

REMARKS BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY DR EDGAR CHAGWA LUNGU
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA**

AT A MEETING WITH SENIOR CITIZENS

HELD AT STATE HOUSE

ON TUESDAY, 1ST OCTOBER 2019

**STATE HOUSE
LUSAKA**

I AM HAPPY TO WELCOME YOU, SENIOR CITIZENS TO STATE HOUSE ESPECIALLY THAT YOU ARE COMING ON THE COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLD PERSONS.

I AM SURE THIS MEETING IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENHANCE COLLABORATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND YOU, THE SENIOR CITIZENS IN ZAMBIA.

AGEING IS A NORMAL PROCESS OF LIFE. THE PROCESS OF AGEING AFFECTS EVERYONE REGARDLESS OF RACE, COLOUR, ETHNICITY AND GENDER.

A NATION WHICH NEGLECTS ITS SENIOR CITIZENS IS A DANGER TO ITSELF.

WE SHOULD THEREFORE RECOGNISE THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WHICH THEY CONTINUE TO MAKE.

STATISTICS ACCORDING TO THE 2010 CENSUS INDICATES THAT ZAMBIA'S POPULATION OF SENIOR CITIZENS WAS ESTIMATED AT **521,860** AND IT WAS ALSO PROJECTED THAT BY **2020** THE NUMBER OF SENIOR CITIZENS WOULD INCREASE TO **670,239**. HENCE THERE IS NEED FOR THE COUNTRY TO COMMENCE PLANNING AND ADDRESSING ISSUES RELATED TO AGEING.

FURTHER, THE **2015** LIVING CONDITIONS MONITORING SURVEY REPORTED THAT **67.2** PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS OF SENIOR CITIZENS EXPERIENCED HIGHER POVERTY THAN HOUSEHOLDS HEADED BY OTHERS.

THERE IS NEED FOR US TO ADDRESS THIS DISCREPANCY. THEREFORE, GOVERNMENT HAS FACILITATED FOR A MULTI DIMENSIONAL, MULT-SECTORAL, AND MULTI-DISCIPLINARY NATIONAL AGEING POLICY.

IN THIS REGARD, THERE IS NEED FOR US TO COORDINATE THIS POLICY, TO BE ACTUALISED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PEOPLE IT IS INTENDED FOR.

THE CHALLENGES BEING FACED BY SENIOR CITIZENS IN THE COUNTRY CALL FOR IMMEDIATE INTERVENTIONS.

GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO THE WELFARE OF SENIOR CITIZENS HENCE HAS TAKEN MEASURES TO ADDRESS SOME OF THE CHALLENGES AIMED AT REDUCING THE VULNERABILITY AMONG SENIOR CITIZENS.

HOWEVER, THESE MEASURES HAVE BEEN LIMITED TO SOCIAL WELFARE, AND PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SERVICES.

THE PLIGHT OF SENIOR CITIZENS REQUIRES A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO FOCUS ON SUSTAINABLE PROGRAMMES WHICH WOULD EMPOWER SENIOR CITIZENS ECONOMICALLY, AND ENABLE THEM CONTRIBUTE EFFECTIVELY TO THEIR COMMUNITIES.

GOVERNMENT IS IMPLEMENTING THE SOCIAL CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMME TO WHICH THE SENIOR CITIZENS ARE ELIGIBLE. HOWEVER, WE NEED TO EXPAND SOCIAL CASH TRANSFER TO INCLUDE SENIOR CITIZENS.

CURRENTLY, THE PROGRAMME IS EMPOWERING A TOTAL OF **372,676** HOUSEHOLDS AMONG THEM OLDER PERSONS;

WE APOLOGISE FOR THE CHALLENGES THAT SURROUNDED THE SOCIAL CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMME IN THE RECENT PAST. GOVERNMENT IS WORKING TIRELESSLY TO ENSURE THAT THE SENIOR CITIZENS ARE NOT INCONVENIENCED IN ANY WAY.

IN ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES THAT SENIOR CITIZENS FACE, THERE IS NEED FOR CONCERTED EFFORTS OF ALL STAKEHOLDERS INCLUDING THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS IMPROVING THE WELFARE OF THE NATION'S OLDER PERSONS, AND TO EXPEDITE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY ON AGEING.