

*Speech by Professor Heneri Dzinotyiweyi, Hon. Minister Science & Technology Development, at the Harare Roundtable Discussion on Innovation, Sustainability and Development: A New Manifesto. Friday 5 March 2010*

It gives me great pleasure to be addressing this **Innovation, Sustainability, and Development: A New Manifesto Roundtable**. Firstly I would like to thank Practical Action for organizing this Roundtable Discussion. Although it is for the purpose of feeding our ideas into a global initiative with Sussex University, it also provides, at the local level, an opportunity for our scientists to interact on the themes under discussion today.

The approach taken by Practical Action Southern Africa, to involve partners in rethinking policies around science, technology and development is providing a platform for the development of cutting edge ideas and innovative policy recommendations.

This Roundtable comes against the background of a nation which is going through unprecedented socio-economic challenges demanding a sophisticated combination of science, technology and research based responses.

With other roundtables having been initiated on other continents, I acknowledge with pleasure, that this platform is a first and a breakthrough in Zimbabwe and Southern Africa, as we try to leverage technology to fight poverty. The areas of water and sanitation, agriculture, housing and Science & Technology under discussion here today, have the potential to greatly contribute to the country's economic development. I must hasten to add that Government is committed to these three sectors as we strive to provide affordable decent accommodation, improve access to safe water for both urban and rural communities and improve agricultural production for both communal and commercial farmers.

While my Ministry notes that there are many institutions involved in technology development in Zimbabwe, there is need for a multi-stakeholder approach to advance national interests. The public and private sectors, civil society and government all have a role to play.

The launch of the Science and Technology Policy framework in 2002, has facilitated a conducive policy environment linking science and technology innovation to build a more sustainable, equitable and resilient future for people in poverty. It is also crucial to note that at this point more platforms such as this roundtable must be accelerated and explore diverse ways of linking science and innovation to development to address the challenges of poverty reduction and social justice.

It is my sincere hope that the deliberations conducted today will contribute significantly towards a new technology manifesto, which looks at innovation as a tool to fight poverty as we seek more sustainable initiatives to improve the lives of Zimbabweans. Outputs from today's deliberations, while contributing towards a new Science and Technology Manifesto, can also provide a starting point towards ensuring food security, access to potable clean water and adequate housing.

More effort and energy needs to be channelled towards initiatives such as this Roundtable, to build a vibrant constituency for science, technology and innovation.

I therefore throw the challenge to the participants here present today to effectively deliberate on strategies in the three thematic areas and suggest practical ways of applying technology to fight poverty and at the same time strengthen the Zimbabwean economy.

Again we wish to thank Practical Action for your initiative. We wish to acknowledge your interest to be more involved with the work of my Ministry. As you know, we have accepted to have a Memorandum of Understanding between yourself and the Ministry. This will establish a more formal working relationship between us.

It is therefore my singular honour and privilege to declare the **Innovation, Sustainability, and Development: A New Manifesto Roundtable** officially open. I THANK YOU.