



Republic of Zambia

**SPEECH DELIVERED
BY
HIS EXCELLENCY, MR EDGAR CHAGWA LUNGU
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

AT THE

ZAMBIA NATIONAL FARMERS' UNION (ZNFU)
NATIONAL FIELD DAY HELD IN LUAPULA PROVINCE**

TUESDAY, 23RD APRIL, 2019

**STATE HOUSE
LUSAKA**

- **THE PROVINCIAL MINISTER – LUAPULA PROVINCE, HONOURABLE NICKSON CHILANGWA, MP;**
- **THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, HONOURABLE MICHAEL KATAMBO, MP;**
- **CABINET MINISTERS PRESENT;**
- **MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT PRESENT;**
- **THE PRESIDENT OF THE ZAMBIA NATIONAL FARMERS UNION, MR JERVIS ZIMBA;**
- **YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS CHIEF MIBENGE;**
- **SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS PRESENT,**
- **REPRESENTATIVES OF SEED COMPANIES AND OTHER PRIVATE COMPANIES PRESENT;**
- **REPRESENTATIVES OF RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS;**
- **DISTINGUISHED GUESTS;**
- **MY FELLOW FARMERS;**
- **MEMBERS OF THE PRESS;**
- **LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

IT IS INDEED A GREAT HONOUR TO GRACE THE 2019 ZAMBIA NATIONAL FARMERS' UNION NATIONAL FIELD DAY TAKING PLACE HERE IN LUAPULA PROVINCE.

MATTERS OF AGRICULTURE ARE CLOSE TO MY HEART AND SHOULD BE FOR ALL OF US. IT IS IN GOD'S PLAN THAT WE CULTIVATE THE LAND TO PRODUCE FOOD. THEREFORE, THIS MUST BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY.

HOWEVER, IT IS A MATTER OF GREAT CONCERN THAT WE ARE FACED WITH SERIOUS EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE WHICH HAS ADVERSELY AFFECTED SOME OF OUR FARMERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF THE HARSH CLIMATIC CONDITIONS WHICH HAS BESET THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR SHOULD KEEP US ON OUR TOES TO PURSUE LASTING AND SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS, TO CUSHION THE IMPACT OF THIS PHENOMENON AND ENABLE US TO CONTINUE PRODUCING FOOD.

IN THIS REGARD, THE 2019 ZAMBIA NATIONAL FARMERS UNION (ZNFU) IS AN IMPORTANT OCCASION AND PLATFORM FOR FARMERS AND ALL STAKEHOLDERS IN THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR TO LEARN AND EXPLOIT NEW AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION.

THE FACT THAT UNPREDICTABLE CLIMATE AND WEATHER PATTERNS CONFRONT US SHOULD NOT DETER US FROM SEEKING SOLUTIONS TO THIS CHALLENGE.

WITH THIS PHENOMENON, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO EXPLOIT OPPORTUNITIES FOR US TO SUSTAIN OUR FOOD PRODUCTION AND CONSEQUENTLY, ENHANCE FOOD SECURITY.

IF SOUTHERN PROVINCE HAS BEEN FACING INCESSANT DRY SPELLS, WHAT IS IT THAT WE CAN DO FOR US TO CONTINUE PRODUCING, EVEN IN THE MIDST OF SUCH UNFAVOURABLE CLIMATIC CONDITIONS?

THIS SCENARIO IS A CALL FOR US TO URGENTLY INTERROGATE POSSIBLE SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS THAN SIT BACK AND FOLD OUR HANDS WATCHING THE STATUS QUO FROM THE TERRACES.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

MY GOVERNMENT ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO AGRICULTURE AS IT IS ONE OF THE VITAL PILLARS FOR THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

HOWEVER OUR EFFORTS TO BOOST AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION IS BEING DERAILED BY THE CLIMATE CHANGE AND WEATHER VARIABILITY WHICH IS THREATENING AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION.

DESPITE THIS DEVELOPMENT, WE HAVE REMAINED RESOLUTE TO PURSUING LASTING SOLUTIONS TO THIS CHALLENGE.

WE HAVE SEEN HOW SOME PARTS OF OUR COUNTRY EXPERIENCED A SEVERE REDUCTION IN RAINFALL, WHILE OTHER AREAS ENCOUNTERED FLOODING DURING THE LAST FARMING SEASON. THIS AFFECTED CROP AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION.

WHAT THIS ENTAILS IS THAT LIVELIHOODS OF OVER **50** PERCENT OF THE POPULATION, WHO DIRECTLY DEPEND ON AGRICULTURE, AND THE NATION AT LARGE IS THREATENED BY THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

AS GOVERNMENT WE ARE NOW LOOKING TO THE NORTHERN HALF OF THE COUNTRY, WHICH INCLUDES LUAPULA PROVINCE, TO BECOMING THE NEXT FOOD BASKET. THIS IS BECAUSE THE REGION IS ENDOWED WITH GOOD RAINFALL AND VAST WATER RESOURCES THAT CAN BE HARNESSSED FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

LUAPULA PROVINCE FOR INSTANCE, HAS OVER THE LAST THREE AGRICULTURAL SEASONS PRODUCED AN AVERAGE OF **124,214** METRIC TONNES OF MAIZE AND RECORDED YIELDS OF OVER TWO METRIC TONNES PER HECTARE.

THE REGION'S HIGH YIELDS IS AN INDICATION OF THE RICH AGRICULTURAL POTENTIAL THAT LUAPULA AND THE COUNTRY'S NORTHERN REGIONS HAVE IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION.

I WISH TO REITERATE MY EARLIER CALL THAT THE DRY SPELLS WHICH HAS AFFECTED AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION IN THE COUNTRY'S SOUTHERN PARTS SHOULD BE A WAKE UP CALL FOR US TO DO SOMETHING FOR THE AFFECTED AREAS TO CONTINUE PRODUCING.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

IN LINE WITH THE ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION AGENDA, GOVERNMENT SEES AGRICULTURE AS A POTENTIAL FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNER FOR THE COUNTRY.

IT IS ONLY THROUGH INCREASED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION THAT THE COUNTRY CAN LEVERAGE THE AGRICULTURAL EXPORT MARKETS WHICH EXIST IN THE SADC REGION, MAINLY IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO.

LUAPULA IS ALREADY AT AN ADVANTAGE TO EXPLOIT THIS EXISTING MARKET OWING TO PROXIMITY TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO.

IN THIS REGARD, GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, TRADE AND INDUSTRY IS DEVELOPING A MECHANISM OF CREATING AN EXPORT QUOTA FOR AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES INTO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO.

I URGE THE TWO MINISTRIES TO EXPEDITE THE PROCESS OF COMING UP WITH MODALITIES FOR THE EXPORT QUOTA.

WHILE GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EXPORT ORIENTED AGRICULTURE SECTOR, I MUST HASTEN TO SAY THAT EXPORTS SHALL NOT BE AT THE EXPENSE OF HOUSEHOLD AND NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY.

I THEREFORE WISH TO ENCOURAGE THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE TO QUICKLY DEVELOP A CREDIBLE AND AUTHENTIC GRAIN MARKETING INFORMATION SYSTEM TO EFFECTIVELY INFORM US ON THE GRAIN SUPPLY SITUATION. YOU MAY REST ASSURED THAT THE SURPLUS GRAIN WILL BE ALLOWED TO BE EXPORTED.

THE QUEST FOR INCREASED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION SHOULD NOT BE LIMITED TO MAIZE, BUT SHOULD INCLUDE OTHER AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES SUCH AS FISH, LIVESTOCK AND CROPS SUCH AS CASSAVA, SOYA BEANS AMONG OTHERS.

GOING FORWARD, DIVERSIFICATION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IS ONE WAY WHICH GUARANTEES FOOD FOR US TO MEET THE GROWING DEMAND AS WELL AS TO MEET THE COUNTRY'S NEEDS.

I AM DELIGHTED THAT LUAPULA PROVINCE IS PROMOTING THE COMMERCIALISATION OF CASSAVA FOR INDUSTRIAL AND DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION.

THE PROVINCE IS LEVERAGING ITS COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE TO ENHANCE THE PRODUCTION OF CASSAVA AND ULTIMATELY THE INCOMES OF THE FARMERS.

I WANT TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO ENCOURAGE OTHER PROVINCES TO LEVERAGE THEIR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE FOR AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES IN ORDER TO DEVELOP THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

GOVERNMENT REMAINS COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING SMALLHOLDER FARMERS IN ZAMBIA THROUGH VARIOUS INTERVENTIONS, SUCH AS THE FARMER INPUT SUPPORT PROGRAMME AND MAIZE PURCHASES THROUGH THE FOOD RESERVE AGENCY.

IN THIS REGARD, I WISH TO REMIND THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE OF MY DIRECTIVE TO ENSURE THAT THE INPUTS UNDER THE FARMER INPUT SUPPORT PROGRAMME ARE DELIVERED BEFORE THE START OF THE NEXT RAIN SEASON.

DELAYS IN THE DELIVERY OF INPUTS TO FARMERS JEOPARDISES AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION. THE TWO MINISTRIES SHOULD WORK OUT MECHANISMS ON PAYMENTS TO AGRO-DEALERS UNDER THE FARMER INPUT SUPPORT PROGRAMME AND HOW THIS PROBLEM WILL BE DEALT WITH.

IN THE COMING MARKETING SEASON I EXPECT TO SEE THE FOOD RESERVE AGENCY OFFERING A COMPETITIVE PRICE THAT IS REFLECTIVE OF THE COSTS OF PRODUCTION INCURRED BY THE FARMERS.

IN ADDITION, THE MINISTRIES OF AGRICULTURE AND FINANCE SHOULD ENSURE THAT IN FUTURE FARMERS WHO SUPPLY MAIZE TO THE FOOD RESERVE AGENCY (FRA) ARE PAID ON TIME.

BY THE END OF NEXT MONTH I EXPECT, THE TWO MINISTRIES TO DEVISE A WORKABLE SOLUTION TO THE CHALLENGES FACING THE FOOD RESERVE AGENCY. WE CAN NOT CONTINUE TALKING ABOUT THE SAME ISSUES WITHOUT PROVIDING PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I AM ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THE PRICE OF OUR STAPLE FOOD, MAIZE MEAL WHICH HAS INCREASED OVER THE PAST FEW WEEKS IN MOST PARTS OF THE COUNTRY. THIS HAS MOSTLY BEEN DRIVEN BY SPECULATION ON THE EXPECTED PRODUCTION.

LET ME TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO URGE THE MILLERS THAT HAVE BOUGHT MAIZE FROM THE FOOD RESERVE AGENCY TO REDUCE THEIR PRICES TO REFLECT THE COST OF MAIZE OBTAINED.

SOME UNSCRUPULOUS RETAILERS HAVE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION TO ARBITRARY INCREASE THE PRICE OF MEALIE MEAL EVEN WHEN GETTING IT CHEAPLY. I URGE THE CONSUMERS TO ENSURE THAT THEY BUY THEIR MEALIE MEAL FROM RECOGNISED DISTRIBUTORS AND RETAILERS.

FURTHER, I ENCOURAGE ALL MILLERS TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THE MAIZE MARKETING SEASON TO ENSURE THAT THEY PROCURE ENOUGH STOCKS FOR THEIR OPERATIONS.

THE MILLERS CANNOT BE RELYING ON THE FOOD RESERVE AGENCY FOR THEIR OPERATIONS BUT THEY NEED TO INVEST IN STORAGE FACILITIES AND PURCHASE OF THE GRAIN FROM THE FARMERS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

AS I CONCLUDE, I WOULD LIKE TO DRAW YOUR ATTENTION TO THE PURPOSE OF OUR GATHERING HERE TODAY, WHICH IS TO SHARE THE IMPROVED AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES AND CUTTING EDGE TECHNOLOGIES.

IT IS UNDENIABLE THAT, THERE CAN BE NO GROWTH IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY AND PRODUCTION, WITHOUT HAVING APPROPRIATE AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGIES, ESPECIALLY IN AN ERA WHERE THE LIVELIHOODS OF FARMERS ARE THREATENED BY CLIMATE CHANGE.

I AM AWARE THAT A LOT IS BEING DONE TO ENSURE APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGIES ARE MADE AVAILABLE AND SERVICES ARE PROVIDED TO FARMERS FOR INCREASED CROP PRODUCTIVITY AND PRODUCTION.

ITS TIME OUR FARMERS ADOPTED THESE TECHNOLOGIES AND PRACTICES. AN EXAMPLE OF SUCH AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES IS CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE WHERE FARMERS ARE KNOWN TO PRODUCE MORE THAN FOUR (4) METRIC TONNES PER HECTARE.

IT IS MY SINCERE HOPE AND PRAYER THAT YOU HAVE FOUND THIS FIELD AND OPEN DAY FRUITFUL. I AM SURE YOU WILL TAKE HOME CLEAR MESSAGES AND LESSONS TO BETTER YOURSELVES IN THE FARMING BUSINESS.

I WISH TO THANK THE VARIOUS SPONSORS OF THE FIELD DAY FOR THE SUPPORT RENDERED. I ENCOURAGE YOU TO CONTINUE WITH THIS SPIRIT.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

WITH THESE REMARKS, IT IS NOW MY HONOUR AND PRIVILEGE TO DECLARE THIS NATIONAL FIELD DAY OFFICIALLY OPEN.

**I THANK YOU ALL.
AND GOD BLESS YOU ALL.**