



Republic of Zambia

**SPEECH BY
HIS EXCELLENCY DR. EDGAR CHAGWA LUNGU
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA,
AT THE NATIONAL HARVEST DAY
HELD AT WISDOM MABABE'S FARM, CHIEF KAINDU'S
AREA IN MUMBWA
ON WEDNESDAY, 3RD JULY, 2019**

**STATE HOUSE
LUSAKA**

- **THE PROVINCIAL MINISTER, HON. SYDNEY MUSHANGA, MP;**
- **THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, HON. MICHAEL KATAMBO, MP;**
- **HON. CABINET MINISTERS PRESENT;**
- **HON. MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT PRESENT;**
- **SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS;**
- **YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS, CHIEF KAINDU AND ALL ROYAL HIGHNESSES PRESENT;**
- **THE ZAMBIA NATIONAL FARMERS' UNION PRESIDENT MR. JERVIS ZIMBA;**
- **THE MANAGING DIRECTOR, PANNAR SEED;**
- **DISTINGUISHED GUESTS;**
- **DEAR FARMERS;**
- **LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO BE HERE IN MUMBWA, TO OFFICIATE AT THE NATIONAL HARVEST DAY. I AM ALWAYS ELATED TO BE AMONG FARMERS BECAUSE OF THEIR IMPORTANCE TO THE NATION. AS THE SAYING GOES **“NO FARMER, NO FOOD, NO FUTURE”**.

I WISH TO NOTE THAT THE LAST FARMING SEASON WAS CHALLENGING MAINLY BECAUSE OF THE DROUGHT WE EXPERIENCED IN SOME PARTS OF THE COUNTRY.

WE SHOULD THEREFORE EMERGE FROM THIS EXPERIENCE UNITED, UNSCATHED AND FULL OF GRATITUDE, BECAUSE WE ARE STILL ABLE TO CELEBRATE SOME ACHIEVEMENTS, WHILE MOVING ON TO OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO USE OCCASIONS, SUCH AS THIS NATIONAL HARVEST DAY, TO TAKE STOCK AND REFLECT ON WHAT WE CAN DO TO BOOST AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN OUR COUNTRY.

IT IS VERY CLEAR THAT, FARMERS NEED A WELL PACKAGED MESSAGE ON CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE HIGHLIGHTING THE BENEFITS OF EARLY PLANTING, CORRECT CHOICE OF DROUGHT RESILIENT CROP VARIETIES, AND GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES SUCH AS CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE. EVIDENCE OF THE BENEFITS OF CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE IS THERE FOR ALL TO SEE.

CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE IS INDEED THE WAY TO GO, AND WE SAW AN EXAMPLE OF THIS AT THE FARM WE VISITED IN MAY, 2019, IN CHIEF SIACHITEMA'S AREA IN KALOMO, WHERE WE WITNESSED A GOOD MAIZE FIELD. THIS WAS IN THE MIDST OF OTHER FARMERS WHO WERE EXPECTING NOTHING FROM THEIR FIELDS DUE TO THE DRY SPELL.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE IS THIS ONE WHERE WE ARE TODAY AT MR. WISDOM MABABE'S FARM, WITNESSING YET ANOTHER GOOD HARVEST AT A FARM WHICH WAS ALSO HIT BY DRY SPELLS, BUT STILL SURVIVED. THESE TWO FARMS, WHICH SURVIVED DRY SPELLS, SIMPLY TELL US THAT IF THINGS ARE DONE DIFFERENTLY, WE ARE ABLE TO PRODUCE ENOUGH FOOD, EVEN WHEN WE ARE HIT BY DROUGHT.

IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT AT THIS POINT, I WISH TO THANK THE ZAMBIA NATIONAL FARMERS' UNION, THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND PANNER SEED FOR ORGANISING SUCH EVENTS WHICH CLEARLY DEMONSTRATE HOW A FARMER CAN STILL HAVE A CROP DESPITE A DRY SPELL.

I ALSO WISH TO COMMEND FARMERS SUCH AS OUR HOST TODAY, MR. WISDOM MABABE, FOR EMERGING AS SHINNING EXAMPLES TO THEIR FELLOW FARMERS. I SAY, KEEP UP WITH THIS GOOD SPIRIT.

TIME HAS COME FOR US TO ADDRESS ALL THE BOTTLENECKS AND TRANSFORM OUR AGRICULTURE SECTOR ONCE AND FOR ALL.

YES, ZAMBIA HAS THE POTENTIAL TO FEED AFRICA BUT FOR HOW LONG ARE WE GOING TO BE TALKING ABOUT THIS POTENTIAL? WE NEED TO TAKE PRAGMATIC ACTION TO ACTUALISE THIS POTENTIAL AND TIME TO DO THAT IS NOW.

WE JUST HAVE TO DO IT FOR THE GOOD OF OUR COUNTRY. THERE IS NO NEED FOR THIS COUNTRY TO EXPERIENCE HUNGER BECAUSE GOD GAVE US ALL THAT IT TAKES FOR A COUNTRY TO PROSPER.

MY GOVERNMENT CAN NOT BE PART OF THIS RHETORIC ON ZAMBIA'S POTENTIAL AND WILL INSTEAD DRIVE THIS PRACTICALLY TO UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL THAT ZAMBIA HAS IN AGRICULTURE.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

SOME OF THE MEASURES TO BE TAKEN ARE OF A MEDIUM TO LONG TERM NATURE BUT THERE ARE MEASURES THAT WE CAN IMPLEMENT IMMEDIATELY TO STIMULATE THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR.

IT IS NOT A SECRET THAT WHAT HAS SLOWLY BEEN KILLING OUR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY IS THAT FARMERS HAVE NOT BEEN MAKING PROFIT BECAUSE OF UNFAVOURABLE PRODUCER PRICES. IN THE PROCESS, AND UNDERSTANDABLY SO, FARMERS, BOTH LARGE AND SMALL SCALE, HAVE BEEN SLOWLY OPTING OUT OF FARMING.

I AM CONVINCED, BEYOND ANY REASONABLE DOUBT, THAT THE DAY FARMERS WILL START RECEIVING GOOD PRICES FOR THEIR PRODUCE, ZAMBIA WILL CHANGE AND WE WILL NEVER LOOK BACK.

I AM ALSO CONFIDENT THAT OUR COUNTRY'S GREAT POTENTIAL IN AGRICULTURE THAT WE HAVE ALWAYS TALKED ABOUT FOR A LONG TIME NOW WILL ONLY BE REALISED IF THE FARMER IS CORRECTLY REWARDED WITH GOOD PRICES AMONG OTHER INTERVENTIONS.

IN THIS REGARD, I WISH TO REPEAT MY EARLIER DIRECTIVE PERTAINING TO THE PRICE OF MAIZE. AS A COUNTRY WE NEED TO ENSURE THAT OUR FARMERS GET THE BEST OUT OF THEIR PRODUCE. SIMPLY PUT, IT IS IMPORTANT TO ENSURE THAT THE PRICE COVERS THE COST OF PRODUCTION AND ALLOWS A FARMER TO MAKE A DECENT PROFIT.

I AM AWARE THAT THE FOOD RESERVE AGENCY (FRA) WILL BE ANNOUNCING THE PRICE BEFORE FRIDAY THIS WEEK.

I WOULD THEREFORE, LIKE TO URGE THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE TO ENSURE THAT CONSULTATIONS ARE MADE WITH OUR STAKEHOLDERS SUCH AS THE ZAMBIA NATIONAL FARMERS UNION SO THAT, TOGETHER, WE COME UP WITH A PRICE THAT ADEQUATELY TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE COST IMPLICATIONS IN TERMS OF PRODUCTION.

IN ORDER TO STIMULATE MAIZE PRODUCTION, GOVERNMENT IS ALSO REVIEWING THE FRA ACT. IT IS AGAIN VERY CRITICAL THAT THE REVIEW OF THE FRA ACT IS DONE IN FULL CONSULTATION WITH THE STAKEHOLDERS TO ENSURE THAT ISSUES OF MARKET DISTORTIONS THAT AFFECT THE MAIZE INDUSTRY ARE ADDRESSED.

I ALSO WISH TO INFORM YOU THAT GOVERNMENT, THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, WILL SOON EMBARK ON ANALYSING THE FRA INTERVENTIONS ON THE MARKET.

GOVERNMENT WANTS TO CLEARLY UNDERSTAND THE COST OF FRA INTERVENTIONS ON THE MARKET, THE IMPACT OF FRA'S INTERVENTIONS ON MAIZE PRODUCTION, GRAIN TRADERS, MILLERS AND MEALIE MEAL PRICES INCLUDING ISSUES RELATED TO TRANSPORTATION COSTS. AGAIN, I WANT THIS EXERCISE TO BE DONE IN CLOSE COLLABORATION WITH OUR STAKEHOLDERS.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

WORKING WITH THE FARMERS, GRAIN TRADERS AND MILLERS, GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION IS TO TRANSFORM THE MAIZE INDUSTRY TO PRODUCTION LEVELS OF MORE THAN **3** MILLION METRIC TONNES IN THE **2019/2020** AGRICULTURAL SEASON, MORE THAN **3.5** MILLION METRIC TONNES IN **2020/2021** AGRICULTURAL SEASON; AND MORE THAN **5** MILLION METRIC TONNES IN **2021/2022** AND BEYOND. THIS WE ARE ABLE TO ACHIEVE.

TO FURTHER ACCELERATE MAIZE PRODUCTION, GOVERNMENT HAS INITIATED DISCUSSIONS WITH THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC) ON STRUCTURED EXPORTS OF MEALIE MEAL. AT A MEETING BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND DRC OFFICIALS ON 27TH JUNE, 2019 IN NDOLA, WHICH WAS ALSO ATTENDED BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR, A ROAD MAP WAS AGREED TO ACTUALISE STRUCTURED EXPORTS TO THE DRC.

AS YOU MAY ALREADY BE AWARE, THERE IS A YAWNING MARKET FOR **1.3** MILLION METRIC TONNES OF MEALIE MEAL IN THE DRC. EXPORT MARKETS ALSO EXIST IN OTHER NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES WHICH WE WILL PROACTIVELY STRUCTURE FOR YOU.

IF WE ARE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SUCH MARKETS WITHIN THE REGION AND BEYOND, THERE IS NO REASON FOR US TO BE TALKING ABOUT FOREIGN EXCHANGE. IN FACT, IF IT WERE POSSIBLE, I WOULD SAY LET US TARGET PRODUCING **5** MILLION TONNES JUST IN THE NEXT SEASON.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

STREAMELINING FRA INTERVENTIONS TO AVOID MARKET DISTORTIONS AND STRUCTURED EXPORT MARKETS FOR MEALIE MEAL ARE TWO MAJOR CATALYSTS THAT SHOULD RESULT IN GUARANTEED MARKETS AND GOOD PRICES FOR OUR FARMERS.

THE RESULT WILL DEFINITELY BE INCREASED MAIZE PRODUCTION AND, THEREFORE, INCREASED REVENUES FOR BOTH THE FARMERS AND THE GOVERNMENT. I, THEREFORE, WANT TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO URGE ALL FARMERS, LARGE AND SMALL SCALE, TO GO FLAT OUT AND GROW MORE MAIZE STARTING IN THE **2019/2020** AGRICULTURAL SEASON.

I AM HAPPY AND PLEASED TO HEAR FROM THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE THAT FARMERS WILL START ACCESSING INPUTS UNDER THE FARMER INPUT SUPPORT PROGRAMME ON THE 1ST OF SEPTEMBER, 2019 WHICH IS WAY BEFORE THE RAINY SEASON. EARLY DELIVERY OF INPUTS, COUPLED WITH A CLEAR EXTENSION MESSAGE ON SMART AGRICULTURE, WILL DEFINITELY CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS INCREASED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION.

I HAVE SPENT SO MUCH TIME TALKING ABOUT MAIZE. THIS IS BECAUSE IT IS GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO TRANSFORM MAIZE INTO AN EXPORT CROP, ESPECIALLY THAT IT IS AN EASY CROP TO GROW.

FURTHER, THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE HAS CONDUCTED DETAILED CONSULTATIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS ON THE MAIZE INDUSTRY.

THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE WILL SOON INITIATE SIMILAR CONSULTATIONS WITH OTHER COMMODITY INDUSTRIES SUCH AS SOYABEANS, TOBACCO, WHEAT, COTTON, AMONG OTHERS, WITH THE AIM OF DEVELOPING ACTION PLANS AND POLICIES JOINTLY AGREED WITH STAKEHOLDERS. AS I MENTIONED EARLIER, TIME TO TRANSFORM THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR HAS COME.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

TALKING ABOUT LIVESTOCK, I AM AWARE AND SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE SPREAD OF FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE WHICH IS OF NATIONAL ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT GOVERNMENT REMAINS COMMITTED TO MAKING RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR CONTAINING THE FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE.

LET ME ALSO IMPLORE THOSE CHARGED WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY TO OVERSEE LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION AT THE MINISTRY OF FISHERIES AND LIVESTOCK TO ACT WITH SPEED AND EMBRACE IDEAS FROM ALL THE STAKEHOLDERS SO THAT THERE IS UNITY OF PURPOSE.

AS YOU ARE ALREADY AWARE MR. PRESIDENT, GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN WORKING WITH THE ZAMBIA NATIONAL FARMERS UNION TO ADDRESS ISSUES RELATED TO UNFAIR COMPETITION FROM CHEAP IMPORTED PRODUCTS.

THEREFORE, ISSUES ARE BEING ADDRESSED. IF THEY ARE NOT, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO BRING IT TO OUR ATTENTION.

I ALSO WISH TO ENCOURAGE YOU TO CONTINUE WORKING VERY CLOSELY WITH THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE ON MATTERS RELATED TO THE FINANCIAL DISTRESS THAT FARMERS FIND THEMSELVES IN. IT IS TIME TO ACT TOGETHER WHEN DEALING WITH SUCH MATTERS OF NATIONAL INTEREST.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

AS I CONCLUDE, ALLOW ME TO ONCE AGAIN THANK OUR HOST, MR. WISDOM MABABE, THE SPONSORS AND ORGANISERS, FOR MAKING THIS NATIONAL HARVEST DAY POSSIBLE. I ALSO WISH TO THANK ALL OF YOU PRESENT FOR PARTICIPATING AND MAKING THIS NATIONAL HARVEST DAY A SUCCESS.

LET US CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER FOR THE GOOD OF OUR NATION. THIS IS THE ONLY WAY WE CAN REMOVE POVERTY, THIS IS THE ONLY WAY WE CAN REMOVE HUNGER, THIS IS THE ONLY WAY WE CAN DEVELOP OUR COUNTRY. ALWAYS REMEMBER, NO ONE WILL DEVELOP THIS COUNTRY BUT OURSELVES.

IT IS NOW MY SINGULAR HONOUR AND PRIVILEGE TO OFFICIALLY OPEN THIS NATIONAL HARVEST DAY.

MAY GOD US ALL, I THANK YOU.