



**President Morgan Tsvangirai's remarks at the occasion of
the MDC's 13th anniversary celebrations**

Bulawayo, 29 September 2012

The Vice President of the MDC, Hon. Thokozani Khupe
The National Chairman of the Party, Hon. Lovemore Moyo
**Members of the Standing Committee, National Executive
and National Council**
The esteemed members of the MDC family here present
Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

As always, it is an honour to lead Zimbabweans in celebrating
13 years of our existence as the MDC.

It has been a gruelling 13 years for this movement; punctuated
by an odd mixture of frustrations and achievements; of joy and
sorrow. The good news is that both our negative and positive



experiences have helped enrich the legacy of the MDC. We are far much better as a party, made wiser by our arduous experience since 1999.

In 13 years, we have morphed from a small movement founded on the vision of a people's quest for freedom and good governance to the largest party in the country with Cabinet Ministers, mayors, councillors and with the biggest representation in a Parliament chaired by a Speaker from our party.

Five years ago, I was a battered prisoner in a police cell but today I stand before you as Prime Minister of the country and President of the biggest political party in Zimbabwe.

Four years ago, this country was tottering on the brink of collapse. There was massive hyperinflation. There was starvation in the country and people were surviving on wild fruits. Hospitals and schools had closed, there was a big cholera outbreak and this country had lost all hope.



This party, whose 13th birthday we celebrate today, became part of government and since February 2009, there has been massive improvement in the provision of clean water. Our schools and hospitals have opened and families can share a loaf of bread for breakfast.

This country is not there yet, but I stand before you proud of the achievement in the past four years when we have taught our colleagues that it is possible to have a government that can serve the people. True, we have had our own shortcomings, but it is also true that we are where we are today because of the positive contribution of the Movement for Democratic Change.

I say this because it possible, in today's confusion and the new world of propaganda, to forget that it is the MDC that has brought us to the stability we enjoy today as a country. This country could have been worse were it not for our strategic decision to join the government and save the people.



We have proven in the past dozen years that we are a people's alternative to a post-colonial dictatorship whose way of life was heavily backed by a system of governance that thrived on brutality, terror and lawlessness.

Today, thanks to the contribution by the MDC in the last 13 years, the people of Zimbabwe have entered the last mile towards real transformation.

It has been a long journey, littered with blood, sweat, tears and the occasional joy. Allow me, Mr Chairman, at this stage, to place on record our human losses; to salute some of our gallant heroes of this new revolution; particularly this anniversary year alone:

Senator Enna Chitsa,

Senator Gladys Gombami,

Dr Tichaona Mudzingwa,



Dr Mufandaidza Hove,

My personal adviser and mentor: veteran nationalist Mike

Masotcha Hove,

Youth organising Secretary Simangaliso Chikadaya,

more recently,

Cephas Magura

Senator Josiah Rimbi, among numerous others.

May their souls rest in peace!

In the same vein, we will always remember the gallant sons and daughters who were slain, brutalised, raped and maimed in the last 13 years for the simple reason that they believed in democratic change.



Further, as we gather here, our youth leader Solomon Madzore and 29 other activists continue to languish in jail in a clear case of a selective application of the rule of law.

I say so advisedly because Shamva police officers, arrested for a similar criminal offence at around the same time more than a year ago, were released on bail instantly on a paltry warranty.

But the same could not be afforded to our comrades. Madzore and others have had a raw deal, under extremely difficult conditions, in their bid to secure temporary freedom while justice takes its course.

Our destination, Mr Chairman, is as clear as daylight as we affirm our dominance on the local political market today; as we move to reclaim our dignity; as we re-assert our national concern and our national vision.



We remain resolute in our quest for freedom – a basic and non-negotiable ideal of the liberation struggle for which so many sons and daughters of this land paid the ultimate price.

We decided to be here in Bulawayo to be part of a large national sample of suffering Zimbabweans who, through sheer determination, willpower and a collective strength of mind, have vowed to finish off a national project we started in 1999.

Bulawayo aptly displays the permanent scars of decades of neglect and one of the deepest levels of the national crisis, now evident throughout the country.

This city has been reeling under a serious water emergency for nearly a century. That predicament and calamity has spread to cover all urban areas in Zimbabwe today.



To compound the disaster in this region is the spectre of famine and serious food shortages, among a host of economic afflictions arising from bad governance.

I am aware that once upon a time, the City of Kings was the industrial heartland of Zimbabwe, employing 150 000 full time workers. Of these, nearly 35 000 worked for the National Railways of Zimbabwe and the Cold Storage Commission.

Today, 80 per cent of those industrial jobs are no more and staff at railways is down to less than 8 000 while the CSC, among other enterprises, has all but collapsed.

People have nowhere to turn to; the people are suffering. The only way Zimbabwe can get itself out of this economic mire and political morass is through a successful conclusion of the non-violent struggle we started 13 years ago.

I am happy that the nation is fully behind the MDC on this unwavering position.



As Prime Minister in the coalition government, I have tried to impress my partners of the urgency of these matters during this transition, only to meet stubborn resistance at every turn.

For example, we agreed 18 months ago on a raft of measures to halt the collapse of Bulawayo but because of policy confusion and Zanu PF's unending war on the people, the consequences are now evident, everywhere. Air Zimbabwe and many private companies are now history for the same reason.

Unlike our detractors and opponents, the MDC pledges never to burn down Zimbabwe, for political survival, with millions of its citizens still trapped inside.

I hear that railway workers have not been paid for almost six months. This is totally unacceptable; it requires immediate attention.

I will be meeting union leaders before I leave Bulawayo to chat the way forward. As of now, Mr Chairman, kindly allow me to



thank workers for their patience and understanding. We cannot take them for granted. A lasting solution must be found.

We are on record, Mr Chairman; we have made it abundantly clear, at all platforms, that our collective credo is primarily motivated by a burning desire to embrace a universal approach to nation-building, based on our diversity and human commonality.

As I stand here before you, my mind has naturally been taken back to our 2006 national Congress at which we set out specific benchmarks to see us through the final phase of our 1999 mission.

As a reminder and in particular, our 2006 contract with the people, demanded a clear roadmap to political legitimacy and to a new Zimbabwe.



Through that covenant, we publicly pronounced our plan to push Zanu PF and Robert Mugabe to talk to us; and to form a transitional arrangement in order to soft-land the national crisis.

Barely a year later, your grit and resilience paid off: leading to minimal reforms for the March 2008 national election.

After that election, you decided to change the face of Zimbabwe forever.

As expected, the dictatorship slid backwards into its traditional comfort zone of violence, a war psychosis and a failed state status. Our neighbours could have none of it, leading to where we are today.

Fellow Zimbabweans, this struggle as you can all testify, has never been a *hunky-dorry* affair. I know we have yet to see a real Zimbabwe of our dreams.



I know the bridge we are currently crossing has its own challenges and frustrations. I believe this was a necessary step, as it fitted perfectly well in our 2006 roadmap.

We continue to encounter numerous roadblocks along the way. But I am happy to report that we remain on course, with the strong possibility that we shall accomplish all our goals soon.

Definitely, a new Constitution is almost ready as you, the people, put final touches to that supreme law after a referendum, in a few weeks time.

As a party, we have agreed to support the COPAC draft for the simple reason that it lays the basis for a good charter for the people of Zimbabwe. Among the many progressive clauses in the people's draft is the imperative for a devolved State, the sharing of power between all the executive arms of government and the expansion of the Bill of Rights. Above all, this charter



represents a big improvement in the rights and the advancement of women. These are issues that have always been at the core of the value system of the MDC and we will vote Yes at the referendum.

Once that new national charter is with us, a finishing line shall become clearly visible. An election, conducted under an agreed framework and in terms of international norms and standards, shall soon be with us within the next nine to 12 months.

Like all of you, I expect the MDC to celebrate its 14th anniversary in a New Zimbabwe! The choice will be very clear; voting for the past as represented by Zanu PF or voting for a future of hope and stability as embodied by our great movement.

I know---and I am certain--- that Zimbabweans will vote for hope and progress.



Our record speaks for itself. We realised all our victories under the most trying conditions.

Our officials, including Cabinet ministers and senior party leaders, were routinely victimized by a hopelessly partisan cabal inside the security sector.

Ladies and gentlemen, yesterday's forces of darkness remain determined to fight on; and to frustrate this national project.

To complicate an already muddied situation, pockets of lawlessness still roam the countryside; Zanu PF induced corruption remains the order of the day, in particular with the distribution of food and national resources, such as diamonds and other minerals while politically motivated violence remains unacceptably high.



Our hope had been that the GPA would help in addressing three fundamental pillars; **national healing, socio-economic development** and **political reforms**.

Though marginal achievements have been made in the socio-economic pillar we are starting to see a regression given ZANU-PF's obsession with destructive policy-frameworks. The other two pillars have not achieved anything notable given the paralysis in the functioning of the GNU.

Working with Zanu PF and Mugabe in government has not been easy. I am however happy to report that our ministers have been outstanding given the systems and structures they found in place.

May I further acknowledge the spirit of all Zimbabweans in the face of extreme provocation during this hard transition to a true democracy?



Your confidence in the future shall remain indelibly etched into our collective history as unique in the collective African experience.

Despite these setbacks, I must say I am proud of what we have achieved so far. I stated upon entering into this transition that the MDC was far from retreating and abandoning the struggle; instead we were advancing in another direction. We are a few months from our destination, despite our daily humiliation and public vilification.

Our struggle has reached a point of no return. We are now in an irreversible national mood for change and total transformation.

Mr Chairman, I see a Zimbabwe that must redefine the national question to include all the people who have a stake in its heritage.



I see a Zimbabwe that must be inclusive and participatory, a Zimbabwe that can turn itself into a humane nation where diversity, difference and dissent are seen as healthy and normal signs of growth.

My vision is stubbornly anchored on five guiding pillars – all directed at transforming Zimbabwe into a newly industrialised country within a single generation.

Leading the pack in this five-legged pot is the critical issue of **governance**. With your active participation, collective intelligence and wise counsel, I pledge to facilitate the establishment of key institutions and systems designed to protect democracy; to eliminate fear; and to fight off any threats or forms of uncertainty among Zimbabweans.



We must deal decisively with the cowboy mentality and political vice; corruption and patronage; and a sloppy political culture which rewards violence and inhuman behaviour.

Once Zimbabweans demonstrate a high level of faith and confidence in themselves and begin to see the State as a mere enabler worthy of their trust and devoid of the current international pariah tag, our **economy** can spring back to life in no time.

No **economy** can realise a sustainable turn-around on the basis of an informal sector, or through a closed door policy in which selfishness and bad politics constantly meddle with global knowledge and technological trends.



Given the extent of the damage to Zimbabwe, I know that without the rehabilitation and a rapid expansion of the existing **infrastructure**, no meaningful transformation shall be possible.

The current set up was designed for a tiny population more than a century ago and can never be expected to cope with today's demands.

It is embarrassing, Mr Chairman, that after plundering the entire countryside, smashing a once vibrant commercial agriculture sector, Zimbabweans find themselves at the mercy of foreign food handouts.

Food availability and food security shall be a major priority if people are to take an active part in matters of governance; in economic revival and growth; and in repairing and improving their infrastructure to comparable international standards.



Today, Zimbabweans find themselves in unimaginable locations very far away from their homes in search for **security**, **sustenance**, **world-class services** and **infrastructure**, and -- above all – **food**.

Once we set a solid foundation for these key pillars, I can assure the nation that we shall realise full employment in short space of time.

Let us never fool each other, one can never empower any other person without access to a combination of inflows of new knowledge, new technology and new capital transfers.

Let us never fool the people that **without new labour entrants** onto the productive sector; **without skills-intensive industries**; **without knowledge-based intensive industries**; **without rapid mechanisation and automation**; **without intensive**



technological inventions and innovation; there can be any meaningful empowerment.

We have already seen the folly of such reckless populism in agriculture in the last 13 years. Zanu PF failed in this regard, forcing Mugabe to rely on violence – which solicited an unsavoury feedback loop that cost him hearts and minds of the nation and made his job much harder today.

After two decades of political suffocation and unbearable state controls, Zimbabweans – through the MDC – found an outlet to cool down. That outlet has grown phenomenally to a point where the future is now on the radar.

Yes, we are on the threshold of a new direction; the last mile towards real transformation!



As we enter 2013, we must realize that the stakes are going to be high. Every day that goes by is a day closer to the next election. However, our quest is not just for an election for an election's sake.

We seek total transformation and no sector shall escape from holistic scrutiny.

We will continue to collaborate with SADC's efforts to resolve the Zimbabwean situation.

We fully acknowledge the attempts being made by SADC in Zimbabwe and our hope is that it will lead to the outcome that Zimbabweans themselves desire.

On our part, Mr Chairman, allow me to lay some foundational parameters that will lead to the attainment of our aspirations as a party.



1. **We must be united.** We need to safeguard ourselves from anything that is meant to divide us. The success of the party will always pose as a threat to our antagonists. We must not open ourselves to internal divisions as this will give our adversaries a stronghold. Given the journey we have traversed so far and the distance we still have to go; unity is not optional but requisite.
2. **We must be strategic.** The party must urge towards being more strategic and technically astute. The way we run the party must be reflective of our capacity to be the next governing authority in this nation.
3. **We must build more leaders.** There is a need to be intentionally perpetual about building more leaders for



tomorrow. We must invest into the coming generations. The legacy of the party will be determined by how we develop more leaders and not by how we defend our leadership positions.

4. **We must be ready to govern.** The party must have a strategic plan of how we will govern this nation once we have won the next election. The people of Zimbabwe are tired of political rhetoric. They want tangible and realistic plans of how political parties will transform our nation. We must effectively communicate our plan.

5. **We must connect with the people.** All our leaders must realize that we all need to get to the people. We need to be among the people and work with and from among the people. Our focus and priority must always be the people of Zimbabwe.



6. **We must consolidate the struggle.** Like I have mentioned before, our struggle for democracy is still on. We have to fight to the end. It is never over until we can all see and feel the change. We must prevail and the spirit that binds us together today must be the same spirit that must deliver us into destiny.

7. **We must promote peace.** Since the year 2000 when we first took part in national elections, violence has been the hallmark of our adversaries. It has been applied to us and we have lost many of our friends, supporters, sympathizers and cadres. Today, some are actually experiencing the ugly wrath of intentional and targeted political violence across the country. Some are languishing in prison cells wrongly accused of perpetuating violence.

Being victims must not make us the next perpetrators. Our party peace campaigns must be intensified.



The only way of weakening a violent machinery is to respond with what is unfamiliar to it. In our case the violent machinery is unfamiliar to peace and we must therefore respond with peace. Peace may be silent but it speaks its own language, which I believe has the ultimate last say.

After 13 years, some have begun to experience a creeping fatigue. Because it is the last mile, it becomes open season for temptation, for sceptics and naysayers. But the MDC's history is a proud history of triumph over adversity and I am certain that despite the brickbats being thrown at us, we will celebrate the next anniversary in the new Zimbabwe.

In conclusion, I wish to thank you. I am indeed humbled by your commitment. I am encouraged by your resilience and political maturity. I am excited by the prospects for change.



It is where we have come from that keeps me reminded of where we are going: the trials; the tribulations; the smear campaigns; the incessant assault of the brand; attempts at character assassinations; the list of destructive programmes against us is endless...

I can see real change and transformation in the horizon. I can assure you that we will all walk together in this last decisive mile towards real and transformative change.

God bless you.

God bless our movement.

And God bless Zimbabwe.

I Thank You

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mugabe' followed by a flourish.