



PRIME MINISTER

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**SPEECH BY THE HONOURABLE R J L HAWKE AC MP
PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA
AT A BANQUET IN HIS HONOUR IN HARARE,
23 OCTOBER 1991- ZIMBABWE**

Your Excellency President Robert Mugabe
The First Lady Anai Mugabe
Honourable Vice-President,
Honourable Ministers,
Your Excellencies,
Your Worship the Mayor of Harare,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Yesterday nearly all Commonwealth Heads of Government were still here in Harare for one of the most successful and constructive meetings of the Commonwealth I have attended.

The success of this CHOGM is due in no small part to the wonderful hospitality extended by you Mr President, and the Government and people of Zimbabwe. That is the public side of CHOGM.

But may I also say that success is also dependent on what happens in the privacy of the Executive sessions - and here your expert chairmanship did much to create the conditions where a very diverse group of Heads of Government could work constructively and harmoniously together.

It says something, Mr President, of your capacity for work that, rather than taking it easy after the massive responsibilities of hosting CHOGM, you invited me to undertake a separate bilateral visit.

I believe our time together also says something for the particular relationship that has developed between Australia and Zimbabwe since 1980 and of the seeds of that relationship during your struggle for independence.

On a personal note, may I say, Robert and Sally, how much Hazel and I have enjoyed our time in Zimbabwe, especially the many private moments in which you have shared with us some of the unique experiences of your lives. We now appreciate a little better what the long years of struggle for the independence of Zimbabwe have meant to you.

Mr President

Our two nations may be at opposite ends of the A-to-Z alphabet of the Commonwealth, but we also have much in common, much that we are working for together in the forums of the world, including the Commonwealth.

Some parts of Zimbabwe even look like Australia.

I have been struck by the success our eucalyptus trees have found here in Zimbabwe, with some 200 species of Australian gum-trees and wattles flourishing here under the Seeds of Australia project.

Travelling around the cattle country of Zimbabwe, the extensive eucalypt plantings remind me of many parts of our cattle country in Northern Australia.

This is a reminder that we are both countries of the Southern Hemisphere, sharing the same tropical latitudes and climate, and sharing some of the same industries - mining, agriculture, and tourism.

Like Zimbabwe, Australia has great natural wonders and an abundance of unusual wildlife that in our case, millions of people will travel thousands of kilometres to see. We have an economic interest, as well as a national duty to take seriously the environmental consequences of this increasingly vital industry.

Mr President

Australia was privileged to have played a part in Zimbabwe's triumphant emergence to nationhood, through that crucial meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government in Lusaka just twelve years ago. Australian troops and electoral observers were here under Commonwealth auspices in the vital pre-election period in 1980.

It is only twelve years since the people of Zimbabwe were engaged in a bitter but successful struggle for freedom and equality in the land you have lived in for more than a thousand years.

It is just over eleven years since you achieved independence. That is not a long time in which to reconstruct a country. It is a remarkable tribute to the atmosphere of unity and team-work which your leadership, Mr President has provided that so much has been achieved.

Zimbabwe is characterised by a cheerfulness and optimism not present everywhere in Africa. The struggle to become independent has energised the people of Zimbabwe and given them purpose.

There is no more telling example of the spirit of the people of Zimbabwe than the resurgence, the renaissance, of the arts

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- especially stone carving. I have made a few modest but heavy purchases which will stand as permanent reminders of our visit.

Mr President

Australia has always had a very close relationship with Zimbabwe.

Since the early days of Zimcord, when many young Australians came to assist with that expansion of the education system which has been one of the signal achievements of your government, Australia has continued to provide practical help to Zimbabwe.

Lately, our contribution has focussed on staffing, training and commodities assistance, as well as support for the grass-roots development work undertaken here with the support of Australian non-governmental organisations and volunteers.

Today I had the moving experience of seeing the contribution that can be made to the welfare of men, women and children by things as simple, but as important, as water supply and health care. I am proud of Australia's role in that project and I congratulate World Vision for their enthusiastic and creative management of this important project.

Our trade and investment links have been expanding steadily, if from a relatively low base, with a healthy and broad-based flow in both directions. Australian companies have already identified and shown a strong commitment to significant projects such as Hartley Platinum.

Australians and Zimbabweans enjoy many of the same things.

Sport is one obvious example.

For golfers like myself, your courses certainly provide something unique in the way of hazards. In Australia you might run into the occasional kangaroo, but they are not quite in the same league as a troop of baboons, or a herd of buffalo, as I had the pleasure of experiencing at Elephant Hills last weekend.

Your cricketers gave ours a run for their money last month, and although your Rugby Union team had a disappointing World Cup, it will learn from the international experience.

And Zimbabwean soccer seems to be on the verge of an international breakthrough. Many experts believe the future of soccer is in Africa. I look forward to the day when Zimbabwe will make an impact on a future World Cup similar to the one Cameroon made in 1990.

Frequent international competition is the only way for national sports to progress.

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One of the useful by-products in this region of the gradual re-admission of South Africa to international sport will be increased competition in all the sports our two countries play.

Mr President

Zimbabwe emerged to independence in a manner which has etched itself indelibly on the consciousness of Australians, and of the world. It was an inspiring event - not only for itself, but for the hope it gave for the eventual achievement of a just solution to the uniquely abhorrent and intractable system of institutionalised racism, oppression and exploitation in South Africa.

Our two countries have co-operated actively in the collective effort to speed the passing of apartheid, particularly in the Commonwealth where our respective Foreign Ministers have worked closely together in the Committee of Foreign Ministers on Southern Africa.

All of us now hold firm the hope that the changes underway in South Africa, stimulated by the action of the Commonwealth this week, will lead rapidly to a democratic constitution and the enfranchisement of all South Africans, and the removal of the injustice and disadvantage ingrained in South African society by decades of apartheid.

As you know, we are providing practical assistance to representative organisations and groups, including the ANC, to support that work.

May I also express the hope, Mr President, that the inauguration of a democratic government so long awaited there will be characterised by the same spirit of reconciliation and forgiveness that you gave Zimbabwe in those climactic hours after your first stunning election victory.

The challenges of the last decade of the twentieth century, and those in the beginning of the twenty first century will be very different than those of the recent past. The world has changed utterly in the last two years. Trading nations like Zimbabwe and Australia have to face up not only to a new world order in politics, but also to a new world order in economics. Where once, perhaps, both our countries might have been able to rely on old friends to buy our products, these days we know no-one owes us a living.

We discussed today our respective plans to restructure and reinvigorate our economies. Your economic structural adjustment plan is a bold and imaginative reflection here in Zimbabwe of the world-wide trend towards recognition of the role of markets in sound economic management and raising standards of living. I congratulate you on the plan, and wish it every success.

We have also discussed today, as we did at CHOGM itself, the vital links between economic development, good government,

democratic institutions and respect for human rights. The importance of those links was affirmed in the Harare Commonwealth Declaration, and has been reflected in the extraordinary events we have witnessed in many parts of the world over the past two years.

Those events have shown how more and more people around the world are coming to recognise that the universal aspirations to freedom, dignity, security and prosperity can best be satisfied through pluralistic democratic institutions and market economies.

We have been particularly glad to see this growing realisation in Africa, where command economics and undemocratic politics have in so many cases until recently blighted the bright hopes of independence.

Of course every nation must develop its own political and economic structures to meet its particular circumstances. It is not the Commonwealth way to seek to impose our views on fellow-members. But it is the Commonwealth way to recognise and reflect on the enduring ideals we share, which were set out so well in the Singapore Declaration twenty years ago, and re-affirmed here in Harare, and to encourage and assist fellow members to find ways to meet those ideals more closely in their particular circumstances.

For all these reasons I am delighted that at the historic conference which you have hosted and chaired over the past week, Mr President, the Commonwealth has dedicated itself to help its members take practical steps towards building the institutions of good government.

I had a practical example of the role the Commonwealth can play today, when I had lunch with the President of the Australian Senate, Senator Kerry Sibraa, who is travelling to Zambia with other Australian and Commonwealth Parliamentarians to observe the multi-party elections being held there next week. I wish his team, and the people of Zambia, well for their election.

I am sure that the courage and foresight which you have shown in developing and implementing your economic structural adjustment program for Zimbabwe will also provide a strong impetus for strengthening the democratic institutions which we believe are, amongst other things, the natural and essential complement to market-based economic institutions. In talking about these vital issues in our long and warm discussion this afternoon, I was heartened by your strong recognition of the appropriateness of multi-party democracy in Zimbabwe.

Mr President

The emergence of a democratic South Africa will have a profound effect on regional relations. I believe that in the medium term it can be a source of economic dynamism, but it will not be smooth sailing.

Australia sees Zimbabwe as a lynch-pin in the emergence of a new dispensation in this whole region - a region which has suffered so much but which has such enormous potential.

We look to Zimbabwe to give a lead in providing talent, energy and creative solutions for the new challenges facing you and your neighbours in the next decades.

Your land, your manufacturing capacity, and the talent and energies of your people are rich endowments which can help to carry not only Zimbabwe but this whole region of Southern Africa to a prosperous and peaceful future.

Mr President, as free and independent nations we naturally and necessarily make our way in the regions within which we live.

We have in recent years devoted much thought and work to regional issues, such as the processes of Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation, or APEC.

In the light of concerns sometimes expressed by commentators in this part of the world, I want to make it very clear that APEC is not and will not become a trading bloc. On the contrary, it is committed to promoting free trade both within the region and between the region and other parts of the world.

After all, we too are a country of the South. As a commodity exporter and in other ways, Australia shares direct interests with the countries of the developing world. Our position on international trade and our initiative in promoting the Cairns Group of agricultural exporting countries fully bears this out.

The dramatic and rapid changes of recent years make us question the assumptions of the past.

I therefore welcome the new focus being proposed for the Non-Aligned Movement, of which Zimbabwe is a distinguished former Chairman and which is now led by one of our nearest neighbours and most important regional partners, Indonesia. I should also like to express Australia's deep respect and appreciation for the far-sighted role played by Zimbabwe as a member of the Security Council, and as its President in February, at a time when the world was faced with a major threat to international security in tense and unprecedented circumstances.

The new world order, whether we like it or not, is now being forged in the crucible of breath-takingly rapid change. None of us can afford to be locked into old and obstructive ways of thinking, or to limit ourselves solely to regional concerns.

We must not be spectators: we must decide where to put our weight, slight as it all too often may seem, on the international scales.

Australia looks forward to working with Zimbabwe, an old and trusted friend, in the effort to ensure that the new world

order is one that fulfils the long-term needs and aspirations of our peoples.

As part of that process it is imperative that the statements of Commonwealth principles be translated into the lives and experience of our peoples.

Mr President, I look forward to the continuing development of an even closer and more mutually beneficial bilateral relationship between Australia and Zimbabwe.

May I in conclusion ask you all to join me in a toast to good health and happiness of President Mugabe and First Lady Mrs Mugabe and to the peace, prosperity and happiness of Zimbabwe and all its people.

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