



Republic of Zambia

SPEECH BY
HIS EXCELLENCY MR. EDGAR CHAGWA LUNGU
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA,
AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE NATIONAL
DIALOGUE FORUM
THURSDAY, 25TH APRIL, 2019

STATE HOUSE
LUSAKA

- **YOUR HONOUR THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA, MRS. INONGE MUTUKWA WINA, MP;**
- **HONOURABLE MINISTER OF JUSTICE, MR. GIVEN LUBINDA, MP;**
- **THE ACTING SECRETARY TO THE CABINET MR. PATRICK KANGWA;**
- **THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE FORUM, PROFESSOR MUYUNDA MWANALUSHI;**
- **THE SECRETARIES GENERAL AND REPRESENTATIVES OF POLITICAL PARTIES;**
- **REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CHURCH AND RELIGIOUS BODIES;**
- **DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

LET ME BEGIN BY CONGRATULATING YOU ALL FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT TO REPRESENT OTHER ZAMBIANS IN THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE FORUM. THIS IS A BIG RESPONSIBILITY WHICH WE SHOULD ALL UNDERTAKE DILIGENTLY FOR THE GOOD OF THE CITIZENS IN THE COUNTRY.

I WISH TO STATE FROM THE OUTSET THAT THIS FORUM IS A QUALITY ASSURANCE VALIDATION FORUM AND, THEREFORE, WE DO NOT EXPECT NEW SUBMISSIONS.

RATHER, WE ARE EXPECTED TO PROVIDE INPUTS OR CLARIFICATIONS ON EARLIER SUBMISSIONS WHICH WERE MADE. THIS IS IN ORDER TO REFINE OUR CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNANCE-RELATED LEGISLATION SUCH AS THE PUBLIC ORDER ACT, ELECTORAL PROCESS ACT AND THE POLITICAL PARTIES BILL.

I WISH TO NOW BRIEFLY GIVE BACKGROUND TO THIS FORUM WE ARE HOLDING TODAY.

AS YOU MAY RECALL, THE CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT PROCESS COMMENCED AFTER PARLIAMENT APPROVED A PRIVATE MEMBER'S MOTION IN PARLIAMENT URGING GOVERNMENT TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION OF ZAMBIA CAP 1, OF THE LAWS OF ZAMBIA IN ORDER TO ADDRESS THE INCONSISTENCIES IN THE CONSTITUTION.

FOLLOWING THIS APPROVAL, GOVERNMENT CALLED FOR SUBMISSIONS FROM STAKEHOLDERS SUCH AS CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS, GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS THE JUDICIARY AND COMMISSIONS, STATUTORY BODIES, PROFESSIONAL BODIES AND INDIVIDUALS.

THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE COLLATED THE SUBMISSIONS AFTER WHICH A ZERO DRAFT CONSTITUTION OF ZAMBIA (AMENDMENT) BILL WAS PREPARED.

THE DRAFT WAS THEN SUBJECTED TO FURTHER SCRUTINY BY VARIOUS INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING THE JUDICIARY, THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, CABINET OFFICE, MINISTRY OF JUSTICE, THE NATIONAL PROSECUTION AUTHORITY, LEGAL AID, OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT AND OTHER RELEVANT LINE MINISTRIES.

IN LINE WITH THE CONSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS, THE BILL WAS APPROVED BY CABINET FOR INTRODUCTION IN PARLIAMENT FOR POSSIBLE AMENDMENT.

HOWEVER, IN 2018, GOVERNMENT WAS REQUESTED TO DEFER THE PUBLICATION OF THE BILL BY THE ZAMBIA CENTRE FOR INTER-PARTY DIALOGUE. THIS WAS TO ENABLE POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE CHURCH MOTHER BODIES TO FINALISE THE DIALOGUE PROCESS WHICH HAD COMMENCED.

GOVERNMENT, WHICH IS VESTED WITH THE MANDATE TO DISCHARGE EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS, PROCEEDED TO APPROVE A ROADMAP TO CONSIDER THE CONSTITUTION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2019, AT A NATIONAL VALIDATION MEETING OF ALL STAKEHOLDERS.

THIS ACTION FOLLOWED DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE ZAMBIA CENTRE FOR INTERPARTY DIALOGUE ON THE FOCUS AREAS OF THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE, AND THE PLATFORM FOR THE DIALOGUE PROCESS.

**DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES;
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

AT THIS MEETING, STAKEHOLDERS WHO INCLUDED SOME OF YOU DELEGATES, MADE SUBMISSIONS ON THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNANCE RELATED LEGISLATION.

THIS FORUM HAS, THEREFORE, BEEN CONSTITUTED TO VALIDATE THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION, BEFORE IT CAN BE INTRODUCED IN PARLIAMENT.

GOING FORWARD GOVERNMENT REMAINS COMMITTED TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT PROCESS, AS WELL AS TO CONTINUOUS DIALOGUE AMONG ALL ZAMBIANS.

THE ENGAGEMENT OF VARIOUS PLAYERS DURING THE STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS AND INDEED THIS FORUM, WHICH HAS INVOLVED REPRESENTATION FROM VARIOUS WALKS OF LIFE, INCLUDING POLITICAL PARTIES, ATTESTS TO THIS.

YOU WILL ALSO RECALL THAT WE ENGAGED STAKEHOLDERS SUCH AS POLITICAL PARTIES DURING THE NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM FOR THE DRAFTING OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES BILL AT MULUNGUSHI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTER WHICH WAS HELD FROM **25TH** TO **29TH** SEPTEMBER, **2017**.

ADDITIONALLY, PROVINCIAL CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS WERE HELD FROM **13TH** TO **16TH** OCTOBER, **2018** IN ORDER TO RECEIVE SUBMISSIONS ON THE REFORMS TO THE PUBLIC ORDER ACT, CHAPTER **113** OF THE LAWS OF ZAMBIA.

IN MARCH 2019, THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION NETWORK AND THE SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FACILITATED A MEETING WITH ALL MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT TO SHARE INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICES ON MATTERS RELATING TO PUBLIC ORDER. SUBMISSIONS WERE RECEIVED ON THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE PUBLIC ORDER ACT.

THE MEETING GAVE RISE TO PROGRESSIVE RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE INCORPORATED IN THE PUBLIC ORDER (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2019.

DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES:

IT IS AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND THAT CABINET APPROVED THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE (CONSTITUTION, ELECTORAL PROCESS, PUBLIC ORDER AND POLITICAL PARTIES) BILL 2019, IN ORDER TO PROVIDE A LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE DIALOGUE PROCESS.

THE BILL WAS APPROVED BY PARLIAMENT ON 4TH APRIL, 2019 AND I ASSENTED TO IT ON 9TH APRIL, 2019.

AS WE VALIDATE THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION OVER THE NEXT 10 DAYS, I URGE YOU TO FULLY COMMIT YOURSELVES TO THIS IMPORTANT NATIONAL ASSIGNMENT WHICH HAS BEEN BESTOWED ON US BY THE PEOPLE OF ZAMBIA.

I ALSO WISH TO URGE YOU TO ACQUAINT YOURSELVES WITH THE CONTENTS OF THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE. TO BE PRECISE, THE CONSTITUTION, ELECTORAL PROCESS, PUBLIC ORDER AND POLITICAL PARTIES ACT NO. **6 OF 2019**, THE CONSTITUTION OF ZAMBIA (AMENDMENT) BILL, **2019**, THE ELECTORAL PROCESS (AMENDMENT) BILL, **2019**, THE PUBLIC ORDER (AMENDMENT) BILL, **2019**, AND THE POLITICAL PARTIES BILL, **2019** SO THAT OUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS PROCESS ARE CONCISE.

GOVERNMENT ANTICIPATES THAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS GENERATED DURING THIS FORUM

WILL CULMINATE INTO WIDELY ACCEPTABLE AMENDMENTS TO THE SAID BILLS.

DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES:

LET ME ONCE AGAIN THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION TO THIS IMPORTANT NATIONAL ASSIGNMENT. I NOW DECLARE THE FORUM OFFICIALLY OPENED.

GOD BLESS OUR COUNTRY, GOD BLESS US ALL.