



REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE

KEY NOTE ADDRESS BY

THE VICE PRESIDENT HON. E. D. MNANGAGWA

COMMERCIAL FARMERS UNION OF ZIMBABWE ANNUAL CONGRESS

*"ZIMBABWE HAS THE POTENTIAL, WE NEED TO DEVELOP THIS POTENTIAL"*

28 OCTOBER 2015

## **SALUTATION**

- 1. The President of the Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU)**
- 2. The Vice President of the CFU**
- 3. Honourable Ministers**
- 4. Development Partners**
- 5. Captains of the Agro-Industry**
- 6. Members of the National Council of the CFU**
- 7. The CEO and Staff of the CFU**
- 8. Ladies and Gentlemen**

Morning Ladies and Gentlemen. Director of Ceremonies, I would like to thank the Director in the Ministry for introducing the Vice President of Zimbabwe. It is a great honour for me to be here for you today, ladies and gentlemen. Directed by the words of the bible, when the Prophet Isaiah was sent to speak to the people of Israel, and when he got to them he said Thus Saith the Lord. So in the same vein, I will stand and speak and say thus, saith the Vice President of Zimbabwe. The Minister of Agriculture Mechanisation and Irrigation Development Dr. Josph Made, the Secretary for Agriculture, Mechanisation and Irrigation Development Mr Ringston Chitsiko, the President of the Commercial Farmers' Union Mr Peter Steyl, guest speaker and President of the World Farmers' Organisation, Dr Evelyn Nguleka, guest speaker and Governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Dr. John Mangudya, the Mayor of the City of Harare, visiting agricultural unions, the Vice President of the CFU, development partners, captains of the agro industry, members of the national council of the CFU, the Chief Executive Officer of the CFU, traditional leaders, if there are any and distinguished guests.

I am greatly honoured to be invited to attend and address your Annual Congress running under the theme ***"Zimbabwe Has the Potential, We Need to Develop this Potential"***. First I want to congratulate you on the choice of this year's theme. The intent of the theme that is to develop the potential that Zimbabwe resonates well with the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Social Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET) blue print that His Excellency summarised in a Ten (10) Point Plan for Economic Growth. I will spare you from going through the Ten Point Plan but I want to emphasise that the Ten (10) Point Plan realises three important facets towards realising Zimbabwe's potential.

1. Agriculture remains the mainstay of realising Zimbabwe's potential. Agriculture accounts for over 70% of rural employment, 10.7% GDP, 16% to exports and 60% of the raw materials utilised by the domestic manufacturing industry. Agriculture also provides food and nutrition security and sustains livelihoods of 70% of the Zimbabwean population living in rural areas through the production of food crops, cash crops and livestock. However I believe that more benefits can be accrued along the production chain. However I believe that more benefits can be accrued along the production chain.
2. Farmers (women, men and youth) are central to the development of Zimbabwe's agriculture potential both as instruments and as

beneficiaries of the realisation of the potential of Zimbabwe.

3. Zimbabwe has gone past the Land Redistribution Exercise as a strategy to realize the food agriculture potential of this country. To that end the agricultural focus of ZIMASSET in the Ten (10) Point Plan is aimed at developing sustainable agricultural production, productivity, market access and competitiveness through multi-stakeholder, multi-sectorial, multi-disciplinary and multi-dimensional development efforts. Collectively therefore we hold the future of the Zimbabwean agriculture in our hands. This is why we are convinced that the democratisation of ownership, which sought to empower the majority of Zimbabwean's to have access to agricultural land, when supported by policy measures we are putting in place as Government should with time, will enable us to unlock food potential and meet our strategy vision of a prosperous, diverse and competitive agricultural sector. This is why we are convinced that the democratisation of ownership, which sought to empower the majority of Zimbabwean's to have access to agricultural land, when supported by policy measures we are putting in place as Government should with time, will enable us to unlock food potential and meet our strategy vision of a prosperous, diverse and competitive agricultural sector.

At this juncture, ladies and gentlemen, allow me to share with you some of the potential that Zimbabwe has, how government is tapping into this potential and challenges that we are facing where the private sector and development partners can chip in.

Zimbabwe is endowed with fertile agricultural land a skilled and educated labour force and a conducive climate that is favourable for the growth of a wide variety of crops and the rearing of livestock. These products can be enriched and value added for both the domestic and export market. However agriculture productivity has been negatively affected by the unpredictable rainfall pattern attributed to climate change. In the 2014/2015 cropping season, the country did not realise the expected bumper harvest due to erratic rainfall in most parts of the country. Maize and small grains production during the season decreased by 49% and 71%

respectively. The erratic rainfall patterns, means that Zimbabwe continues to be highly vulnerable, as such we need to maintain an effective utilisation of the water we harvest. In this regard, the stored irrigation capacity is 220 000 ha out of which 153 000 ha are functional and must be put to good use. We cannot continue on a low level usage of irrigation, and as such, this is a clarion call, for all in Government, farmers and the private sector that together we must develop practical ways aimed and increasing use of irrigation. In light of the challenges faced by farmers, the Government has put in place an enhanced policy framework to boost production and productivity in the crop and livestock programmes. To that end Government remains committed to supporting the agricultural sector to ensure its full recovery. An example of such government support is the US\$ 32,88 million that has been set aside for the upcoming 2015/16 agricultural season under the Presidential Input Support Programme. The Programme is targeting 350 000 households with crop inputs.

The Government is currently investing in irrigation development through the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) and also from bilateral cooperation with countries like Brazil, China, India, Russia, Japan, Egypt and other friendly states. The private sector and the farmers themselves are expected to play an even greater role in this effort.

With climate change being a reality that threatens crop and livestock production, efforts are underway to develop crop varieties and livestock breeds that can withstand the vagaries of climate change and the weather. Research efforts are underway to develop crop varieties that are drought with research in the livestock sector aimed at curtailing disease spread.

The livestock sector efforts aimed at increased production and productivity include introduction of livestock multiplication centres, new germplasm of improved breeds and artificial insemination centres.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

The Government of Zimbabwe has put in place Policy, Legal and Regulatory Frameworks to guide operations of the agriculture sector. The policy priorities issues of innovation, investment, productivity and market access for grains and gives prominence to irrigation and

mechanization development.

Informed by the Comprehensive African Development Program (CAADP) and ZIMASSET, the MAMID is operationalizing the Zimbabwe Comprehensive Agriculture Policy Framework through the Zimbabwe Agriculture Investment Plan (ZAIP) (2013-2018). This investment plan is the framework for the mobilization, coordination, directing and managing of public, private and development partners' investment into agriculture.

In addition to the above, the Ministry of Agriculture Mechanisation and Irrigation Development, in collaboration with the Ministry of Lands and Rural Resettlement, has developed a National Contract Farming Strategic Framework in order to create an enabling policy and regulatory environment for mutually beneficial contract farming arrangements and provide incentives to encourage contractors and farmers to engage in contract farming.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

We will continue to engage the financial services sector to develop a mind-set change from traditional forms of financing agriculture to more innovative ways.

I am aware that representatives of the private sector have been invited to attend this Congress and would like to applaud the strong linkages that exist between the Union and the private sector. I also take this opportunity Ladies and Gentlemen to exchange candid views to ensure that the result of this Congress reflect the interest of the farmers that you represent. I am aware that the farmers are operating under very difficult socio economic conditions, but I would like to encourage the Union leadership to strive to find lasting solutions to the challenges being faced by farmers. It is through representative bodies like the CFU and your other farmers' union

colleagues that these challenges will be addressed.

May I at this stage unreservedly condemn those who ask for bribes in the discharge of their public duties, and in equal measure those who pay such bribes. We must shun all forms of corruption and galvanise ourselves to realise the potential we have as a nation, which potential we must develop through increasing agricultural production. As Government we will continue to support the improvement of the viability of the agricultural industry and look forward to receiving a recommendation on how Government can assist in solving some of our farmers' challenges.

Finally the 2015/16 summer agricultural season is now upon us and on behalf of the Government of Zimbabwe and indeed on my own behalf, I call upon all those present here and those at home to make optimal use of these rains in support of food security. It is now my pleasure to declare this year's Commercial Farmers' Union Congress officially open.

I thank you.