



HH Presidential Archive

HAKAINDE HICHILEMA — 7TH PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

Inauguration Speech - President Hakainde Hichilema

Date: 24 August 2021

Location: National Heroes Stadium, Lusaka

Occasion: Presidential Inauguration

Your Excellency, the Sixth President of the Republic of Zambia, Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu and the Former First Lady, Mrs. Esther Lungu; Your Excellencies visiting Heads of State and Government; Your Excellencies, Special Representatives of Heads of State and Government; Your Excellency, the Fourth President of the Republic of Zambia, Mr. Rupiah Bwezani Banda and Mrs. Thandiwe Banda; and visiting Former Presidents; Your Honour, the Vice-President of the Republic of Zambia, Mrs. Mutale W. K. Nalumango, MP; Your Honour the Immediate Past Vice-President of the Republic of Zambia, Madam Inonge Mutukwa Wina and other Former Vice-Presidents present; Your Lordship, the Acting Chief Justice, Honourable Mr. Justice Michael Musonda, SC; The Speaker of the National Assembly, Honourable Justice Dr. Patrick Matibini, SC; The Chairperson of the Electoral Commission of Zambia, Honourable Judge Esau Chulu; The Secretary to the Cabinet, Dr. Simon K. Miti; Your Worship the Mayor of the Greater City of Lusaka, Ms. Chilando Chitangala and other Civic Leaders present; Newly elected Members of Parliament; My Lords and Ladyships the Judges of the Supreme Court, Constitutional Court, Court of Appeal and High Court; Leaders from the United Party for National Development (UPND) Alliance; Leaders of other Political Parties present; Local and International Election Observers; Permanent Secretaries and other Senior Government Officials; Your Excellencies, Ambassadors and High Commissioners accredited to the Republic of Zambia; Your Royal Highnesses; Members of the Clergy; Members of the Press; Fellow Zambians; Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Fellow Zambians,

Before we proceed, I request that we take a moment of silence in honour of eminent citizens who passed on this year. We lost our founding father and first President of the Republic of Zambia, Dr. Kenneth David Kaunda, and the first female Chief Justice, Madam Irene Chirwa Mambilima. We also recognise all those that have passed on during this period.

(Pause)

May their souls rest in eternal peace.

My fellow Zambians,

Twenty-three years ago, a visionary by the name of Anderson Kambela Mazoka, together with his colleagues, founded the United Party for National Development (UPND). It was founded on the promise of a better Zambia — a Zambia which is united and prosperous; a Zambia that guarantees basic needs for all its citizens; a Zambia in which the fundamental human rights and property of its citizens are protected. Today, we begin our journey towards realising this dream.

I stand before you today, humbled and filled with gratitude, for your trust in a simple village boy who you have made the Seventh President of the Republic of Zambia. This victory is not mine but for all the citizens of our great country, especially the youth who turned out to vote in great numbers with great energy and passion, and made this day possible.

We showed the world the resilience of our democracy and we reaffirmed that power belongs to the people. You, the people of Zambia, resoundingly spoke with your vote and I thank you from the depth of my heart. The people decided it was time for change and today, we can boldly say, change is here!

The road ahead will not be without challenges but with a clear vision and plan, which we have, and relentless determination, we shall overcome and deliver on the aspirations of our people.

To the jobless youths, a new dawn is here where you will be skilled and find opportunity to work or do business in an economy that we will revive. To the mother struggling with the high cost of food, a lower cost of living will soon be a reality. To the entrepreneur seeking capital, an investor and a better operating environment, a government is here that understands your challenges and knows exactly what you need in order to thrive. To all citizens of Zambia, this is truly your moment!

Fellow citizens,

You have entrusted the UPND Alliance with the responsibility of serving you and running the affairs of the nation with your interests at heart. We do not take this responsibility lightly. We will truly be your servants and you the people, our masters. As your President, I will ensure that we deliver on our promises. We said Bally and team will fix our economy, but we will do more than that. We will grow our economy so we can lift more people out of poverty than ever before.

We will promote unity in diversity and ensure respect for the fundamental human rights and freedoms for all. We will restore the rule of law, general order in our public places and communities, and return our country back to normalcy. Read my lips — no more cadreism!

Fellow Zambians,

I pray that God will continue to guide us throughout our journey. He is our anchor in all seasons.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, our outgoing President, for his service to this nation and facilitating a smooth transition. We choose not to call it "transfer of power" because power belongs to the people. It is therefore to the great credit of the people of this nation that today marks the third peaceful, democratic transfer of leadership since the advent of multi-party democracy, three decades ago.

To my beloved wife, Mutinta — words cannot express my gratitude for your unconditional love, support and counsel. I thank my children and the entire family for their unwavering support. To my running mate and now Vice-President of the Republic of Zambia, Mrs. Mutale Nalumango, I say thank you for being part of our vision and being a reliable partner throughout our journey to this day. I am confident that, together, we will deliver to the expectations of the Zambian people.

Fellow citizens,

To all the loyal members of the UPND Alliance and the wider UPND family, I am grateful. You worked day and night, traversing all corners of this country to garner the trust of our people, under very difficult circumstances. Your hard work and commitment have, indeed, steered us to victory. Thank you very much.

Naonga chomene, natotela sana, luitumezi zahulu, twasanta, nataizya, zikomo kwambiri, tunasikilili mwani, twasakwila chikuma mwane, ndalumba kapati.

We commend the Electoral Commission of Zambia for ensuring that the elections were successfully held despite the ravaging COVID-19 pandemic and other challenges. I wish to thank and commend all political parties and individuals who participated in the elections. Your participation makes our multi-party democracy stronger. To you we pledge a better democracy where your voices and rights will freely be exercised.

To the Church, we thank you for your prayers and guidance before, during and after the elections. To our Traditional Leaders, your wise and invaluable counsel is much appreciated. To our cooperating partners, we sincerely thank you for the material and financial support towards the elections. You, once again, have demonstrated true friendship. To the various stakeholders, particularly the election observers and the media, both local and international, we thank you for the role you played in the elections.

Fellow Zambians,

As we embark on our term of office as President of this great Republic, we shall abide by the vision of our party to have a united, prosperous and equitable Zambia. I therefore invite every Zambian to join hands with us as we move forward on this noble journey.

I invite the private sector on this journey — the Zambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Zambia Chamber of Mines, the Zambia Association of Manufacturers, the Zambia National Farmers Union, the Zambia Federation of Employers, the Labour Movement, and the Tourism Council of Zambia. I invite you all!

Let us all get better organised so we can deliver better lives for all our people. I invite all political parties to work with us within the remits of a democratic society. We must put aside our election-related and other differences and pull in one direction as a country. We have a lot more things that unite us than those that divide us. We must devote our energies to contribute meaningfully to our national development.

I invite the Church and the Traditional Leaders to continue providing spiritual and moral guidance and to be true partners in development in pursuit of better lives for our people. I invite civil society to continue complementing our development efforts. I invite our development partners to continue your cooperation as Zambia's recovery requires concerted effort. Going forward, you will see rationality, prudence and effectiveness from our side.

Fellow Zambians,

Our focus over the next five years will be on restoring macroeconomic stability and promoting growth of the economy. We will pay special attention to lowering the fiscal deficit, reducing public debt and restoring social and market confidence. We will also promote national unity and good governance by strict adherence to the rule of law. We will focus on inclusion and not exclusion. Unity, and not division. Gathering and not scattering.

I. Economic Management

Fellow Zambians,

Over the last decade, we have witnessed the erosion of our economy. The debt situation has become unsustainable, reducing the country's capacity to invest in productive areas of our economy and address the gaps in healthcare, education and other social services. Our national budget has been overwhelmed by debt servicing, emoluments and consumption, when there should be greater room for investment, for growth.

The high levels of unemployment, especially among our youth, is of great concern to us and will be high on our agenda to address. Food should be available and affordable for the people. The people have hope and expect us to address the cost of living that is beyond the reach of the majority of our citizens.

The scourge of corruption has not only eroded our much-needed resources, but it has also robbed us of the opportunity for growth. We shall have zero tolerance to corruption. This will be our hallmark. The fight against corruption will be professional and not vindictive. The institutions mandated to investigate and prosecute will be given unfettered autonomy to effectively and efficiently carry out their mandate without fear or favour of political bias.

We are determined to free our country from the ills of mismanagement and malpractice, and promote that which is better. We will undertake an ambitious economic and social transformation agenda to move Zambia forward, create equitable opportunities for all our people, and reduce poverty. We believe that a time will come when poverty in our country will not be tolerated. No Zambian should go to bed hungry. No effort should be spared in salvaging the children on the streets or those engaged in vices such as alcohol and substance abuse.

Our administration will also prioritise establishing a stable and predictable environment that will promote private local, regional and international investment, protection of private property and growth, and generate value for all stakeholders in our society. We will aggressively promote the creation of jobs and opportunities that will create wealth, especially for our youth, women and indeed all citizens. God has blessed us with abundant natural, human and other resources that we will derive greater value from, through value addition and the promotion of greater supply chain participation by our citizens.

Fellow Zambians,

Some of our key priority sectors that will drive economic growth and reduce poverty are agriculture, mining, energy, financial services, tourism, technology, health and education.

In agriculture, we will work to enhance production, agricultural extension services, market access, value addition and lowering the cost of inputs. In mining, we will strive to increase copper and other mineral production so that Zambia can reclaim its place as one of Africa's leading mining countries. We shall promote expansion of the mining value chain as well as mineral diversification — encouraging the production and processing of gemstones, gold, nickel, manganese, iron and other minerals. We will put in place measures to facilitate local ownership and increased participation of Zambians in the sector.

Recognising the importance of energy for development, our administration will transform Zambia into an energy surplus country. We will implement an ambitious energy investment plan to increase power generation and further broaden the energy mix. In addition, we will put in place a conducive policy environment to encourage private investment in generation, transmission, distribution and retail in the sector.

To improve land administration and management in the country, my administration will put in place a transparent policy framework. We will promote equitable access to land for all citizens. We will strengthen land tenure security and enhance sustainable utilisation and productive management of land resources.

The potential of the tourism sector will soon be realised through the promotion of Zambia and its various tourism endowments as the destination of choice. This will include reviewing visa requirements, building support infrastructure and revising tax rates. Economic cooperation, trade and investment, security for peace and stability, and development, will form a critical base for our foreign policy.

II. National Unity

Fellow Zambians,

I want to assure the nation that under our administration, the One Zambia, One Nation motto shall be our way of life. We are indeed one Zambia and one people regardless of your race or ethnicity. We have no tolerance for any form of discrimination and we commit to ensuring our government will be a reflection of our ten provinces. We treat diversity as a strength — never again should any difference be used for political mileage or to favour one over another. Every citizen will be availed equal opportunity to participate in the socio-economic development of our nation. We will not be selective when it comes to development of our country. All regions will have an equitable share of investment.

III. Good Governance and the Rule of Law

The UPND Alliance administration will enhance good governance and strictly uphold the rule of law. We will live up to our campaign promises by ensuring that all citizens are equal before the law. We in the executive should not interfere in the work of the other arms of government. Our Constitution provides separation of powers and we will, therefore, endeavour to promote this principle in order to enhance good governance. Coordination to deliver for our people will however be of critical importance.

Fellow citizens,

It is a new dawn. The fourth estate, the media, will be freed. The time has come for all Zambians to be truly free. I want to reiterate what I said during my acceptance address — gone are the days when political cadres would take over the functions of public service workers in markets, bus stations, government offices, and other places. Our administration will not allow such disorder. Sanity will return to all places. The days of government workers being retired in national interest for political or unfair grounds are over. The days of political interference in public institutions and parastatals are over.

Fellow citizens,

With regards to education, we will pursue policies that will address the core barriers of access to education. We will also ensure that established standards for quality education are met and enforced. In addition, we will enhance linkages between education and industry to ensure graduates have relevant and employable skills. Further, we will promote innovation and entrepreneurship for job and wealth creation.

Fellow Zambians,

To realise these aspirations in a systematic manner, our administration will develop and implement rationalised, succinct, and actionable plans. These plans will focus on achieving economic transformation, entrepreneurship development and digital revolution with jobs and business opportunities top on the agenda. The plan will also incorporate other measures critical to the attainment of our national vision towards being a middle income nation over the years ahead.

Fellow Zambians,

To achieve the Zambia we want, we must work together as a people — a people united in diversity under our motto of "One Zambia, One Nation." This is what our founding father Dr. Kaunda believed in. To achieve the Zambia we want, we need to be committed to hard work. With hard work, patriotism, discipline and dedication, we will achieve and attain our national aspirations.

We must be innovative and identify local solutions to address our problems. We must be open to new ideas and as your government, we will be available to listen and to support you. We must ensure environmental sustainability and inclusiveness in our development agenda. We must mitigate against climate change and strive to build a green economy. We must respect, promote and protect the rights

of one another.

Fellow Zambians,

The defence and protection of the Constitution of Zambia is critical to the realisation of our development agenda. Equally important is the respect for our culture and heritage. We need ethical and servant leadership at all levels of society. We need morality, integrity and accountability.

Fellow Zambians,

Under our administration, our country will continue to be an active member of regional, continental and international bodies. We are committed to enhancing international cooperation and foreign relations. We are committed to promoting open and cordial relations with our neighbours and countries on the continent and beyond. We are equally committed to pursuing a foreign policy based on mutual interest and respect. The enhancement of economic diplomacy and trade facilitation will be paramount.

Fellow Zambians,

I stand before you and with you, as your President and a true servant. A President devoted to taking our country to greater heights. I pledge a better Zambia for all.

God bless us all. God bless our democracy. God bless our great Republic, Zambia. God bless Africa and our global family.

I thank you all.