

UPND President Hakainde Hichilema

Hakainde Hichilema, a self-made millionaire businessman, is the youthful and energetic leader of the major opposition political party in Zambia the United Party for National Development (UPND).

Hichilema was born on June 4 1962 in the southern district of Monze. After attending school locally he was admitted to the University of Zambia on a government bursary where he studied and graduated in 1986 with a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Economics and Business Administration. He later obtained an MBA degree in Finance and Business Strategy from the University of Birmingham, UK.

Since then, Hichilema, affectionately known as HH, has carved out an impressive track record in business, both locally and internationally. A large commercial farmer, Hichilema is now the second biggest cattle rancher in Zambia with nearly 100,000 herds of cattle to his name on four ranches, and is one of the biggest suppliers of meat to the local Zambian market, as well as one of Zambia's biggest exporter of hard-currency-earning beef products. He also holds substantial investments in Zambia's tourism sector.

Following his university education Hichilema ascended to top positions in Zambia's corporate world, landing such prestigious jobs as CEO of Coopers and Lybrand at the tender age of 32 years old, from 1994 to 1998, and later as CEO of Cooper's successor, Grant Thornton, from 1998 to 2006. He was the biggest local shareholder in two foreign-owned companies; including Barclays Bank Zambia Plc. Hichilema is also a trained Business Negotiator, a qualified Change Management Practitioner and is a member of the Zambia Institute of Directors.

HH won the presidency of the UPND in 2006 following the death of its leader, Anderson Mazoka, his business mentor, tribesman and close friend. Since then ruling party politicians have, unsuccessfully, poured their energy into trying to keep him tied up in legal cases which he has refused to let stand in his way.

In the recent January 2015 president by-election Hichilema came second in the race to the candidate of the incumbent PF, falling short by just 27,000 votes (1%). He has run his campaigns on a strong economic platform, arguing that Zambia needs a leader who understands business and can turn around the economy in order to unlock developmental benefits in health, education and elsewhere. He is passionate about delivering improvements in Zambia's education system so that every young Zambian has that same opportunity he had to receive government support that can empower youths to launch a successful career in which they can earn a decent wage, provide for their family and help grow the Zambian economy.

Finally, Hichilema is not just a politician and a businessman, he is also a philanthropist, donating to community activities and projects such as clinics, schools, sinking boreholes and building dams to enhance agriculture activities. He is married to Mutinta and together they have three children.