



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

ADDRESS

By

**HIS EXCELLENCY MR. EDGAR CHAGWA LUNGU
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA**

On The

**PROGRESS MADE IN THE APPLICATION OF THE NATIONAL
VALUES AND PRINCIPLES**

Delivered

TO THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE TWELFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

On

FRIDAY, 12TH FEBRUARY, 2021

**STATE HOUSE
LUSAKA**

INTRODUCTION

MR SPEAKER,

1. OUR CONSTITUTION, PURSUANT TO PART II, ON NATIONAL VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND ECONOMIC POLICIES, ARTICLES 8 AND 9, AS READ WITH ARTICLE 86(1), REQUIRES THAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA REPORTS TO THIS AUGUST HOUSE THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE APPLICATION OF OUR NATIONAL VALUES AND PRINCIPLES. I AM, THEREFORE, HONOURED TO BE HERE TODAY TO DELIVER THE REPORT.

MR. SPEAKER,

2. THIS ADDRESS IS BEING MADE AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC WHICH HAS NEGATIVELY IMPACTED THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES. INDEED, WE ARE AT WAR WITH AN INVISIBLE ENEMY. AN ENEMY THAT HAS REDEFINED OUR LONG HELD TRADITIONS ON HUMAN INTERACTION AND WORK.

MR SPEAKER,

3. THE CURRENT COVID-19 STRAIN HAS GREATLY DECIMATED OUR POPULATION. WE HAVE LOST A LOT OF LIVES AND IF COVID-19 TO SOME WAS A DISTANT EXPERIENCE, NOW IT IS VERY CLOSE TO ALL OF US BECAUSE THE PEOPLE WE HAVE LOST ARE NOT ONLY PEOPLE WE KNOW BUT PEOPLE CLOSE TO US.

MR SPEAKER,

4. SOME OF THE PEOPLE I HAVE IN MIND, ALTHOUGH NOT EXHAUSTIVE, WHO HAVE SUCCUMBED TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC INCLUDE THE RIGHT REVEREND BISHOP MOSES HAMUNGOLE, FATHER CHARLES CHILINDA, MR AUGUSTINE SEYUBA, MRS JUSTICE ELIZABETH MUYOVWE, MR ABEL MKANDAWIRE, MR ANTHONY MWAMBA, AND SOME ROYAL HIGHNESSES. THE LIST IS INDEED LONG.

MR. SPEAKER,

5. THEREFORE, BEFORE I PROCEED WITH MY ADDRESS, LET ME TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO REQUEST THE HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THIS AUGUST HOUSE TO STAND AND JOIN ME IN OBSERVING A MINUTE OF SILENCE IN HONOUR OF ALL OUR CITIZENS WHO HAVE SUCCUMBED TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

(MINUTE OF SILENCE)

MAY THEIR SOULS REST IN ETERNAL PEACE.

MR SPEAKER,

6. DESPITE THE CHALLENGES CAUSED BY THIS PANDEMIC, WE, IN ZAMBIA, HAVE REMAINED RESOLUTE AND DETERMINED TO OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES WE FACE TODAY. LET ME, THEREFORE, COMMEND ALL ZAMBIANS FOR BEING RESILIENT AND HOPEFUL IN THESE TRYING TIMES.

MR SPEAKER,

7. I WANT TO ASSURE YOU THAT GOVERNMENT IS DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES WE FACE TODAY. THIS FIGHT CALLS FOR ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT OF EVERYONE. ACTING TOGETHER, WE WILL WIN, AND WIN WE MUST!

MR. SPEAKER,

8. BEFORE I PROCEED FURTHER, LET ME TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CONGRATULATE OUR NEW MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT. HONOURABLE GEORGE CHISANGA, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR LUKASHYA CONSTITUENCY AND HONOURABLE KABASO KAMPAMPI, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR MWANSABOMBWE CONSTITUENCY.

9. TO THE TWO MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, DO NOT TAKE YOUR ELECTORAL VICTORY FOR GRANTED. YOU HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PASSING LEGISLATION AND ATTENDING TO OTHER IMPORTANT MATTERS OF THE HOUSE, FOR THE GOOD OF OUR PEOPLE. YOU SHOULD NEVER ABROGATE THIS IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITY AND BETRAY THE TRUST OF THE PEOPLE WHO VOTED FOR YOU. THE PEOPLE HAVE REPOSED THEIR CONFIDENCE AND TRUST IN YOU. THEY WANT IMPROVED LIVELIHOOD THROUGH YOUR EFFECTIVE REPRESENTATION IN THIS HOUSE.

MR. SPEAKER,

10. THE INCLUSION OF NATIONAL VALUES AND PRINCIPLES IN OUR CONSTITUTION IS IN ITSELF INDICATIVE OF THEIR IMPORTANCE. THESE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES ARE:

- MORALITY AND ETHICS,
- PATRIOTISM AND NATIONAL UNITY,
- DEMOCRACY AND CONSTITUTIONALISM,
- HUMAN DIGNITY, EQUITY, SOCIAL JUSTICE, EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION,
- GOOD GOVERNANCE,
- INTEGRITY AND,
- SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

11. THESE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES PROVIDE THE MORAL COMPASS FOR OUR COUNTRY. THEY GUIDE EVERY DECISION WE MAKE; EVERY POLICY WE FORMULATE; AND EVERY LAW WE ENACT.

MR. SPEAKER,

12. LET ME NOW PROCEED TO GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF HOW WE HAVE APPLIED THE NATIONAL VALUES AND PRINCIPLES FROM THE TIME WE ENSHRINED THEM IN OUR CONSTITUTION.

MORALITY AND ETHICS

MR. SPEAKER,

13. CITIZENS WHO ARE MORALLY UPRIGHT GREATLY CONTRIBUTE TO BUILDING THE MORAL FABRIC OF ANY NATION.

MR SPEAKER,

14. THE QUESTION IS; *WHAT IS MORAL FABRIC?*

MR SPEAKER,

15. AMERICAN PHILOSOPHER, DR SARAH STROUD DEFINES MORAL FABRIC AS,

THE KEYSTONE KEEPING THE ARCH OF OUR SOCIETY AND THE MORAL IT HOLDS HIGH TOGETHER. WITH THE MORAL FABRIC OF SOCIETY HELD IN PLACE, THE PEOPLE SHARE A STANDARD OF DIGNITY WITH EACH OTHER. WITH EACH SHARING A COMMON RESPECT AND AMOUNT OF DIGNITY.

MR SPEAKER,

16. HAVING SAID THIS, HOWEVER, I HAVE OBSERVED WITH CONCERN THE DECLINING MORALS AND ETHICS IN OUR COUNTRY.

17. THIS IS EVIDENCED BY THE HIGH PREVALENCE OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, CHILD MARRIAGES, TEENAGE PREGNANCIES, AND ALCOHOL, SUBSTANCE ABUSE, AND MOST OF ALL SOCIAL MEDIA ABUSE. I WILL LATER TALK ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA ABUSE IN DETAIL BECAUSE IT IS OF GREAT CONCERN TO ALL OF US.

MR SPEAKER,

18. ACCORDING TO THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME *HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2020*, ON ZAMBIA, THE PERCENTAGE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN EVER EXPERIENCED FROM AN INTIMATE PARTNER AMONG THE FEMALE POPULATION AGED BETWEEN 15 AND OLDER STANDS AT **45.9 PERCENT**, WHICH IS WAY TO HIGH.

MR SPEAKER,

19. THE PERCENTAGE OF MARRIED WOMEN AGED BETWEEN **20** AND **24**, MARRIED AS CHILDREN OR BEFORE THE AGE OF **18**, IS **29 PERCENT**. AGAIN THIS CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE.

MR SPEAKER,

20. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, RAPE AND DEFILEMENT UNDERMINE THE HEALTH, DIGNITY AND SELF-ESTEEM OF VICTIMS. ACTS OF VIOLENCE SUFFERED BY SOME OF OUR PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY, WOMEN AND CHILDREN THESE DAYS ARE APPALLING. IN SOME CASES THESE CRIMINAL ACTS HAVE, UNFORTUNATELY, RESULTED IN DEATHS.

21. WE ALL KNOW OF PEOPLE THAT ARE VICTIMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND DEFILEMENT. WE ALL KNOW OF FAMILIES THAT ARE STILL GRIEVING OVER THE LOSS OF THEIR LOVED ONES. WE ALSO KNOW THAT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IS A CRIME. DEFILEMENT IS A CRIME. THESE ACTS HAVE NO PLACE IN OUR HOMES, COMMUNITIES AND NATION.

MR. SPEAKER,

22. IN A BID TO STOP PEOPLE FROM ENGAGING IN GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND DEFILEMENT, GOVERNMENT AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS HAVE CONTINUED TO CONDUCT COUNTRYWIDE PUBLIC AWARENESS AND SENSITISATION CAMPAIGNS. THROUGH THESE CAMPAIGNS, MORE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN MADE AWARE THAT SUCH ACTS ARE INHUMAN AND PUNISHABLE BY LAW.

23. IN ADDITION, WE HAVE ENCOURAGED PEOPLE TO REPORT CASES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND CHILD DEFILEMENT TO THE NEAREST POLICE STATION OR OTHER RELEVANT AUTHORITIES.

24. IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS, OVER **85,000** CASES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE WERE REPORTED ACROSS THE COUNTRY. IN 2017, A TOTAL NUMBER OF **21,504** CASES WERE REPORTED. THE CASES REPORTED IN 2018 WERE **22,073**, WHILE IN 2019, **25,121** CASES WERE REPORTED. BY THE THIRD QUARTER OF 2020, **17,089** CASES HAD BEEN REPORTED. FOR DEFILEMENT ALONE, THE COUNTRY RECORDED OVER **8,000** CASES IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS.

25. THE INCREASE IN REPORTED CASES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND DEFILEMENT IS A CLEAR INDICATION THAT OUR SENSITISATION CAMPAIGNS ARE BEARING FRUIT. MORE AND MORE PEOPLE ARE ABANDONING THE CULTURE OF SILENCE ON THESE VICES.

MR. SPEAKER,

26. I AM HAPPY THAT THE INVOLVEMENT OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS, THE CHURCH, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND THE MEDIA HAS BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN ENCOURAGING OUR PEOPLE TO REPORT THESE CASES.

27. LET US REAFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT AND CONTINUE WITH THE GOOD WORK TO ENDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND CHILD DEFILEMENT IN OUR SOCIETY. I URGE EVERYONE TO REPORT THESE CRIMES WHENEVER THEY OCCUR. LET US NOT SHY AWAY FROM REPORTING SUCH CASES AS DOING SO WILL NOT HELP THE VICTIMS GET JUSTICE. THE MORE WE COME OUT AND REPORT THESE CASES, THE MORE THE PERPETRATORS WILL BE EXPOSED AND PUNISHED. THIS WILL ACT AS A DETERRENT TO WOULD-BE PERPETRATORS.

MR. SPEAKER,

28. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE FAST-TRACK COURTS IN LUSAKA, CENTRAL, EASTERN, COPPERBELT, SOUTHERN AND WESTERN PROVINCES IS CONTRIBUTING TO THE SPEEDY DISPOSAL OF CASES. ORDINARILY, CASES OF THIS NATURE WOULD TAKE TWO YEARS OR MORE.

29. WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FAST-TRACK COURTS, THE TIME TO ADJUDICATE THESE CASES HAS SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED TO AN AVERAGE OF THREE MONTHS OR LESS. THE VOLUME OF CASES DISPOSED OFF HAS CONSEQUENTLY INCREASED FROM **199** IN 2017 TO **1,262** CASES IN 2020.

MR. SPEAKER,

30. TO ASSIST THE VICTIMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND DEFILEMENT, WE ARE PROVIDING SOCIAL, MEDICAL AND LEGAL SUPPORT. SINCE 2017, **27,528** FEMALES AND **16,445** MALES HAVE RECEIVED ASSISTANCE FROM OUR ESTABLISHED INSTITUTIONS. THE RESULTS FROM THESE LIFE-SAVING INTERVENTIONS ARE HEART-WARMING AND VERY ENCOURAGING.

31. I KNOW OF A STORY OF A WOMAN CALLED TOWELA WHO WAS IN AN EXTREMELY ABUSIVE MARRIAGE AND WANTED TO LEAVE. HER OWN FAMILY DID NOT WANT TO TAKE HER BACK, AND SHE HAD NOWHERE TO GO. SHE SOUGHT THE SERVICES OF A GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE ONE-STOP CENTRE THAT REFERRED HER TO A PLACE OF SAFETY. TOWELA HAS BEEN HELPED TO OVERCOME HER SITUATION. SHE IS NOW A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS WOMAN. SHE IS ALSO DEDICATED TO HELPING OTHER WOMEN WHO FIND THEMSELVES IN SIMILAR SITUATIONS.

32. I URGE EVERYONE TO PARTICIPATE IN RENDERING ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND CHILD DEFILEMENT. THEY NEED OUR HELP. THEY DESERVE OUR HELP. WE ALL HAVE A MORAL DUTY TO SUPPORT AND HEAL VICTIMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND DEFILEMENT. WE MUST END GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND DEFILEMENT.

33. AS THE GREAT AMERICAN ARTISTES STEVIE WONDER AND KENNETH EDMUNDS SUNG IN THEIR HIT SONG, *HOW COME, HOW LONG; DO WE LET IT JUST GO ON, TURN OUR BACKS AND CARRY ON.*

WE MUST END GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND DEFILEMENT RIGHT NOW!

MR SPEAKER,

34. CHILD MARRIAGES AND TEENAGE PREGNANCIES ARE NOT ONLY A VIOLATION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS BUT ALSO A DANGER TO THEIR HEALTH. THESE VICES IMPEDE GIRLS FROM REALISING THEIR FULL POTENTIAL. THESE VICES ARE HARMFUL NOT ONLY TO GIRLS THEMSELVES, BUT ALSO TO THEIR COMMUNITIES.

35. TO END CHILD MARRIAGE, MY GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTING A NATIONAL STRATEGY ON ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE IN ZAMBIA USING A MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH.

36. THIS INITIATIVE IS NOW BEARING FRUIT, ESPECIALLY IN THE RURAL AREAS. WORKING WITH OUR ESTEEMED CHIEFS AS CHANGE AGENTS ON ADDRESSING THIS VICE, POSITIVE CHANGE IS COMING.

37. FOR INSTANCE, GUIDELINES TO PROTECT YOUNG PEOPLE FROM CHILD MARRIAGES AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE HAVE BEEN FORMULATED IN **TEN** CHIEFDOMS. IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE GUIDELINES HAS RESULTED IN THE REDUCTION IN CHILD MARRIAGES. IN CHIEF CHAMUKA'S CHIEFDOM OF CENTRAL PROVINCE, FOR EXAMPLE, INCIDENCES OF CHILD MARRIAGES HAVE REDUCED FROM **45** IN 2015 TO ONLY **EIGHT** IN 2017. IN ADDITION, **67** GIRLS WHO DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL DUE TO CHILD MARRIAGES, WERE WITHDRAWN FROM THE SO-CALLED MARRIAGES AND TAKEN BACK TO SCHOOL.

38. THE SUCCESS STORY OF TAKING THESE CHILDREN BACK TO SCHOOL MUST BE ENCOURAGED ACROSS THE COUNTRY. I URGE OUR TRADITIONAL LEADERS TO CONTINUE WITH THIS EFFORT. WE NEED TO ACHIEVE OUR STRATEGIC VISION OF ENDING CHILD MARRIAGES IN ZAMBIA. LET GIRLS BE GIRLS AND NOT WIVES!

MR. SPEAKER,

39. TO FURTHER ASSIST THE GIRL CHILD, WE ARE IMPLEMENTING THE SCHOOL RE-ENTRY POLICY TO ENSURE THAT TEENAGE GIRLS WHO BECOME PREGNANT ARE ACCEPTED BACK INTO SCHOOL. IN THE PAST FOUR YEARS, **27,647** AFFECTED GIRLS BENEFITED FROM THIS POLICY.

40. INDEED, THE **RE-ENTRY POLICY** IS HELPING THE GIRLS TO REALISE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL.

MR SPEAKER,

41. LET ME ILLUSTRATE THE POINT FURTHER. A GIRL CALLED CECILIA WAS EXPELLED FROM SCHOOL IN GRADE 11 FOR GETTING PREGNANT. SHE LATER HAD FOUR CHILDREN BUT SHE TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE **RE-ENTRY POLICY** AND WENT BACK TO SCHOOL. TODAY, CECILIA IS ONE OF THE DEDICATED FRONTLINE STAFF, AS A REGISTERED NURSE, IN OUR FIGHT AGAINST THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

42. I, THEREFORE, IMPLORE GIRLS WHO LEFT SCHOOL BECAUSE OF PREGNANCY TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL AND CONTINUE WITH THEIR EDUCATION. I ALSO URGE PARENTS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES TO COUNSEL AND GUIDE OUR CHILDREN. ONE MISTAKE SHOULD NOT CONDEMN OUR GIRLS TO A LIFE SENTENCE.

MR. SPEAKER,

43. ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE REMAINS A SERIOUS CONCERN IN OUR SOCIETY. IF LEFT UNCHECKED, IT CAN LEAD TO DYSFUNCTIONAL HOMES AND SOCIETY. FURTHER, PRODUCTIVITY IN THE NATION SUFFERS.

44. TO ADDRESS THIS PROBLEM, GOVERNMENT, TOGETHER WITH VARIOUS PARTNERS, HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTING SENSITISATION, TRAINING AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

45. SINCE 2017, **1.7 MILLION** INDIVIDUALS AND **1,075** ORGANISATIONS HAVE BEEN SENSITISED ON THE DANGERS OF ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE.

46. IN ADDITION, GOVERNMENT HAS TRAINED **171** TEACHERS UNDER THE PEER EDUCATION TRAINING PROGRAMME IN DRUG ABUSE.

47. THESE TEACHERS ARE SETTING UP ANTI-DRUG ABUSE CLUBS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE SCHOOLS. FURTHER, **2,802** ADDICTS BENEFITED FROM THE REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES.

MR. SPEAKER,

48. OUR PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY THE YOUTH, SHOULD KNOW THAT HELP IS AVAILABLE. SERVICES TO DEAL WITH ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE ARE AVAILABLE AND ACCESSIBLE IN MOST GOVERNMENT HEALTH FACILITIES. ALL IT REQUIRES IS THE RESOLVE AND SUPPORT OF THE FAMILY TO DO THE RIGHT THING. LET US ALL HOLD HANDS AND HELP OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS AFFECTED BY THIS PROBLEM.

MR SPEAKER,

49. I ACKNOWLEDGE THE WORK BEING DONE BY PARTNERS SUCH AS THE CHURCH AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN PROVIDING REHABILITATION SERVICES TO AFFECTED PERSONS.

50. AS A RESULT OF THEIR EFFORT, MANY OF OUR PEOPLE WHO WERE ADDICTS ARE NOW LEADING PRODUCTIVE LIVES.

MR SPEAKER,

51. ALSO OF CONCERN IS THE RATE OF SUICIDES AMONGST OUR PEOPLE. NO PROBLEM IS INSURMOUNTABLE AND PEOPLE HAVING MENTAL CHALLENGES ALSO NEED HELP.

52. MENTAL DISEASES CAN AFFECT ANYBODY AND THAT IS WHY FAMILIES, FRIENDS, AND THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL NEED TO HELP OUR PEOPLE RAVAGED BY CHALLENGES SUCH AS DEPRESSION. IN ZAMBIA, SUICIDE RATES ARE NOW REPORTED TO BE AT **17.5 PER 100,000 MALES** AND **6.2 AMONG WOMEN**. THIS NEEDS TO BE STEMMED BEFORE NUMBERS GO UP.

PATRIOTISM AND NATIONAL UNITY

MR. SPEAKER,

53. IT IS THE DUTY OF EVERY CITIZEN TO LOVE THIS GREAT NATION. IT IS THE DUTY OF EVERY CITIZEN TO DEFEND THIS NATION. IT IS A DUTY FOR EVERY CITIZEN TO PROTECT THIS COUNTRY. WE ARE ALL DUTY BOUND TO WORK FOR THE GOOD OF THIS COUNTRY. THIS IS WHAT PATRIOTISM IS ALL ABOUT.

54. ONE WAY OF SHOWING PATRIOTISM IS TO RESPECT OUR NATIONAL SYMBOLS. THE NATIONAL FLAG, THE NATIONAL ANTHEM, THE COAT OF ARMS, THE PUBLIC SEAL AND THE NATIONAL MOTTO OF **ONE ZAMBIA, ONE NATION**. THESE SYMBOLS REPRESENT OUR IDENTITY, OUR SOVEREIGNTY AND OUR PRIDE.

MR SPEAKER,

55. I AM HAPPY THAT ONCE AGAIN, ZAMBIANS PROUDLY RELATE TO OUR NATIONAL FLAG. ONCE AGAIN, ZAMBIANS SING THE THREE STANZAS OF OUR NATIONAL ANTHEM, *PROUDLY AND FREELY*. ONCE AGAIN, OUR NATIONAL BROADCASTER, ZNBC, RECITES THE MOTTO **ONE ZAMBIA, ONE NATION** AT THE BEGINNING OF EVERY NEWS BULLETIN.

56. INDEED AS ZAMBIANS, WE SHOULD PROUDLY FLY OUR FLAG HIGH. WE SHOULD ALSO PROUDLY SING OUR NATIONAL ANTHEM AND STAND STILL, AS THE ANTHEM IS BEING SUNG, A SIGN OF RESPECT!

MR. SPEAKER,

57. BEING PATRIOTIC IS ALSO ABOUT **PROTECTING AND TAKING CARE OF PUBLIC ASSETS.** THESE ARE BUILT AT GREAT COST AND MEANT TO BENEFIT ALL OF US. THEREFORE, ANY FORM OF ABUSE, MISUSE OR DAMAGE IS A SETBACK TO NATIONAL PROGRESS.

58. I URGE YOU ALL TO **TAKE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR PUBLIC ASSETS** AND REPORT ANY MISUSE OR DAMAGE. THIS RESPONSIBILITY SHOULD EXTEND TO THE PROTECTION OF OUR ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

59. TO THOSE CHARGED WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF OVERSEEING THE CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF SUCH ASSETS, I IMPLORE YOU TO TAKE THE TASK SERIOUSLY. WE MUST GUARD MOTHER ZAMBIA AND ANYTHING PLACED UNDER OUR CHARGE, JEALOUSLY.

MR. SPEAKER,

60. PATRIOTISM ALSO ENTAILS **BEING DEVOTED TO, AND BEING POSITIVE ABOUT OUR COUNTRY, ZAMBIA.** WE NEED TO PORTRAY A POSITIVE IMAGE OF THE COUNTRY TO OUR CHILDREN AND TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD. WE MUST USE ALL AVAILABLE PLATFORMS, INCLUDING SOCIAL MEDIA, TO PROMOTE THE IMAGE AND INTERESTS OF OUR COUNTRY.

61. I COMMEND ALL THOSE CITIZENS WHO ARE ALREADY DOING SO, PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO HAVE TAKEN THE INITIATIVE TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO SPREAD POSITIVE MESSAGES ABOUT ZAMBIA. WE ARE ALL AMBASSADORS OF OUR COUNTRY IN OUR OWN RIGHT.

62. LET US BLOW OUR TRUMPET AND **PROMOTE THE IMAGE OF OUR COUNTRY.** I KNOW THAT TO SOME, SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS ARE FOR DENIGRATING THE IMAGE OF OUR COUNTRY.

63. HERE IS THE DEAL, WHETHER YOU BELONG TO THE RULING PARTY OR OPPOSITION PARTY, YOU ONLY HAVE ONE COUNTRY YOU CAN PROUDLY CALLS YOURS. WHETHER YOU LIVE IN ZAMBIA OR NOT, YOU ONLY HAVE ONE GOD-GIVEN COUNTRY. THEREFORE, DON'T FLAUNT ADOPTED COUNTRIES AS YOURS. GOD GAVE EACH INDIVIDUAL ONLY ONE COUNTRY AND WHEN THE RIGHT TIME ARRIVES YOU WILL RUN TO THAT COUNTRY.

MR. SPEAKER,

64. I AM ENCOURAGED TO SEE THAT MORE OF OUR LOCAL PRODUCTS ARE BEING SOLD IN SHOPS. EQUALLY ENCOURAGING IS THE FACT THAT MORE OF OUR PEOPLE ARE CONSUMING THESE PRODUCTS. THIS IS PATRIOTISM. IT IS ALSO A CLEAR INDICATION THAT OUR **PROUDLY ZAMBIAN CAMPAIGN** HAS TAKEN ROOT.

65. I AM HAPPY TO REPORT THAT **33** COMPANIES HAVE SO FAR BEEN CERTIFIED TO USE THE OFFICIAL PROUDLY ZAMBIAN LOGO, COVERING OVER **500** PRODUCT LINES. THIS IS A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. A MARK OF QUALITY AND INCREASING COMPETITIVENESS OF OUR LOCAL PRODUCTS.

66. THE BENEFITS ACCRUING TO THIS NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS ARE EVIDENT IN THE INCREASED CONSUMPTION OF WHAT WE PRODUCE. THIS IS NOT ONLY CREATING A READY MARKET FOR OUR LOCAL PRODUCERS BUT ALSO CREATING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR MORE OF OUR PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY THE YOUTH.

67. I, THEREFORE, URGE ALL CITIZENS TO ALWAYS **THINK LOCAL FIRST** WHEN BUYING GOODS AND SERVICES. IT SHOULD BE A MATTER OF PRIDE TO CONSUME WHAT WE PRODUCE.

MR SPEAKER,

68. THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND ITS CONSEQUENCES SUCH AS LOCKDOWNS HAVE TAUGHT US THAT WE CANNOT OVERLY RELY ON FOREIGN PRODUCTS FOR OUR LIVELIHOOD. WE MUST PRODUCE AND CONSUME OUR OWN GOODS.

MR. SPEAKER,

69. PATRIOTIC CITIZENS RIGHTLY **DECLARE AND PAY TAX.** IN THIS REGARD, I WISH TO EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION TO ALL TAXPAYERS WHO HAVE CONTINUED TO HONOUR THEIR TAX OBLIGATIONS. YOUR TAX BUILDS THE NATION. YOUR TAX EDUCATES THE CHILDREN OF THIS COUNTRY. YOUR TAX SUPPORTS THE VULNERABLE IN OUR SOCIETY.

70. EVADING TAX IS, THEREFORE, UNPATRIOTIC AND A SERIOUS CRIME. AS GOVERNMENT, WE CONTINUE TO DO OUR BEST TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR OUR TAX PAYERS TO MEET THEIR OBLIGATIONS WITHIN THE COMFORT OF THEIR HOMES OR WORK PLACES.

MR. SPEAKER,

71. WE HAVE CITIZENS AND ORGANISATIONS THAT ARE DEMONSTRATING AN ADMIRABLE AND INSPIRING SENSE OF PATRIOTISM.

72. THEY ARE RESPONDING TO DISASTER AND EMERGENCY SITUATIONS IN OUR COUNTRY. IN 2020, A NUMBER OF THEM CAME ON BOARD TO SUPPORT THE NATIONAL RESPONSE AGAINST THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. OTHERS CAME TO THE AID OF OUR PEOPLE DURING FLOODS AND DROUGHTS EXPERIENCED IN THE COUNTRY, WHILE OTHERS JOINED THE FIGHT AGAINST THE AFRICAN MIGRATORY LOCUST INVASION.

73. THIS IS THE WAY IT SHOULD BE. YOUR COUNTRY SALUTES YOU. GOVERNMENT ON ITS OWN CANNOT FULLY MEET THE NEEDS OF OUR PEOPLE IN TIMES OF DISTRESS.

74. I URGE OUR PEOPLE, THE CORPORATE WORLD AND CIVIL SOCIETY TO CONTINUE PARTNERING WITH GOVERNMENT IN TIMES OF NEED. THIS IS A SIGN AND MEASURE OF PATRIOTISM. IT IS A SIGN AND DEMONSTRATION OF UNITY.

75. AS WE PREPARE FOR THE AUGUST 2021 GENERAL ELECTION, I CALL UPON ALL ELIGIBLE CITIZENS TO DEMONSTRATE PATRIOTISM BY PARTICIPATING AS VOTERS AND CANDIDATES.

MR. SPEAKER,

76. NATIONAL UNITY IS ESSENTIAL IN PROMOTING PEACE AND STABILITY.

77. WE NEED TO UNITE, AS A PEOPLE, TO BUILD A PROSPEROUS ZAMBIA. THAT IS WHY MY GOVERNMENT IS ACTIVELY PROMOTING THE MOTTO OF **ONE ZAMBIA, ONE NATION**. INSPIRED BY OUR MOTTO, MY GOVERNMENT IS TAKING DEVELOPMENT TO ALL PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, WITHOUT LEAVING ANYONE BEHIND.

MR. SPEAKER,

78. NOTWITHSTANDING THE PEACE WE HAVE ENJOYED AS A COUNTRY, WE HAVE CONTINUED TO WITNESS INCIDENCES OF POLITICALLY MOTIVATED VIOLENCE. THIS IS NOT ONLY WORRISOME BUT ALSO DISHEARTENING FOR A CHRISTIAN NATION WITH A LONG HISTORY OF BEING A BEACON OF PEACE. ONE OF THE ROOT CAUSES OF SUCH VIOLENT ACTS IS THE INCREASING POLARIZATION OF OUR SOCIETY ALONG REGIONAL AND ETHNIC LINES, ESPECIALLY BY POLITICIANS. THIS MUST BE CONDEMNED WITH THE CONTEMPT IT DESERVES.

79. TO ADDRESS POLITICAL VIOLENCE, MY GOVERNMENT IS WORKING WITH VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS SUCH AS THE CIVIL SOCIETY, POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE CHURCH TO PROMOTE INTER-PARTY AND INTRA-PARTY DIALOGUE. AS A NATION WE MUST DEVELOP A CULTURE OF SETTLING OUR DIFFERENCES IN A PEACEFUL MANNER.

80. WE MUST BE BROAD-MINDED AND ACCEPT THAT THERE WILL ALWAYS BE OTHERS WITH DIVERGENT VIEWS AND OPINIONS. AND IN ELECTIONS, THERE WILL ALWAYS BE THE VICTORS AND THE VANQUISHED.

81. THE RENOWNED CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER, DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JUNIOR, WAS RIGHT WHEN HE SAID;

WE ARE TIED TOGETHER IN THE SINGLE GARMENT OF DESTINY... WE MUST ALL LEARN TO LIVE TOGETHER AS BROTHERS, OR WE ALL PERISH TOGETHER

....

82. WE OWE OURSELVES THE DUTY TO SAFEGUARD THE UNITY OF OUR NATION. AS ZAMBIANS, WE HAVE MORE IN COMMON THAN WHAT SEPARATES US. LET US AT ALL TIMES FOSTER UNITY AND BUILD A BETTER ZAMBIA FOR ALL, ESPECIALLY AS WE APPROACH THE 12TH AUGUST, 2021 GENERAL ELECTION.

DEMOCRACY AND CONSTITUTIONALISM

MR. SPEAKER,

83. GOVERNMENT REMAINS COMMITTED TO PROMOTING DEMOCRACY AND CONSTITUTIONALISM.

84. WE BELIEVE IN PLURAL POLITICS. WE BELIEVE IN THE UPHOLDING OF THE CONSTITUTION AS THE SUPREME LAW OF THE LAND. WE BELIEVE IN THE RULE OF LAW AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS OF STATE.

85. AS A COUNTRY, WE HOLD GENERAL ELECTIONS EVERY FIVE YEARS. THIS IS WHAT OUR CONSTITUTION DEMANDS. ELECTIONS PROVIDE A PLATFORM FOR OUR CITIZENS TO ELECT LEADERS OF THEIR CHOICE AND TO HOLD THEM ACCOUNTABLE. THIS IS A KEY ATTRIBUTE OF DEMOCRACY.

MR. SPEAKER,

86. WE HAVE MADE HEADWAY IN OUR PREPARATIONS FOR THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTIONS TO BE HELD ON THURSDAY, 12TH AUGUST, 2021. IN 2020, THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION OF ZAMBIA EMBARKED ON AN EXERCISE TO DEVELOP A NEW REGISTER OF VOTERS.

MR SPEAKER,

87. THIS EXERCISE WAS NECESSITATED BY RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY POLITICAL PARTIES, CIVIL SOCIETY PLAYERS, AND INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS, FOLLOWING CONCERNS RAISED AFTER THE 2016 GENERAL ELECTIONS.

88. THE NEW REGISTER HAS ENHANCED SECURITY FEATURES TO INCREASE THE CREDIBILITY OF OUR ELECTIONS.

MR SPEAKER,

89. THROUGH THIS AUGUST HOUSE, LET ME THANK THE ZAMBIAN CITIZENS WHO TURNED UP IN LARGE NUMBERS TO REGISTER AS VOTERS. I ALSO COMMEND THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION OF ZAMBIA AND ALL STAKEHOLDERS FOR SENSITISING OUR PEOPLE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF REGISTERING AS VOTERS.

MR SPEAKER,

90. THE EFFORTS OF THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION OF ZAMBIA, POLITICAL PARTIES, TRADITIONAL LEADERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS RESULTED IN A **PROVISIONAL REGISTER** WITH SLIGHTLY OVER **7 MILLION** PEOPLE AGAINST THE **TARGETED 8.4 MILLION** ELIGIBLE VOTERS. THIS REPRESENTS **83 PERCENT** OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS.

91. THIS IS COMMENDABLE, ESPECIALLY THAT THE NEW VOTERS' REGISTER HAS CAPTURED MORE NEW VOTERS AND OUTNUMBERS THE OLD REGISTER BY FAR.

MR SPEAKER,

92. REGISTERING AS A VOTER IS NOT AN END IN ITSELF. I, THEREFORE, URGE ALL THOSE WHO HAVE REGISTERED AS VOTERS TO TURN UP IN LARGE NUMBERS AND EXERCISE THEIR DEMOCRATIC RIGHT TO CAST THEIR VALUABLE VOTE ON THURSDAY, 12TH AUGUST 2021.

MR SPEAKER,

93. MY GOVERNMENT WILL ENSURE THAT LAW AND ORDER PREVAILS BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER THE ELECTIONS. LET ME REPEAT AND STRESS THAT MY GOVERNMENT WILL GUARANTEE AND ENSURE THAT LAW AND ORDER PREVAILS BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER THE ELECTIONS THIS YEAR.

HUMAN DIGNITY, EQUITY, SOCIAL JUSTICE, EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

MR. SPEAKER,

94. MY GOVERNMENT IS PROMOTING HUMAN DIGNITY, EQUITY, SOCIAL JUSTICE, EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION FOR ALL CITIZENS. THIS IS DEMONSTRATED IN THE MANNER SOCIAL SERVICES ARE BEING PROVIDED TO OUR PEOPLE ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

95. TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF OUR PEOPLE, WITHOUT LEAVING ANYONE BEHIND, GOVERNMENT IS IMPLEMENTING PROGRAMMES IN EDUCATION, HEALTH, WATER AND SANITATION. WE ARE ALSO IMPROVING ACCESS TO ELECTRICITY AS WELL AS INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY. IN ADDITION, WORK IS BEING DONE TO INCREASE OUR PEOPLE'S ACCESS TO JUSTICE.

MR. SPEAKER,

96. WITH REGARD TO EDUCATION IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS, GOVERNMENT HAS CONSTRUCTED **69** SECONDARY SCHOOLS ACROSS THE COUNTRY, BRINGING THE TOTAL NUMBER TO **1,114**. THIS HAS CREATED **41,400** ADDITIONAL SCHOOL SPACES FOR OUR LEARNERS.

97. TO PROMOTE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION, WE HAVE ALSO INCREASED THE NUMBER OF TEACHERS TRAINED IN SPECIAL EDUCATION FROM **1,380** IN 2017 TO **2,275** IN 2019.

98. CURRENTLY, THE NUMBER OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS WITH FACILITIES TO CATER FOR LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS STANDS AT **227**.

99. IN ADDITION, **10** SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN CONSTRUCTED SINCE 2017 BRINGING THE TOTAL TO **51** SUCH SCHOOLS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. THESE FACILITIES ARE PROVIDING EDUCATION SERVICES TO ABOUT **130,000** LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS PER YEAR.

100. FURTHER, TO PROMOTE THE DIGNITY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, GOVERNMENT IS SUPPORTING **73,365** BENEFICIARIES WITH DISABILITIES UNDER THE SOCIAL CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMME.

MR. SPEAKER,

101. MY GOVERNMENT IS SUPPORTING STUDENTS FROM POOR AND VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS WITH STUDENT LOANS AND SCHOLARSHIPS. BY END OF 2020, GOVERNMENT HAD SUPPORTED **22,799** STUDENTS COMPARED TO **17,221** STUDENTS IN 2017. CURRENTLY, **30 PERCENT** OF LOANS AND SCHOLARSHIPS IS RESERVED FOR FEMALE LEARNERS, WHILE THE REMAINING **70 PERCENT** IS COMPETED FOR BY BOTH MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS. THESE QUOTAS ALSO APPLY TO ENROLMENT OF LEARNERS IN UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES.

MR. SPEAKER,

102. TO ENHANCE PUPIL ATTENDANCE AND NUTRITION AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS, WE HAVE SCALED-UP THE HOME-GROWN SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME. CURRENTLY, GOVERNMENT IS FEEDING **1,127,000** LEARNERS IN **2,800** SCHOOLS IN **41** DISTRICTS COMPARED TO **1,052,760** LEARNERS IN **2,700** SCHOOLS IN **38** DISTRICTS IN 2017.

103. WE ARE DETERMINED TO ENSURE THAT NO CHILD DROPS OUT OF PRIMARY SCHOOL ON ACCOUNT OF HUNGER.

MR. SPEAKER,

104. GOVERNMENT IS ADDRESSING THE PLIGHT OF CHILDREN LIVING ON THE STREETS. TO THIS EFFECT, WE HAVE BEEN REMOVING, REHABILITATING AND REINTEGRATING THESE CHILDREN INTO SOCIETY. SINCE 2018, **1,935** STREET CHILDREN WERE REMOVED FROM THE STREETS AND SUBSEQUENTLY REINTEGRATED INTO SOCIETY.

105. FURTHER, GOVERNMENT, THROUGH THE ZAMBIA NATIONAL SERVICE, IS PROVIDING SKILLS TRAINING TO ADOLESCENTS REMOVED FROM THE STREETS. THIS PROGRAMME IS EMPOWERING STREET AND VULNERABLE YOUTHS THROUGH CHARACTER TRANSFORMATION AND SKILLS TRAINING.

MR SPEAKER,

106. THE TRAINING RECEIVED INCLUDES CARPENTRY, GENERAL AGRICULTURE, METAL FABRICATION, BRICKLAYING AS WELL AS TAILORING AND DESIGNING. WE WANT THESE YOUTHS TO BECOME PRODUCTIVE CITIZENS IN OUR SOCIETY.

107. IN 2020, WE TARGETED **1,100** ADOLESCENTS OUT OF WHICH **350** BOYS COMMENCED THEIR TRAINING AT CHIWOKO ZAMBIA NATIONAL SERVICE TRAINING CAMP IN KATETE. THE REMAINING **500** BOYS AND **250** GIRLS WILL THIS YEAR COMMENCE THEIR TRAINING AT THE CHISHIMBA TRAINING CAMP IN KASAMA AND THE KITWE TRAINING CAMP.

MR SPEAKER,

108. THIS EXERCISE OF ENDING STREETISM AMONG CHILDREN FROM DISADVANTAGED FAMILIES IN OUR SOCIETY USING THE ZAMBIA NATIONAL SERVICE IS A GLOWING SUCCESS AND IS UNPRECEDENTED. IT IS YET ANOTHER EXAMPLE THAT **THIS GOVERNMENT CARES.**

109. AND TO YOU MY DEAR YOUTH, LET ME TELL YOU THIS; TO US IT DOES NOT MATTER WHICH FAMILY YOU COME FROM. AS LONG AS YOU ARE A CITIZEN OF THIS COUNTRY, THIS GOVERNMENT CARES FOR YOU. THIS GOVERNMENT WANTS THE BEST FOR YOU.

MR. SPEAKER,

110. IN THE HEALTH SECTOR, MY GOVERNMENT HAS CONSTRUCTED OVER **500** HEALTH FACILITIES SINCE 2017. WE HAVE ALSO RECRUITED OVER **23,000** HEALTH WORKERS. TO ENSURE EFFICIENCY IN THE SUPPLY OF DRUGS AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES, WE HAVE ESTABLISHED **FIVE** REGIONAL MEDICAL STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION HUBS.

MR SPEAKER,

111. AS A RESULT OF THESE EFFORTS, MORE AND MORE OF OUR MOTHERS ARE NOW GIVING BIRTH IN HEALTH FACILITIES SUPPORTED BY QUALIFIED PERSONNEL.

112. IN ADDITION, OUR PEOPLE ARE COVERING LESS DISTANCES TO ACCESS HEALTH SERVICES AND ESSENTIAL DRUGS ARE WITHIN THEIR REACH BECAUSE **THIS GOVERNMENT CARES.**

MR. SPEAKER,

113. AS A PRO-POOR GOVERNMENT, WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO ENSURE THAT THE RURAL POPULATION ALSO BENEFITS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA OF THE COUNTRY.

114. I AM, THEREFORE, HAPPY TO REPORT THAT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ELECTRICITY SERVICE ACCESS PROJECT IS GOING ON WELL. BY THE END OF 2020, THE NUMBER OF BENEFICIARY HOUSEHOLDS WAS **29,968** OUT OF WHICH **9,082** WERE FEMALE-HEADED.

115. ONCE COMPLETED, **38,296** HOUSEHOLDS IN RURAL AREAS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO ELECTRICITY. FURTHER, GOVERNMENT IS IMPLEMENTING OTHER PROJECTS TO INCREASE ACCESS TO ELECTRICITY IN RURAL AREAS. **THIS GOVERNMENT CARES.**

MR. SPEAKER,

116. WE HAVE ALSO CONTINUED TO INCREASE ACCESS TO SAFE AND CLEAN WATER AND ADEQUATE SANITATION.

117. LAST YEAR, **1,813** BOREHOLES WERE CONSTRUCTED AND **362** REHABILITATED. FURTHER, **68** WATER SCHEMES WERE CONSTRUCTED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. THIS BRINGS THE NUMBER OF BOREHOLES CONSTRUCTED IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS TO **7,987**. THE NUMBER OF BOREHOLES REHABILITATED IN THE SAME PERIOD IS **2,880**, WHILE **119** WATER SCHEMES WERE CONSTRUCTED.

118. OVERALL, **2.5 MILLION** PEOPLE HAVE BENEFITED FROM THESE GOVERNMENT PROJECTS.

119. IN ADDITION, I AM GLAD TO REPORT THAT OVER THE LAST FOUR YEARS MORE THAN **480,000** HOUSEHOLDS WERE CONNECTED TO WATER SUPPLY AND MORE THAN **220,000** TO SEWERAGE INFRASTRUCTURE IN URBAN AREAS. FURTHER, MORE THAN **1.7 MILLION** PEOPLE ARE EXPECTED TO BENEFIT FROM VARIOUS WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION PROJECTS CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION.

MR SPEAKER,

120. THESE INITIATIVES ARE IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF OUR PEOPLE. FOR INSTANCE, WE ARE SEEING REDUCED INCIDENCES OF WATER BORNE DISEASES.

MR. SPEAKER,

121. MY GOVERNMENT HAS DEMONSTRATED COMMITMENT TO NARROWING THE DIGITAL GAP BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS IN THE COUNTRY. MOST OF YOU HAVE SEEN COMMUNICATION TOWERS IN YOUR DISTRICTS AND CONSTITUENCIES.

122. THE COMMUNICATION TOWERS AND EXPANDED INTERNET INFRASTRUCTURE HAVE ENABLED OUR PEOPLE, INCLUDING THOSE LIVING IN RURAL AREAS, TO ACCESS INFORMATION AND A WIDE RANGE OF SERVICES ELECTRONICALLY, **CLEARLY DEMONSTRATING THAT THIS GOVERNMENT CARES FOR ALL AND WILL NOT LEAVE ANYONE BEHIND.**

123. OUR PEOPLE ARE NOW PARTICIPATING MORE IN SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES. EQUALLY IMPORTANT HAS BEEN THE INCREASED ACCESS BY OUR PEOPLE TO RADIO AND TELEVISION SIGNALS WITHOUT ANY HINDRANCE. THIS HAS BEEN AS A RESULT OF OUR INVESTMENT IN CONSTRUCTION OF RADIO AND TELEVISION TRANSMITTERS.

MR. SPEAKER,

124. TO PROMOTE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL, MY GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN PROVIDING LEGAL AID SERVICES TO THE POOR AND VULNERABLE. IN 2020, **8,756** CLIENTS WERE ASSISTED WITH LEGAL SERVICES COMPARED TO **5,177** CLIENTS IN 2017. THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CLIENTS ASSISTED IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS STANDS AT **32,276.**

MR SPEAKER,

125. ONLY ON MONDAY, 1ST FEBRUARY, 2021, CABINET APPROVED FOR PUBLICATION AND INTRODUCTION HERE IN PARLIAMENT, DURING THE CURRENT SITTING, A BILL ENTITLED '**THE LEGAL AID BILL 2021**' WHICH SEEKS TO CREATE A COMPREHENSIVE LEGAL AID SYSTEM IN ZAMBIA THAT IS ACCESSIBLE, EFFECTIVE, CREDIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE TO PERSONS WHOSE MEANS ARE INSUFFICIENT IN CIVIL OR CRIMINAL MATTERS.

MR SPEAKER,

126. ONCE ENACTED, THE PROVISION OF LEGAL AID SERVICES IN ZAMBIA TO PERSONS WHOSE MEANS ARE INSUFFICIENT TO ENABLE THEM PAY FOR LEGAL SERVICES IN CIVIL OR CRIMINAL MATTERS WILL BE ENHANCED.

MR SPEAKER,

127. JUSTICE DEMANDS THAT, RICH OR POOR, WE ALL MUST HAVE ACCESS TO LEGAL REPRESENTATION, ESPECIALLY BEFORE COURTS OF LAW WHETHER IN CIVIL OR CRIMINAL MATTERS IF NECESSITY SO DEMANDS.

MR SPEAKER,

128. MY GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO PARTNERED WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES AS WELL AS CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS TO PROVIDE PARALEGAL TRAINING AND SERVICES COUNTRYWIDE. SO FAR, **280** STUDENTS HAVE BEEN TRAINED.

MR SPEAKER,

129. WE ARE ON COURSE IN PROVIDING EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL OUR PEOPLE.

GOOD GOVERNANCE AND INTEGRITY

MR. SPEAKER,

130. VARIOUS MEASURES ARE BEING IMPLEMENTED TO CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE THE GOVERNANCE ENVIRONMENT AS WELL AS PROMOTE INTEGRITY.

MR SPEAKER,

131. TO IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY AND ACCOUNTABILITY, WE ARE INCREASING THE NUMBER OF SERVICES THAT CAN BE ACCESSED ONLINE BY OUR PEOPLE USING THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE BUS AND PAYMENT GATEWAY. THIS IS PROVIDING A NUMBER OF BENEFITS TO OUR CITIZENS AND THE ECONOMY AS A WHOLE.

132. FIRSTLY, ACCESS TO ONLINE SERVICES HAS LED TO REDUCTION IN THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS. IT IS ENABLING OUR PEOPLE TO CONVENIENTLY MAKE PAYMENTS REMOTELY. IT IS ALSO PROMOTING SAFETY UNDER THE NEW NORMAL OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. FOR INSTANCE, ONE DOES NOT NEED TO QUEUE UP IN ORDER TO PAY FOR RENEWAL OF DRIVERS' LICENSE, ROAD TAX OR GROUND RENT.

133. SECONDLY, ONLINE PROVISION OF SERVICES IS PROMOTING EFFICIENCY. THIRDLY, THE ONLINE PAYMENT SYSTEM IS ENHANCING REVENUE COLLECTION.

134. FURTHER, THE ROLL-OUT OF E-SERVICES IS REDUCING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORRUPTION, THEFT AND PILFERAGE OF PUBLIC RESOURCES. MY GOVERNMENT WILL ENSURE THAT E-PAYMENTS AND SERVICES ARE SCALED UP AND BECOME THE "NEW NORMAL" IN ZAMBIA.

MR SPEAKER,

135. AS OF DECEMBER, 2020, OVER **30** GOVERNMENT SERVICES WERE ACCESSIBLE AT THE TOUCH OF A BUTTON. PLANS ARE UNDERWAY TO INTEGRATE MORE SERVICES ON THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE BUS BY THE END OF THIS YEAR.

MR. SPEAKER,

136. TO FURTHER BRING SERVICES CLOSER TO OUR PEOPLE, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT HAS DEVOLVED SOME OF ITS FUNCTIONS TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES. IN 2020, MOTOR VEHICLE LICENSING, ROAD-WORTHINESS CERTIFICATION AND PHYSICAL INSPECTION SERVICES WERE BEING PROVIDED BY SIX LOCAL AUTHORITIES, NAMELY KABOMPO, MWINILUNGA, KAFUE, MUMBWA, NYIMBA AND LUNDAZI.

137. THESE SERVICES WILL BE ROLLED OUT TO SIX MORE LOCAL AUTHORITIES THIS YEAR. IT MUST BE STATED HERE THAT LOCAL AUTHORITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY ARE THE INSTITUTIONS THROUGH WHICH DECENTRALISATION IS BEING ACTUALISED WITHOUT CREATING ANY OTHER PARALLEL STRUCTURES. THEREFORE, I DIRECT CABINET OFFICE TO ACCELERATE THE DEVOLUTION OF POWER FROM CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT, THROUGH THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

MR. SPEAKER,

138. TO STRENGTHEN GOOD GOVERNANCE, GOVERNMENT ENACTED A NUMBER OF PIECES OF LEGISLATION. THE NATIONAL PLANNING AND BUDGETING ACT NO. 1 OF 2020 WAS ENACTED TO ENHANCE ACCOUNTABILITY AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE NATIONAL PLANNING AND BUDGETING PROCESSES.

139. IN ADDITION, THE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT ACT NO. 8 OF 2020 WAS ENACTED TO ENHANCE TRANSPARENCY, VALUE FOR MONEY, COMPETITION AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE USE OF PUBLIC RESOURCES.

MR SPEAKER,

140. GOVERNMENT WILL NOT TOLERATE ANY MISUSE OF PUBLIC RESOURCES. TO DEMONSTRATE GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO PRUDENT MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC RESOURCES, THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PUBLIC FINANCE MANAGEMENT ACT NO.1 OF 2018 IS IN FULL FORCE.

MR SPEAKER,

141. ACCORDINGLY, PRESCRIBED ACTION IS BEING TAKEN SYSTEMATICALLY AGAINST OFFICERS WHO DO NOT OBSERVE THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT.

MR. SPEAKER,

142. RECOGNISING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MEDIA IN OUR GOVERNANCE SYSTEM, GOVERNMENT LAUNCHED THE FIRST-EVER MEDIA DEVELOPMENT POLICY IN NOVEMBER 2020. THE POLICY AIMS TO PROMOTE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION BY GUARANTEEING PRESS FREEDOM.

143. THE POLICY IS ANCHORED ON FOUR PILLARS, NAMELY MEDIA FREEDOM, MEDIA PLURALISM, MEDIA INDEPENDENCE AND SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS. THIS DEVELOPMENT UNDERSCORES GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO SUPPORTING MEDIA INSTITUTIONS AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION.

144. THIS YEAR, BEING AN ELECTION YEAR, THE MEDIA WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY ITS VERY IMPORTANT ROLE OF BEING THE FOURTH ESTATE.

MR SPEAKER,

145. I AM A FIRM BELIEVER OF PRESS FREEDOM AND AS WE APPROACH THE GENERAL ELECTION THIS AUGUST, I CALL UPON ALL ZAMBIANS TO ALLOW JOURNALISTS TO PERFORM THEIR FUNCTION OF REPORTING ON EVENTS LEADING TO THESE ELECTIONS FREELY.

146. CONVERSELY, MY ADMINISTRATION AND I EXPECT JOURNALISTS TO OBSERVE THE ELECTORAL CODE OF CONDUCT. BIASNESS AND UNTRUTHS ARE NOT PART OF JOURNALISM, THEY BELONG TO THE DRAINAGE!

147. JOURNALIST SHOULD ALSO AVOID GIFTS AND BEING PAMPERED WITH MONEY AND MATERIAL THINGS BECAUSE IT IS THIS BEHAVIOR THAT COMPROMISES THEIR REPORTING. MY DEAR MEDIA COLLEAGUES, I CALL UPON YOU TO EXERCISE FAIRNESS, PROFESSIONALISM AND OBJECTIVITY. WE NEED A FREE BUT RESPONSIBLE MEDIA.

MR SPEAKER,

148. FOR THOSE WHO ARE IN THE HABIT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ABUSE OF ANY KIND; CHANGE, USE YOUR TIME PRODUCTIVELY. YOU CANNOT BE ON SOCIAL MEDIA THE WHOLE DAY JUST CRITICISING GOVERNMENT. IF IT IS IMPERATIVE, IN YOUR OPINION TO CRITICISE GOVERNMENT, DO SO, BUT PLEASE, DO NOT INSULT. NO ONE WILL HEAR YOU WITH YOUR PROFANITIES AND FALSEHOODS.

149. AND HERE IS NEWS FOR YOU "SOCIAL MEDIA ABUSERS"; CABINET IS INTRODUCING A BILL IN PARLIAMENT ENTITLED **THE CYBER SECURITY AND CYBER CRIMES BILL, 2021**. THIS BILL AIMED AT PROTECTING PERSONS FROM CYBERCRIME WILL NOT LET YOU GO SCOT-FREE IF YOU DO NOT STOP ABUSING INNOCENT PEOPLE ONLINE.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

MR. SPEAKER,

150. AS WE PURSUE OUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, THERE IS NEED TO PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES. WE NEED TO EXPLOIT OUR NATURAL RESOURCES IN A SUSTAINABLE MANNER FOR US TO ATTAIN INTER-GENERATIONAL EQUITY, WHILE MAINTAINING ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY.

151. TO THIS END, GOVERNMENT HAS, OVER THE YEARS, STRENGTHENED MEASURES AIMED AT PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT FOR OUR NEEDS AS WELL AS THE NEEDS OF FUTURE GENERATIONS.

MR. SPEAKER,

152. TO STEM THE NEGATIVE TIDE OF DEFORESTATION, WE HAVE STEPPED-UP AFFORESTATION AND REFORESTATION ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE FOREST COVER. TO THIS END, OVER **13,272.45** HECTARES OF LAND ACROSS THE COUNTRY HAS BEEN PLANTED WITH TREES IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS.

153. GOVERNMENT IS ALSO WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES IN THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF FORESTS. SO FAR, **1.2 MILLION** HECTARES ARE BEING MANAGED AS COMMUNITY FORESTS UNDER **34** FOREST MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN SIGNED SINCE 2018. WE ARE ALSO PROMOTING NATURAL REGENERATION OF FORESTS.

MR SPEAKER,

154. I REITERATE THE CALL TO THE NATION TO PLANT MORE TREES. LET US ALSO CHOOSE TO USE CLEAN AND SMART ENERGY SUCH AS SOLAR. LET US AVOID THE USE OF CHARCOAL WHICH LEADS TO INDISCRIMINATE CUTTING OF TREES.

MR. SPEAKER,

155. THE TENDENCY BY SOME OF OUR PEOPLE TO SETTLE IN FRAGILE ECO-SYSTEMS SUCH AS WETLANDS AND PROTECTED WILDLIFE AREAS IS A GROWING CONCERN IN OUR COUNTRY.

156. THIS PRACTICE EXPOSES SETTLERS TO THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE SUCH AS FLOODS. SETTLING IN SUCH AREAS RESULTS IN THE DEGRADATION OF THESE FRAGILE ECO-SYSTEMS AS WELL AS HUMAN-ANIMAL CONFLICTS.

157. I URGE OUR CITIZENS TO DESIST FROM SETTLING IN FRAGILE ECO-SYSTEMS. WE OWE IT TO POSTERITY TO CONSERVE OUR PRISTINE ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY.

MR. SPEAKER,

158. IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE, GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO PROMOTE CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE, SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND RENEWABLE ENERGY IN PURSUIT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. WE WANT THESE SECTORS TO GROW AND COMPLEMENT THE MINING SECTOR.

CONCLUSION

MR. SPEAKER,

159. AS A NATION, WE HAVE MADE PROGRESS IN ENTRENCHING OUR NATIONAL VALUES AND PRINCIPLES. WE ARE ON THE RIGHT PATH. WE HAVE SEEN MORE AND MORE OF OUR YOUNG GIRLS BEING WITHDRAWN FROM CHILD MARRIAGES TO CONTINUE WITH THEIR EDUCATION.

160. WE HAVE ALSO SEEN MORE OF OUR CITIZENS REPORTING ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE WHICH HAS LED TO MORE CASES BEING ADJUDICATED. THIS IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

161. LET US DO MORE TO END CHILD MARRIAGE AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE. LET US HAVE THE COURAGE TO REPORT ALL THE PERPETRATORS OF THESE VICES TO RELEVANT AUTHORITIES. LET US ALL JOIN HANDS IN THIS FIGHT.

MR. SPEAKER,

162. OUR CONCERTED EFFORTS TO FOSTER PATRIOTISM ARE ALSO YIELDING THE DESIRED RESULTS. WE ARE CONSUMING MORE OF OUR LOCALLY PRODUCED PRODUCTS. THIS IS A CLEAR SIGN OF PATRIOTISM. LET US PROMOTE AND CONSUME OUR LOCAL PRODUCTS EVEN MORE. LET US BE PROUD OF WHAT WE PRODUCE. LET US MAKE ZAMBIA STAND OUT AMONG OTHER PROGRESSIVE NATIONS.

MR. SPEAKER,

163. PROMOTING AND SAFEGUARDING HUMAN DIGNITY, EQUITY, SOCIAL JUSTICE, EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION FOR OUR PEOPLE IS TOP ON OUR AGENDA. WE WILL, THEREFORE, CONTINUE TO INCREASE ACCESS TO HEALTH, EDUCATION AND JUSTICE.

164. WE WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO INCREASE OUR PEOPLE'S ACCESS TO ELECTRICITY, WATER AND SANITATION, ESPECIALLY IN RURAL AREAS.

MR. SPEAKER,

165. ON 12TH AUGUST THIS YEAR, OUR COUNTRY WILL HOLD GENERAL ELECTIONS. AS A NATION, WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE THE IMPACT OF NATIONAL VALUES AND PRINCIPLES ON OUR DEMOCRACY.

166. WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DENOUNCE VIOLENCE AND HATRED. WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO EMBRACE UNITY, CIVILITY AND PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE.

167. MY GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT OUR ELECTIONS ARE PEACEFUL. MY GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO ENSURING OUR COUNTRY REMAINS PEACEFUL BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER ELECTIONS.

168. I, THEREFORE, CALL UPON EVERY ZAMBIAN, EVERY POLITICAL PARTY AND PLAYER, THE CHURCH AND THE CIVIL SOCIETY TO JOIN ME IN ASSURING OUR PEOPLE OF PEACE AND UNITY BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE 2021 GENERAL ELECTIONS. WE ARE ONE ZAMBIA, AND INDEED WE ARE ONE NATION.

MR. SPEAKER,

169. THE ACHIEVEMENTS WE HAVE MADE SO FAR WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER STAKEHOLDERS. I, THEREFORE, EXTEND MY SINCERE GRATITUDE TO ALL ZAMBIANS, OUR COOPERATING PARTNERS, THE CHURCH AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS.

170. TO YOU, I SAY THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR CONTINUING TO PARTNER WITH US IN ENSURING THAT THE NATIONAL VALUES AND PRINCIPLES WE HAVE SET FOR OURSELVES ARE APPLIED IN THE INTERPRETATION OF OUR CONSTITUTION, IN THE FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR POLICIES AS WELL AS IN THE ENACTMENT OF LEGISLATION.

171. THESE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES MUST BE ENTRENCHED IN OUR PRIVATE AND PUBLIC LIVES. THIS TASK IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EVERYONE. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT WE HAVE TRANSLATED NATIONAL VALUES AND PRINCIPLES INTO OUR SEVEN MAJOR LOCAL LANGUAGES.

MR. SPEAKER,

172. MAY WE ALL CHOOSE TO BE COUNTED IN THIS NOBLE CAUSE OF LIVING BY OUR NATIONAL VALUES AND PRINCIPLES. LET US ALL COMMIT TO MAKING OUR COUNTRY SAFER AND BETTER BY LIVING BY OUR NATIONAL VALUES AND PRINCIPLES.

MR SPEAKER,

173. THIS PATRIOTIC FRONT GOVERNMENT **CARES FOR ALL ZAMBIANS**, REGARDLESS OF WHO YOU ARE, WHERE YOU ARE, OR WHOM YOU VOTED FOR.

174. MAY GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, BLESS THE WORKS OF OUR HANDS AND OUR GREAT NATION, ZAMBIA.

175. I THANK YOU.