express my profound gratitude to the French Government for the generous gesture extended to us in Heritage Management and Conservation.

The partnership between the French Development Agency and the Government of Zimbabwe in the preservation and promotion of the Great Zimbabwe Monument is indeed a welcome initiative. It speaks volumes about the excellent relations that exist between our two great countries and peoples.

The project is a culmination of a visit by the French Development Agency delegation in November 2018, where upon, a wide range of cooperation initiatives, including investment in the Cultural Heritage Sector were agreed on. I commend all stakeholders for making a decision to focus the partnership to target the Great Zimbabwe World Heritage Site, here in Masvingo Province.

The interventions of this project will go a long way in enhancing the realisation of our country's tourism recovery and growth targets. The multi-dimensional package of interventions of this project which include, documentation and conservation of tangible and

intangible heritage of the site; installation of interpretation and visitor's facilities at the site, as well as commercial management and marketing of the site are a welcome development.

In line with the United Nations World Tourism Organisation spirit of 'tourism for all' by 2030, I urge the tourism, travel and hospitality sector players and in particular the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe to take head on the barriers that encumber visits to our tourist attraction sites. Ride on the use of technologies as best ways to brand and market our tourism products in both traditional and emerging markets. The capacity building of the National Museums and Monuments as well as strengthening of research and development under this project, must propel the tourism development and marketing vision of this iconic monument.

Over and above this, the envisioned interventions to improve community livelihoods based on innovative and

territorial level management solutions dovetail with the country's Community Based Tourism Enterprise Strategy. In this regard, the funding for the development of tourism incubation programmes must continue to ensure that our local communities participate in the sector's value chains. This will ensure that our people enjoy the benefits of our rich heritage and natural endowments.

The modernisation of the Nemanwa Craft Centre and Cultural Hub, as well as the training in environmental management practices, amongst a myriad of other outcomes of this project must be speedily implemented.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The Great Zimbabwe Monument is one of our country's national tourist attractions owing to its significance at both the national and global level. Our independent and sovereign country Zimbabwe derives its name from this sacred national monument and heritage site. It is the physical embodiment and expression of our

national identity. It remains our source of pride, inspiration, a cradle of our civilisation, rich heritage and culture bequeathed to us by our fore fathers.

It is no coincidence therefore, that this monument was designated a National Monument as well as World Heritage Site. This epitaph of our nationhood possesses an outstanding universal value that transcends national boundaries and is indeed an embodiment of the rich African civilisation.

To us in Zimbabwe, the monument is not only about its grandiose architecture but a revered national shrine and place of worship that symbolises our sacred cultural traditions and belief systems.

I, therefore, take the opportunity of this occasion to applaud the Government, stakeholders, traditional leaders and communities here in Masvingo Province, for preserving, protecting and safeguarding this world heritage site.

That singleness of purpose in safeguarding this revered shrine for the benefit of our country, Zimbabwe and for mankind in general must remain a priority. A people without knowledge of their history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots, hence, we are obligated to preserve our country's diverse and rich cultural heritage.

We must be alive to the fact that our protracted armed struggle for independence also revolved around the importance of the Great Zimbabwe Monument as the oppressive white minority regime had the intention of denying us the Zimbabwean people of its ownership and authorship. The failed ploy to underplay our forefathers' human creativity was realised through a protracted war of liberation. Today we are an independent, free, democratic and sovereign country. Never again will our country and people be subdued in any form.

We will continue to leverage on our rich heritage based development alternatives to grow, modernise and industrialise our great motherland, Zimbabwe.

After all, this iconic Monument bears a unique and undeniable testimony of the production, economic and governance, system embedded in our culture and civilisation. The unifying force that builds this great country emboldens us to work harder towards the realisation of our National Vision 2030. To this end, we will unapologetically invest in our local economy, construct our roads, dams, schools, clinics and hospitals, produce what we eat, manufacture our own clothes and safeguard our peace, unity and cultural heritage.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

To date, different groups have been converging at this cultural heritage site for religious and spiritual functions. Hence, the need to positively enhance the overarching originality and heritage integrity of this site.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

I once again commend the French Government, through the French Development Agency, for cooperating with us in the area of heritage management and conservation. This cooperation must continue to weave the intricate link between culture and sustainable socio-economic development. This is more critical as climate change, COVID-19, illegal sanctions and emerging global shocks entail the increased need to build adaptive and resilient capacities.

In conclusion, my Government remains committed to the successful implementation of this project. We stand ready to welcome French tourists and investors across all sectors of the economy.

With these remarks, it is now my honour and privilege to declare the French Development Agency and the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe partnership project officially launched.

I wish you all great success as you implement this project.

God bless you all.

God bless Zimbabwe.

I thank you.