



**REMARKS BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE ZIMBABWE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION;
COMMISSIONER ELASTO HILARIOUS MUGWADI; AT THE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS
DAY COMMEMORATION; MUREWA RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL GROUND; MUREWA; FRIDAY 7
DECEMBER 2018**

**Honourable Minister of State for Provincial Affairs, Mashonaland East Province,
Honourable Apollonia Munzverengi**

**Commissioners of the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission and other Commissions here
present**

Honourable Members of Parliament here present

Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps

**The Country Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and
other UN Family Members here present**

The European Union and Other Development Partners represented here

Chief Mangwende and Other Traditional Leaders

Murewa Rural District Councillors and Officials here present

**The Executive Secretary of the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission Dr. Makanatsa
Makonese and other members of the Commission Secretariat**

Permanent Secretaries of Government Ministries and Government Officials here present

Directors and Staff of Civil Society and Faith Based Organizations

Representatives of the Private Sector

Members of the Media Fraternity

Our Performing Artistes here with us

People of Murewa

Ladies and Gentlemen

All Protocol Observed

It is an honour for me to deliver these remarks on behalf of the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) and on my own personal behalf at this very important occasion to commemorate the International Human Rights Day. May I take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs, Mashonaland East Province, Honourable Apollonia Munzverengi, for gracing this event. Let me also acknowledge the presence amidst us, of Chief Mangwende and other Traditional leaders, distinguished guests from the Diplomatic Corps, Development Partners, Government Ministries, Civil Society Organisations, the entire Murewa community and other stakeholders represented at this important occasion.

The International Human Rights Day is commemorated globally each year on the 10th of December since 1948, when the United Nations General Assembly recognised the importance of human rights through the adoption of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)* soon after the end of the Second World War. This year the ZHRC together with the district leadership agreed to schedule the celebrations ahead of the 10th of December for the convenience of the local community whose tradition is to host such events on Fridays (*musi we Chisi*).

This year's International Human Rights Day commemoration marks the end of year-long celebrations under the theme “*#StandUp4HumanRights*” that began on 10 December 2017 to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the UDHR. The thirty articles of the UDHR include all categories of rights that are now recognised in our own Zimbabwean Constitution.

The theme “*#StandUp4HumanRights*” gives everyone the duty and obligation to protect and promote human rights guaranteed in our Constitution which accords the duty to respect, protect, promote and fulfil rights and freedoms set out in the Declaration of Rights to the State and its Agencies. We must stand up to defend the rights of the voiceless in our societies such as persons with disabilities, disempowered women, children, indigenous minority groups, or anyone else at risk of discrimination or violation of rights.

As some of you may be aware, the ZHRC is one of the Independent Commissions Supporting Democracy in Zimbabwe established by Chapter 12 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe. Its mandate is to protect, promote and enforce human rights and administrative justice. The Commission has made remarkable progress in many areas of its work since it was established. This work includes receiving and investigating complaint cases of human rights violations, monitoring human rights in places of detention and similar institutions, and educating citizens on human rights to enable them to claim these rights. The work of the Commission on investigating human rights complaints and making recommendations to relevant authorities seeks to influence positive policy formulation, law reform, behaviour change, promote administrative justice and foster a culture of human rights observance.

The Commission applauds the Government's commitment to revive the economy and move the country forward with a focus on inclusive economic growth guided by Vision 2030. Enjoyment of many of the socio-economic rights such as the right to education, health, food, shelter and many others has a direct correlation with the state of the economy. An improved and functional economy therefore increases the chances of citizens enjoying these rights fully. In this regard, the



Commission urges the Government as the chief Duty Bearer, to urgently address economic challenges currently obtaining in the country. These include the high cost of basic commodities, distortions and confusion in the multicurrency system, loss of currency value, shortages of basic commodities and agricultural inputs, unemployment, scarcity of fuel and high cost of medicines that are being sold in foreign currency by local pharmacies. Provision of portable water and sanitation to curb the perennial outbreak of cholera and other diseases will ensure that citizens everywhere fully enjoy their socio-economic rights. We also gather at a time when there is another strike by government doctors. We urge the government to address this perennial problem in order to ensure the enjoyment of the right to health and the right to life by citizens. The ZHRC also hopes for a speedy completion of the alignment of the various pieces of legislation to the Constitution to enable citizens to fully enjoy their rights.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to assure you that the ZHRC is ready to continue to partner with all duty bearers and key stakeholders in Government, Civil Society, Local Authorities, Faith Based Organisations, Development Partners, Traditional Leadership, fellow Constitutional Commissions, among other key institutions for the fulfilment, protection and enjoyment of human rights by all in Zimbabwe. May I end by thanking the Government of Zimbabwe for the financial resources that made it possible to carry out the event and the Australian Embassy for sponsoring some of the T-shirts. May I thank the Office of the District Administrator, Murewa Rural District Council, all other Murewa Stakeholders and the ZHRC Secretariat for working very hard to organise this event. Thank you Radio Zimbabwe, Police Band, Drum Majorettes and the Artiste Groups.

I thank you.