



Republic of Zambia

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

**DELIVERED ON
THE OCCASION OF LABOUR DAY CELEBRATIONS**

HELD AT THE FREEDOM STATUE, LUSAKA

ON WEDNESDAY, 1ST MAY, 2019

**STATE HOUSE
LUSAKA**

- YOUR EXCELLENCY, THE FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA, DR. KENNETH DAVID KAUNDA;
- YOUR EXCELLENCY, THE FOURTH PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA, MR. RUPIAH BWEZANI BANDA;
- THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, MR. DAVIES MWILA;
- THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, DR. PATRICK MATIBINI, SC, MP;
- YOUR LADYSHIP THE CHIEF JUSTICE, MADAM IREEN MAMBILIMA;
- MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT;
- THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY, MRS. JOYCE NONDE-SIMUKOKO, MP;
- HONOURABLE CABINET MINISTERS PRESENT;
- THE ACTING SECRETARY TO THE CABINET, MR. PATRICK KANGWA;
- HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT;
- YOUR WORSHIP THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF LUSAKA, MR. MILES SAMPA;
- SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS;
- MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS;
- LEADERS OF OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES PRESENT;
- THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION COUNTRY DIRECTOR FOR MALAWI, MOZAMBIQUE AND ZAMBIA, MR. GEORGE OKUTHO;
- THE ACTING PRESIDENT, ZAMBIA FEDERATION OF EMPLOYERS, MR. STEPHEN SIKOMBE;
- THE PRESIDENT, ZAMBIA CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS, MR. CHISHIMBA NKOLE;
- THE PRESIDENT, FEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS OF ZAMBIA, MR. CHINGATI MSISKA;
- THE ACTING PRESIDENT, CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS OF ZAMBIA, MR. JAMES CHANSA;
- EMPLOYERS AND FELLOW WORKERS;
- MEMBERS OF THE PRESS;
- DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I AM DELIGHTED TO JOIN YOU AND THE REST OF THE WORKERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY TO MARK THE COMMEMORATION OF THIS YEAR'S LABOUR DAY.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS DAY CANNOT BE OVEREMPHASISED. THE LABOUR DAY ACCORDS US AN OPPORTUNITY TO CELEBRATE OUR WORKERS AND THEIR MANY ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR NATION.

I WISH TO CONGRATULATE ALL THE MARCHERS FOR THE COLOURFUL MARCH PAST AND DISPLAY. YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS EVENT IS ALWAYS A SOURCE OF NATIONAL JOY AND PRIDE.

I ALSO WISH TO COMMEND THE ORGANISERS FOR A WELL ORGANISED EVENT AND APPLAUD ALL THE WORKERS GATHERED HERE TODAY TO CELEBRATE THIS YEAR'S LABOUR DAY.

LET ME ALSO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY, TO SALUTE A GALLANT TRADE UNIONIST WHO CONTRIBUTED IMMENSELY TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT IN ZAMBIA, THE LATE MR. RAYFORD MBULU, WHO PASSED ON IN ACCRA, GHANA ON 5TH MARCH 2019, WHILE SERVING AS OUR HIGH COMMISSIONER TO THAT COUNTRY.

EQUALLY, I WISH TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE BASIC EDUCATION TEACHERS UNION OF ZAMBIA (BETUZ)-GENERAL SECRETARY, THE LATE MR JEFFREY SIMUNTALA FOR HIS SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE TEACHING FRATERNITY IN PARTICULAR, AND THE ENTIRE LABOUR MOVEMENT. MR SIMUNTALA PASSED ON, ON 21ST APRIL, 2019.

JOIN ME, THEREFORE, IN OBSERVING A MINUTE OF SILENCE IN HONOUR OF THE DEPARTED UNIONISTS.

[**PAUSE**]

MAY THEIR SOULS REST IN ETERNAL PEACE.

FELLOW WORKERS:

AS YOU HAVE ALREADY HEARD, THIS YEAR'S LABOUR DAY CELEBRATIONS ARE BEING HELD UNDER THE THEME ***"ENHANCING PRODUCTIVITY AND ALLEVIATING POVERTY THROUGH THE DECENT WORK AGENDA."***

THIS THEME RESONATES WELL WITH OUR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA OF ACCELERATING OUR EFFORTS TOWARDS VISION **2030**, WITHOUT LEAVING ANYONE BEHIND.

IN THIS REGARD, PRODUCTIVITY IS AN INDISPENSABLE INGREDIENT. IT ENTAILS OPTIMUM UTILISATION OF HUMAN AND OTHER RESOURCES FOR IMPROVED OUTCOMES.

PRODUCTIVITY CALLS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN WORK PROCESSES FOR ASSURED QUALITY OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES.

IN ADDITION, PRODUCTIVITY DEMANDS CONTINUOUS SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND A POSITIVE MINDSET WHICH IS ALWAYS GUARANTEED BY A MOTIVATED WORKFORCE.

THE THEME ALSO REMINDS US OF THE IMPORTANCE OF DECENT WORK IN PURSUIT OF PRODUCTIVITY AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION. DECENT WORK DEMANDS NOT ONLY THE CREATION OF JOBS, BUT CREATION OF JOBS OF ACCEPTABLE QUALITY.

JOBS WHICH ARE PRODUCTIVE, AND WHICH DELIVER A FAIR INCOME. JOBS WHICH ARE SECURE, AND WHICH PROVIDE SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR FAMILIES. JOBS WHICH ALLOW OUR PEOPLE TO EXPRESS THEIR CONCERNS, ORGANISE AND PARTICIPATE IN DECISIONS AFFECTING THEIR LIVES.

THIS YEAR'S THEME, THEREFORE, DEMANDS THAT WE, THE WORKERS, SHOULD WORK HARDER AND MORE DILIGENTLY TO ENSURE THAT WE CONTRIBUTE TO IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY.

THIS WILL, IN TURN, CONTRIBUTE TO THE GROWTH OF OUR ECONOMY.

ON THE OTHER HAND, THE THEME CALLS ON EMPLOYERS TO ENSURE THAT THEY PROVIDE DECENT JOBS TO THEIR WORKERS WHO ARE POSITIVELY CONTRIBUTING TO IMPROVED PERFORMANCE OF THEIR RESPECTIVE ORGANISATIONS. THIS WILL RESULT IN A WIN-WIN SITUATION.

FELLOW WORKERS:

ACCESS TO DECENT WORK IS ONE WAY THROUGH WHICH OUR PEOPLE CAN REALISE THEIR ASPIRATIONS, IMPROVE THEIR LIVING CONDITIONS AND ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THE ECONOMY.

GOVERNMENT IS, THEREFORE, FULLY COMMITTED TO CREATING A VIBRANT LABOUR MARKET WHERE THE RIGHTS OF OUR WORKERS ARE PROTECTED AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ARE ABUNDANT. A LABOUR MARKET WHERE THE SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEM IS INCLUSIVE AND SOCIAL DIALOGUE IS THRIVING.

HOWEVER, WE DO RECOGNISE THAT OUR LABOUR MARKET IS CHARACTERISED BY VARIOUS CHALLENGES. THE POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK GOVERNING THE EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR SECTOR IS STILL INADEQUATE. **GOVERNMENT IS FULLY AWARE OF JOB INSECURITIES ESPECIALLY IN THE MINING SECTOR.**

OTHER NOTABLE CHALLENGES INCLUDE CASUALISATION OF LABOUR, LOW WAGES, POOR ADHERENCE TO SAFETY AND HEALTH CONDITIONS, AS WELL AS LOW SOCIAL SECURITY COVERAGE AMONG THE INFORMAL ECONOMY WORKERS.

FELLOW WORKERS:

IN ORDER TO RESPOND TO THESE CHALLENGES GOVERNMENT, TOGETHER WITH SOCIAL PARTNERS, HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTING AN AMBITIOUS PROGRAMME TO REFORM THE EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR SECTOR.

THE COUNTRY IMPLEMENTED THE FIRST AND SECOND GENERATION OF THE DECENT WORK COUNTRY PROGRAMMES. THESE HAVE CULMINATED INTO AMENDMENTS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO SOME OF OUR PIECES OF LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS.

AS A LISTENING GOVERNMENT, WE HEARD YOUR CRY ABOUT THE NEED TO FINALISE THE REVIEW OF LABOUR LAWS. I AM HAPPY TO INFORM THE NATION THAT THE EMPLOYMENT CODE HAS BEEN ENACTED TO STRENGTHEN THE LABOUR MARKET.

THIS EMPLOYMENT CODE IS AIMED AT PROMOTING THE DECENT WORK AGENDA BY IMPROVING SOCIAL PROTECTION AND STRENGTHING EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS. THE CODE HAS FURTHER OUTLAWED CASUALISATION ON JOBS OF PERMANENT NATURE. IT IS ALSO AIMED AT PROVIDING DECENT CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

FOR INSTANCE, OUR MOTHERS ARE NOW ABLE TO SPEND MORE TIME WITH THEIR NEWLY BORN BABIES AT THE MATERNITY LEAVE PERIOD HAS BEEN EXTENDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ILO PROVISIONS. I CALL UPON ALL STAKEHOLDERS TO IMPLEMENT THIS LAW TO THE LETTER.

FURTHERMORE, VULNERABLE WORKERS ARE INCREASINGLY BEING ABLE TO ACCESS DECENT CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT AND IMPROVED JOB SECURITY.

IT IS ALSO MORE DIFFICULT FOR EMPLOYERS TO TERMINATE EMPLOYMENT ARBITRARILY TODAY THAN BEFORE. WE ARE DETERMINED TO CONTINUE WITH THESE PROGRESSIVE REFORMS.

MY FELLOW WORKERS:

THE MAJORITY OF OUR WORKERS IN THE INFORMAL ECONOMY ARE NOT COVERED BY ANY SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEME. THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE AND CONTRARY TO OUR ASPIRATION OF ATTAINING INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT.

GOVERNMENT HAS, THEREFORE, BEEN IMPLEMENTING INTERVENTIONS AIMED AT EXTENDING SOCIAL SECURITY COVERAGE TO THE INFORMAL ECONOMY.

IN THIS REGARD, SOCIAL SECURITY COVERAGE IS BEING EXTENDED TO INCLUDE DOMESTIC WORKERS, BUS AND TAXI DRIVERS, SAW MILLERS, MARKETEERS AND SMALL SCALE FARMERS.

ABOUT **11,000** NEW MEMBERS SO FAR, HAVE BEEN REGISTERED WITH THE NATIONAL PENSION SCHEME AUTHORITY (NAPSA).

FURTHER, NAPSA HAS DEVELOPED A MOBILE MONEY PLATFORM TO EASE REMITTANCE OF SOCIAL SECURITY CONTRIBUTIONS.

THE INTERVENTIONS WILL GIVE OUR PEOPLE JOB SECURITY AND ALSO OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A DIGNIFIED LIFE AFTER RETIREMENT.

FELLOW WORKERS:

YOU ARE ALL AWARE THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT HAS ENHANCED PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE WORKERS BY REVISING THE MINIMUM CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

I, THEREFORE, URGE ALL EMPLOYERS OF THIS CATEGORY OF WORKERS TO ADHERE TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE LAW.

THIS WILL NOT ONLY IMPROVE THE STANDARD OF LIVING AND MORALE OF OUR WORKERS, BUT ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY. A MOTIVATED WORKER IS A PRODUCTIVE WORKER.

I ALSO URGE OUR WORKERS TO DEMONSTRATE RENEWED COMMITMENT TOWARDS WORK TO GUARANTEE EMPLOYMENT AND ENTERPRISE SUSTAINABILITY.

I WOULD LIKE TO ASSURE MY FELLOW WORKERS THAT I HAVE TAKEN NOTE OF THE VARIOUS CONCERNS RAISED BY THE SPEAKERS BEFORE AND THE RESPECTIVE MINISTERS WILL IN DUE COURSE ADDRESS THE ISSUES SO RAISED.

FELLOW WORKERS:

GOVERNMENT IS IMPLEMENTING A NUMBER OF INTERVENTIONS TO PROMOTE JOB CREATION WHICH WILL ULTIMATELY CONTRIBUTE TO POVERTY REDUCTION.

THESE INTERVENTIONS INCLUDE PROMOTION OF RURAL INDUSTRIALISATION, DEVELOPMENT OF MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE, AND COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT.

FOR INSTANCE, UNDER THE RURAL INDUSTRIALISATION PROGRAMME, MORE THAN **4,000** SMALLHOLDER FARMERS IN NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCE, HAVE SINCE BEEN ENGAGED TO SUPPLY CASSAVA TO PREMIERCORN STARCH LIMITED FOR FURTHER PROCESSING INTO STARCH.

SIMILARLY, IN LUAPULA PROVINCE, ZAMBIA BREWERIES PLC IS BUYING CASSAVA FROM SMALLHOLDER FARMERS FOR USE IN ITS MANUFACTURING PROCESSES. THIS HAS CREATED **5,500** JOBS ALONG THE VALUE CHAIN.

IN MUCHINGA PROVINCE, THE ZAMPALM OUTGROWER PROJECT IS BEING IMPLEMENTED. **5,000** FARMERS WILL ENJOY THE BENEFIT OF INCREASED INCOMES.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RURAL INDUSTRIALISATION PROGRAMME HAS NOT ONLY CONTRIBUTED TO JOB CREATION, BUT WILL ALSO IMPROVE THE LIVING STANDARDS OF OUR PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS.

GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO CONTINUED TO FACILITATE MARKET LINKAGES FOR MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES.

SO FAR, **1,000** SMALLHOLDER FARMERS ON THE COPPERBELT HAVE BEEN LINKED TO THE MARKET THROUGH COOPERATIVES. THIS WILL ENABLE OUR FARMERS EARN EXTRA INCOME AND IMPROVE THEIR LIVELIHOODS.

I AM AWARE THAT SOME OF OUR WORKERS TODAY FEEL NEGLECTED AND FORGOTTEN. I AM EQUALLY AWARE OF CASES OF DELAYED SALARIES AND RETIREMENT BENEFITS.

THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN THREATS OF JOB CUTS. THE LOGICAL AND NATURAL QUESTION BEING ASKED IS, "**WHAT IS GOVERNMENT DOING ABOUT THE PLIGHT OF WORKERS AND RETIREES IN OUR COUNTRY?**"

I EMPATHISE WITH OUR WORKERS WHO ARE STRUGGLING TO MAKE ENDS MEET AS A RESULT OF THE HARSH REALITIES OF OUR LABOUR MARKET TODAY.

LET ME ASSURE YOU THAT GOVERNMENT IS DETERMINED TO RESTORE THE DIGNITY OF EVERY WORKER IN THE COUNTRY.

WE WILL ENSURE THAT YOUR JOBS ARE PROTECTED. WE WILL ALSO ENSURE THAT YOUR HARD EARNED SALARIES AND WAGES ARE PAID IN ACCORDANCE WITH OUR LABOUR LAWS AND THE DICTATES OF NATURAL JUSTICE.

GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO EXPEDITE THE PENSION REFORMS TO ADDRESS THE PLIGHT OF OUR RETIREES.

FELLOW WORKERS:

TO EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU I SAY, DO NOT DESPAIR. DO NOT GIVE UP. DO NOT LOSE HEART. CONTINUE TO WORK HARD AND RENDER YOUR SERVICES WITH DILIGENCE AND COMMITMENT.

THE NATION NEEDS YOUR CONTRIBUTION NOW MORE THAN EVER BEFORE. REMEMBER, YOU ARE A KEY FACTOR IN THE CREATION OF WEALTH IN OUR LAND.

WITHOUT YOUR EFFORT, THE JOURNEY TOWARDS PROSPERITY FOR ALL IS IMPOSSIBLE. CONTINUE TO RESPECT YOUR EMPLOYERS AND TO WORK HARD. AVOID THE TEMPTATION OF EMBRACING UNETHICAL BEHAVIOURS DURING THESE HARD TIMES.

INSTEAD, REMAIN COMMITTED TO YOUR WORK AND ENSURE THAT YOU PRODUCE VALUE FOR YOUR EMPLOYER AND SOCIETY AS A WHOLE.

THIS GOVERNMENT, YOUR GOVERNMENT, OUR GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO WORK TIRELESSLY TO PROTECT AND IMPROVE YOUR CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

WE WILL CONTINUE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH OUR SOCIAL PARTNERS FOR BETTER CONDITIONS AND OUTCOMES ON OUR LABOUR MARKET. WE WILL CONTINUE TO FIGHT CORRUPTION, CASUALISATION AND OTHER VICES WHICH CAUSE DISTORTIONS ON THE LABOUR MARKET AND ROB OUR WORKERS OF A DIGNIFIED LIFE.

FELLOW WORKERS:

I CALL UPON ALL EMPLOYERS TO COMMIT TO RESPECT AND PROMOTE THE DIGNITY AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE ZAMBIAN WORKER. I URGE YOU TO TIMELY AND CONSISTENTLY HONOUR YOUR OBLIGATIONS. WHERE THERE ARE CHALLENGES, LET US TIMELY AND TRUTHFULLY ENGAGE.

I HAVE HEARD YOU EMPLOYERS COMPLAIN ABOUT TAXES AND LEVIES. THE MOST PRUDENT WAY TO DEAL WITH THIS IS TO CONTINUE TO DIALOGUE OVER THESE ISSUES AS OPPOSED TO LAMENTING.

SIMILARLY, I HEAR YOU WORKERS COMPLAIN ABOUT ISSUES SUCH AS THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE SCHEME AND I WILL REPEAT WHAT I TOLD YOU WHEN WE MET AT STATE HOUSE TWO MONTHS AGO, THAT THESE MATTERS SHOULD BE RESOLVED THROUGH DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE EMPLOYERS AND GOVERNMENT.

THIS IS THE RIGHT AND HONOURABLE THING TO DO. BESIDES, THIS WILL MAKE IT EASY FOR OUR WORKERS TO PUT IN THEIR BEST AND PRODUCE THE VALUE AND PROFITS YOU RIGHTLY DESERVE FROM YOUR INVESTMENTS.

AT THIS POINT, I WILL BE FAILING IN MY DUTY IF I DID NOT TAKE A MOMENT TO ADDRESS MYSELF TO THE PLIGHT OF THE MANY AND GROWING NUMBER OF PROSPECTIVE WORKERS IN OUR COUNTRY, ESPECIALLY THE YOUTH. I AM WITH YOU IN YOUR FRUSTRATION.

WE WILL, THEREFORE, CONTINUE TO DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO CREATE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU. WE WILL CONTINUE TO ATTRACT INVESTMENT IN ALL THE SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY FOR ENHANCED JOB CREATION.

WE WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT VARIOUS YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES AIMED AT PROVIDING A VITAL LIFELINE TO OUR YOUTH.

ON YOUR PART, I EXPECT YOU TO EXPLOIT THESE OPPORTUNITIES WHENEVER THEY ARE AVAILABLE. DESIST FROM DIRECTING YOUR ENERGIES TO UNPRODUCTIVE VENTURES.

I NOW CALL UPON ALL OF US, THE GOVERNMENT, THE EMPLOYERS, THE UNIONS AND MY FELLOW WORKERS TO REFLECT ON THIS YEAR'S THEME, **"ENHANCING PRODUCTIVITY AND ALLEVIATING POVERTY THROUGH THE DECENT WORK AGENDA."**

LET US GALVANISE OUR EFFORTS AND EMBRACE PRINCIPLES WHICH WILL HELP US IMPROVE OUR WORK CULTURE, INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY AND ULTIMATELY REDUCE POVERTY.

LET ME CONCLUDE BY CONGRATULATING ALL THOSE TO BE AWARDED TODAY FOR THEIR VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS.

TO THE REST OF YOU, WE ALSO APPRECIATE YOUR EFFORTS AND ENCOURAGE YOU TO CONTINUE STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE.

I WISH YOU ALL A BLESSED 2019 LABOUR DAY.

MAY GOD BLESS OUR NATION, ZAMBIA.

I THANK YOU.