

## A fool and his money...

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### *Road rehabilitation with the new parliament building in the background*

Zimbabwe has splurged over US\$200 million on preparations to host the Sadc summit, the second time the regional meeting will be held in the country in a decade.

It is pulling out all stops to host a successful event with the cherry on top being the ascendancy of President Emmerson Mnangagwa to the rotational chairmanship of the regional bloc.

This will mark a big turnaround for the man, who seven years ago, was on the ropes as the Zanu PF party succession “war” reached a crescendo.

He prevailed in November 2017 after a military-assisted transition that ended the 37-year reign of the late former President Robert Mugabe.

A spruce up campaign is underway which is giving Harare a new look ahead of Mnangagwa’s crowning moment.

Roads are being rehabilitated so that regional guests will not have a feel of the potholes we have been accustomed to over the years.

Presidential villas are almost complete to host the Sadc heads of State and government during the two-day summit which will be preceded by an industrialisation summit.

A foreign company was given the task to build the villas which will be ready by month end.

The revamp of Harare shows that the Mnangagwa's administration can be efficient when it wants to.

This is not the first time Zimbabwe has hosted a Sadc summit of Heads of State and Government. Ten years ago, the regional bloc's leaders were in Victoria Falls for the summit which saw Mugabe assuming the reins.

Mnangagwa has outshined his predecessor for the historic summit that will place him at the top table in the bloc's decisionmaking, barely a year after the Sadc election observer mission dismissed the 2023 harmonised election for having failed to meet regional and international benchmarks on the holding of a free, fair and credible poll.

Election observer missions from the European Union and Carter Center also reached a similar verdict.

The bling associated with this year's event has confounded critics at a time when Zimbabwe has extended a begging bowl to mobilise US\$3 billion and avert hunger after an El Nino-induced drought.

According to government data, more than half of the population is food insecure and requires food aid.

After squandering millions on preparations to host the two-day Sadc summit, Zimbabwe will go cap in hand to donors and co-operating partners begging them to chip in and help her feed hungry citizens.

There is no need for this level profligacy today when the future looks bleak.

It's not only Zimbabwe which suffered an El Nino-induced drought. Zambia and Malawi are in the same boat and the two countries are busy mobilising resources to stock food.

In the global scheme of things, Zimbabwe is a footnote. The world is seized with the Israel-Gaza war which has left millions on the brink. In Sudan, warring parties are in the second year of a civil war that has displaced millions from their homes who are starving.

Sudan is experiencing a humanitarian catastrophe with over 25 million people in desperate need of assistance, according to the UN.

<https://www.newsday.co.zw/theindependent/editorials/article/200029960/a-fool-and-his-money#:~:text=Zimbabwe%20has%20splurged%20over%20US,the%20country%20in%20a%20decade>.

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