

**ROY BENNETT- ADDRESS TO SA BUSINESS CLUB- 4 MAY 2011- NEW STREET
SQUARE, LONDON ECLS 3BZ**

Good Evening Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of my wife Heather, my party the Movement for Democratic Change, and of course the people of Zimbabwe, I thank the SA Business Club for the opportunity of engaging with like-minded people—people who care about the prospects of a democratic Southern Africa. Given the much esteemed personalities who have addressed this forum previously, I feel truly humbled.

I hope that my address helps to shed further light on the inescapable fact that Zimbabwe's continuing trials and tribulations will increasingly impact negatively on South Africa, and on the region, if there is no true resolution of the crisis. A true resolution can only come when the theft of Zimbabwean votes is righted—when Zimbabweans are allowed to elect leaders of their choice.

Nearly twelve years ago, a close family friend of mine living in Johannesburg told me of a discussion he had had with one of Johannesburg's celebrated business leaders. The gist of this conversation was along the lines of 'Well even if President Mbeki has covered up for Mugabe, and the MDC actually did win

the 2000 elections, so what?' This whole issue will be seen by us in, South Africa as irrelevant and it will be business as usual—that's 'AFRICAN POLITICS'.

We all know now some of the more obvious results of President Mbeki's policy of 'Quiet Diplomacy'. South Africa has, for example, been overwhelmed by at least two million Zimbabwean migrants. This sad, unnecessary, traumatic exodus will be felt for decades and decades to come. Indeed, the effects cannot yet be fully evaluated. For the two million Zimbabweans cast into abject poverty, it is a human tragedy of epic proportions. If ever South Africans wanted to see the sheer scale of their misery, a visit at night to the Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg, is all that is needed. Bishop Paul Veryn and the Methodist Church will always be warmly remembered and admired by Zimbabweans for his single-handed, herculean efforts to ease the plight of homeless Zimbabweans.

The pressures exerted by desperate Zimbabweans, experienced across South Africa, has seen highly literate Zimbabweans compete for employment opportunities from white collar jobs to the most menial of tasks. This human contagion has already resulted in turmoil and social discord. Yet President

Mbeki denied the very existence of xenophobia in South Africa, such was his disconnect with reality in his own country, let alone Zimbabwe.

I have news for all South Africans. If the result of the next Zimbabwean elections, likely to be held in early 2012, are not accepted by the MILITARY JUNTA/ZANU PF DICTATORSHIP and the resulting will of the people is again, for the fifth time, ignored, Zimbabweans will be left with no hope for a peaceful democratic future. They will pour into South Africa! But this flood of refugees will be different. The Zimbabweans, who will come to South Africa in 2012, will be older, much older and totally destitute. They will also be less educated, and they will most certainly not assimilate into South African society as well as the previous flood of Zimbabweans. They will become a DAILY, living reminder, on every street corner, of South Africa's dreadful complicity in the subversion of democracy in our region. For Botswana, where Francistown groans under the weight of the Zimbabwean influx, the story will be the same. We are looking at an awful scenario.

Ladies and Gentlemen, please do not in any way simply brush this possible development aside. What we have in Zimbabwe is a ruthless coterie of thugs, bullies, and incompetent individuals, masquerading as a political

organisation—ZANU-PF. They are capable of anything. Their capacity for institutionalised violence and torture is unprecedented, even in Africa. Most recently, they dragged my friend, the MDC's Deputy Treasurer General, Honourable Elton Mangoma, to court in leg irons after an unpleasant and unjustified incarceration. Honourable Mangoma is Minister of Energy in this so called INCLUSIVE GOVERNMENT, and is a respected and influential leader in our party.

The South African Government and the governments in the region, as represented by SADC, MUST FINALLY and I repeat FINALLY, demand in simple unambiguous language, that ZANU-PF adhere to EACH AND EVERY condition that forms part of the Global Political Agreement. If they don't, the REGION, the WHOLE REGION of Southern Africa, will feel the effects of their feebleness. Reluctance on behalf of SADC once again to reign in ZANU PF, will negatively and radically affect future regional business investment. It will be a red rag to the indigenization radicals in ZANU PF—a group that already has the whip hand—and the international investment risk profile for the entire region will go through the roof. It will also provide fuel for those in South African politics who see ZANU PF as blazing a trail, showing how the game should be played south of the Limpopo. This is not an exaggerated scenario. Every South African,

Botswanan, Zambian, and Malawian citizen should demand from their governments that GADAFI'S bosom buddy, ROBERT MUGABE, respect the peaceful democratic will of the people, and transfer power to the people's choice, once their votes are tallied, after a peaceful electoral process. More than anyone, it is the South African business community that must see this scenario in full Technicolor and push its government to finally bring this nonsense to an end. Another pseudo-solution will be a disaster.

If any further proof is needed of ZANU PF'S failure to grasp reality, reflect for a moment on the absurdity of their most recent INDIGENIZATION demands. These are totally and utterly illegitimate, they are not endorsed by my party, and if implemented they will, as sure as day follows night, lay waste to Zimbabwe's natural resources industry. If ever intelligent people are inclined to wonder what investors think of ZANU-PF'S nationalization/indigenization policies, just look what has happened to the value of PLATINUM shares such as IMPALA and ANGLO PLATINUM on the London Stock Exchange. It is beyond comprehension in today's GLOBALISED competitive market place, to expect companies to cede 51% of their equity, and to fund the business going forward assuming their obligation and those of their NEW PARTNERS!

We only have to look back a few years to see what indigenization Mark 1 did to the country: we have gone down the road of 'so called' "Agricultural Land Reform". Every Zimbabwean besides half-baked ZANU PF zealots knows now that agriculture and agri-business, hitherto Zimbabwe's most productive sectors, have been virtually destroyed. Indicatively, literally all our groceries and food stuffs are imported, primarily from South Africa! Far from being liberated, we have become a Bantustan.

These are the legacies of ZANU-PF'S 'BREAD BASKET, TO BASKET CASE IN TEN YEARS!' How should business respond to these challenges? To begin, the desperate INDIGENISATION demands made upon well-known, respected London Listed companies must be disregarded. The majority party in Zimbabwe's parliament is not a signatory to this institutionalised theft by individuals, posing as agents for the Zimbabwean people! Ladies and Gentlemen I also find the attempts by management of these companies to 'NEGOTIATE' an acceptable level of 'theft' quite nauseating. It is symptomatic of a worldwide malaise affecting many companies. Namely a gross failure to understand, that a country's resources, whether they be Libyan, Egyptian or Zimbabwean, are not the property of illegitimate dictators, their wives and fellow travellers. The justifiable anger of the Egyptian people directed at the

MUBARAK family should serve as a real wake up call to ZANU-PF. Zimbabweans have had enough of Grace Mugabe's shopping trips using our peoples resources!

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am not an embittered 'Rhodesian Farmer'. I am not a product of WHITE privilege. In fact most of you will be interested to know that many WHITE Zimbabweans complicit with the regime for monetary gain actually loathe me—I am 'BENNETT the TROUBLE MAKER' etc. I have often been asked to 'CUT A DEAL'—'ALL THEY WANT IS MONEY' and so on. My constituency and reference point in life is the wonderful, brave ethical people of CHIMANIMANI and ZIMBABWE. A friend of mine once told me I have perhaps become the JOE SLOVO of Zimbabwean Politics. Being a simple Zimbabwean farmer, I didn't know whether it was a compliment or a back handed snide remark, given how apparently unpopular the late JOE SLOVO was with many white South Africans! However, the steadfast bravery and support which I enjoy from ordinary Zimbabweans, reminds us all in Southern Africa of Nelson Mandela's vision. This is what he had to say at his inauguration as democratic South Africa's first president on the 10th May 1994 and it rings loud and clear for us tonight: 'The time for the healing of wounds has come. The moment to bridge the chasms that divide us has come. The time to build is

upon us... We enter into a covenant that we shall build the society in which all South Africans, both black and white, will be able to walk tall, without any fear in their hearts, assured of their inalienable right to human dignity- a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world' This is the part of the African National Congress that ZANU-PF can never resonate with. Since when should I accept that I have no rights in the country of my birth? Since when should Ndebele's accept second class citizenship in Zimbabwe, and so on, and so on?

Is it too much in the 21st Century for Zimbabweans to expect access to functioning educational infrastructure, decent/effective health care, socially acceptable housing, and meaningful employment opportunities, with access to impartial courts of justice?

Zimbabweans demand that the fundamentals of democratic society, stolen by ZANU-PF, be returned to us. We are NO DIFFERENT from KENYANS; FROM IVORIANS. How are we different from the brave people of South Sudan, our African brothers and sisters in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt? The days of tyrants and dictators are over.

Individually, when evaluating the possibility of supporting MDC, all of us here need to reflect on the reality that the African National Congress is not aligned to ZANU-PF, and has little in common with it.

ZANU- PF'S history in the war of liberation was in Partnership with the PAC. When President Jacob Zuma, and ANC MK CADRES fought alongside freedom fighters in the then Rhodesia, President Zuma came under fire with comrades from ZAPU and their armed wing ZIPRA alongside him. The party of Luthuli, Mandela, Sisulu and Tambo is not, and can never be equated with ZANU-PF. ZANU-PF is the party of TRIBAL ETHNIC CLEANSING. Mugabe's shameful extermination of thousands of Ndebele's was a deliberate systematic pogrom of murder. Only recently Operation MURAMBATSVINA (CLEAN OUT THE FILTH) is yet another grotesque example of ZANU-PF'S 'APARTHEID JACK BOOT' approach to solving dissent. The similarity displayed by ZANU-PF'S disgusting destruction of people's homes, mirrors the myriad actions of the Apartheid regime's delinquent behaviour over many years with forced relocations. The shameful record of ZANU PF obligates every South African to speak out. ZANU PF constantly violates EVERY tenet, of the remarkable South African Constitution. We as MDC strive for people's Constitution that is comparable.

The one strand that I sense is the real fundamental disconnect between the ANC and ZANU-PF, and which is at the core of the African National Congress and its Alliance Partners, is its declared commitment to non-racialism and the pre-eminence the ALLIANCE gives to HUMAN RIGHTS. We in the MDC, aspire to be a party, which shows by its decisions and policies, that we are in step with the vision of Nelson Mandela.

My involvement in the unfolding struggle is to ensure that fundamental HUMAN RIGHTS be entrenched in every component of our country's new constitution. My struggle, and that of many Zimbabweans, demonstrates to people—irrespective of race—that those whose rights have been ignored, and trampled upon, are also citizens deserving to have their respect and dignity restored.

Now enough with the 'gloom and doom'. Believe me; I am totally optimistic about Zimbabwe and the region's future. With one caveat though: there is, in spite of what I have said, no room for any of you as mere spectators and arm chair critics! Accordingly, I urge each and every one of you, to genuinely engage in your own way directly in the fight for Southern Africa's DEMOCRATIC

FUTURE. A real life drama is playing out. Everyone is part of history in the making.

Most of you in this audience are probably sceptical about the suggestion that Zimbabwe has all the possibilities to become Africa's 'Switzerland'. But if one stops for a moment, and reflects on RWANDA's dramatic progress over the past few years, Zimbabwe's transformation is entirely feasible and optimistic.

My position heading up our party's GLOBAL ADVOCACY campaign which embraces far, far more than FUNDRAISING, has enabled me to meet one-on-one, with some of the world's most influential entrepreneurs, financiers and business leaders.

I find it simply incredible that LONDON and NEW YORK are more favourably disposed to Zimbabwe than South Africa. It is not ignorance either: whether the interest comes from Europe, Canada, or Brazil or Sweden, I have been warmly received.

Business opportunities will flourish in Zimbabwe as our economy begins to grow again. One of the world's outstanding entrepreneurs confirmed to me,

after a personal, on the ground visit to Zimbabwe recently, that unlike most African countries, ‘Everything, infrastructure-wise was built— power, roads, railways, schools, arms, factories, homes. It is always easier to rebuild than to create from scratch’. I was deeply impressed with his observations and advice.

My colleagues in party leadership positions will fast track ethical investment in every sector of the economy. It is South African business, those listed construction companies in South Africa, mining houses, exploration companies, health sector players that stand to benefit, if they engage properly. But perhaps significantly, it is individuals, who wish to re-connect with Africa, that offer our best hope for the future.

With a natural resources boom underway, and likely to be in play for some time ahead, the fundamentals of SUPPLY and CAPACITY constraints continue to undermine landlocked Southern Congo, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Botswana’s ability to effectively leverage the value of their mineral resources.

As long as Zimbabwe, which acts as the LOGISTICS HUB for Central Africa, is rightfully perceived by the investment community as another SOMALIA in the

making, Botswana, Zambia and the resource-rich Southern Congo, will be deprived of natural resources growth investment. An efficient rail network is required in the region. Investment of this scale clearly requires a measure of stability going forward. This is just one fundamental reality beyond the scope and capacity of ZANU-PF to understand.

Our Party's is a broad church. Its bedrock is the Zimbabwean people, most of who are recognised throughout Africa as industrious, intelligent, educated individuals. Unlike many in Africa, we know the STATE cannot offer sustainable economic growth, employment or career opportunities. The institutions of the STATE are they HEALTH, EDUCATION, WATER AND SEWERAGE, RAILWAYS or ROADS, have been ruined by ZANU-PF.

Tremendous business opportunities therefore exist in Zimbabwe for tomorrow's dynamic entrepreneurs. EVERYTHING, I repeat EVERYTHING, has to be RE-BUILT. The goodwill and financial capacity to fund this is available from the world community—if we get our politics right.

We look for inspiration to our friends in Botswana, South Africa, Zambia and our SADC partner Mauritius. Why can't Zimbabwe emulate the development that is occurring in these countries?

Everyone can be sure of one thing. I speak to you tonight in all honesty, and filled with excitement of perhaps being able to look on as an elder figure, while the youngsters, the smart guys in our party, roll up their shirtsleeves and create a genuinely business-friendly environment in our beloved country. It is an honour for all Zimbabweans, and a singular reason for us to be proud, that our MDC Minister of Finance has become respected around the world. I acknowledge our economy's modest size but reflect also on his achievements against all odds.

By helping us in Zimbabwe, to rid ourselves decisively of the scourge of ZANU-PF—folks it's in South Africa's selfish best interests. Here is a simple illustration of my argument. An MDC-led Zimbabwe will embrace broad based economic EMPOWERMENT initiatives that clearly sustain and encourage investment, which are supported by local communities and CIVIL SOCIETY. This carefully crafted legislation will be the genuine perfect alternative to POPULIST rhetoric in South Africa for the nationalisation of specific sectors. Zimbabwe has been

down the nationalisation road to ruin and chaos. The evidence of abject failure is there for all who truly have the best interests of the region's people at heart. We in Zimbabwe have seen the MOVIE, been there, and DONE THAT. Believe me; South Africa does not need to go down that road.

We yearn to show you all that Zimbabwe can, and with the hard-nosed good will of others, in time truly become an African Switzerland. We can, as predicted by MDC President Tsvangirai at the recent MDC party congress in Bulawayo, transform ourselves into a US\$ 100 billion economy within 30 years.

While many among you may be sceptical, perhaps even cynical, Zimbabwe offers so many opportunities for those who are African in their souls. Those who wake up in Zimbabwe, and breathe that wonderful fresh, unpolluted air still believe. 'Yes, we Can' overcome the pervasiveness of failure and AFRO pessimism. Now is the time for action. Zimbabwe's glass is most definitely half full and the future is that of opportunity and growth.

I would like to take this opportunity to say with pride MAKOROKOTO, AMHLOPHE, CONGRATULATIONS, to the MDC for last weekend's successful historical third Party Congress. A big thank you to my fellow members for the

confidence they have shown in my unopposed re-election, congratulate my colleagues on their election and join them in a commitment towards the next election, TOGETHER. UNITED, WINNING, READY FOR REAL CHANGE!

It has been a pleasure to talk to you this evening as an African talking to my fellow brothers and sisters from South Africa. I say THANK YOU-SIYABONGA-BAIE DANKIE- HAMBE GAHLE.