

A Critical Discourse Analysis of President Mugabe's 2002 Address to the World Summit on Sustainable Development

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Abstract

Language acts as a vehicle for propagating the ideologies, values and aspirations of those in power. Since politics is a struggle for power in order to put one's preferred political, economic and social ideas into practice, the role of language cannot be over emphasized, as every political action is prepared, accompanied, influenced by and played out through language. As the world re-gathered for the World Summit on Sustainable Development dubbed Rio+20, this paper therefore, analyses the political discourse of Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe focusing on the persuasive strategies and covert ideology enshrined in his address at the 2002 World Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa. The concept of sustainable development is contextualized and redefined by the Zimbabwean president in accordance with his government's ideology on the land question giving the concept a different emphasis. The paper is grounded in Fairclough's assumptions in Critical Discourse Analysis that, "ideologies reside in texts", that "it is not possible to "read off ideologies from texts" and that "texts are open to diverse interpretations" (Fairclough: 1995). The selected speech's persuasive strategies and ideological underpinnings are assessed to reveal President Mugabe's expert use, of personal pronouns and well timed repetition as the major rhetorical tools used in articulating his worldview.

Introduction

The first World Summit on Sustainable Development was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, whereupon members agreed on specific objectives to be met. 20 years on, in June 2012, the summit has been revisited as Rio+20 whereupon members consider progress made since Rio 1992. This paper re-focuses on President Robert Mugabe's 2002 Earth Summit address in Johannesburg mainly as a focal point of a persuasive speech by a statesman, rallying not only summit members in attendance, but also Africans as well as Zimbabweans behind his vision of an environmental, as well as a political and economic dispensation for sustainable development.

It can be argued that in politics, language is used as a weapon for mass persuasion when fighting one's political battles in place of 'weapons of mass destruction.' In view of this concept, the paper analyses political discourse, namely President Robert Gabriel Mugabe's 2002 Earth Summit address. The aim of this paper is to analyze how Mugabe uses personal pronouns and repetition to persuade his audience to support him in his ideological contest against Western powers.

Background to the Study

The paper argues that this speech marks the turning point in President Mugabe's relationship with some of his global partners such as the European Union (EU) and the United States of America (USA). When this speech is given, the Zimbabwean government had just had sanctions imposed upon it by the USA and the EU threatened to follow suit. President Mugabe's party was accused of stifling democracy and not observing the rule of law as a result of the political and economic upheavals in the country from the year 2000 (The Herald 2 January 2002). Some critics argue that what led to this development is the emergence of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) as a strong political force in 1999. The national referendum on the constitution in February 2000 which the government lost to opposition forces is believed to also have played a part. It is argued that in a panic, the ZANU-PF government opted to play the "land card" and thus accused Britain of not assisting in land reform as a means of paving the way for its (that is, the government's) land redistribution programme in order to win the 2000 elections.

The ensuing redistribution and land reform aimed at removing white farmers and restoring land to indigenous Zimbabweans was referred to by the MDC as chaotic and questioned by The Daily News (3 March 2003) as “a revolutionary move or a political gimmick?” Meanwhile the USA imposed sanctions and Britain campaigned for the EU to follow suit.

In response President Mugabe countered by arguing that the sanctions were a conspiracy involving George W. Bush and Tony Blair, the president of the United States and Prime minister of Britain respectively at the time. President Mugabe had read the sanctions as coming out of a regime change agenda arguing that the international campaign against the country was a result of the land reform exercise, which sought to reclaim land expropriated by British settlers from indigenous Zimbabweans (under colonial rule). As noted by The Herald (December 6, 2003), the British government was accused by the Zimbabwe government of sponsoring The Daily News and other opposition newspapers as well as the MDC to champion its views and reverse the land reforms through a regime change in Zimbabwe. It becomes apparent that the speech in question is a deliberate attempt to address the ‘regime change’ agenda under the umbrella theme of sustainable development.

Conceptual framework

The paper utilizes Norman Fairclough’s concept on discourse, power and hegemony in an attempt to link social practice and linguistic practice as well as micro and macro analysis of discourse (Fairclough, 1989, p.97). Fairclough, views language as text spoken or written, discourse practice (text production and text interpretation), and the socio-cultural practice.” Contrastive Discourse Analysis (CDA), as propounded by Fairclough, was considered appropriate because of its holistic nature that seeks to understand a text beyond its lexico-grammatical features. Since texts are produced by socially and politically situated speakers such as President Mugabe, it is essential to also look for rhetoric intent, coherence and the world view that the and receptor bring to the text (Kaplan, 1990 in Dellinger, 1995).

Methodology

The corpus of data used for the analysis is President Robert Mugabe’s Earth Summit speech delivered in Johannesburg On 3 September 2002. The paper adopts a qualitative approach employing CDA as its tool of analysis. CDA was adopted because as analytical tool it offers a comprehensive approach as it describes the language text, interprets the relationship between the discursive process and the text and explains the relation between the discursive processes and the text, and the relationship between the discursive processes and the social processes. (Fairclough 1989:97). The analysis was organized around how the speech is organized. We begin by analyzing the most frequently used pronoun narrowing down to the least frequently used pronouns. Such organization helps the reader to follow the thread of Mugabe’s argument and his ideology

Literature Review

Discourse

Discourse is a broad term attracting many definitions due to its wide use ranging from linguistics, sociology, philosophy and other disciplines. For the purpose of this paper we refer to the definition based on van Dijk’s (1977:3) views and his general concept of discourse as text context, seen as “data that is liable for empiric analysis”(Titscher et al 1998:44) with focus being put on discourse as action and process. From this it follows that discourse is a wider term than “text”. This concurs with Fairclough’s assertion that discourse refers to the whole process of social interaction of which a text is just a part (Fairclough 1989:24). On the other hand, Scaffner (1976) defines political discourse as a genre of discourse in general which is based on two criteria, that is, functional and thematic. According to Scaffner, political discourse results from politics and fulfils different political functions due to its different political activities. It is thematic because its topics are primarily related to politics such as political activities, political ideas and political relations.

The main purpose of politicians is to persuade their audience of the validity of their political claims. The ensuing political influence flows from the employment of resources that shape the beliefs and behavior of others. Mugabe’s rhetoric against sanctions falls under this category as the purpose is to persuade his audience to support him. In order to achieve this, politicians make expert use of linguistic skills such as personal pronouns and anaphora. Such language use has the potential to injure or ‘score’ without physical force.

The Use of Personal Pronouns as Discourse ‘weapons’

Wales (1996:3) refers to a personal pronoun as a substitution of a noun. Pronouns can be used to refer back to something thereby avoiding repetition. In political speeches, personal pronouns are often used as a form of address, either to refer to an audience or to the speaker. Partington (2000:60) notes that the use of pronouns can indicate whether the speaker is addressing the audience as an individual or representative of an institution.

Explaining the communicative functions of pronouns further, Wilson (1990) argues that pronouns reveal the speakers’ attitude and social standing. It can be argued therefore that pronouns are more than just a word class whose main function is to work as a substitute for nouns and noun phrases since they can have pragmatic functions. A political leader can therefore use various pronouns to his/her advantage to unite the speaker with the audience or to express his/her own beliefs. Wilson (1990) illustrates this by referring to former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher when she says:

There are those who for sinister political reasons wish to undermine the institutions and values upon which we depend. Those who call extra parliamentary action and the sacking of judges and chief constables: those who viciously attack the newly appointed commissioner of Police for the Metropolis before he has taken up his appointment ...

Wilson (1990) points out that in this speech, “those” are deliberately distanced by the speaker from “we” of both the speaker and addressee. This is made effective by the use of strong negative forms like ‘undermine’, ‘vicious’, ‘sinister’, which increases the sense of menace as Thatcher builds her rhetoric to a climax against the group she withholds from identifying until an effective appropriate point in the speech. The desired effect is to persuade the audience to negatively view and distance themselves from such a group and identify with the speaker, her policies and point of view (Takavarasha, 2008).

Another example is Brozin (2010) who notes in his study of American President Obama’s campaign speech, that the use of *we* and *us is* to represent all those who want to change the political system and to unite the nation. This, according to Brozin, allows him to present himself as representing the people who want change thus persuasively portraying himself as their spokesman. Bull and Fetzer (2006) have also studied politicians’ strategic use of *we* and *you* in interviews and they conclude that these pronouns are strategically used to accept, deny or distance politicians from responsibility for political actions, and also to point out and identify supporters and enemies.

In the same vein, the researchers in this paper argue that the key to understanding how President Mugabe represents participants and concepts lies in his manipulative use of personal pronouns. The first person plural, ‘*we/us*’ and its possessive form ‘*our,*’ is used more frequently by President Mugabe than any other pronoun in the text. Following Wilson’s (1990) argument, the use of pronouns in relation to participants and concepts is based on whether one wishes to bear the core responsibility for what is said or to have some set of actions attributed to oneself. One way of interpreting this is that it refers to whether President Mugabe intends to identify himself with, or distance himself from particular concepts and participants. Another way is to view this as whether Mugabe intends to have participants identify with him and distance themselves from particular concepts he portrays negatively.

The use of the pronoun *we* can be divided into two categories;

- (i). “inclusive’ *we* which can be used to refer to the speaker and the addressee and
- (ii). the “exclusive” *we* referring to the speaker plus one or more others but that does not include the addressee (Fairclough, 2001).

Furthermore echoing Fairclough’s view, Muhlauser and Harre (2006) note that the inclusive *we* can be divided into two subcategories viz:

- (a) An integrative use which includes both the speaker and hearer(s) and
- (b) An expressive use, which is just as (a) but it also expresses solidarity.

As already noted, exclusive *we* on the other hand, refers to a group of people including the speaker but excluding the hearer(s).

A distinction between inclusive *we* and exclusive *we* can be problematic at times as Winston (1990,p.48) notes that it can sometimes become ambiguous in actual production, between what is known as the speaker inclusive *we* and the speaker 's exclusive *we*. The use of inclusive *we* can also be used to share responsibility. The speaker gives the impression that he/ she is speaking on behalf of the addressee.

Anaphora

Anaphora or repetition is a common device in political rhetoric. It is the repetition of the same word or group of words at the beginning of several consecutive sentences, to emphasize an image or concept, or to influence the reader or audience. Politicians frequently use it to encourage audiences or readers to remember critical aspects of their speeches. An appropriate example is the British Second World War Premier Winston Churchill's famous speech:

“We shall fight on the beaches...**We** shall not flag or fail, **we** shall go on to the end. **We** shall fight in France, **we** shall fight on the seas and oceans, **and we** shall fight with growing confidence and strength in the air...” (<http://en.wikisource.org/wiki>).

Anaphora also gives presence to persuasive discourse (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969; Karon 1978). Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1990) observe that presence concerns, “the displaying of certain elements on which the speaker wishes to center attention in order that they may occupy the foreground of the hearer's consciousness.” Repetition has an effect of accumulation and insistence hence it focuses and emphasizes on what the speaker wants his audience to remember.

In his address to the American public after September 11, 2001 George W. Bush used anaphora to create a feeling of belonging and togetherness among the citizens and emphasize the message how serious the attacks were. According to Bush;

Americans have known wars but for the past 136 years they have been wars on foreign soil except for one Sunday in 1941..., Americans have known casualties of war but not the centre of a great city on a peaceful morning, Americans have known surprise attacks but never before on thousands of civilians.(SOURCE)

The repetition may have been used to make people remember that the nation had to cope with surprise attacks in the past and that people should have confidence in their leaders. Anaphora in this sense can be used to emphasize and reinforce a message given before in previous speeches. Persuasion is a form of social influence. It is the process of guiding people towards adoption of an idea, attitude, or action by rational and symbolic (though not always logical) means. It is a strategy of problem-solving relying on “appeal” rather than force (Wikipedia, 2008). Thus, as stated by McLennan (2007), the discourse of any field may be fruitfully studied, not for the quality of its politics, literature or science, but for its rhetorical significance and effectiveness.

Defining ‘Sustainable Development.’

Sustainable development plays a key role in the rhetoric and therefore needs to be defined here. According to Walls (2007) the concept of sustainable development was publicized in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Economy in the Brundtland Commission report entitled “Our Common Future.” However, he notes that it is a slippery term with users interpreting it differently, some emphasizing the former word and others the latter. Also, when conceived as mediating tensions between environment and economy, the role of culture is often underplayed. Furthermore, Wall (2007) notes that it is often not clear exactly what is to be sustained and at what scale, or whether the concept refers to a philosophy, a process, a program or a product, or all of these. Though a number of definitions have been proffered, it becomes apparent that the concept is open to any interpretation and redefinition according to the user's worldview, and it can be said that in his address, Mugabe is at liberty to re-define sustainable development from a Zimbabwean point of view as argued in this paper.

Data Analysis and Discussion

An analysis of Mugabe's 2002 Earth Summit speech indicates an extensive use of pronouns. For a speech that is 1,899 words long, Mugabe uses a total of 141 personal pronouns. This represents a percentage of 13.46. The table below further illustrates a breakdown of the use of the pronouns as either inclusive or exclusive.

Pronoun	Inclusive	Exclusive	Total
We	12	48	63
Us	7	8	15
Our(s)	3	16	39
They	-	3	5
Them	-	3	4
My	-	3	3
You/ Your	-	1	4
Those	-	1	1
Their			7

The researchers in this paper argue that the key to understanding how President Mugabe represents participants and concepts lies in his manipulative use of personal pronouns. The first person plural, **'we/us'** and its possessive form **'our,'** is used more frequently by President Mugabe than any other pronoun in the text. Following Wilson's (1990) argument, the use of pronouns in relation to participants and concepts is based on whether one wishes to bear the core responsibility for what is said or to have some set of actions attributed to oneself. One way of interpreting this is whether President Mugabe intends to identify himself with, or distance himself from particular concepts and participants. Another way is to view this as whether Mugabe intends to have participants identify with him and distance themselves from particular concepts he portrays negatively.

Inclusive we

The first reference of **'we'** in the text is inclusive of the addressee. According to Fowler et al (1979), this implicates the addressee in the content of the discourse and is ostensibly more intimate and solidary. As noted by Chapanga and Choto (2005), the use of collective pronouns such as 'we', 'us' and 'our' is aimed at fostering a collective approach.

The use of **we**-inclusive therefore inextricably binds the audience to the speaker and the success or failure of the vision expounded by President Mugabe. He does not give the audience room to distance themselves from him as the speaker and the ideas he presents due to the overwhelming use of **we**-inclusive. This is intended to persuade the audience to accept collective responsibility and participation in reviving the world's ecology inextricably linked to humanity's, particularly the west's moral and political responsibility. At the beginning of the speech he uses **we** to include all delegates attending the summit. He sets the tone of his speech by initially using the pronoun **we** to include delegates from the developing nations as well as those from developed nations. Examples of the inclusive **we** that include all the delegates:

We worried about our troubled Earth and its dangerously diminishing flora and fauna. **We** worried about the variegated poor or **our** societies, in their swelling numbers and ever deepening, distressful social conditions.

Here it is quite clear that Mugabe in his use of **we** is inclusively talking about himself and all the delegates and those who had attended the previous Earth Summit in Rio. Through the use of **we** he emphasizes the shared observations they had made at the summit. **We** persuasively draws the audience into agreed positions at the Earth summit. Since this comes at the beginning of the speech, Mugabe is being careful not to offend some of his audience hence through the use of **we** he identifies with the ideals of the earth summit. This has the effect of creating the impression that his sustainable development concerns are shared collectively with the audience. As supported by Wilson (1990, cited in Partington 2003), **we** thus used persuasively shows solidarity with the audience. Concurring with Wilson, Jones and Wareing (1996, p.46) such use of the pronoun **we** has the effect of creating togetherness and a feeling of sharing responsibility with the audience. It can be argued therefore that as a rhetorical strategy for Mugabe this subtly sets the stage for the audience to be amenable to his views. Furthermore, reference to the original 1992 Rio Earth Summit legitimizes his presence then and now and expresses shared concern regarding sustainable development.

Exclusive 'we'

Mugabe's introductory remarks at the commencement of his address are complimentarily specific to the South African people. However, what is significant is that the remarks are exclusionary by the subtle use of the possessive **our continent** seemingly excluding anyone not from Africa.

Comrade President, let me begin by congratulating you and the people of South Africa on hosting this mammoth and yet historic Earth Summit on the Southern tip of **our** continent.

The introduction and repetitive use of this possessive pronoun seems to indicate Mugabe's dichotomous view of what is '**ours**' and what is '**theirs**' as he fights his ideological battle against western countries making use of the pronouns **we** versus **them**. This is demonstrated when Mugabe focuses on differences of the conceptualization of sustainable development with the developed world. He uses **we** in a manner meant to exclude developed nations but include those who agree with him and disagree with the developed nations. He uses **we** exclusively to identify first the part of the audience that shares his views on sustainable development.

We complained about unequal economic power that existed and still exists between the North and the South and had historically reposed itself in our international institutions, including the United Nations.

We spoke against unequal terms of trade that made rich and powerful nations enjoy undeserved rewards from world trade.

We are ready to defend the agenda of the poor and **we** are clear that **we** can only do that if **we** do not pander to foreign interests or answer to false imperatives that are not clearly alien and inimical to the interests of the poor who have given us the mandate to govern them but are also hostile to the agenda for sustainable development.

Here Mugabe implicitly distances those who are opposed to what he views and define as a liberal concept of sustainable development. **We** is used exclusively in the first two sentences to refer and identify those who are opposed to the concept of sustainable development as enunciated by the Western world or the developed world. In the third sentence **We** excludes and narrows the audience to the Zimbabwean leadership, that includes him, who because of their mandate, are ready to defend their people from policies that do not benefit them. This persuasively legitimizes the decisions Mugabe has taken concerning land in Zimbabwe. In the third statement Mugabe uses **we** exclusively to refer to the current leadership of Zimbabwe that includes him to insinuate that political events in Zimbabwe are a manifestation of ideological differences with the West who have a different interpretation of sustainable development. In the same vain Mugabe uses **we** to stave off criticism that expropriation of land is his personal strategy to remain in power. He thus is able to present himself as mandated by the poor to a represent and defend the land as a resource that will ensure sustainable development for them. Using the pronoun **they** referentially and anaphorically Mugabe identifies the segment of the audience that he considers as opposed to the shared view in the Third world.

The unilateralism of the unipolar world has reduced the rest of mankind to collect underdogs, chattels of the rich, willful few in the North, who beat, batter and bully **us** under the dirty cover of democracy, rule of law and good governance.

Otherwise how would **they** undermine at global level the same values of good governance and rule of law **they** arrogantly demand from the South?

Without being blunt, he identifies and 'others' those who have imposed sanctions on him as preaching what they cannot practice. (good governance, rule of law and democracy). Using the pronoun **they**, Mugabe is able to index them in a way that exposes them but saving their face. This is a persuasive strategy meant to make the accusation palatable for the audience and possibly keep those he is attacking in their seats until he has said what he wants to say:

The rule of law, democracy and good governance are values that **we** cherish because **we** fought for them against the very same people who today seek them to preach to us.

Mugabe uses the seasoned politician's strategy of implicature by not naming names of these so-called preachers of democracy, whilst at the same time softening the attack by representing himself as harmless and a victim of global politics:

Having said that, **we** wish no harm to anyone...

And later on in the speech;

We are threatening no one. And therefore, the operations by Mr (Tony) Blair are artificial, completely uncalled for, and an interference in our domestic affairs.

Furthermore, repetition of the pronoun **we** can be viewed as deliberate manipulation meant to cajole any free and self-respecting Pan African into projecting and displaying a sense of pride and patriotism:

We are Zimbabweans, **we** are Africans, **we** are not English. **We** are not Europeans. **We** love Africa, **we** love Zimbabwe, **we** love our independence. ..

Mugabe's logical appeal builds the momentum into the crux of his address, namely that sustainable development means ownership of resources whose utilization is the prerogative of the owners of such resources, hence interference with a country's allocation of said resources is interference in that country's domestic affairs which is unwarranted and uncalled for. This is a reiteration/repetition, expansion and continuation of his opening statement where he earlier stated:

It is a great honour and source of African pride to all of **us** who live, belong and **rightfully own** this great corner of the Earth.

This sense of belonging and rightful ownership is expanded thus;

We belong to this continent. **We** do not mind having and bearing sanctions banning **us** from Europe. **We** are not Europeans. **We** have not asked for an inch of Europe, any square inch of that territory. So (Tony) Blair, keep your England and let me keep my Zimbabwe.

Us here is used exclusively to refer to Mugabe's leadership and the generality of Zimbabweans. **Us** identifies those who are the target of the European and American sanctions and it 'others' those who have imposed and advocate for sanctions on Zimbabwe. The repeated use of these pronouns, we, us and our dovetails with Mugabe's rhetorical purpose which is to deny that his actions in Zimbabwean are not widely supported by the majority of Zimbabweans. First he uses **we** to confirm a shared vision with other world leaders on the issue of sustainable development as they had envisioned it at the summit. Later on in the speech the pronouns are used to communicate collectivity on the land issue by Zimbabweans. Thus **we**, **us** and **our(s)** are used to legitimize what his opponents in the Western world have accused him of, that is acting against the wishes of the majority of Zimbabweans. The repetition emphasizes collective decision making thus persuasively presenting himself as representing the wishes of the majority in Zimbabwe. Repeated use of they, them, those identifies and 'others' Mugabe's opponents in the European union and elsewhere who have imposed sanctions. These he identifies as having an understanding of sustainable development which is not beneficial to the real poor of the world.

Ownership and control of Resources: Re-Defining Sustainable Development

At the beginning of his address, Mugabe makes clear the theme of rightful ownership by declaring:

It is a great honour and source of African pride to all of us who live, belong and rightfully own this great corner of the Earth.

Extensive use of anaphora is employed as the pronoun **our** is repetitively emphasized in conjunction with **keep** and **look after** to highlight Mugabe's theme which is that sustainable development is resource ownership.

We **keep our** forests, we **keep our** animals, we **keep** even **our** reptiles plus insects.

We **look after our** elephants and ivory.

We **look after our** lions as they roar everywhere.

They attract those who would want to see them.

As noted by Wall (2007) the term ‘sustainable development’ is not only broad but slippery and Mugabe is thus able to redefine the concept according to ZANU-PF ideology in that;

The sustainable empowerment of the poor cannot take place in circumstances where democratic national sovereignties are assaulted and demonised on a daily basis.

That is why we, in Zimbabwe, understand only too well that sustainable development is not possible without agrarian reforms that acknowledges, in **our** case, that land comes first before all else, and that all else grows from and off the land.

‘**Our**’ implies possession or ownership by every member of the group being referred to. This suggests that Zimbabweans are unanimous about the issue of land. According to Bramley (2000), this has the effect of deflecting attention on the politician. This, therefore legitimizes what Mugabe has been accused of having done as **our**, suggests that he is speaking on behalf of the majority of Zimbabweans. Mugabe says:

In our situation in Zimbabwe, this fundamental question has pitted the black majority who are the right-holders, and, therefore, primary stakeholders, to our land against an obdurate and internationally well connected racial minority, largely of British descent and brought in and sustained by British colonialism now being supported and manipulated by the(Tony) Blair government.

Our serves the same purpose as *we* and *us* as it separates Mugabe and Zimbabweans from the rest of the audience. The pronoun **our** also emphasizes possession which singles out the European Union Australia and the United States of America as too distant to be involving themselves in Zimbabwean affairs.

Conclusion

The analysis has shown that Mugabe purposely and persuasively uses pronouns to include and exclude segments of his audience. The pronoun **we** is used first to show a unity of purpose with the rest of the audience with regard to sustainable development. The pronoun **we**, and its variant **us** and possessive form **our** are used to point at shared responsibility regarding events that have taken place in Zimbabwe as well as ownership of natural national resources. The use of these pronouns persuades the audience to agree that despite what has been said about him, he represents the interests of the majority of Zimbabweans. He is able to present a unified position and collective responsibility with other Zimbabweans for what he is being accused of. Other pronouns such as **them**, and **they** are used to ‘other’ those who are opposed to land reform in Zimbabwe and those advocating for a global economy sanctions on Zimbabwe. It can be noted that the land issue has been and still is central to Zimbabwe’s political and economic history and is therefore according to Mugabe, at the heart of Zimbabwe’s sustainable development agenda. Punishment in the form of targeted sanctions for land redistribution is in Mugabe’s view contrary to the concept of sustainable development. In this manner, Mugabe is able to ‘marry’ an international concept to ZANU-PF ideology in a simple but subtle and intricate manner and thus re-define the agenda and concept of sustainable development. The analysis therefore has shown that language in the hands of a politician therefore, becomes a tool through which political battles are fought, won or lost. The paper ends by recommending that one aspect of the speech that requires further analysis is the simplicity of the language used given the fact that President Mugabe is a well read man and capable of much more complex use of language.

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- The Daily News 3 March 2003 and 24 March 2003
- The Herald 2 April 2012
- The Herald 6 December 2003

Appendix

President Robert Gabriel Mugabe's World Summit on Sustainable Development- September 2002

YOUR Excellency, Thabo Mbeki, President of the Republic of South Africa, Your Excellency, Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, Majesties, Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government, Mr Nitin Desai, the Secretary-General of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, Comrades and Friends.

Comrade President, let me begin by congratulating you and the people of South Africa on hosting this mammoth and yet historic Earth Summit on the Southern tip of our continent.

It is a great honour and source of African pride to all of us who live, belong and rightfully own this great corner of the Earth.

Ten years ago, we gathered in Rio de Janeiro, in the same numbers and were moved by the same developmental anxieties that many of us have today.

We worried about our troubled Earth and its dangerously diminishing flora and fauna. We worried about the variegated poor of our societies, in their swelling numbers and ever deepening, distressful social conditions.

We complained about the unequal economic power that existed and still exists between the North and the South and had historically reposed itself in our international institutions, including the United Nations.

We spoke against unequal terms of trade that made rich and powerful nations enjoy undeserved rewards from world trade.

Indeed, we denounced the debt burden by which the rich North continued to take away the impoverished South even that little which they still had.

Your Excellencies, we must examine why, 10 years after Rio, the poor remain very much with us, poorer and far more exposed and vulnerable than ever before.

Our children suffer from malnutrition, hunger and diseases, compounded now by the deadly HIV/Aids pandemic.

No, the World is not like it was at Rio; it is much worse and much more dangerous. Today Rio stands out in history as a milestone betrayed.

The multilateral programme of action we set for ourselves at Rio has not only been unfulfilled but it has also been ignored, sidelined and replaced by a half-baked unilateral agenda of globalisation in the service of big corporate interests of the North.

The focus is profit, not the poor, the process is globalisation, not sustainable development, while the objective is exploitation, not liberation.

Comrade President, 10 years, after Rio, the time has come for all of us to state quite categorically that the agenda of sustainable development is not compatible with the current dominant market fundamentalism coming from the proponents of globalisation.

The betrayal of the collective agenda we set at Rio is a compelling manifestation of bad global governance, lack of real political will by the North and a total absence of a just rule of law in international affairs.

The unilateralism of the unipolar world has reduced the rest of mankind to collective underdogs, chattels of the rich, the wilful few in the North who beat, batter and bully us under the dirty cover of democracy, rule of law and good governance.

Otherwise how would they undermine at global level the same values of good governance and rule of law they arrogantly demand from the South?

Institutionally, we have relied for much too long on structures originally set to recover and rebuild Europe after a devastating war against Nazism.

Over the years, these outdated institutions have been unilaterally transformed to dominate the world for the realisation of the strategic national goals of the rich North.

That is why, for example, the International Monetary Fund has never been a fund for poor peasants seeking sustainable development.

Even the United Nations, a body that is supposed to give us equal voices, remains unreformed and undemocratic, largely because of resistance from the powerful and often selfish North.

Comrade President, it has become starkly clear to us that the failure of sustainable development is a direct and necessary outcome of a neo-liberal model of development propelled by runaway market forces that have been defended in the name of globalisation.

Far from putting people first, this model rests on entrenching inequities; giving away privatisation of public enterprises and banishing of the State from the public sphere for the benefit of big business.

This has been a vicious, all-out, assault on the poor and their instruments of sustainable development.

In Zimbabwe, we have, with a clear mind and vision, resolved to bring to an end this neo-liberal model.

For us in Zimbabwe, the agenda for sustainable development has to be reasserted, with a vigorous, democratic and progressive interventionist State and public sector capable of playing a full and responsible developmental role.

We are ready to defend the agenda of the poor and we are clear that we can only do that if we do not pander to foreign interests or answer to false imperatives that are not only clearly alien and inimical to the interests of the poor who have given us the mandate to govern them but are also hostile to the agenda for sustainable development.

For these reasons, we join our brothers and sisters in the Third World in rejecting completely, manipulative and intimidatory attempts by some countries and regional blocks that are bent on subordinating our sovereignty to their hegemonic ambitions and imperial interests, falsely presented as matters of rule of law, democracy and good governance.

The real objective is interference in our domestic affairs.

The rule of law, democracy and governance are values that we cherish because we fought for them against the very same people who today seek them to preach to us.

The sustainable empowerment of the poor cannot take place in circumstances where democratic national sovereignties are assaulted and demonised on a daily basis.

The poor should be able to use their sovereignty to fight poverty and preserve their heritage in their corner of the earth without interference.

That is why we, in Zimbabwe, understand only too well that sustainable development is not possible without agrarian reforms 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 of the poor and prospects for their immediate empowerment and sustainable development.

Indeed, ours is an agrarian economy, an imperative that renders the issue of access to land paramount.

Inequitable access to land is at the heart of poverty, food insecurity and lack of development in Zimbabwe.

Consequently, the question of agrarian reforms has, in many developing countries, to be high on the agenda of sustainable development if we are to meet the targets that are before us for adoption at this Summit.

In our situation in Zimbabwe, this fundamental question has pitted the black majority who are the right-holders, and, therefore, primary stakeholders, to our land against an obdurate and internationally well-connected racial minority, largely of British descent and brought in and sustained by British colonialism now being supported and manipulated by the (Tony) Blair government.

We have said even as we acquire land, we shall not deprive the white farmers of land completely. Every one of them is entitled to at least one farm, but they would want to continue to have more than one farm.

More than one farm indeed.

Fifteen, twenty, thirty-five, one person!

These are figures I am not just getting out of my mind, they are real figures.

So, no farmer is being left without land and there is no one who would want to leave Zimbabwe anyway.

So those operations, which are underway of how to airlift those who are threatened in Zimbabwe by the regime of Mugabe, as it is said, are really not called for.

We are threatening no one. And therefore, the operations by Mr (Tony) Blair are artificial, completely uncalled for, and an interference in our domestic affairs.

But, we say this as Zimbabweans, we have fought for our land, we have fought for our sovereignty, small as we are.

We have won our independence and we are prepared to shade our blood in of that independence. sustenance, maintenance and protection

Having said that, we wish no harm to anyone. We are Zimbabweans, we are Africans, we are not English. We are not Europeans.

We love Africa, we love Zimbabwe, we love our independence. We are working together in our region to improve the lot of our people.

Let no one interfere with our processes.

Let no one who is negative want to spoil what we are doing for ourselves in order to unite Africa.

We belong to this continent.

We do not mind having and bearing sanctions banning us from Europe.

We are not Europeans. We have not asked for any inch of Europe, any square inch of that territory.

So (Tony) Blair, keep your England and let me keep my Zimbabwe.

Economically, we are still an occupied country, 22 years after our Independence.

Accordingly, my Government has decided to do the only right and just thing by taking back land and giving it to its rightful indigenous, black owners who lost it in circumstances of colonial pillage.

This process is being done in accordance with the rule of law as enshrined in our national Constitution and laws.

It is in pursuit of true justice as we know and understand it, and so we have no apologies to make to anyone.

Mr Chairman, having said that, may I say we are happy that through Sadc, through Comesa and through Ecowas, we are doing our best to sustain our environment in every way possible.

We keep our forests, we keep our animals, we keep even our reptiles plus insects.

We look after our elephants and ivory.

We look after our lions as they roar everywhere.

They attract those who would want to see them.

We sustain our environment.

We are committed to that not just now, but in the future because we want a heritage as a legacy.

We want that to pass on to future generations. But we will need support, we want to be friends and not enemies of other regions.

We want to work together and that is why the theme of this conference is very important to us.

Not only as it brought us together, but we hope that at the end of it, it will have cemented our relations, our oneness to work for this globe, which is ours together.

Finally Comrade President, Zimbabwe has alongside other Southern African countries, suffered a severe drought, itself a reminder that all is not well on our Earth.

We continue to import food to sustain all our citizens during this period of drought.

I join other Heads of State or Government in our SADC region, in expressing my gratitude and appreciation to those countries and organisations that pledged to assist us.

Mr Chairman, as we look at the next decade we must honestly acknowledge those of our actions, which have served mankind and those many others, which have undermined our collective wellbeing.

Clearly there has to be a paradigm shift from the globalised corporate model to a people-centred paradigm that reaffirms that people must always come first in any process of sustainable development.

And let Africans come first in the development of Africa. Not as puppets, not as beggars but as a sovereign people.