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OPENING SESSION

CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE

LANCASTER HOUSE

LONDON

SEPTEMBER 1979

Opening Statement by the Chairman, Lord Carrington

LANCASTER HOUSE

10 SEPTEMBER 1979

PRESENT:

UK DELEGATION

Lord Carrington (in the Chair)

Sir I Gilmour Bt

Sir M Havers

Lord Harlech

Mr R Luce

Sir M Palliser

Sir A Duff

Mr D M Day

Mr R A C Byatt

Mr R W Renwick

Mr P R N Fifoot

Mr N M Fenn

Mr G G H Walden

Mr C D Powell

Mr R D Wilkinson

Mr R M J Lyne

Bishop Muzorewa and Delegation

Bishop A T Muzorewa
Dr S C Mundawarara
Mr E L Bulle
Mr F Zindoga
Mr D C Mukome
Mr G B Nyandoro
Rev N Sithole
Mr L M Nyemba
Chief K Ndiweni
Mr Z M Bafanah
Mr I D Smith
Mr D C Smith
Mr C Andersen
Dr J Kamusikiri
Mr L G Smith
Air Vice Marshal H Hawkins
Mr D M Zamuchiya
Mr G Mutambanengwe

Mr Mugabe, Mr Nkomo and Delegation

Mr R G Mugabe	Mr J M Nkomo
Mr S V Muzenda	Mr J M Chinamano
Mr E Z Tekere	Mr J W Msika
Mr J M Tongogara	Mr T G Silundika
Mr E R Kadungure	Mr A M Chambati
Mr H Ushewokunze	Mr L Baron
Mr D Mutumbuka	Mr S K Sibanda
Mr J Tungamirai	Mr C Ndlovu
Mr E Zvobgo	Miss T Siziba

Secretariat

Mr J M Willson
Mr R S Dewar

CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, now that we have got the preliminaries over, I am glad to welcome you to this Conference and to open its proceedings.

When the British Government issued invitations to this Conference on 14 August, after extensive consultations, we naturally hoped for and expected a positive response. Our consultations had revealed a strong desire that the United Kingdom should take the initiative in making a further attempt to achieve a final settlement of the problem of Rhodesia, in fulfilment of its constitutional responsibilities. There was also a widespread feeling that continuation or intensification of the war was not in the best interests of any of the parties to the dispute, nor of the people of Rhodesia as a whole. Nevertheless, it is not a simple matter for those who have been involved in a bitter and tragic military confrontation to sit round a conference table together. The British Government felt strongly that it had the responsibility to bring that about.

When inviting you here we appealed to you, in the interests of the people of Rhodesia, to approach these negotiations in a positive spirit and to seek to build up areas of agreement. We hope thereby to lay the foundations for a free, independent and democratic society in which all the people of Rhodesia, irrespective of their race or political beliefs, would be able to live in security and at peace with each other and with their neighbours. The act of coming together is important. It is now up to us to build on that.