

CONFERENCE PRESENTATION

The West's Diplomatic bungling on the land issue and how it triggered the Land Revolution in Zimbabwe

By

Wenceslaus Mudyanadzo

Lecturer, Department of Politics and Public Management

Midlands State University

Abstract

The paper argues that the failure of western diplomacy on Zimbabwe's land issue was responsible for the breakdown of mutual trust which triggered the Land Revolution in 2000. Starting from the Anglo- American Proposals of 1977 to the Lancaster House diplomatic initiatives which revolved around the land issue, to the various proposals on the land issue by the Commonwealth, the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme in 1998 at the International Donors Conference on Land Reform and Resettlement, the West exhibited elements of dishonesty, intransigence, unreasonableness and reluctance to stick to the pledges made by the UK and the US governments at Lancaster House Conference to fund the land acquisition processes in Zimbabwe as a way of supporting the new political dispensation that emerged in 1980. The delays and frustrations that build-up as a results of western countries' procrastination, the continuous change of goal posts and conditions for assistance convinced the Zimbabwe government and intended beneficiaries that the solution lay in their hands and not the West. A Zimbabwean solution was therefore adopted to solve a Zimbabwean problem through the land revolution.

Abstract contd

The Zimbabwean leadership and people came to the conclusion that the West could not be relied upon to decolonize the land given the country's colonial history of land expropriation by the minority white race who were the West's kith and kin and were expected to lose their land as a result of the West's participation in funding such a land reform programme. The paper explores and systematically analyses the behavior pattern and strategies and tactics used by the West to frustrate the land acquisition process and why it was therefore necessary to activate an African solution to an African problem.

Introductory remarks

- ▶ -It is my pleasure and distinguished honour to be able to participate at this conference which focuses on Zimbabwe's Land Reform Programme and how it had impacted on Zimbabwe's foreign Relations with the West and how, domestically, it had shaped social, economic and political justice issues, inclusive development and inter-generational equity, among other issues.
- ▶ -In this presentation, I argue that:
- ▶ (a) The Zimbabwe Government, on one hand, and the British and other Western Governments, on the other, differed fundamentally in ideological and philosophical terms regarding the direction the land reform programme was to take and the critical importance of the land in ensuring poverty alleviation, sustainable development, peace and stability, social justice, inclusive development and the advancement of present and inter-generational equity issues.
- ▶ (b) The failure by the Western powers, in particular Britain, the former colonial power, and the US government, to stick to the pledges made at the Lancaster House Conference in 1979 to fund Zimbabwe's land acquisition and resettlement programme and to mobilize international partners for financial support as a way of supporting the new political dispensation in Zimbabwe, triggered Zimbabwe's Land Revolution which started in 2000.

Introductory remarks

- ▶ - The diplomatic behavior pattern of Britain and her Allies stretched to the limit the policy of national reconciliation and moderation adopted by the Zimbabwe in 1980 with the active support of western nations as the road map of the Lancaster House Agreement. Western nations' behaviour pattern towards the land acquisition and resettlement in Zimbabwe was marked by shifts in goal posts regarding the issue, imposition of conditions for assistance, imposition of sanctions on Zimbabwe which was linked to a regime change agenda and the application of double standards with respect to the application of democracy, good governance and the rule of law values when it comes to Zimbabwe and other countries in Africa, within the Commonwealth and EU-ACP frameworks of multilateral co-operation and elsewhere.
- ▶ -British and Western governments, during the negotiation and implementation of the land reform and resettlement programme, exhibited attributes of dishonest broking, intransigence, unreasonableness, miscalculation and their obsession with the protection of their national interest considerations and the defence of the existing status quo and the constitutional distribution of power and order which sustained the Rhodesian status quo and by extension their own interests.

Introductory remarks

- ▶ -The presentation will explore the various sanctions regimes imposed by the West with a view to effecting a regime change in Harare which was favourable to the world capitalist system. The strategies and tactics of regime change failed spectacularly to achieve their objectives. President Mugabe and the ZANU-PF government strengthened their tenure in power in the process. Their major achievement was the unprecedented destruction of the economy and the untold suffering of the ordinary people who were expected to be protected by the so-called “targeted sanctions” which marginally affected the ruling class, but had devastating effects on businesses and the ordinary people.

Introductory remarks

- ▶ (c) The presentation will also explore double standards in the implementation of western standards on democracy, good governance and the rule of law within the Commonwealth and the impact on Zimbabwe's land reform and its governance in general.
- ▶ (d) The presentation draws some lessons from this most successful land revolution and how public and foreign policy adjustments could be restructured to reinforce this great revolution.

Introduction

- ▶ -This presentation articulates and illustrate how western diplomacy was instrumental in triggering the land revolution in Zimbabwe.
- ▶ - Britain and its western allies exhibited elements of dishonesty, intransigence, gross unreasonableness and reluctance to implement the letter and spirit of the Lancaster House roadmap on Land Reform and Resettlement which achieved a breakthrough in the negotiations leading to independence.
- ▶ -During the implementation process, Britain dictated the progress and pace of the land reform and resettlement process, as the main funder of the programme. As they say, “he who pays the piper calls the tune”. The former colonial power steered the route of moderation and reconciliation during the first 10 years using “soft power” methods of diplomacy like provision of development aid, negotiation, mediation, enquiry to facilitate the land reform and resettlement programme.

Introduction contd

- ▶ -The soft power strategies were abandoned in the second decade of independence when Britain and her allies adopted “hard power” strategies to impose their values on the land reform process and to protect the white farmers whose land had been targeted for resettlement by the government.
- ▶ -The Economic Structural Adjustment Programme, a programme which was introduced between 1990 to 1996, with promises of massive aid by Bretton Woods Institutions and the west was premised on raising the standards of living of the people, promotion of long term employment expansion and the growing of a modern, internationally competitive economy were dangled by the West to Zimbabwe and Zimbabwe grudgingly accepted the offer. ESAP entailed cuts in public programmes meant to benefit ordinary people, removal of subsidies on basic commodities, trade and currency deregulation, devaluation of the Zimbabwe dollar, lifting of price controls and minimum wages, removal of consumer subsidies, lay-offs of government personnel and the removal of bottlenecks on productivity. Zimbabwe was expected to spend its way into a free market on borrowed money (Saunders,1996)

Introduction contd

- ▶ **ESAP brought untold hardships to the people of Zimbabwe. Unemployment worsened, the working class were reduced to destitutes, the standards of living plummeted to levels not seen since independence, access to food, medication and education became difficult. The sufferings led to “IMF riots” in 1993 and 1998. ESAP did not factor in the Land reform programme and land acquisition and resettlement programme, in practice LRP slowed down during this period. Government was diverted from the LRP to ESAP with the active financial support of the west. Statistics show that in the first decade of independence, government acquired 40% of the target of 8million hectares, resettling more than 50 000 families on 3 million hectares. In the 1990s 1 million hectares was acquired for distribution and fewer than 20 000 families were resettled (Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions,2001).This period demonstrated how western powers diverted the attention of the Zimbabwe government towards ESAP which was made attractive through massive funding. Zimbabwe government was diverted from its LRP which did not become a priority then to ESAP. Changes in goal posts and the shifting of assistance from LRP to ESAP clearly demonstrated the protection of western interests in Zimbabwe while the government was led to self- destruction under the guidance of western countries and their financial institutions. This was the beginning of the regime change agenda in Zimbabwe as the people were expected to rebel against their government after the implementation of ESAP.**

Introduction contd

- ▶ Western governments and their financial institutions misjudged President Mugabe's resolve to implement the land reform programme without their assistance. The land reform programme and the general direction of his empowerment policies remained popular with the ordinary people. Developing countries also supported President Mugabe's general direction of his policies given the history of colonial deprivation of the black majority by a small white settler community
- ▶ The land issue became Zimbabwe's No.1 Foreign Policy issue because of the following reasons:

Introduction contd

- The land was central to the defence of Zimbabwe's nationhood, sovereignty and independence. It was difficult to talk of the total independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country when some pockets of the country were controlled by foreign western interests.
- .Land was the vehicle for the total emancipation of the country from neo-colonial designs and imperialist manouvres on the country. Land was central to economic development and political and social stability. Land redistribution was to be carried at all cost because of its potential to cause instability between blacks and whites.
- .Domestic control of land was seen as pivotal to the control of the country's diverse mineral wealth and other natural resources.

Introduction contd

- ▶ . The land issue was the *raison de'tre* of the liberation struggle, it also dominated the Lancaster House Constitutional Conference and therefore the land issue dominated post- independence engagement with the west and the international community who had guaranteed the independence agreement relating to Zimbabwe.
- ▶ . In the context of Zimbabwe, the land issue was a primary interest as it guaranteed the country's sovereignty, prosperity and its security. The land was therefore central to any post-independence development, peace and security agenda of the government.

.Research methodology :The study employed qualitative research methodology to analyze policy documents, speeches by government leaders, written articles and newspaper reports on the land crisis

2.0 The Challenges of the British- led and sponsored Land Reform and Resettlement Programme in Zimbabwe

2.1 Differences in Ideological and Philosophical Approaches to the Land Issue and its impact on the Land Reform Programme-

-There were basically two ideological/philosophical views which competed for space in shaping the land reform programme. The failure to reconcile these differences derailed the land reform programme as informed by the LHA.

► Eurocentric view of Land (due to the colonial legacy)

-Land was regarded as a commodity which needed to be bought and sold and hence the prescription of the “willing seller-willing buyer” formula by the British at Lancaster House.

-Land was seen as exclusive to the individual and hence the focus on the sanctity of private property and the emphasis on freehold title to acquire tenure security and to be able to use it as a commodity when the need arises, to use it as collateral security to borrow money from banks. Freehold title seen as the gateway to investment on land.

Zimbabwean/African view of land

- Land is seen as a God-given gift within a specified geographical area. Land is also seen as a natural endowment that can neither be bought or sold.
- Africans believe in common rights to land and therefore communal rights override individual rights which are expected to be enjoyed in the overall communal good/benefits
- African land tenure is based not on ownership but on use and access (eg in Zimbabwe, policy of ‘use it or lose it’, and the ‘99 year lease agreement’ between the state and the farmer; the land remains state property and no one can sell the land or hold it for speculative purposes.
- According to President Robert Mugabe “ ...sustainable development is not possible without agrarian reform that acknowledges in our case that land comes first before all else, and that all else grows from and off the land. This is the one asset that not only defines the Zimbabwean personality and demarcates sovereignty but also an asset that has a direct bearing on the fortunes for the poor and prospects for their immediate empowerment and sustainable development ...”(The Herald,September2, 2002)

Zimbabwean/African view of land(contd)

► President Mugabe also argued that:

-Land is about life and death. Life comes from, flourishes on and ultimately end in the land.

-Land was about extending our freedom, independence and sovereignty through our god-given natural resources, the principal resource being land.

-Zimbabwe's land and other natural resources must first and foremost be used by Zimbabweans. "This is our vision which is also our survival. So let it be".

- The cultural differences in the conceptualization of the land and its essence led to irreconcilable differences and disputes over the LRP and this negatively affect the course of diplomatic events between Britain and Zimbabwe, on one hand and the Western world and Zimbabwe on the other.

2.2 The Failure by Britain and her allies to stick to the Lancaster House Roadmap on Land Reform in Zimbabwe

- ▶ Britain and western governments exhibited elements of dishonesty, intransigence, unreasonableness and reluctance to stick to the letter and spirit on land reform and resettlement. The formula which was agreed at Lancaster House was that of moderation and reconciliation in building the new nation. Zimbabwe was expected to respect the LHC Agreement with respect to the protection of property rights for the minority whites and ensure their 20% representation in Parliament for the first 10 years. Respect for these key provisions were viewed as critical to ensure external capital inflows for land reform and resettlement and the funding of Zimbabwe's post-war reconstruction and development agenda. Zimbabwe fulfilled its obligations but Britain and its allies struggled to implement the Lancaster House formula on land reform and resettlement.

The willing seller-willing buyer formula had many constraints which inhibited the LRP implementation:

- ▶ The GoZ, according to the agreement, was expected to provide counterpart funds to match British funding dollar for pound. The new Zimbabwe government could not allocate enough resources to match British funding because of its meagre resource and the fact that it was confronted by a huge agenda of post-war reconstruction and development. As a result of the Zim government's constraints, only 26.5 million pounds of the allocated 30 million pounds pledged by the British Government was used to buy land. The remaining 3 million pounds was not disbursed after the British Government sent a Technical Mission to Zimbabwe to facilitate the programme but the team ended up delaying and eventually derailing the programme. The money was eventually returned unspent to the British government. The issues of transparency and accountability also became the bone of contention as there were fears that money intended for resettlement of the landless poor were finding their way into unauthorized hands. The land grant was mostly spent by 1988 and formally expired in 1997 when the UK's Labour Party came to power

The willing seller-willing buyer constraints contd

- ▶ 2.2.2. The process of identifying land up to the buying stage was cumbersome and expensive. The pace of land acquisition was too slow for the government which wanted to achieve social, economic and political stability, poverty alleviation and the restoration of peace and justice in the country following the end of war. The process also limited scope of spatially matching land supply with demand for resettlement
- ▶ 2.2.3. Some white farmers charged exorbitant prices for land they were selling to discourage government from acquiring their land
- ▶ 2.2.4 Small pieces of land sold were expensive to develop into resettlement areas because they would only accommodate a few people who required a big infrastructure to support such a settlement.

The willing seller-willing buyer constraints contd

- ▶ **-The British Minister of Overseas Development, Lynda Chalker, wrote a letter to the then Finance Minister, Dr Bernard Chidzero, outlining her government's proposals on the land reform programme. The proposals did not find favour within the Zimbabwe government and were tantamount to interfering in the internal affairs of Zimbabwe. Chalker's letter marked the end of donor funding and any funding that followed after that was meant to complete on-going projects.**
- ▶ **By the end of the First Phase of the land reform programme in 1998, the unbalanced racial ownership of land did not change much with 4000 white large commercial farmers retaining 11.2 million hectares of land (28%), over 1million communal households occupying 16.3million hectares (42%) while 70 000 households had been resettled on 2million hectares (9%) and the rest was occupied by state land not meant for cultivation like parks and wildlife, and urban settlement (FAO,2005). Impatience and tension grew as a result of this slow pace of land reform.**

The willing seller-willing buyer constraints contd

- ▶ Following the failure of the IDCLRR in 1998, the Govt of Zimbabwe tried to finance its own LRP between October 1998 and June 2000, using very limited resources available, to acquire 168 263 808 hectares to resettle 4697 families . In response to the frustrations relating to the slow pace of the LRP and the inability by Government to secure donor funding according to the LHA roadmap, the Zimbabwe Government officially launched the Fast Track Approach to land acquisition and resettlement on June,15 2000.

2.3 Britain's repudiation of its colonial responsibility to fund the land reform as agreed at Lancaster House

- ▶ Britain under the New Labour Government of PM Tony Blair, cut off all meaningful dialogue with Zimbabwe in 1997 when they came to power and repudiated Britain's colonial responsibility to fund the land reform programme as agreed at Lancaster House. Blair's government also argued that they had not agreed to hand over large sums of money to the Zimbabwe government on an unconditional basis thereby opening prospects for interference in the internal affairs of Zimbabwe. This was also a kind of declaration of war. The following statements illustrates how the British government disowned their colonial responsibility for land reform in Zimbabwe;

Britain's repudiation of its colonial responsibility contd

- ▶ “I should make it clear that we do not accept that Britain has a special responsibility to meet the costs of land purchase in Zimbabwe. We are a new government from diverse backgrounds without links to former colonial interests. My own origins are Irish and as you know we were colonized not colonisers” (Claire Short, British Minister for Overseas Development, letter to Minister K. Kangai of Zimbabwe,2002)

Britain's repudiation of its colonial responsibility contd

- ▶ “I repeat that I have been trying to ensure that Zimbabwe, not Britain, is isolated for the terrible actions of President Mugabe...and to ensure the[land] issue ceases to be a bilateral one and is made an issue of shared concern by the international community” (British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw in the House of Commons, January 8,2002).

Britain's repudiation of its colonial responsibility contd

- ▶ Foreign Secretary Jack Straw also called for the international community to isolate Zimbabwe, to deny it vital international financial support and to ensure that President Mugabe leaves office for things to go “right” in Zimbabwe.(House of Commons speech, June 25,2002)
- ▶ -PM Blair's intransigent position on the land issue precipitated an unprecedented breakdown of relations between Zimbabwe and Britain over the land issue. Even the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers at their Abuja meeting in September 2001 acknowledged that “land was at the core of the crisis in Zimbabwe and could not be separated from other issues of concern to the Commonwealth such as the rule of law, respect for human rights, democracy and the economy”. Blair's govt did not share this view

Britain's repudiation of its colonial responsibility contd

- ▶ In his infamous statement to the House of Commons in June 2004 Blair admitted that he was working closely with the opposition MDC, unnamed people in South Africa and Southern Africa to effect a “regime change” in Zimbabwe, adding that he “will not rest until that regime is changed”(The Herald ,June 25, 2004) This statement inflamed the bilateral relationship between Britain and Zimbabwe. In response Zimbabwe govt consolidated its regime security.

Britain's repudiation of its colonial responsibility contd

- ▶ - Although the British Government had pledged at Lancaster to support efforts of the Zimbabwe government to obtain international assistance for land reform, it later on reneged at the International Donors Conference on Land Reform and Resettlement (IDCLRR) in Harare, from 9-11 September 1998. Britain killed the Inception Phase initiative by refusing to join a team of major donors to prepare documents for a two year phase. UK suggested at the IDCLRR that a consultant be appointed to do an economic returns analysis of the programme to date to assess how far it had alleviated poverty among the chronic poor in Zimbabwe, thus effectively killing the Inception Phase initiative and sealing the fate of the IDCLRR.
- ▶ -Zimbabwe was left alone /“splendid isolation” after the international funding initiative, whose origins was Lancaster House, had been scuttled by the British. A total of 118 farms were on offer for purchase but the behavior of the British ensured that no more funding for Zimbabwe's land reform programme could be entertained.

4.0 Britain and its Western Allies impose sanctions as a Regime Change Agenda.

- ▶ -Following the fallout from the International Donors Conference on Land reform and Resettlement, the ZANU-PF Government, war veterans and peasants regarded this British diplomatic stance as dishonest brokering. The collapse of IDCLRR destabilized the country and triggered the first wave of land invasions called the Svosve Land Invasions in 1998. The ZANU-PF party held its National Congress in December 1999 and resolved that Britain should pay compensation for land acquired under the LRP while the Zimbabwe government pays for the improvements on the land. The proposal was later given a constitutional effect.
- ▶ -While Zimbabwe had been patient for two decades to allow Britain and its western allies to deliver on its LHA commitments on the land redistribution and resettlement, the Labour Government of PM Blair pursued an intransigent position of refusing to fund the programme and it activated its scotched earth policies on Zimbabwe which marked the foundation of the land crisis in Zimbabwe. Boris Johnson, Mayor of London, admitted in February 2015 that this move by the Blair government was an act of betrayal of the LHA (The Telegraph, February 2015).

Britain and its Western Allies impose sanctions as a Regime Change Agenda contd

- ▶ The British Government, with the active support of the USA and the EU, activated their “special relationship” based on historical and cultural affinities, to co-ordinate a series of sanctions on Zimbabwe as a way of achieving a policy of regime change.

4.1 Political sanctions;

- ▶ -Political sanctions by the West included travel bans on senior ZANU-PF and Government Officials from travelling to western capitals, freezing their overseas assets and bank accounts . The bans have now been lifted for most of the officials
- ▶ -Banning of military supplies to Zimbabwe; Zimbabwe simply responded by diverting its procurement to China and other friendly countries

4.2. Economic sanctions

-Economic sanctions took the form of cutting lines of credit or loans from western countries and western financial institutions

- ▶ -Restricting investment into Zimbabwe
- ▶ -Economic sanctions were used to track and freeze financial transactions by Zimbabwe government agents and banks if the transactions were suspected to be under the west's sanctions regime. The centrality of New York and the USD to the global financial system meant that the US government was central to the enforcement of the sanctions regime.
- ▶ -Travel warnings were also given by western countries' embassies discouraging western tourists not to visit Zimbabwe due to allegations of the breakdown of the rule of law, collapse of health service provision and shortages of money, among other reasons provided.

Faced by western sanctions which the enforcers were not willing to lift, Zimbabwe embarked on the fast track land reform programme to regain its land once and for all. President Mugabe sought to establish through this land reform programme a “brave new world order” where land and other resources would be placed under the control of nationals, distributed in a fair, balanced, non-racial way and more efficiently and sustainably used for the greater public good. By 2000, negotiations with western powers had practically broken down and it was therefore necessary to counter western sanctions with land seizure and to normalize relations when the revolution was complete.

4.3 Impact of sanctions on the country's behavior pattern

- ▶ - Western sanctions on Zimbabwe which took the form of travel bans, asset freezes, arms embargoes, and capital restraints had the impact of punishing the general populace, and not the “targeted group”. The standard of living for the poor people deteriorated at an alarming rate as the economy weakened during the period 2000-2008.
 - ▶ - The use of sanctions to coerce, deter, punish or shame entities that endangered western interests and values failed to modify Zimbabwe's behavior pattern in the international diplomatic system.
- Western sanctions on Zimbabwe were meant to change the regime in power but they actually served to consolidate the regime in power rather than to change its ways.
- ▶ -Punitive western sanctions on supply of military equipment to the country were not successful as other countries like China moved in swiftly to fill the gap.

Impact of sanctions on the country's behavior pattern contd

- ▶ - In view of the opposition to sanctions by the Government of National Unity (2009-2013), SADC and the AU, continued insistence on sanctions by the West can be construed as western arrogance towards an African initiative. President Mugabe's anti-imperialist and anti-neocolonialist rhetoric gained effective political traction in SADC and AU in the face of punitive application of sanctions by the west which threatened its sovereignty and the tenure of the regime in power.
- ▶ -The western powers must accept that the war is over and it is time for constructive engagement outside the framework of destructive sanctions and regime change agendas.

5. The application of double standards:

- ▶ The west's double standards on Zimbabwe were reflected in its standards of judgment with respect to democracy and good governance. Although the Commonwealth at its Abuja meeting recognized the land issue as the root cause of the crisis in Zimbabwe it nevertheless went on to suspend Zimbabwe from the Commonwealth in 2002, for breaching the Harare Declaration of Commonwealth principles which sets democracy, good governance and the rule of law as the basis for membership. Zimbabwe was accused of not following the rule of law in the Presidential elections of 2002 and also of not following the law during the FTLRP.
- ▶ Parallels can be drawn between Zimbabwe's disputed presidential elections of 2002 and the violent electoral environment which was linked to the FTLRP, which delivered Commonwealth membership suspension and the disputed and violent Ugandan Presidential elections of 2001 and 2006 which resulted in Uganda being given the honour to host the CHOGM Summit in 2007. Another case in mind is the house arrest of the Ugandan opposition leader Kizza Besigye who was arrested 3 times in a week and was under house arrest during the 2013 election voting period only to be released after the announcement of the results. The EU criticized the conduct of elections and the force used on opposition supporters and the lack of transparency during the process. The Commonwealth did not suspend Uganda although this was a clear breach of the Harare Declaration of Commonwealth principles.

6. Lessons from this Great Land Revolution

-President Mugabe's government taught this nation that issues of primary national interest, like the acquisition of land, can not be subcontracted. When the former colonial power reneged on its commitment to fund the LRF, we became our "own liberators". It was unrealistic to expect the British Government to buy land to give it to the people of Zimbabwe and make President Mugabe popular in the process. The realist theory of International Relations teaches us that "states seek power and they also seek to increase that power and to decrease the power of their enemies" The land was a primary national interest which could not be compromised as it determined the life and death of the country

Lessons from the great Land revolution contd

- ▶ - The land reform programme was successful from three perspectives (1) it succeeded in decolonizing the land in 3 years against previous attempts which had taken over a century to do so,(2) it also achieved government's objective of immediate transfer of land ownership from a tiny white minority of about 6000 to some of the majority black population of 13 061239 million, (3) the third objective of the land reform programme was to increase productivity in the medium and long terms and signs are beginning to show that it is an achievable objective. The best way of defending this successful revolution is to come up with new policies that attracts investment on the land and other areas of the economy and promote exports.

Lessons from the great Land revolution contd

- ▶ -The state may want to explore the possibility of establishing a resettlement scheme, call it A3, or whatever, for the export markets only. Such a model will comprise agricultural skilled people from universities and colleges who will be allocated land to work on contract farming for external markets with support from the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, Zimtrade and our diplomatic missions abroad. The Government will provide the regulatory framework.

Lessons from the great Land revolution contd

- ▶ -In victory the Zimbabwe government should be magnanimous and reach out to the west. Zimbabwe must embark on conciliatory diplomacy as opposed to confrontational diplomacy. Emphasis should be placed on that type of diplomacy that mends relations with the international community whilst also defending the gains from the land reform programme. Therefore, a paradigm shift in terms of communication by Zimbabwe should be developed to emphasize partnership in trade, investment, tourism and other areas of our national economy where we may not be able to do it alone. It must be emphasized that the west must come now whilst there are still opportunities to be taken up in various sectors. Continued fence-sitting will result in whatever diplomatic space they occupied previously being taken for good by other players like Chinese who are now into every sector of the economy.

Lessons from the great Land revolution contd

- ▶ Finally, it is my sincere belief that the current land tenure system could be maintained to ensure that land remains state property and should not be sold or held for speculative purposes. Security of tenure should be reinforced so that farmers are guaranteed of ownership if they are meeting the terms and conditions of the lease agreement. Giving farmers freehold title is problematic in that indigenous elites, foreign elites, former white farmers and local institutions may buy all the land on sale, for speculative purposes, in a development which may result in the land being concentrated in the hands of the few again. It would be tantamount to high-jacking a successful land revolution. The development will compromise present and future governments from implementing the values of economic and political justice, inclusive development and inter-generational equity upon which the current policy is based on