



## HH Presidential Archive

HAKAINDE HICHILEMA — 7TH PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

# First Media Address by President-elect Hakainde Hichilema following the 2021 Zambian General Election

**Date:** 16 August 2021

**Location:** Community House, Lusaka, Zambia

Thank you very much.

Just to start by recognising our colleagues in the leadership of our movement, to recognize, I shall repeat to recognize leaders of our movement the UPND Alliance. I shall repeat that and I hope we can be orderly for just a few minutes, to get done with the business of now.

I was just recognising the leadership of our movement, the UPND Alliance, all the constituent parties that are represented in the Alliance. Of course respective members, constituent members of those component parties.

Very important for us to recognise the presence of Dr Guy Scott, who served as our President at some time. Thank you for being here, Dr Scott.

We need, and I believe we should, recognise all of you that are here, but truly to recognise the media, local media that have walked with us through this difficult journey, the international media that had been available when the local media could not open their mouths, lest they got arrested. The international media was there; the global village media was there, thank you for that. And all colleagues that are here, colleagues that are following this short address through various platforms, thank you for being with us, joining us in the next few minutes.

My fellow citizens, citizens of Zambia, it is with great honour, humility, gratitude, that I stand before you today to say, “change is here!”

The voters of Zambia, the voters of Zambia and through them, the people of Zambia, have prevailed. I think that’s very important, that the voters decided who should lead them for the next five years and not those who count votes. Very important for democracy. Zambia, therefore, has prevailed. This victory does not belong to HH, to "Bally," this victory belongs to the men and women of Zambia, especially the youth, especially the Youth!

This was your election, you started by registering in large numbers under very, very restrictive and difficult conditions. You were in the queues to register as voters; I think the signal was sent that time that the youth of Zambia, who are in the majority, had taken a position for the 2021 elections. I took note of that, we took note of that, I think some people did not take note of that. The queues were long to register as voters; the queues were long to vote, to vote for change and you did vote for change. We thank you for that.

Truly, it is befitting to say this was your election. It was your election, evidenced by the numbers, the numbers that turned out to vote, large numbers, the energy and passion that was exhibited by this young population. This population that owns this country; by all

probability, they are likely to live longer than others in this country, so they have a higher stake to what happens to their country. Indeed, you sent a clear message, resounding message that has gone all around the world, you have stated your intentions we have heard you, we have heard you. Although this message you have tasked onto HH, you have tasked onto the running mate, and soon to be Vice President, not elect but in situ, in situ and the UPND Alliance, indeed the people of Zambia, those that are card carrying members of our component parties are definitely fewer than the ordinary citizens that voted for us, look at the numbers.

So, it is clear that it is the people of Zambia who have given us such a huge, resounding mandate to form Government and to deliver on the promise of change. It is in no doubt what the instruction is to all of us that have been just elected into office at such a very, very difficult time. We understand what you have done; we understand, what you want us to do. We comprehend that. We are under no illusion; we know what you want. And we want to thank you at this stage for your support and we pray that we will be worthy of your trust, we will be worthy of your confidence that you have demonstrated and placed on our shoulders to deliver, to deliver, to answer your cries for change.

Fellow citizens, it is indeed a new day in Zambia. It's a new beginning for all of us. With the election behind us, let us come together as Zambians, as a family and that's what we are. Once again, we have an opportunity to sing the old song, to return to what we knew when some of us were growing up: One Zambia, One Nation.

And this to us, is not a simple matter; it's not phraseology, it's not a matter of playing with words. This we should translate in everything we do, in all the things that we work on to truly walk this phraseology of, One Zambia, One Nation. It is easy to talk, it's easy to say things, but we want to demonstrate that we will walk the talk, and you will see that very soon, starting with the Cabinet. The Cabinet will represent this country. You will see that, and you will make your own judgment, and we will send a signal that, that phraseology, we will live it. Just a few days from now, start marking the script of what we've been saying in terms of reuniting this country, and I can assure you in advance, we will get a high mark for it, even from critics.

To those who voted for other candidates because this is a democracy, this is competition, this is not war; this is not extermination of others, this is a competition to serve and we want to recognize the fact that, others voted for other candidates and we say to all of you who voted for other candidates, we extend our hand, a hand of friendship, our respect for having decided to vote for alternative candidates. It doesn't hurt us; it just reinforces the importance of democracy, its value, the choices that people must continue to have and no one should take away a citizen's choices, choices of leadership, choice on what they want to be in their country. The opportunities must be available for all to make their decisions and it should hurt nobody, that should not be any cause for jail sentences for people to express their views in terms of who they want to lead them and how they want to live their lives, as long as they do that within the laws and within common decency, that should be promoted.

And we would like to thank you such voters, and record our respect for you, please get to know that. though today you may be disappointed that your candidates did not win, we wish to embrace you as your brothers, as your servants, because that's what we truly are those of us who seek public office must get it and get it straight that we are not masters of the people; we are servants of the people, I think it is very important.

On that score, I wish to confirm that I and our team will be, for me, President and for others, servants for all of our citizens across the ten provinces of Zambia. It does not matter how you look by colour; it won't matter how you look by height, by your features, it won't matter. Under this administration, it will not matter who your mother, who your father is, because you never made that decision as to who will be your mother and your father. It is a decision beyond your control, but you will be an equal citizen of this beloved country

called Zambia. Mark our words; get your script and your pencil aside and keep marking as we serve you in the months, in the years to come. And after five years, take your talk and see how we have walked the talk, I think we will pass with flying colours.

For those that voted for us and for those that did not, you will be treated equally. Shall I repeat that, for emphasis and you know what I mean, when I say that, you know what I mean. For those that voted for us and those that did not vote for us, you will be treated equally, equitably, fairly, that is important to us, that is important to us. We will run this country without preference for any group over another. Absolutely no preference at all. We will govern without selectivism. We will serve knowing that all citizens to us are identical twins in the way we see you, in the way we serve you. It will not matter what your name is, what your surname is, for you to rise in the civil service, to be Permanent Secretary or to be Secretary to the Cabinet, your surname won't matter. What will matter, two things: one, that you are a citizen of Zambia; two, that you are competent for the job at hand. That's it, that's it, nothing else.

And feel safe that, no one will "retire in national interest" yet it's under the guise of personal interest, nothing of that sort will ever happen again, not under our administration. And I send a signal to all my colleagues that will serve in Cabinet and in other portfolios that you are not coming into Cabinet to marginalise citizens, to exclude citizens; you are coming into Cabinet to be a tool for inclusion, to be a tool for unity, to be a tool for creating opportunities for all our people. Simple, straight, isn't it? It is as simple as that.

That confirms the values of inclusivity, equality recognizing that we need to promote the concept of unity in diversity. 72 ethnic groups, all of them gifts from God. Sometimes, minor variations in the culture, in the upbringing, we will not focus on the differences; we'll focus on the things that should unite us as a people. Big difference, isn't it? Big difference from what we have been seeing over the years. Sometimes, colleagues fear to say things the way they see them, because they say things they don't believe in. We harbour no such fears. We say things because we believe in them. You have heard, we say things because we believe in them, we are consistent because we believe in certain things, in those things that should better your lives. So there must be no secret around those issues because then you will be able to judge our behaviour, our performance going forward.

Shall I say that, now is the time to move forward beyond the partisanship of the election. The election period to some people invokes anger, and some people, they say things that should never be said about another human being, I think you know what I am talking about. You understand people who sung the song of ethnic hatred throughout their campaign, but yet in their hometown, they lost to us who they demonised.

Now is the time, now is the time to forgive such people, for they did not know what they were doing. Now is the time for us to show them the better side of life and perception of other humans. I guess, if they are normal, they will learn a lesson going forward that divisiveness will get you punished by the voters. And I am proud of the voters of Zambia, across the country, I am very proud of you voters representing, the 18 million plus Zambians, you have said no to ethnic divides. Look at the results, look at where our votes are coming from. Look at these millions of votes, they have been delivered by all the ten provinces of Zambia. That is beautiful, isn't it? That is lovely, isn't it? Against an orchestrated hate language, hate messages, promoted by those who had the opportunity to rein in on such people but did not it only tells you a message that they actually sent them out to say those things against fellow citizens, that should come to an end. UPND Alliance members, you are not about to replace those individuals with yourselves; then you are no different from those individuals, I hope I am clear about that? Let us put the past behind us, for it is what we do now in the present that will define our future, completely.

At this stage, I seek your attention, added attention to more than what you have granted me already. I want to spend a minute or so to talk about violence, lawlessness. Let me be clear, we are categorically clear about this, we are victims of violence. We are victims of demonization, mudslinging for years, you all know that. We are victims of retribution. We are not about to take public office, replace those that have been very violent against our people, and only to start a new wave of violence. We are not about to be that. Absolutely

not.

I have heard, I have seen on social media some people out there, damaging property, attacking citizens. I didn't say "some citizens," I said citizens. Am aware that some of the citizens being attacked were the violent ones against us, but I say it to you, I put it to you that, if you want to show that you occupy a higher moral ground, even when you know who attacked you before under this brutal regime which is exiting, if you want to show that you are different from them, do not attack them. Do not damage property, someone's property. In the way we calculate national assets, it includes, Individual assets, so those are national assets in terms of property. None of you, I repeat, none of you should damage anyone else's property, even when you know the owner abused you. If you do that, you are no different from those people. I want to believe we are different, and that's why Zambians have given us this huge mandate, to correct those wrongs. Please do not cause violence out there; please do not damage anyone's property, public property, private property. If you damage a shopping centre, a shop because you know the owner, and the owner offended you, you are taking away someone's job, tomorrow they will not be able to work in that shop but in our manifesto, we talking about creating jobs, so you are negating the very reason that Zambians have voted for us.

That is not who HH is, follow my example, follow our example. Demonised, arrested fifteen times, we are not going into office to arrest those who arrested us, because then we are no different from them.

*Nami kupa bana ba Yesu, nami lomb*a, come out of the streets, come out of the streets if you have bad intentions, if you want to harm somebody, if you want to damage someone's property, come out of the streets. I know you may be angry, I know you were tear-gassed over the last seven years, I know you were arrested, I am one of you, but I am not bitter. Follow my example, follow my example. Show magnanimity.

You should celebrate! indeed! because there is cause for celebration, new dawn, freedoms, rule of law, anti-corruption, opportunity for education for all, opportunity for a job, opportunity to do business. I would like to see many young people become businessmen at an age earlier than when I became a business person myself at 26. I want to see people at 21 becoming businesspeople, and we shall support you. But that's not connected to being violent. We want to see magnanimity; we want to see a new way of treating the violent ones.

And I want to assure you, a few days from now, there will be no bus stop where you fear to go to. I can assure you, there is no taxi rank that will be a no-go area for you. You can wear your PF T-shirt, you can wear, your any other party T-shirt including UPND, at the bus stops, the markets, and public places will be available for you. No one will touch you. No one will take away your rights, freedom of movement, freedom of assembly because of violence, because of any other vices of that nature. But the UPND and this alliance partners lead by example. Come out of the streets if your intent is to damage somebody, you have heard me. But go out and celebrate, sing, hoot your car horns, greet somebody out there, go and greet the one who you know, your neighbour who was attacking you, go and tell them there's a new dawn, there's peace, there is stability coming. Don't end there, go and tell them that you too will be looked after by the UPND and its alliance Government. Is that not a powerful message? Love conquers hate.

To all our competitors, we thank you for your participation in these elections. We are grateful for your graciousness. A number among the 16 or so presidential candidates, a greater number of them have formally conceded defeat, they have congratulated us for winning this election, which we have won, which has been delivered to us by the people of Zambia. And this win is for you as well, believe us, you will see that in the months ahead, you will see that in the months ahead. This acknowledgment of our victory to serve not to be served by the people, is humbling.

And a few minutes ago, this list of gracious competitors in the presidential race, have added on another colleague, who was slow, am sure he had his own reasons, President Edgar Chagwa Lungu. I want to thank you, sir, for your message, for conceding defeat, and for

indicating that you will support a smooth transition, I don't want to call it power of servant leadership. I think it's the barest minimum, someone who occupies public office, as you exit, facilitates the new entrants to continue serving the country and its people, where you left it, it's the barest minimum. And I want to assure the people of Zambia in advance, when our time to leave comes, we will graciously leave. We will support the incoming team, then. But for you to be an incoming team, you better work hard, because we are going to raise the standards of that office!

I encourage you to work harder because this team has not come to celebrate, this team has come to work, and to work and more work, that is the value I personally bring to public office. Hard work, diligent work. In my early days in the profession, I knew no working hours, I don't believe in working hours. I believe in the outcome, the deliverables, you will see this in this administration and I think you will appreciate it after a few months, a few years from now. That is why we believe we will earn your confidence, going forward within the laws.

"Third term" is not part of our language, it's not part of our language it should not be part of anyone's language and Zambians have spoken about it and you the Lawyers, must deal with those lacuna's, no one should seek a third term, Zambians have spoken about this, from the Chona Commission in the 70's, Mwanakatwe Commission, Mung'omba Commission, am told about the constitutional review commissions. Why should anyone dream that they should stay in office beyond the limit that the Zambians have decided? More than 10 years, what do you want to do beyond 10 years which you couldn't do in 10 years? If you couldn't do certain things, certainly you would have set the institutional arrangement and the platform for others to continue to achieve what you did not achieve. That's how the relay race works. I trust that, my colleagues on the left understand what that means. So, thank you to President Edgar Lungu, and you'll be okay, sir. Don't worry, you will be okay.

We pledge to the people of Zambia, that we will foster a better democracy, rule of law, being integral to that, restoring order, respecting human rights, liberties and freedoms, choices, media. There's a new dawn for you; no one will tear-gas you in the exercise of your duties, isn't that good? Zambians should be at par with any other citizens of a democratic country around the world in the barest minimums that they should enjoy and no leadership has a right to take away those minimums from its own population, if anything, we should expand those minimums. Watch the space, check if we are just playing with words, check that I am not talking about lawlessness here, I am not talking about corruption, because we will have a zero tolerance to corruption, I am not talking about that, I am not talking about that. I am talking about your rights, your liberties, your freedom to do what is within the Laws, your freedom to aspire to be anything you wish to be. I never thought that I would sit and seek the presidency of this country as I was born in a village, grass-thatched house, went to school first three years with no shoes. But I got an opportunity, we want to expand these opportunities for all our children to better what HH has become and more so, in the last few days, when Zambians decide to accord us with this rare opportunity to serve them, why should that be denied to another child, male or female, not at all.

I want to invite all of you, to acknowledge, the path we have chosen that we will work together with you, you with us to build a better Zambia for our people, for all our people. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my running mate, my running mate, Mrs Mutale Nalumango, all the members of the UPND Alliance, our candidates across the spectrum of this foursome election; councillors, mayors, chairmen, members of parliament, I want to thank all of you, I want to thank all of you for participating in this election, for winning and those who did not win, for offering yourself for service not as masters, but as slaves of our people. All our members, campaign teams, well-wishers who worked tirelessly on the front lines, dodging bullets, tear gas, being detained at airports, being denied the right to use airspace, but you endured, you moved on. I want to acknowledge now; I can reveal a bit of a strategic secret here. we had an army of underground volunteers as we were facing tear gasses, as we were not allowed to go to certain jurisdictions, we had an underground movement of volunteers who were working quietly. On top you could not see them, I knew, I was seeing them every day, and when I saw them, I smiled and I knew they were doing the damage. Look at the results, look at the results!

Thank you to you all, we will not be here today without your hard work, without your commitment to duty to the people of Zambia. We graciously acknowledge your contributions, no one did more work than the other, not me, we all did what we could and together put up a stellar event, we have delivered, thank you for your dedication to duty.

I want to thank my beloved wife, who has always been on my side. Good times, difficult times, she's been there. I want to encourage young couples: please support each other, even girlfriend/boyfriend please support each other. You will see the value of that later in years in your life. Respecting each other and understanding that you are equal. Being husband doesn't make you superior to your wife. I say it without blinking because I know what some husbands do to their wives, I also know what some wives do to their husbands, of late. So, my kids, thank you to you, the rest of the family, we love you. We appreciate your enduring love to us, great source of strength. We give thanks to God the Almighty, without whom this day would have never been impossible.

My fellow citizens, we have an enormous task ahead of us to revive our economy and deliver on our expectations. The journey will be tough, challenging, there will be up's and down's but I am certain that with hard work and commitment we will succeed in building a better life for all our citizens, I do believe in that.

Finally, let me thank you again, my masters, our masters, the people of Zambia, for the huge mandate you have bestowed upon us to serve you and we will serve you better, believe in that. We will not let you down.

God bless you all, and God bless the Republic of Zambia.

I thank you for listening.