



Republic of Zambia

ADDRESS TO THE NATION

BY

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

ON THE

**EVE OF AFRICA FREEDOM DAY
FRIDAY, 24TH MAY, 2019**

**STATE HOUSE
LUSAKA**

GOOD EVENING COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN.

TOMORROW, WE JOIN THE REST OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENT IN COMMEMORATING AFRICA FREEDOM DAY. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT DAY ON OUR CALENDAR.

ON THIS DAY, 56 YEARS AGO, OUR FOUNDING FATHERS AND MOTHERS SET THE FOUNDATION FOR TAKING UNITED ACTION AGAINST COMMON CHALLENGES SUCH AS POVERTY, DISEASE, RACISM AND EXPLOITATION OF MAN BY MAN. TOMORROW, WE THUS CELEBRATE THIS UNITY OF PURPOSE AMONG THE NATIONS OF AFRICA.

IN DOING SO, WE ALSO REMEMBER AND HONOUR THOSE WHO LIBERATED US FROM COLONIALISM. WE REMEMBER AND PAY TRIBUTE TO THE GIANTS OF THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE WHOSE NAMES DESERVE A PLACE OF HONOUR IN OUR HEARTS AND THE AFRICA HALL OF FAME.

KENNETH KAUNDA OF ZAMBIA, HAILE SELASSIE OF ETHIOPIA, JULIUS NYERERE OF TANZANIA, KWAME NKRUMAH OF GHANA AND BEN BELLA OF ALGERIA, AMONG OTHERS.

WE HONOUR THEM FOR SOWING THE SEEDS OF THE CONTINENTAL UNITY THAT WE ENJOY TODAY.

WE HONOUR THEM FOR SHOWING US THAT WE CAN HAVE AFRICAN SOLUTIONS TO AFRICAN PROBLEMS WHEN WE STAND HEAD AND SHOULDERS TOGETHER.

WE HONOUR THEM FOR GIVING US THE COURAGE AND DETERMINATION TO WORK FOR GENUINE PEACE, ESPECIALLY WHEN PEACE ELUDES US.

WE DO SO BECAUSE, WITHOUT PEACE, THE FUTURE WE WANT FOR AFRICA IS UNTENABLE AND RECOVERY FROM ANY DISASTER OR CRISIS BECOMES MUCH MORE DIFFICULT.

COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN:

THE THEME FOR THIS YEAR'S AFRICA FREEDOM DAY IS **“THE YEAR OF REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS: TOWARDS DURABLE SOLUTIONS TO FORCED DISPLACEMENT IN AFRICA.”**

THE AFRICAN UNION RIGHTLY RESOLVED THAT THIS YEAR'S THEME FOR COMMEMORATING AFRICA FREEDOM DAY SHOULD REFLECT OUR SHARED CONCERN AND DETERMINATION TO FINDING LASTING SOLUTIONS TO THE PERENNIAL PROBLEM OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT. THE THEME SPEAKS TO A COMMON PROBLEM AND ONE THAT REQUIRES JOINT ACTION.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT OUR FOUNDING FATHERS AND MOTHERS ENVISAGED AN AFRICA WHERE ALL OF US WOULD BE FREE. AN AFRICA WHERE NO ONE WOULD BE STATELESS OR A STRANGER IN HIS OR HER OWN COUNTRY. AN AFRICA WHERE NO ONE WOULD EVER AGAIN FEEL INSECURE.

SADLY, POST-INDEPENDENCE AFRICA HAS BEEN BESET WITH ONE FORM OF CRISIS OR ANOTHER, OFTEN LEADING TO MASS DISPLACEMENT OF PERSONS BOTH WITHIN AND ACROSS NATIONAL BORDERS.

THESE FORCED REMOVALS OFTEN CONSTITUTE A HUMANITARIAN CRISIS THAT SEVERELY TESTS THE RESILIENCE OF NATIONS AND COMMUNITIES TO WITHSTAND THE COMPLEX NATURE OF THESE EMERGENCIES, WHETHER NATURAL OR MAN-MADE.

THEY TEST OUR COMMITMENT TO UPHOLDING THE OBLIGATIONS OF STATES TO PROVIDE RELIEF, OFFER PROTECTION AND RESPECT THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF ALL WHO FIND THEMSELVES IN THESE UNFORTUNATE CIRCUMSTANCES.

THEY TEST THE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES WHICH ARE AT THE CORE OF OUR HUMANITY.

ABOVE ALL, THEY TEST WHETHER WE LIVE UP TO THE TEACHING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST WHEN HE REMINDS US IN MATTHEW CHAPTER **25**, VERSE **35**, AND I QUOTE:

“FOR I WAS HUNGRY AND YOU GAVE ME FOOD, I WAS THIRSTY AND YOU GAVE ME DRINK, I WAS A STRANGER AND YOU WELCOMED ME.” END OF QUOTE.

COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN:

A NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN AFRICA ARE FORCED TO CROSS BORDERS AND OCEANS TO SEEK SANCTUARY IN OTHER COUNTRIES AND CONTINENTS, AND ARE RECOGNISED BY THE HOST COUNTRIES AS REFUGEES.

WE SHOULD BE MINDFUL THAT, IN MOST CASES, THESE ARE YOUNG AND HIGHLY SKILLED PEOPLE WHO WE NEED TO DEVELOP OUR CONTINENT.

IN ADDITION, THERE ARE THOSE WHO ARE FORCED TO MOVE FROM THEIR HABITUAL RESIDENCE TO ANOTHER AREA WITHIN THEIR OWN COUNTRY. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE OFFICIALLY RECOGNISED AS INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS. WHEN CONDITIONS ALLOW, SOME OF THESE PEOPLE WILLINGLY RETURN TO THEIR COUNTRIES AND AREAS OF ORIGIN AS RETURNEES.

THIS YEAR'S THEME IS THEREFORE, TIMELY AS IT IS PRODDING US TO RE-FOCUS OUR ATTENTION ON THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE OF REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS.

AS WE COMMEMORATE THIS YEAR'S AFRICA FREEDOM DAY, IT IS IMPORTANT FOR US TO REFLECT ON THE MAGNITUDE AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE CHALLENGE OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT GLOBALLY, ON OUR CONTINENT AND LOCALLY HERE IN ZAMBIA.

COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN:

ACCORDING TO THE **2017** GLOBAL TRENDS REPORT ON FORCED DISPLACEMENT BY THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR), THERE ARE OVER **68.5 MILLION** FORCIBLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN THE WORLD. OVER ONE THIRD OF THESE ARE IN AFRICA.

THIS ONE THIRD COMPRISES MORE THAN **6 MILLION** REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS, AS WELL AS **14.5 MILLION** INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS.

THE REPORT ALSO INDICATES THAT THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES WHO RETURNED TO THEIR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN IN THE YEAR **2017** INCREASED TO **667,400** FROM **552,200** IN THE YEAR 2016.

IN AFRICA, ONE OF THE MAJOR CAUSES OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT IS HUMAN CONFLICT ARISING FROM POLITICAL, ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS AND RACIAL DIFFERENCES AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS. OTHER CAUSES INCLUDE BAD GOVERNANCE, IMPLEMENTATION OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, UNCONTROLLED USE OF GUNS AND OTHER ILLEGAL WEAPONS, TERRORISM, AS WELL AS HUMAN-INDUCED DISASTERS.

FORCED DISPLACEMENT OF PERSONS OFTEN PROVIDES A FERTILE GROUND FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING, HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE, SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, DETENTION OF ASYLUM SEEKERS, DEPORTATION AND XENOPHOBIA. IN SOME INSTANCES, DISPLACED PERSONS ARE DENIED HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, LEADING TO INCREASED VULNERABILITY.

COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN:

THESE CHALLENGES CONTINUE TO BE A MAJOR SOURCE OF CONCERN AND A THREAT TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND STABILITY OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENT.

THEY BETRAY THE DREAM OF OUR FOUNDING FATHERS AND MOTHERS FOR AN AFRICA AT PEACE WITH ITSELF, AN AFRICA AT PEACE WITH THE WORLD, AND AN AFRICA FOCUSED ON DELIVERING DEVELOPMENT TO ALL ITS PEOPLE.

IN THE RECENT PAST, AFRICA HAS ALSO WITNESSED INCREASING FREQUENCY AND INTENSITY OF NATURAL DISASTERS SUCH AS DROUGHTS AND FLOODS DUE TO EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS. THESE HAVE NEGATIVELY IMPACTED ON THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING OF OUR PEOPLE.

WE HAVE SEEN WHOLE COMMUNITIES RAVAGED BY FLOODS, CROPS WASHED AWAY OR WHITHERING PREMATURELY, AND HOUSEHOLDS LEFT WITHOUT FOOD, SHELTER AS WELL AS ESSENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE.

FURTHER, THE MAGNITUDE AND INCREASED FREQUENCY OF THESE DISASTERS ARE IMPACTING NEGATIVELY ON THE CAPACITY OF COUNTRIES TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY. THAT IS WHY TODAY, AS PART OF THE GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY, WE STAND SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WITH OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN MALAWI, MOZAMBIQUE AND ZIMBABWE AS THEY RECOVER FROM THE TRAIL OF DESTRUCTION LEFT BEHIND BY THE RECENT TROPICAL CYCLONES.

COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN:

WE ARE MOVED TO LEND A HELPING HAND BECAUSE THAT IS WHO WE ARE, A PEOPLE OF SOLIDARITY, COMPASSION AND CARE.

OUR COUNTRY IS CELEBRATED, WITHIN AND BEYOND THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC) REGION, AS A FRIENDLY NATION AND A BEACON OF PEACE.

WE ARE EQUALLY CELEBRATED FOR OUR OUTSTANDING PEACE-KEEPING MISSIONS WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE AFRICAN CONTINENT.

UNDOUBTEDLY, WE ARE A STRONG BELIEVER AND LIVING SYMBOL OF INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY AND BURDEN-SHARING.

WE MUST NOT RELENT, SLUMBER OR GROW WEARY IN CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS MAKING AFRICA AND THE WORLD AT LARGE A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE IN.

AS PART OF OUR COMMITMENT TO PROVIDING DURABLE SOLUTIONS TO THE PLIGHT OF FORCIBLY DISPLACED PERSONS, ZAMBIA HAS RATIFIED A NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS.

THESE ARE THE **1951** UNITED NATIONS REFUGEE CONVENTION, THE **1969** ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN UNITY (OAU) CONVENTION GOVERNING THE SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF REFUGEES IN AFRICA, AND THE **2009** AFRICAN UNION KAMPALA CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS.

FURTHER, GOVERNMENT IS IMPLEMENTING THE REFUGEES ACT NO. 1 OF **2017**. THIS LAW PROVIDES FOR AN INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE RECOGNITION, PROTECTION AND CONTROL OF REFUGEES. ZAMBIA CURRENTLY HOSTS OVER **80,000** REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS.

GOVERNMENT ALSO RECOGNISES THE FACT THAT THERE ARE ZAMBIANS DOMICILED IN OTHER COUNTRIES WHO MAY BE VULNERABLE AND MADE TO FEEL STATELESS. TO THIS EFFECT, GOVERNMENT HAS DEVELOPED THE DIASPORA POLICY TO, AMONG OTHER MEASURES, HELP OUR NATIONALS TO PREPARE FOR THEIR EVENTUAL RETURN HOME.

TO ENSURE THAT INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS RECEIVE THE NECESSARY ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION AS WELL AS PROMOTE THEIR WELFARE, GOVERNMENT HAS PUT IN PLACE A NATIONAL RESETTLEMENT POLICY.

THE POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK WE HAVE PUT IN PLACE IS ONE WAY OF ENSURING THAT WE EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT DURABLE SOLUTIONS TO THE CHALLENGES OF REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS. THIS IS OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE AFRICA WE WANT, THE AFRICA WE DESERVE AND THE AFRICA WE SHOULD BE CELEBRATING TOMORROW.

COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN:

IN LINE WITH OUR NATIONAL FRAMEWORK, GOVERNMENT IS IMPLEMENTING SETTLEMENT AND LOCAL INTEGRATION PROGRAMMES FOR REFUGEES. WE HAVE DESIGNATED REFUGEE SETTLEMENT SITES AT MEHEBA IN KALUMBILA, MAYUKWAYUKWA IN KAOMA AND MANTAPALA IN NCHELENGE. WE HAVE ALSO PROVIDED SELF-SETTLEMENT FACILITIES IN **28** DISTRICTS LOCATED IN **5** PROVINCES ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

IN THESE SETTLEMENT SITES, GOVERNMENT PROVIDES SUPPORT TOWARDS ACCESS TO FOOD AND WATER, DECENT SHELTER, HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION SERVICES. OUR INTERVENTIONS ALSO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE NEEDS OF VULNERABLE GROUPS SUCH AS WOMEN, CHILDREN, THE ELDERLY PERSONS, PEOPLE LIVING WITH DISABILITIES AND THE CHRONICALLY ILL.

IN ATTENDING TO THE DISTRESS CALL OF FORCIBLY DISPLACED PERSONS, GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO CONTINUED TO PAY ATTENTION TO THE NEEDS OF HOST COMMUNITIES. THIS BALANCING ACT IS IMPORTANT IN ENSURING SOCIAL HARMONY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMMES IN THE AFFECTED AREAS.

COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN:

IN THE AREA OF LOCAL INTEGRATION, ZAMBIA HAS SUCCESSFULLY DEMARCATED AND ALLOCATED LAND TO FORMER REFUGEES WHO DECIDED TO REMAIN IN THE COUNTRY AND HAS CONTINUED TO ASSIST THEM WITH SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND LEGAL SUPPORT.

OVER **18,000** REFUGEES WHO WERE NOT VOLUNTARILY REPATRIATED DURING THE MASS REPATRIATION EXERCISE BETWEEN **2002** AND **2005**, HAVE BEEN LOCALLY INTEGRATED. SOME OF THEM ARE PARTICIPATING SIGNIFICANTLY IN THE LOCAL ECONOMY.

TO ENSURE AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGES POSED BY INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT, GOVERNMENT, IN **2013**, DEVELOPED GUIDELINES ON COMPENSATION AND RESETTLEMENT OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS, ARISING FROM IMPLEMENTATION OF DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECTS, AMONG OTHERS.

I, THEREFORE, URGE EVERYONE INCLUDING THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES AND OTHER LAID DOWN PROCEDURES.

IN RESPONDING TO POTENTIAL THREATS WHICH COULD LEAD TO FORCED DISPLACEMENT, GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO PUT IN PLACE EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL, CLIMATE-RELATED AND HUMAN-INDUCED DISASTERS. THESE SYSTEMS ARE IN ACCORDANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICES.

COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN:

THE ACHIEVEMENTS WE HAVE MADE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE COMMITMENT OF VARIOUS HUMANITARIAN ACTORS AND OUR MEN AND WOMEN IN UNIFORM.

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO ALL THE COOPERATING PARTNERS, THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, CIVIL SOCIETY AND FAITH-BASED ORGANISATIONS FOR THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT IN TAKING CARE OF REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS.

IN ADDITION, WOMEN DESERVE OUR PROFOUND GRATITUDE FOR THE SPECIAL ROLE THEY PLAY IN HUMANITARIAN CRISES.

I HAVE SEEN OUR MOTHERS UPLIFTING WHOLE COMMUNITIES BY THEIR RESILIENCE AND RESOURCEFULNESS WHEN TRAGEDY STRIKES. IT IS, THEREFORE, ONLY RIGHT AND PROPER THAT WOMAN ARE INCLUDED IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES AIMED AT ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT.

LEST WE FORGET, WOMEN PLAYED A CRITICAL ROLE IN FIGHTING FOR THE FREEDOM WE CONTINUE TO ENJOY AND ARE COMMEMORATING TOMORROW. THEY CONTINUE TO DO SO IN FORGING THE UNITY OF OUR COMMUNITIES AND ARE CRITICAL IN FINDING DURABLE SOLUTIONS TO FORCED DISPLACEMENTS.

COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN:

THE SUCCESSES WE HAVE ACHIEVED SO FAR UNDERSCORES THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY, BURDEN SHARING AND PARTNERSHIPS IN ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT.

EVEN AS WE TAKE PRIDE IN THIS SUCCESS, A LOT MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE. I, THEREFORE, IMPLORE ALL INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONS OF GOOD WILL TO CONTINUE WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT IN THESE HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS.

NO EFFORT TO HELP IN A HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IS TOO SMALL. AS MOTHER THERESA RIGHTLY SAID, AND I QUOTE:

“IF YOU CAN’T FEED A HUNDRED PEOPLE, FEED JUST ONE” END OF QUOTE.

IT IS OUR DUTY TO SAFEGUARD THE PEACE AND STABILITY WE HAVE ENJOYED SINCE ATTAINING OUR INDEPENDENCE IN **1964**. NO HUMAN BEING DESERVES TO BE A REFUGEE AND, INDEED, NO ZAMBIAN SHOULD BE GIVEN CAUSE TO BECOME ONE.

THAT IS WHY, AS A COUNTRY, WE SUBSCRIBE FULLY TO THE CONTINENTAL EFFORT IN FINDING DURABLE SOLUTIONS TO FORCED DISPLACEMENT.

WE WILL CONTINUE TO CONSOLIDATE AND IMPROVE OUR DEMOCRACY AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN TANDEM WITH OUR EFFORTS TO ENHANCE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

THIS IS WHAT OUR FOUNDING FATHERS AND MOTHERS FOUGHT FOR. THIS IS WHAT WE STAND FOR. THIS IS WHAT WE OWE OUR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN:

I WISH YOU ALL A PEACEFUL AND PURPOSE-FILLED AFRICA FREEDOM DAY.

LONG LIVE AFRICA AND LONG LIVE OUR BELOVED COUNTRY, ZAMBIA.

**MAY GOD BLESS US ALL.
GOODNIGHT.**