



Transcript

Navigating the Difficult Transition to Democracy

Rt Hon Morgan Tsvangirai, Prime Minister, Republic of Zimbabwe

Chair: Lord Hastings of Scarisbrick

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Lord Hastings:

I am Michael Hastings – Lord Hastings of Scarisbrick – and it is my honour to host the Prime Minister with us today. I said to the Prime Minister beforehand, when we were talking in the reception room, that he needs no introduction. He has had a phenomenal profile in the few days since he has been here in the UK. He is a man whose story we have all followed with huge interest, great empathy, sometimes with tears, as much as we have shared with you the losses you have felt and the fight that you have had in the struggle for democracy and for rebuilding Zimbabwe. We just want to honour you for the leadership you have taken and appreciate you as a man, as a leader, and as the Prime Minister of your country.

I can also tell you that during the course of the half an hour we had together beforehand, he is also a man with a great sense of humour and a lot of joy. Prime Minister, we welcome you to the UK; we welcome you to Chatham House. We look forward to hearing you.

Rt Hon Morgan Tsvangirai:

Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. When the gentleman was putting on this thing, I thought we were going to address in a stadium, because my voice as an [indiscernible] is supposed to address a stadium. So he might as well just have left this out. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

It is indeed a great honour for me to stand before you and to share some of our recent experiences in the ongoing struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. Before I begin, ladies and gentlemen, my address, kindly allow me to pay special tribute to the British people for their unwavering support for the ordinary people of Zimbabwe through providing the essential humanitarian assistance that we have received over the years. Your position is greatly appreciated, notwithstanding our historical ties arising from our past relationship.

As you all know, Zimbabwe is in a difficult transition and requires massive moral and material support at home and abroad to rebuild our nation. Our situation is unique to Africa, where past power transfers and political change are traditionally a chaotic and often bloody affair. Our position differs substantially in that the pressure for change, the desire for democracy, is people-driven: spearheaded by social movements and a civil society-based political force clamouring for the extension of freedom in line with the ideals of our liberation struggle. What makes the Zimbabwean scenario unique is that for the first time in Africa, ordinary people organised themselves through civil

society and other social networks and mounted a potent but peaceful struggle against a post-colonial regime and a flamboyant tyranny. That struggle has largely been won, as you all know, against heavy odds. What remains is a meaningful transition to a genuine democracy under a new constitution.

Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, you will recall that when the Movement for Democratic Change found all doors firmly shut after the March 2008 election, in which we emerged victorious, we decided to enter into the current arrangement for reasons which, I believe, are now common cause. We took southern Africa's advice in good faith, in the firm belief that the region was turning the corner and assuming a stout position in its desire to clean up the neighbourhood and avert a crisis from cascading into full-blown conflict.

We entered into this transition fully aware the final leg of our struggle would not be an easy one. We were motivated by a patriotic desire to avoid driving the country into a state of permanent disability. But transitions, from our experience and by their very nature, can be extremely difficult periods in a nation's history. It took four years and two months for South Africa to get a legitimate government after the release of ex-President Nelson Mandela in February 1990, and another two years to craft a world-class constitution with essential institutional safeguards to protect democracy and unite a divided people into a single nation.

I am not Nelson Mandela; neither do I claim or pretend to be. But allow me to draw parallels between Zimbabwe's transition to a normal society and that of our erstwhile southern neighbour. Here are two cases of a divided people: a group here historically thriving on exclusion and the other, unfortunately the majority, seeking equity, freedom, opportunity and democracy. One group believes in separate development, oiled by a system of patronage and keeping out others as a survival mechanism, while the entire country cries out for a better deal, albeit in a post-colonial environment. It took South Africa moments of extreme anxiety. The international community waited with baited breath, fearing the worst but hoping for the best.

In Zimbabwe, we have our own nail-biting challenges, cases of itching uncertainty, as hardliners who realise that they are losing their grip on power play opportunistic games designed to frustrate the national sentiment and frustrate a process designed to take us out of our failed-state status. Hardliners – through intolerance, greed and avarice; political score-settling, ethnic outbidding and a search for a sense of supremacy over all they used to survey – are comfortable only in circumstances of lawlessness and chaos. Such an atmosphere has no space for accountability and allows for unfettered

economic and political corruption. These pockets of irritants respect no rule of law and care less for the future; neither do they desire to move the nation out of a debilitating international pariah status.

This kind of powerful extremism held sway in South Africa during its transition, resulting in the death of close to 20,000 people in a short space of four years. We have similar elements in our own nation, working day and night to see a nefarious and hopeless result. They are Zimbabweans, not colonial administrators who would vanish to colonial capitals soon after democracy is realised. We need an inclusive approach to what we are doing, to put national healing into effect, to build a single nation and to harness our creative energies to correct the mistakes of the past. We have to accommodate them. We have to address their concerns and we have to help them understand there is a greater good for both the victim and the perpetrator in the end. We have no intention of ostracising and vilifying any Zimbabwean; we seek no retribution. We are concerned about the future, about our nation, about the plight of ordinary people, and about Zimbabwe's re-entry into the family of nations.

We need your support in handling our trying moments, out of our appreciation that there is a national, regional and international gain at the end of the pain. That said, allow me to place on record the fact that we have reached a stage where we are set for an irreversible path to a new Zimbabwe. I am confident that whatever happens in this delicate process, Zimbabwe today is better than the Zimbabwe of yesterday, and that this improvement will transform the Zimbabwe of tomorrow.

The building blocks for recovery and national confidence are slowly being moved into place. Our stabilisation programme has begun to spawn a flicker of hope: our re-engagement with the world is showing positive signs; our children are back in schools; our major hospitals have reopened their doors to all; the state has hobbled itself back to life; and inflation has been contained. Our parliament has begun to work on a new constitutional framework with a view to embark on an inclusive process to identify, define and refine what is uniquely Zimbabwean. We believe the Lancaster House Constitution, a ceasefire document crafted here to help manage the transition to an independent Zimbabwe, has outlived its usefulness and has to mark the end of its belated, interim life.

Ladies and gentlemen, Zimbabwe, like the Ivory Coast and Kenya, is implementing a transitional template as a conflict management tool. Such a plan has dire implications for our ability as a continent to implement African

solutions to African problems. We therefore appeal for your support to ensure these experiments achieve their desired outcomes.

Because Zimbabwe has had a single national head of government since independence in 1980, President Robert Mugabe's leadership style has attracted tremendous local and international interest, in particular his attitude towards diversity, dissent, his country and the world. While I understand the current suspicions and fears about his continued role in our country, as a nation we must however move forward. The sooner we move away from a preoccupation with the past, the better for the country to start working towards establishing a clean slate in its governance practices and system of public responsibility, public policy and delivery. Anything else condemns us to an historical trap that neither benefits the nation nor any new initiative. I am determined to avoid the populist 'blame backwards' syndrome and to look at the past as a foundation for a robust tomorrow. I am an advocate for a fresh start to a new Zimbabwe.

In Zimbabwe's case, we must acknowledge that at the dawn of this new millennium what could possibly go wrong has indeed gone wrong; indeed, gone wrong with dire consequences. Vital economic and political prospects and indicators suddenly pointed downwards, with a resultant meltdown that forced hungry millions into exile as economic refugees, without any semblance of dignity and self-esteem. Inflation soared to billions of per cent; life expectancy dropped from 60 to 34; and a cholera pandemic claimed more than 5,000 productive lives and infected 100,000. Further, widespread food shortages could be felt everywhere.

To rebuild our country, to restore the rule of law, to attract back our skilled citizens and vital investment, we require significant international support now. Such transitional support can start incrementally but it must start if we are to avoid being mired in an environment of poverty and hopelessness.

Ladies and gentlemen, lack of visible economic advancement has led to the now decade-long confrontation over the land issue and property rights in Zimbabwe. There has always been a national consensus that a skewed land ownership system and land use is an unfinished colonial agenda which must be brought to a satisfactory finality. Never at any time was there a national understanding that commercial agriculture – a serious business undertaking, the prime source of our food security and our economic mainstay – must be destroyed as a way of addressing any historical grievances in this sensitive area. The previous government went in with reckless abandon, pushing the country to its knees in the process. People in poverty can never be truly free.

We have always believed that land redistribution must be based on need, not greed. Land must be addressed within the dual context of industrialisation and poverty alleviation. Today, land is a thorny issue because of lack of economic development, which must ensure a nation of a viable social security system. Reduced to dead capital, land in Zimbabwe today is neither a meaningful empowerment tool nor a poverty reduction device. In Zimbabwe today, land produces only pointless political rhetoric, not food or wealth.

As parties to the Global Political Agreement, we have agreed that our focus should be on productivity. In this regard, a land audit will be conducted to assess current land use and current land stock, and to get into commercial and competitive production in order to claim our place in a fast-moving world and not to revert to subsistence or communal cultivation.

The racial polarisation in Zimbabwe today appears to stem from the manner in which we have managed land, a finite resource. I see this as a major priority in order for us to address endless perceptions about our attitude toward private property rights, bilateral relations and private sector investment. There may be a delay in the manner in which a finality could be realised but let me assure you that the nation is fully behind us that the land issue and land disputes pose a serious impediment to growth and stability because of our experience in the past ten years. We shall resolve this matter transparently and to the satisfaction of all.

Ladies and gentlemen, Zimbabwe is changing. While that change may not be immediately visible to the outside world, there is a fast-emerging picture at home. Zimbabwe has become a totally different place, a significantly better place, in the past four months. As a society, we were near death, and we have come back to life. We continue to improve our lot. In our first hundred days in office, we provided first aid in a desperate situation and we registered significant achievements.

First, we stopped the money-printing presses. The Zimbabwe dollar, the most inflated currency in the history of the world, has been suspended until economic sanity prevails. The US dollar and South African rand are effectively the currencies in daily use. As a result, our record-setting inflation is history.

Second, we have begun a process of opening the media space so previously banned news organisations will be free to come and work in and from Zimbabwe without official hindrance.

Third, we have launched constitutional reform, which will lead to a new constitution and national free and fair elections. This was the promise of the National Constitutional Assembly and it will come to pass.

Food aid is mostly available for the 5 million people who need it. The basic necessities of ordinary life are present on our store shelves. All these are the results of our specific policies but also of the people's trust. The people have gone back to work because they trust that the struggle for democracy in the new arena will succeed. An interim economic recovery plan is now in place to guide us through the stabilisation programme, leading to a new dispensation.

Under our short-term emergency recovery programme (STERP), for example, farmers are no longer required to sell their crops to the government's grain marketing board as the sole controlling board. The government's prior monopoly policies meant low prices for farmers, high costs to consumers, and overseas bank accounts for a few. No wonder we were producing 20 per cent of the food we needed. In effect, we seek to remove all forms of control on the economy. Controls lead to a scarcity economy; controls breed corruption. Corruption is a blunt instrument that discourages production and competition and fertilises political patronage.

In addition, we will again welcome the world at our airports and other entry points. Tourism is 10 per cent of our economy yet we scared away our tourists while preventing airlines from bringing them to our beautiful country.

Finally, one of our greatest needs is the return of hugely abundant talent and expertise, now scattered all over the world. Sadly, many of those who first fled from the previous government were those whose capacity and educational attainment made them the most marketable in other countries – the brightest graduates of what was once the best school system in Africa. We need people to start thinking of coming back home. They have an indispensable contribution to make in the reconstruction agenda.

We will build Zimbabwe around democracy, free elections, and all universal and generic freedoms, respect for property rights, and the rule of law. The growth of prosperity that follows from these policies will admittedly be slower than the collapse brought about by their absence.

Apart from stabilising the economy, restoring the rule of law is both a moral imperative and a business necessity. If business is the engine of growth, then the rule of law is the fuel that drives that engine. The rule of law is the catalyst that provides the foundation of confidence for contractual dealings and investor activity, without which no economy can grow effectively. The Global Political Agreement upon which this inclusive government is founded, calls for

the promotion and adherence to the law, amongst other essential requirements for an operational democracy.

I pledge to sink my energies into achieving this noble goal of restoring the rule of law in Zimbabwe. I promise never to rest until the end of the blatant violations of the laws of our country by some misguided, residual resistance elements that appear to enjoy tacit political approval for their acts from some quarters. Zimbabweans must ensure that the rule of law is applied and adhered to impartially, for according to our experience if one sector suffers then all of us suffer. Exclusion and separateness affect the whole national body frame.

Ladies and gentlemen, the uncertain political environment over the past decade has created a negative image of the country internationally and this has caused key international partnerships created over long periods to be set aside or terminated, to the detriment of the growth of our nation.

I am aware that suspicions abound as to whether the country is likely to slide back into the past once our former adversaries garner sufficient breathing space and financial support. Such an unfortunate development, in my view, is unsustainable and highly unlikely given the overwhelming commitment to a new Zimbabwe which is already firming across the political divide and throughout the country. Far from shoring up some individual political leaders, as is the perception in some capitals, the biggest winners from this arrangement, as I have said today, are the people of Zimbabwe. Slowly we are managing to bring back the economy from the cemetery. The humanitarian crisis and the cholera pandemic have eased substantially.

Our sceptics remain caged in the view that we have not yet done enough to prove that we are on an irreversible course toward comprehensive reform. Our argument is that much of that evidence can be made possible with the support of the world. Demonstrating an irreversible commitment to reform requires help, encouragement and the necessary wherewithal to make it clear and visible. Merely leaving us to our fate and merely watching from a distance, often from a position of mistrust, does not help us in any meaningful way.

Africa, as underwriters to our agreement, needs to be constantly nudged into action. Africa needs the pressure to constantly review progress on what it committed itself to do, for the success of this experiment.

When friends of the people of Zimbabwe begin to doubt us, then confusion sets in, discouraging the flow of advice and an international desire to stay on course. We are all interested in an orderly transition, a free and fair election

and a smooth power transfer to a government chosen by the people that will enable Zimbabweans to raise their heads once more. Zimbabweans are committed to this process and I trust that the peoples of the world will walk with us on the difficult journey ahead.

Thank you.

Q&A Session:

Lord Hastings: We have precisely thirty minutes for questions. Before anyone else asks a question – Chairman’s privilege, if I may – Prime Minister, your southern neighbour, South Africa, had to go through a truth and reconciliation process. We in the UK watched a similar process underway in Northern Ireland, interestingly also supported by Desmond Tutu. Do you think you need that in Zimbabwe?

Rt Hon Morgan Tsvangirai: Yes, Mr Chairman, I think that it is unavoidable given our history of trauma. You must understand that it is only appropriate that for the nation to move forward, you need peace and stability. That peace and stability can only arise when former enemies are able to embrace each other. We have created an [indiscernible] for national healing, reconciliation and integration. It is headed by three ministers. It already has done a lot of consultations throughout the country. What is now awaiting is for them to give us a programme.

We are slightly different from the truth and reconciliation commission in South Africa. We have got our own experiences. Therefore I think it must be designed for the conditions in Zimbabwe. I hope we should be in a position of achieving that.

Question: Good afternoon, Prime Minister. First, Mr Prime Minister – it is very difficult calling you Prime Minister, since I am so used to calling you Mr President. Nevertheless, I have to congratulate you on the very tough job that you are doing and admire you for your sheer ability and guts and tenacity of talking to a despot like Robert Mugabe.

The question is: in view of the fact that at the cathedral on Saturday you said that there was peace and calm, and then just this week WOZA – which is Women of Zimbabwe Arise, whose slogan is Love – were attacked for a peaceful demonstration in Zimbabwe. WOZA does not have any political

affiliation, is not a political party, but is a social party advocating peace and love and understanding. How does that bode for you personally in view of your ambassadorial goodwill tour?

Question: Going back to truth and reconciliation, what role do you envisage civil society and the church in Zimbabwe playing in that programme?

Rt Hon Morgan Tsvangirai: What can Zimbabwe offer? I am sure you do appreciate that building national and international confidence allows for people to take opportunities that arise in the country. They may be opportunities in business, there may be opportunities to visit as tourists, there may be opportunities to raise children because of the weather. So many opportunities are about. But it is up to the individual, what you want. All we can say is that Zimbabwe was the second biggest economy in sub-Saharan Africa and because of that it has all the economic and social opportunities that any emerging economy can offer. We have the people, we have the resources, and we also have a very good environment that we need to keep up for anyone to make a living in the country.

I have just spoken to the mining conference this morning. I was surprised with the degree of positive assessment of opportunities in mining and opportunities in other sectors of the economy. So that is what the country will offer.

The former chairman of the MDC in the UK highlights the recent incident in which women of WOZA were beaten up at a demonstration. I condemn that. At a press conference I condemned this as unnecessary, self-inflicted injury to the credibility of the inclusive government. We are trying to open space. We are trying to give people more freedoms. In fact the demonstration of that is that talking about Saturday, actually it is very good that people of Zimbabwe are allowed to jeer at their leaders if they don't feel they are doing what they want. But the only difference is that you don't jeer here in the UK, you go to Zimbabwe and you jeer there. That is the environment we want to create in Zimbabwe, not here in the UK. Or the comfort of the UK. Because there are people there in Zimbabwe who have built sufficient confidence that they will jeer at me even in Zimbabwe. They will jeer at President Mugabe even in Zimbabwe, without consequences.

So it is very unfortunate that such an incident of the WOZA women – and I condemn that, I will not be party to such an instruction to beat people who are trying to express themselves.

You say that I am touring as an ambassador – I am not. There are two objectives in this mission. Firstly, I think we need to appreciate that Zimbabwe has been in isolation for the last ten years. We are sufficiently confident that it is time to re-engage. It is time to build relationships with the world. In order not to continue to be a pariah state and treated as scum of the earth, we need to re-establish for our own good. So that is one objective.

The other one is that those who are prepared to help us during this transition, please do so. But we are not going to put a gun to their head to help us. We believe that these are former friends. What has happened has happened, justified or not, but what we need now is to reconnect, re-establish new relationships and to normalise the relationship. That is the whole purpose.

My mandate is to ensure that the Global Political Agreement conditions are fulfilled. That is the mandate. That is why we entered this government. Anything else is supplemental. Raising funds for Zimbabweans – yes, I am doing that because I realise the extent of poverty and desperation back home. But that is not my mandate. I am going beyond my mandate to do this because it is helping ordinary Zimbabweans back home.

On the question of reconciliation, yes, the church will play an important role. Eighty per cent of Zimbabweans are either Christian-related or belong to a church. So we are a Christian country and therefore I think the church is the only credible institution that can play a role between the political divide with the full confidence of everyone. So they have to take a leading role in assuring that the truth, the justice, the national healing, reconciliation and integration process is firmly established, to ensure that Zimbabweans can relate to each other.

Question: I would like to ask you how you think the impact of climate change on Africa will affect your economic and social recovery, in particular the rebuilding of your farming and tourism infrastructure.

Question: [inaudible]

Question: [inaudible]

Rt Hon Morgan Tsvangirai: The climate change agenda – I think in Africa it has not caught on in a big way like in Europe, but we are part of the world and we have to play our part. One of the key industries that is contributing to carbon emissions is the question of thermal power. I want to be very frank with you: it will be some time before the thermal powers are shut down and hydroelectric, alternative means of power generation are put in place. Besides the huge task and huge investment required in creating new hydroelectric facilities is going to take. But we are committed. We believe that we have to play our part as Africa. The environment is very important. We are fast depleting our forests and our wildlife and all that. We need to restore that, we need to protect that. So that also goes to the extent of our, as custodians of natural wildlife of the world, it means that Europe and other continents can come and enjoy what remains, the last remaining wildlife in the whole world.

So we are very conscious of that. But do understand that the climate change agenda is a slow process. We have to grow and increase our role in ensuring that we protect the environment as part of the global initiative.

Financial assistance secured – well, to tell you honestly, we have no figure. We believe we need transitional support. We believe in our estimate that for the next five or maybe six, seven years, we need probably 8 billion. That's our estimate. But that is in the medium to long term. For now I think the support we have received on this tour is sufficient to consolidate the government in terms of its deliverables in education, health, food production, water, sanitation – those basic services. Restoration of infrastructure. Those are the basic services. It is rehabilitation funding. I have failed to calculate how much but I think it is quite substantial.

The issue of contributions by the diaspora – there are really two issues or two contributions the diaspora can make. The first one is that in the reconstruction of Zimbabwe we need the skills that have left the country to come and assist in the reconstruction. Secondly, we know that the diaspora has been generating a lot of resources and therefore we need those resources for reinvestment in the country. But we need a scheme for the diaspora, a scheme that says we have to work together, the diaspora and Zimbabwe. After all, most countries have got those schemes and we want to have the most effective scheme that will incentivise the people in the diaspora to look at these aspects.

One of the challenges for us is the issue of dual citizenship. You may think it is a very innocuous demand but it is a real-life issue for those in the diaspora. So we have to work toward allowing that dual citizenship.

Now, the issue of a personal relationship with Mugabe. It is an extraordinary experience. I had not met the man for ten years and the first night we had dinner, the two of us, it was quite a dramatic experience, worthy of a TV opera. Yes, I think that we were sworn enemies – sworn opponents, not enemies – remember, it has never been a personal issue. Remember that in 1980, Robert Mugabe was my hero. But over the time he has transformed into a villain, and I don't know how to balance the two. It is actually something of an incredible transformation.

But we have been working through this. During the negotiations there were acrimonious exchanges, sometimes almost confrontational exchanges. But ever since we have agreed and negotiated after eighteen months, we have all realised that we have to make this transition work. So we have climbed down from that pedestal of confrontation and we have a working relationship. We meet regularly to discuss government business. Obviously I am unhappy with certain things, he is unhappy with certain things. We use that platform to start building a working relationship.

Do I trust Robert Mugabe? Obviously it is too early to say I trust him wholly. But I want to tell you one thing: we have all agreed that when we differ, we differ respectfully. I think that is important in building a relationship that hopefully will take this country forward. In the cabinet, everywhere in our policy formulation, we try by all means to have a consensus as to what we do. We know that this is just a transition. The only conflict is that while some of us are communicating that there is progress, there are a few remnants, people who want to undermine that progress. It is natural in a situation of our nature.

But I want to say that at a personal level, I am the last person who stands on top of a podium and defends his past. But I am prepared to work with him for the good of the country. That is the basis of our relationship.

Lord Hastings: But there has to be, at some point, a dignified exit. What is the most important thing to ensure that happens for him?

Rt Hon Morgan Tsvangirai: I think he is in a position of making that decision. We have provided a platform for that. If there was no inclusive government, there is no way Robert Mugabe will have a dignified exit. This gives him two possibilities: to restore his legacy as the founding father of Zimbabwe, and to allow for the transition to take place without allowing the country to slide back into chaos and violence. So there is a way. It's up to him

to take opportunities provided by the inclusive government or be defiant and die a villain of the country. I don't think that option for him is a positive option.

Question: Excellency, what effective mechanism do you have in place to protect the Zimbabweans from the residual resistant elements?

Question: I just wonder what your vision for the future of your country was. How would you ideally like to see Zimbabwe in ten years' time, after this transition period?

Question: In a book called *How Rich Countries Got Rich and Poor Countries Stay Poor*, Reinhardt, a Norwegian economist, argues that the Western world (or the North, whichever way you look at it) has effectively outlawed the measures that rich countries use to get rich, through the World Trade Organization. Would you agree that is the case and what do you think needs to happen through the WTO in order for Zimbabwe to regain its economic strength?

Question: I would like to ask you about the thorny question of sanctions against Zimbabwe. This ties in with how far Robert Mugabe is to be trusted. To what extent do you agree with Lord Malloch Brown's view that sanctions should on the whole be maintained pending real progress towards democracy, to what he calls the point of no return? Specifically, that there should be a calibrated response, that sanctions should be lifted insofar as political dissidents and activists are allowed to demonstrate without being harassed and beaten up; that the media obtains more freedom; and that the rule of law is respected and there is an end to arbitrary land seizure.

Rt Hon Morgan Tsvangirai: How do you protect Zimbabweans against what I call residual elements? It is to continue on the path of creating the space for democracy, the space for freedoms, and to demonstrate that indeed they are a dwindling minority. It does not matter what they do, the majority are moving ahead toward that direction. That is the only way you can protect against these elements. Restoring the rule of law, enforcing the rule of law, is one way in which arbitrariness can be stopped. But also I think it will be unhelpful if those elements – if we were to embark, as I said in my statement, on a retributive agenda. Then you force them into a reaction that is going to be counterproductive.

So it is this process of national healing, the process of accommodation, the process of ensuring that everyone is confident that the future holds true for everybody. That, to me, would be a way of protecting Zimbabweans.

What is Zimbabwe's vision in ten years? Politically, it must be Zimbabwe – we call it the new Zimbabwe. The new Zimbabwe where freedoms are restored, where democracy is consolidated, where prosperity once again becomes a possibility for the country. I am sure that vision is not very difficult. All you need is to move away from where we are and try to achieve what we were, ten years or so ago. That would be a Zimbabwe that I wish to be restored. But I think all Zimbabweans share this vision, that never again should we descend into a situation where we are isolated, marginalised, poor, unable to feed ourselves and in a situation in which we become refugees all over the world. I think it is not a healthy vision.

The issue of trade is very important. What is important is that developing nations have proven that the way to go is trade, not aid. Aid will still be needed in certain circumstances as a transitional measure. Africa has moved – for the last fifty years of its independence, it has focused largely on politics. No wonder why conflicts have been prevalent. Africa is moving as the next opportunity continent, where economic focus becomes the focus of development, where people need jobs, food. That way you reduce social tensions and actually protect the politics of the country. I think there are leaders who are beginning to show that vision of focusing on economic growth, economic progress, and not just on retaining political power. This is what creates dictatorships.

On the question of what Lord Malloch Brown – sanctions. My view is that Zimbabwe must be able to earn international confidence by what we do, not by what we say. Therefore the world must also reward progress rather than punish progress. But that progress must be rewarded in a measured, targeted and phased way. That, to me, would be the way to proceed. I don't believe it's helpful when we are talking to each other, when we have opened dialogue with the EU and at a bilateral level, that we start off by putting preconditions that are hard to fulfil. I think we must say yes, eventually sanctions must be removed but here is the template in which we are working. They have to be removed as we improve our dialogue, as the Global Political Agreement conditions are fulfilled – yes, certainly, they should be removed. It would be counterproductive to punish progress. I think that should be the way to proceed.

Question: Your Excellency, will your government recognise Kosovo?

Question: [inaudible] What two messages will the Prime Minister be taking back to ordinary Zimbabweans from his tour?

Question: [inaudible]

Rt Hon Morgan Tsvangirai: I am sorry, on Kosovo I think that is more within the purview – we have to understand the politics of Kosovo. I am sure the Minister of Foreign Affairs is better placed to give me some advice as to how to tackle that one. I can tell you what the policy of Zimbabwe is: we want to live with everyone, everyone is an opportunity of developing bilateral relations with Zimbabwe. We don't want to interfere with what's happening in this part of the world. We only want what is the best interest for the mutuality of our two countries. So I suppose it is in that context that we will look at Kosovo. But I think it is an issue that we will look at.

What are the two messages I will take to Zimbabwe? Firstly, I will say to Zimbabweans that the world is anxious to ensure that Zimbabwe progresses incrementally to consolidating this transition, hopefully leading to an election. But also that the world wants to help in consolidating that process and that the world wants to help Zimbabweans, and they will help Zimbabweans. This is a relationship of helping Zimbabweans rather than individual politicians. I am sure that will be very clear. Zimbabwe once again must behave in a manner which is acceptable, as part of the community of nations and not as a pariah state.

What is a car? I have read people who talk about Mercedes-Benz – yes, symbolism counts. But you must also understand that these very same MPs, ministers and everyone, are getting \$100 a month for the last three or four months. I don't think that is greedy. Besides, some of these cars, the ministers don't own them, they are government property. They are just [indiscernible]. I will be the last one to defend avarice but I think that sometimes we get preoccupied with these symbols at the expense of the challenge that the government is facing, and what these MPs and everyone are trying to grapple with. One of the ministers gives up a Mercedes-Benz – say thank you very much, but what are you going to use?

So it is very important sometimes not to be occupied with – when you have got these huge, monumental problems and challenges, I can't spend my time

thinking about a car or a watch or what. Symbolically, yes, I think it sends a wrong message. But living within their means – what means? They earn \$100. So already they are poor before they even start. But they are working hard. All our civil servants are earning – from the sweeper to me, it is \$100 a month. We are actually trying at the mid-term economic assessment to see whether we can move from an allowance regime to a salary regime; not something that is – certainly not thousands of pounds but something that has to be considered as reasonable.

Lord Hastings: Prime Minister, we want to thank you for your intelligence, your candour, honesty, your transparency with us, your deep sense of personal calling and mission, and for your accountability to your people. We offer you an open hand of friendship and thank you for coming.

Rt Hon Morgan Tsvangirai: Thank you.