ZIMBABWE

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE
HONOURABLE N. M. NDHLOVU

AT

THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR REVIEW AND LAUNCH OF THE CZI ANNUAL MANUFACTURING SECTOR SURVEY 2025

HYATT REGENCY HOTEL

18 JUNE 2026

Director of Ceremonies;

Permanent Secretary for Industry and Commerce, Amb. T.T. Chifamba;

Senior Government Officials here preset;

The President of the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries, Mr. M. Mkanganwi;

The Chief Executive Officer of the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries, Ms. S. Kuvarika;

Captains of Industry and Commerce;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is indeed my distinct honour and privilege to join you here today for the 2026 Edition of the Manufacturing Sector Review and the official launch of the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI) Annual Manufacturing Sector Survey 2025. I wish to extend my profound gratitude to the CZI for the longstanding tradition of convening this important stakeholder dialogue. This dialogue provides us with an indispensable evidence base, which guides our policy direction as we collectively navigate this exciting journey towards structural transformation.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

As we reflect on the findings of this Report, we are reminded that Zimbabwe's industrial transformation is no longer a matter of aspiration, but it is a national imperative. The resilience demonstrated by our manufacturing sector in recent years is commendable, but the message emerging from this Survey is clear: we must therefore accelerate the pace of industrialisation, deepen domestic production, and strengthen the competitiveness of our economy.

Today's gathering reflects the strategic partnership between Government and the private sector in advancing this agenda. Industrialisation cannot be achieved by Government acting alone, nor can it be delivered by the private sector in isolation. It requires deliberate coordination, policy certainty, investment, innovation, and a shared commitment to national development. The Government of Zimbabwe, under the visionary leadership of His Excellency, the President, Dr. E.D. Mnangagwa, remains fully committed to providing an enabling environment necessary for industry to thrive.

As you are aware, Zimbabwe has set itself a clear and ambitious target, which is, attaining Upper Middle-Income Society Status by 2030. This objective is firmly anchored in the National Development Strategy 2 (NDS2) 2026–2030, which places industrialisation at the centre of economic transformation. The era of exporting jobs through the export of raw materials must come to an end. Our future lies in value addition, beneficiation, and the development of globally competitive industries.

It is against this background that Government approved the Zimbabwe National Industrial Development Policy 2 (ZNIDP 2) 2026–2030. This policy is not merely a statement of intent; but it is a comprehensive framework for industrial transformation. It marks a decisive shift from economic stabilisation towards industrial expansion, productivity growth, technological upgrading, and export competitiveness.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Government has set a bold target of growing the industrial sector into a US$12 billion economy by 2030 through the ZNIDP 2. This target is achievable, but only through deliberate and coordinated action by all stakeholders. The policy provides a clear roadmap for increasing domestic production, deepening value chains, strengthening industrial linkages, promoting innovation, and enhancing the participation of local enterprises in strategic sectors of the economy.

Central to this transformation agenda is the Local Content Strategy (LCS) 2026–2035. Government is determined to ensure that Zimbabwean industries derive maximum benefit from domestic economic activity. Accordingly, mandatory local content thresholds will be progressively implemented across strategic sectors to stimulate local production, deepen value chains, create employment, and reduce import dependence.

The current import bill remains unsustainably high and continues to place pressure on domestic industry. This situation cannot persist indefinitely. Zimbabwe must produce more of what it consumes and export more of what it produces. The Local Content Strategy is therefore designed not only to support local enterprises but also to strengthen national economic resilience and improve the country's trade balance.

Government will utilise its procurement power strategically to support domestic industrial development. As the largest purchaser of goods and services in the economy, Government procurement must serve as a catalyst for local production, industrial growth, and enterprise development. Every procurement decision should contribute, where feasible, to the strengthening of Zimbabwe's productive capacity.

Government will establish a Digital Local Content Platform that will register companies, certify production processes, monitor compliance, and provide real-time information on local content performance to ensure accountability, transparency, and effective monitoring. This will significantly enhance policy implementation and create a transparent framework for stakeholder participation.

In this regard, my Ministry has already established a Local Content Steering Committee, which will provide strategic oversight and coordinate implementation across Government, industry, and other key stakeholders. The era of fragmented interventions is behind us. Going forward, implementation will be coordinated, measurable, and results-oriented.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Industrialisation, mining and agricultural transformation are mutually reinforcing pillars of economic development. It is therefore no coincidence that Government has identified fifteen priority agro-industrial value chains for targeted support and development. Agriculture supplies approximately 60 percent of the raw materials required by industry, while industry provides the essential inputs that sustain agricultural production.

Our assessment of these value chains has identified critical supply gaps, infrastructure constraints, import dependencies, and investment opportunities that require urgent attention. These findings are now informing targeted interventions designed to strengthen domestic production, accelerate value addition and beneficiation, improve productivity, and enhance national competitiveness.

In addition, Government has identified a number of mineral-based value chains that will be actively promoted in collaboration with the Ministries of Mines and Finance, as well as other key stakeholders. Central to this strategy is a strong focus on mineral value addition, beneficiation, and industrialisation.

We are already witnessing encouraging progress in this regard. A notable example is the production of lithium sulphate, one of the first value-added lithium products to be exported from Africa. This milestone reflects growing investor confidence in Zimbabwe's economy and is fully aligned with our national development vision and the "Zimbabwe is Open for Business" mantra.

Government is taking a deliberate and strategic approach to assessing all minerals being extracted in the country and developing targeted interventions to maximise local value addition. This has informed the designation of Special Economic Zones based on mineral endowments and mining activities, creating significant opportunities for downstream industries. We therefore expect the manufacturing sector to take full advantage of these opportunities, with increased participation in mineral processing and beneficiation.

At present, the mining sector remains heavily dependent on imports for consumables, equipment, machinery, and technologies. As a mining-intensive economy, Zimbabwe must progressively build domestic manufacturing capacity to sustainably supply the sector and reduce import dependence.

This reflects the development trajectory we have chosen as a nation, one that ensures our mineral resources contribute meaningfully and equitably to national development. I therefore encourage captains of industry to take a keen interest in these emerging opportunities.

Our objective is clear: Zimbabwe must move beyond being a producer of primary commodities and become a competitive producer of finished and semi-finished goods for regional and global markets. That is the essence of industrialisation, and it remains at the centre of Government policy.

Distinguished Delegates,

The growth in manufactured exports recorded during the first quarter of 2026 is encouraging evidence that Zimbabwean industry has the capacity to compete in both regional and international markets. However, the contribution of manufactured goods to total exports remains below our expectations, highlighting the need to accelerate industrial upgrading, value addition, and export diversification.

This imperative becomes even more important in the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which presents one of the greatest economic opportunities of our generation. Access to a continental market of more than 1.4 billion people requires our industries to become more productive, innovative, efficient, and export-oriented. While supportive policies remain important, lasting competitiveness cannot be achieved through protection alone. It must be built through sustained investment, technological advancement, quality production, and improved productivity.

Beyond the opportunities offered by AfCFTA, Zimbabwe is also well positioned to benefit from expanding access to global markets. In this regard, China's decision to extend a Zero-Tariff Policy to African countries, including Zimbabwe, presents a significant opportunity for our exporters. To fully leverage this preferential market access, I intend to establish a dedicated taskforce comprising industrialists, private sector representatives, and relevant Government agencies, working closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. The taskforce will be mandated to develop a coherent and comprehensive strategy for penetrating the Chinese market and maximising the benefits arising from this initiative.

Given the current trade imbalance, where Zimbabwe imports substantial volumes of finished manufactured products from China, we must strategically position ourselves to increase exports of value-added and manufactured goods into that market.

Distinguished Guests,

Another area of critical importance is the growing investment by Chinese investors in Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector. Chinese enterprises have made significant investments across strategic sectors, including iron and steel, cement, tiles, thermal power generation, energy, fertiliser production, mining, and infrastructure development, among others. These investments are highly commendable as they are contributing meaningfully to the industrialisation, economic resurgence, and employment creation efforts of our country.

I therefore call upon both existing and prospective investors to continue investing in Zimbabwe as we work collectively towards achieving the economic transformation objectives outlined in the National Development Strategy 2 (NDS2) and the recently approved Zimbabwe National Industrial Development Policy (ZNIDP) 2026–2030.

Allow me also to commend the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI) for inviting the Chinese Business Association to participate in this event. I hope this marks the beginning of an enduring and mutually beneficial partnership. Such collaboration is important for strengthening business linkages and investment opportunities as well as ensuring that the significant contribution of Chinese enterprises to our economy is more fully recognised, documented, and reflected in our economic data and analysis.

Given the scale and impact of their activities, it is important that these contributions are adequately captured as part of Zimbabwe's broader industrial and economic development story.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is fundamentally reshaping global production systems. Nations that fail to embrace technological transformation risk being left behind. For Zimbabwe, the adoption of Artificial Intelligence technologies is no longer optional; it is an economic necessity.

ZNIDP 2 therefore prioritises digitalisation, automation, artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing systems, and e-commerce as key pillars of industrial competitiveness. These technologies must become integral components of our production systems if we are to increase productivity, reduce costs, improve quality, and compete effectively in international markets.

At the same time, industrial competitiveness must be underpinned by a skilled workforce. Through Education 5.0, the National Skills Audit and Development Programmes, and the National Artificial Intelligence Strategy 2026–2030, Government is investing in the human capital required to support a modern industrial economy.

Equally important is our commitment to quality, standards, and consumer protection. Zimbabwean products must meet the highest standards if they are to compete successfully in regional and international markets. Government will therefore continue strengthening the national quality infrastructure, enhancing regulatory oversight, and combating the proliferation of counterfeit and substandard products.

Distinguished Guests,

Government remains unwavering in its commitment to improving the ease of doing business. Regulatory reforms will continue to be implemented to reduce the cost of doing business, improve investor confidence, and create an environment conducive to industrial growth and investment.

However, achieving our industrialisation ambitions requires more than Government policy. It requires collective action, shared responsibility, and a common national purpose. The relationship between Government and industry has matured significantly over the years, and I am encouraged by the spirit of cooperation that now characterises our engagements.

Let us therefore move beyond identifying challenges and focus on implementing solutions. The time for diagnosis has largely passed. The time for execution is now.

Together, we must build competitive industries, create sustainable jobs, expand exports, and secure prosperity for future generations.

With these few remarks, Ladies and Gentlemen, I declare the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI) Annual Manufacturing Sector Survey 2025 officially launched.

I thank you.

Tatenda

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