



**Address by the Minister of Transport and
Infrastructural Development**

Hon. Arch. Joel Biggie Matiza (MP)

at the Official Opening of the

**Fourth Programme for Infrastructure Development in
Africa**

26 November 2018

Elephant Hills Resort, Victoria Falls

Former Prime Minister of Kenya and the current African Union High Representative for Infrastructure Development, Honourable Raila Amolo Odinga;

Minister of State for Matabeleland North Province, Cde Richard Moyo;

African Union Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, Dr Amani ABOU-ZEID;

Secretary General of COMESA, Ms Chileshe Kapwepwe;

Chief Executive Officer of NEPAD, Dr Ibrahim Assane Mayaki

Secretary for Transport and Infrastructural Development in the Republic of Zimbabwe, Eng Amos Marawa;

ARMP – Cameroon Director General, Mr Joseph Ngo

Representatives of our International Cooperating Partners, International and Regional Organisations, Private Sector and Project Owners;

Speakers and panellists of various sector sessions;

Members of the media present,

Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Republic of Zimbabwe and on my behalf as the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development, I would like to welcome you all to Zimbabwe and Victoria Falls. I would like to express my profound gratitude and appreciation to all of you who have accepted our invitation to attend the Fourth Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) Week here

in Victoria Falls. As you are aware, this programme was adopted as the strategic framework for regional infrastructure development and integration by our Heads of State and Government during their 18th AU Summit held in January 2012 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The aim was to promote the development of infrastructure comprehensively, taking into consideration transport, energy, transboundary water resources and ICT.

The approval of the strategic framework of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa by the African Union Assembly in 2012, was born out of the realisation that for Africa to enhance its infrastructure, there is need to create a platform to bring together key stakeholders involved in the implementation of the PIDA programmes; and take stock of progress and identify strategies to continue to accelerate implementation.

Great African leaders, from the times of our founding fathers, historians, researchers, academics, innovators and business people have always recognised the fact that infrastructure is a potent catalyst for wider economic participation. Abundant empirical evidence points to the fact that infrastructure provision is a means of poverty alleviation and more rapid economic growth among the poorest regional economies. Infrastructure development can contribute to growth and development through several channels, such as reducing transaction costs, increasing the durability of capital goods, fostering higher trade and investment, expanding demand and supply diversification and achieving economies of scale and scope. Regional integration is promoted through infrastructure that both leads to increased production and supports the distribution of goods and services within and between countries. Infrastructure also promotes increased and more diversified economic production and the integration of markets. Therefore regional integration in Africa would be key to growing African economies.

However, it is saddening to note that intra-African trade has remained limited primarily due to inadequate infrastructure. Honourable Ministers and distinguished guests, historically, Africa's trade reforms have mostly been negotiated with donors as part of adjustment programmes, which unfortunately did not give Africa a competitive advantage in negotiating towards better economies. Governments as they develop, need to increase consultations with other sectors such as the private sector and work towards the development of world-class service standards tailor made to address Africa's challenges and needs. The PIDA programme is such a vital initiative, not only to catalyse intra-African trade flows but perhaps more important, to provide a wider platform to encourage investment.

Programme Director, Honourable Ministers, I want to emphasise the fact that regional economic integration through infrastructure development remains the essential mechanism for reconnecting Africans with one another at both social and cultural levels; more importantly, for addressing the issue that most of our countries have small economies. This has limited us as Africa in negotiations and bargaining meaningfully in respective fora such as trade and economic negotiations, and other geopolitical strategic imperatives at the global level. I therefore lend my full support to the theme for PIDA Week 2018, namely:

“Realizing Africa’s Integration through Smart Infrastructure and Good Governance”.

This theme resonates strongly with our vision, that it is only through African solidarity and effective collaboration that African countries would be able to claim their rightful place in global economic matters for the benefit of the African child. Most importantly, PIDA project owners and stakeholders need to have the capacity, mechanisms and enabling environment to practice good

governance. For Africa to realise a competitive future, there is need for greater investment in Africa's people, as well as measures that encourage private investment in infrastructure and production.

Esteemed Guests, I dare say that historically, African countries inherited underdeveloped infrastructure geared toward exports/imports, lacking capital, and skewed toward supplying unfinished goods to the advanced countries. This paradigm had investors focused on infrastructure that supported export/import transportation rather than focusing on transforming and improving local productive capacity as well as promoting intra-Africa trade. This is reason enough for us to reverse this legacy and as a continent we crafted a new trajectory and have turned a corner. I am also encouraged in that our International Cooperating Partners have come on board and embraced our new vision of continental integration. We continue to look forward to working together with these and other partners as we move forward. But as all of us sitting here know too well, the reasons for doing what we are setting out to do over the next four days, go beyond reasons of pride and ideology, but the heart-felt desire transforming African economies through smart infrastructure and good governance.

Nevertheless, Africa, in the face of all these challenges, has managed to achieve notable milestones such as the recently launched African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the creation of a Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) earlier this year. Both these initiatives, amongst others, rely heavily on infrastructure development across all four of the PIDA sectors which are: Transport, Energy, Water and Telecommunication/ICT and are aimed at boosting Africa's integration agenda.

This singular realisation of the momentous need for integrating African economies through infrastructure development makes us privileged to host PIDA Week 2018. On behalf of the Republic of Zimbabwe, we appreciate the

collective gains that would accrue to our respective national States. As a continental initiative, PIDA provides a common framework for African stakeholders to build the infrastructure necessary to integrate the continent physically, economically and socially, offering opportunities to boost intra-African trade, support the continental blue print for industrialisation, the Action Plan for Accelerated Industrial Development for Africa (AIDA) in order to create new jobs for Africa's growing population and improving overall socio-economic development on the continent.

The African Union, Cooperating and Development partners are challenging you and I, as true patriots and as committed public servants, to play our respective roles in accelerating the pace of implementation of PIDA projects so that the stride is commensurate with global developments and Africa's aspirations. Let us use opportunities presented by history to us and transform the current state of affairs. There is need for us to reposition the African continent to industrialise, this is a precursor to promoting economic growth, creating sustainable jobs, raising incomes and fostering transformative development.

Most regional integration initiatives that have been undertaken so far, from the *Lagos Plan of Action*, to *NEPAD*, and inclusive of the *African Union Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*, are aimed at and trying to resolve the need to integrate the physical infrastructure of the African continent. Through PIDA Week, we seek to compliment these, but more importantly, we want to draw attention to an often neglected aspect of the regional and continental integration discourse. We are talking here about the smart infrastructure and good governance.

The uniqueness of the PIDA Week is in the fact that it not only brings together stakeholders but also showcases progress made in selected projects; provides a marketing platform to accelerate implementation; addresses crucial

issues around resource mobilisation and creating an enabling environment. In light of the above, a site visit to Kazungula Bridge has been scheduled during the course of this event. I hope we all take pride in the achievements made so far

PIDA Week is derived from the appreciation of the fact that there are cross-linkages with various stakeholders in:

- (i) Project preparation, Resource Mobilisation and Financing Mechanisms
- (ii) Capacity development, Job Creation and Empowerment
- (iii) Smart and Integrated Infrastructure Development
- (iv) Technology, Innovation and Industrialisation
- (v) Policy, Legal and Regulatory Frameworks

Ladies and Gentlemen, for us to have any chance of transforming the current state of affairs, and to have a meaningful chance of attaining the desired state of affairs, we will need to be brutally honest with one another in identifying and tackling the challenges before us. Let us therefore allow frank engagements and debate on the issues that financiers, development and cooperating partners, contractors, beneficiaries, are constantly bringing to our attention, in regard to challenges that they experience as they formulate, negotiate and implement PIDA Projects.

It is our strong view, as the Zimbabwean Government, that the first practical and necessary step toward the achievement of practical integration of the African continent, is the need to ensure effective infrastructure services within the SADC region, and within the tripartite area, including COMESA and the EAC regional communities and within the whole AU.

On behalf of the Government of Zimbabwe, we have stated categorically, that “Zimbabwe is Open for Business,” based on which we are committed to work with your good selves to advance Zimbabwe’s infrastructure development strategy. We are grateful that we have and continue to benefit from the Programme of Infrastructure Development in Africa. Some of the projects that PIDA has advanced in Zimbabwe include the Batoka Gorge (to be jointly implemented by Zambia and Zimbabwe); the North – South Power Transmission Corridor (linking power generation sites in the north and with load centres south of Zimbabwe) as part of our cherished regional power trading system in COMESA and SADC and our components on the Trans African Highways Project within the North South Corridor; to mention but a few. I am confident, therefore, that as we review the current PIDA Programme, and develop the next PIDA Priority Action Plan, we can take on board other priority projects that will advance of socio economic developmental programme.

I therefore urge this gathering to develop a concrete programme of action that will assist us to accelerate the pace of implementing PIDA projects, thus ensuring real and meaningful linkages necessary to move the continent forward.

Programme Director, I hope that the spirit of your deliberations will be guided by African values of Ubuntu which implies hard work, respect, honesty, fairness and unity. I therefore call on all of us as Africans to go beyond the call of duty and make meaningful contributions toward improving the lives of ordinary people across the continent.

Esteemed guests I therefore commit to creating platforms for further engagements on the PIDA projects within our purview and to lobby my peers in Government and the region and the rest of the continent towards harnessing buy-in for implementation of all PIDA Projects.

We are all invited to deliberate freely so that we contribute to the success of this worthy programme and therefore ensure that Africa's infrastructure becomes competitive.

I would wish everyone a pleasant stay in Victoria Falls one of the Seven Wonders of the World. I also hope you will find time in your busy schedules to visit the Majestic Victoria Falls and all it has to offer.

Once again welcome to Zimbabwe and in particular, the Victoria Falls.

Thank you for your kind attention!