

REMARKS BY MINISTER NALEDI PANDOR, HANDING OVER HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT TO THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE, 25 MAY 2021

Your Excellency President Mnangagwa, the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe

Your Excellency, Vice President Chiwenga

Senior Government officials

Distinguished guests

Your Excellency, Mr President

On behalf of President Cyril Ramaphosa, the Government and the people of the Republic of South Africa, we are here today to hand over the support to the Republic of Zimbabwe as pledged by the Republic of South Africa.

This event whether by design, comes at a symbolic time as the continent rallies to celebrate her entrenched principles of solidarity and unity as embodied during the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). On Africa Day we celebrate and acknowledge the achievements of the OAU from its founding on 25 May 1963 in the fight against colonialism and apartheid. The theme for 2021 is 'The Arts, Culture And Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We Want.' When we narrow this theme to our bilateral relations, this entrenches the already existing people to people cooperation between the two nations as we are the same people with shared history, culture, language and heritage. This project we are embarking on today is aimed at sharing and extending the culture of Ubuntu.

Your Excellency

In 2015, South Africa and Zimbabwe decided to elevate their Joint Commission for Cooperation into a Bi-national Commission. The elevation meant upgrading the level of the Bilateral engagement from Ministerial to Presidential level.

To South Africa, this was a clear depiction of the value we attach to Zimbabwe as a neighbour and a friend. There are fair weather friends and there are friends who stick with you through raging storms. Zimbabwe has been that friend that stood with us as we braved through the storms of colonialism and apartheid. As the saying goes, a friend in need is a friend indeed.

It is in this spirit of cordial working relations, that when our fellow neighbour was in need, we responded with urgency. It is unfortunate that the global pandemic of COVID-19 hindered the urgency in which the South African government could respond to assist their fellow neighbour. The travel restrictions and slow economic activity due to national lockdowns stalled the progress on this project, but it remained high on our list of priorities as we worked harder to ensure delivery at the first opportune time.

Whilst we are hit by the covid-19 pandemic, we do not forget that natural disasters remain cyclic pandemics, affecting millions of people across the world, for decades. They have killed scores of lives, displaced people and deprived them of livelihoods and dignity. They continue to create vulnerable communities, in which people are robbed of their human rights to access food, healthcare, adequate water, housing, educational and recreational facilities.

These natural disasters call for governments, business and civil society to come together in the spirit of unity to rebuild

what was broken, retrieve what was lost and resuscitate life lines to allow communities to rebuild their lives once again.

Cyclone Idai was said to be the worst tropical cyclone on record to affect Africa and the Southern Hemisphere. It is in this regard, that when Zimbabwe was one of the countries that were affected in our region in March 2019, the Government of South Africa immediately rallied our business partners and pledged our joined support to the affected communities.

We also provided support through our health workers, our police and sniffer dogs, including our defense who assisted in building Bailey bridges to reconnect roads swept away by the floods. South Africa subsequently sent an assessment mission to the affected regions to assess the devastation and with the cooperation and guidance of the government of Zimbabwe a resolution was made that informed the requisite support in the area of food security.

Your Excellency

With the good rainy season in our region after the devastating droughts of El Niño, we have tapped into our land, and it has produced enough grains to allow us to share. The cost of our pledge was R50 million and from that amount we were able to secure 450 000 bags of 12.5 kg of maize meal. South Africa will be responsible for the transportation costs to Harare and for further delivery and distribution to the identified 12 districts.

The first tranche thereof, has arrived here in Harare and will be sent to the locations that were affected by cyclone Idai. The first districts that will be serviced are Chipinge and

Chimanimani in the Province of Manicaland. The rest of the consignments will continue to come through until end of September 2021.

In conclusion, allow me Your Excellency, on behalf of the Government of South Africa to officially hand over the humanitarian support of maize meal to the amount of R50 million to the Government and the people of Zimbabwe.

I thank you