

Statement by the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, The Right Honourable Morgan Tsvangirai, Upon His Return to Zimbabwe from Europe and The United States,

Harare, 30 June, 2009

Members of the Diplomatic Corp, Members of the Media, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Three weeks ago, I undertook my inaugural international visit as Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, visiting the United States, Scandinavia and Europe. This visit was initiated by my office as part of the implementation of the 100 Day Plan and the commitments Government made at the Victoria Falls Ministerial retreat, where it was agreed that we need to reengage the international community at a political and economic level.

The visit was an essential step in the process of repositioning Zimbabwe in the family of nations and redefining our national foreign policy agenda. The primary purpose of the visit was to begin Zimbabwe's re-engagement with key international donors whose support of the people of Zimbabwe goes back many years.

In this respect, the visit was an overwhelming success. Every one of the countries I visited expressed their unequivocal support for the direction our country is taking, for our democratisation agenda and for the people of Zimbabwe.

In addition, in Brussels I launched the formal re-engagement process with the European Union as outlined in the Cotonou Agreement.

The response from the EU was immediate and encouraging. The EU committed itself to availing us with transitional and humanitarian support to the tune of more than US\$150 million. They also pledged more support which will be guided by the way in which we meet our own political commitments as outline in the GPA.

As a nation, we should be humbled by the number of friends we have internationally and for their desire to work with us to rebuild our country.

As part of the re-engagement process, I discussed with the leaders I met, the opportunities that Zimbabwe has and the obstacles that we still face to realise those opportunities. In this regard, I also raised the issue of the transitional support that we require to move towards delivering the freedoms, services and society that Zimbabweans demand and deserve.

In this respect as well, the trip was a success. In every country I visited, each leader that I met expressed their desire and ability to help us during this transitional phase.

The pledges we received, for both humanitarian and transitional assistance totalling almost US\$500 million. My office is in the process of finalising the amounts pledged and their allocations and details will be released in due course.

At this point, I would also like to state that in our drive to rebuild Zimbabwe, we are not limited to a "look west" or "look east" policy, but rather we are committed to engaging our friends in all parts of the globe.

While I was away, Government, through Finance Minister, Tendai Biti, also secured lines of credit from China totalling US\$950 million.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the amount of assistance that was raised on my visit to Europe and the United States does not reflect the enormous support we will be able to utilise if we are to fulfil all our political obligations.

In every country, each leader I met expressed reservations about the delays in the full implementation of the Global Political Agreement. They asked, why, after almost five months, had fundamental obligations undertaken by the respective political parties not been implemented?

Both in Europe and the United States, leaders stated that they had concerns about the success of the new, transitional political dispensation as the Government has not yet been fully constituted due to the outstanding issues. These issues are not foreign benchmarks imposed from outside Zimbabwe, but are our own conditions that we committed ourselves to meeting when we signed the Global Political Agreement (GPA).

As such, the concerns of the international community are legitimate and the three political parties as the signatories to the GPA, and particularly the leaders of those parties, must take responsibility for the failure to implement fully the obligations we have signed up to.

As a nation, if we want outside assistance, we must first prove that we are able to fulfil the obligations we have undertaken within the agreement that was brokered by SADC.

In this regard, we will be judged by what we do and not by what we say.

Actions speak louder than words and while I was away there were instances of peaceful protestors being beaten by our police, innocent individuals arrested on trumped up charges and continued vilification of the MDC by the state media. What do these actions say about our commitment to building a new Zimbabwe?

Ladies and Gentlemen, those parties and individuals that are blocking the full implementation of the GPA are blocking national progress and international assistance.

The outstanding issues that must be resolved, and resolved immediately, are a matter of record and were articulated clearly yesterday by Deputy Prime Minister Khupe.

The Ministers from my party disengaged from the Cabinet meeting held yesterday. I understand their frustrations and concerns. It is the same frustration expressed by Zimbabweans in general and the international community that we wish to reengage with as a nation. These frustrations emanate from the slow pace of the implementation of the GPA.

As a principal in the inclusive Government, I have taken it upon myself to engage my two partners, President Mugabe and Deputy Prime Minister Mutambara, to address these issues and bring finality to the formation of the inclusive Government. This engagement includes the referral to SADC of some of the outstanding issues.

I endorse the statement by Deputy Prime Minister Khupe that the greatest challenge Zimbabwe faces is one of old attitudes that refuse to accept the new order. We all have a responsibility as Zimbabweans in general, and the three political parties in particular, to simply implement what we agreed.

Zimbabweans do not want a half-implemented agreement that brings with it more disappointment than hope and more frustration than progress. My party is committed to the GPA and committed to taking our country forward, with the support of our people.

Those residual elements in our midst must decide whether or not they are going to honour the commitments they made or whether they are going to continue to attempt to obstruct and impede the progress of our nation.

It must be understood by all today, that any individual, or group of individuals, who are standing in the way of progress in the implementation of the GPA, are also standing in the way of Zimbabwe's rebirth and reengagement with the family of nations at a political and economic level, including the removal of any restrictive measures.

Those who are serious about fulfilling these commitments will work to immediately resolve the outstanding issues in a matter of days, not weeks.

Ladies and Gentlemen, my recent trip confirmed that the international community is ready and willing to help Zimbabwe, but they need us to help ourselves by standing by the political commitments we have undertaken.

The time for talking about our commitments is now past and we must implement those obligations for the betterment of our nation.

The MDC expects, and the people deserve, only true partners in progress who are prepared to put the best interests of our nation above all other considerations.

As Prime Minister, I am committed to Zimbabwe's re-engagement. I am committed to rebuilding our nation and I call upon all patriotic Zimbabweans to join me on this irreversible journey to a new people-driven constitution and free and fair elections.

I thank you.