Your Majesty Mohammed VI, King of Morocco,

Your Excellency, United Nations Secretary General,

Mr Ban Ki-Moon,

The Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Ms Patricia Espinosa,

Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,

Honourable Ministers,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Comrades and Friends.

Your Majesty,

I wish to congratulate you, Your Majesty, and the people of the Kingdom of Morocco for assuming the Presidency of COP 22. This Conference will be decisive in providing the foundations and in giving the essential orientations to the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Excellencies,

Zimbabwe has welcomed the Paris Climate Change Agreement as a stepping stone towards tangible action in adapting to and

mitigating the climate change challenges the world currently faces. Zimbabwe, which is in the process of ratifying the Paris Climate Agreement, is determined to expedite the ratification process and to complete it in the shortest time possible.

My country is committed to playing its part in combating climate change impacts. We have, through our Intended Nationally Determined Contributions, committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the country by 33 per cent per capita, by 2030. I have established a multi-stakeholder High Level Committee on Climate Change whose responsibility is to ensure the coordinated and effective implementation and monitoring of our Nationally Determined Contributions.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Climate change is a reality that is daily taking its toll on the livelihoods of the majority of our people. As we meet here today, the water situation in my country is dire. Dam levels are precariously low due to the effects of the current El Nino-induced drought. Water rationing has been introduced for some communities, while others traverse punishing distances in search

of this vitally precious liquid. The water scarcity has not spared both the domesticated animals and those in the wilderness. Food insecurity has increased due to reduced agricultural productivity as a result of recurrent droughts.

When we, as developing countries, call for priority to be accorded to adaptation, or that there be parity in the attention given to adaptation and mitigation, we do so because it is a matter of life and death. A dead person cannot mitigate for climate change.

Excellencies,

The Paris Climate Change Agreement, while universal in its application, strongly upholds the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. In elaborating the ground rules for the implementation of this Agreement, this cardinal principle must, in no way, be diluted or qualified. It is our expectation, therefore, that the implementation of the Paris Climate Change Agreement will contribute to the realization of the equally universal agreement on the Sustainable Development Goals.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The implementation of the Nationally Determined Contributions, is not an opportunity for our developed-country partners to seek to frustrate our development prospects, through the imposition of conditionalities or intrusive and punitive mechanisms. Neither should it be an opportunity to seek to disproportionately burden the developing countries.

Excellencies,

Past tendencies towards impositions and dictating to others by highly industrialised countries, must give way to partnership and equitable solutions. Let's not squander the Paris Agreement through old bad habits.

I thank you.

RGM/jm