



Republic of Zambia

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

**AT THE LAUNCH OF THE HARVEST OF WINTER MAIZE**  
**BY ZAMBEEF PLC**

**HELD IN SINAZONGWE DISTRICT, SOUTHERN**  
**PROVINCE**  
**ON FRIDAY, 4TH OCTOBER, 2019**

**STATE HOUSE**  
**LUSAKA**

- **HONOURABLE MICHAEL KATAMBO, MP., MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE;**
- **HONOURABLE EDIFY HAMUKALE, MP., PROVINCIAL MINISTER, SOUTHERN PROVINCE;**
- **HONOURABLE MINISTERS PRESENT;**
- **YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESSES PRESENT;**
- **THE MANAGING DIRECTOR ZAMBEEF, MR. FRANCIS GROGAN;**
- **SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS;**
- **ZAMBEEF EMPLOYEES;**
- **DISTINGUISHED GUESTS;**
- **MEMBERS OF THE PRESS;**
- **LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

I AM DELIGHTED TO BE BACK IN SOUTHERN PROVINCE TO OFFICIATE AT THE LAUNCH OF THE HARVEST FOR WINTER MAIZE AND WHEAT BY ZAMBEEF PLC.

I WAS HERE IN SOUTHERN PROVINCE A FEW WEEKS AGO TO OFFICIATE AT THE FIRST EVER SOUTHERN PROVINCE EXPO IN LIVINGSTONE.

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE POTENTIAL FOR AGRICULTURE TO GROW IN SOUTHERN PROVINCE IS ENORMOUS. THIS IS DESPITE THE CHALLENGING WEATHER CONDITIONS THE PROVINCE IS CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING.

THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE HAVE DEALT A BLOW ON THE PROVINCE. LAST TIME I WAS IN THE PROVINCE, I VISITED KAZUNGULA DISTRICT AS PART OF MY REGULAR MONITORING OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF GOVERNMENT FOOD RELIEF UNDER THE DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND MITIGATION UNIT (DMMU). EFFORTS BY DMMU HAVE HELPED TO CUSHION THE IMPACT OF HUNGER THAT MANY FAMILIES ARE FACED WITH.

## **DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

EVEN ON AN INTERNATIONAL STAGE, MOST COUNTRIES NOW RECOGNISE THAT CLIMATE CHANGE IS A MAJOR THREAT TO FOOD SECURITY AND OUR WAY OF LIFE.

RECENTLY, I ATTENDED THE SEVENTY FOURTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN NEW YORK, IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, AND THE TOPIC CLIMATE CHANGE WAS AT THE CENTRE OF DISCUSSIONS.

THE ATTENTION THAT THE TOPIC CLIMATE CHANGE IS RECEIVING ON THE GLOBAL SCENE IS AN INDICATION OF ITS SERIOUSNESS. WE HAVE ALL SEEN THE DEVASTATING EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

HOWEVER, IT IS DREADFUL THAT EVEN WITH OVERWHELMING EVIDENCE ON THE PRESENCE OF CLIMATE CHANGE, WE STILL HAVE DOUBTING THOMASES WHO HAVE BEEN DISMISSING THE PHENOMENON AS A FALLACY.

IN SOUTHERN PROVINCE, AND INDEED, OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION HAS REDUCED SIGNIFICANTLY. THIS HAS MADE ACCESS TO FOOD FOR MANY ZAMBIAN HOUSEHOLDS WHOSE AREAS HAD POOR YIELDS, VERY DIFFICULT.

WITH THIS SCENARIO, IT IS SAD THAT THE HUNGER SITUATION IN SOME PARTS OF THE COUNTRY IS BEING POLITICISED.

## **DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

MY ADMINISTRATION WILL NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS SITUATION TO GAIN CHEAP POLITICAL MILEAGE. WE ARE AWARE OF THE MANY LIVES WHICH ARE AT STAKE. THERE IS NO NEED TO PLAY POLITICS ABOUT THIS SERIOUS NATURAL PHENOMENON.

MY GOVERNMENT IS DETERMINED TO SEE TO IT THAT NO LIFE IS LOST BECAUSE OF HUNGER.

I, THEREFORE, WISH TO ASSURE THE NATION THAT EVERY EFFORT IS BEING MADE TO PROVIDE RELIEF TO AFFECTED HOUSEHOLDS. THIS HAS, THEREFORE, HELPED US PLAN OUR EFFORTS IN A MORE COORDINATED AND EFFECTIVE MANNER.

SO FAR, THE FOOD RESERVE AGENCY, THROUGH THE DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND MITIGATION UNIT HAS RELEASED ONE MILLION BY FIFTY KILOGRAMME BAGS OF MAIZE TO MOSTLY FAMILIES AFFECTED BY HUNGER.

I WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE SUPPORT RENDERED BY COOPERATING PARTNERS, AND OTHER WELL-MEANING ZAMBIANS

MY GOVERNMENT IS OPEN AND WELCOMES SUPPORT FROM ALL ZAMBIANS REGARDLESS OF THEIR POLITICAL AFFILIATION, TRIBE OR STANDING IN SOCIETY. FOR THIS REASON, I WISH TO APPEAL TO ALL WELL-MEANING ZAMBIANS TO COME FORWARD AND PROVIDE SUPPORT TO PEOPLE IN AREAS AFFECTED BY HUNGER.

I WISH TO ADVISE THAT ALL SUPPORT TOWARDS AREAS AFFECTED BY HUNGER MUST BE CHANNELLED THROUGH RELEVANT INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS THE DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND MITIGATION UNIT. THIS IS BECAUSE DMMU DEALS WITH SUCH MATTERS, AND HAS THE CAPACITY TO GUIDE WHICH AREAS ARE MOST DEPRIVED INCLUDING, ENSURING THAT RELIEF REACHES THOSE THAT NEED IT THE MOST.

**DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

SOUTHERN PROVINCE IS ONE SUCH AREA WHICH NEEDS A LOT OF SUPPORT. IT IS THEREFORE, PLEASING THAT WE ARE HERE IN SINAZONGWE, SOUTHERN PROVINCE TO WITNESS THE HARVESTING OF WINTER MAIZE BY ZAMBEEF PLC.

IT IS ALSO GRATIFYING THAT ZAMBEEF HAS RESPONDED TO THE DECISION WE MADE IN CABINET IN MARCH THIS YEAR, ENCOURAGING THOSE WITH THE CAPACITY TO ENGAGE IN WINTER MAIZE PRODUCTION, TO DO SO.

I AM ALSO HAPPY THAT ZAMBEEF REGARDLESS OF THIS DIFFICULT SITUATION, MANAGED TO INCREASE ITS AREA UNDER CULTIVATION FOR WINTER MAIZE FROM TWO HUNDRED HECTARES TO SIX HUNDRED HECTARES AT A VERY IMPRESSIVE YIELD RATE OF TEN TONNES PER HECTARE. THIS WILL TRANSLATE INTO A TOTAL HARVEST OF ABOUT SIX THOUSAND METRIC TONNES OF MAIZE.

I AM CONFIDENT THAT SUPPLY CHALLENGES OF MAIZE AND MEALIE MEAL IN SINAZONGWE, MAAMBA AND SINAZEZE WILL NOW BE A THING OF THE PAST.

## **DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

THIS IS INDEED A HUGE INVESTMENT BY ZAMBEEF PLC WHICH DESERVES COMMENDATION.

THE EXAMPLE ZAMBEEF HAS SET PROVES TO US ALL THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO PRODUCE CROPS, LIVESTOCK AND FISH, EVEN DURING DIFFICULT TIMES SUCH AS THIS PERIOD OF SEVERE CLIMATIC CONDITIONS.

THE SUCCESS OF ZAMBEEF UNDERSCORES MY GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO IMPLEMENTING MEASURES AIMED AT BUILDING RESILIENCE OF OUR FARMERS TO COPE WITH THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

THE MAJORITY OF OUR FARMERS TO THIS DAY, STILL DEPEND ON RAIN-FED FARMING, AND THIS IS ONE OF THE MAJOR REASONS AGRICULTURE IS VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE CHANGE. IT IS TIME WE CHANGED OUR APPROACH TO AGRICULTURE.

TO ENSURE OUR FARMERS BECOME RESILIENT, MY GOVERNMENT WITH SUPPORT FROM COOPERATING PARTNERS HAS BEEN INVESTING IN IRRIGATION DEVELOPMENT.

IN AUGUST THIS YEAR, I HAD OFFICIATED AT THE GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY FOR THE CHIANSI WATER DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN KAFUE DISTRICT. THIS PROJECT WILL IRRIGATE ONE THOUSAND HECTARES OF LAND AND

BENEFIT ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED HOUSEHOLDS ONCE COMPLETED IN **2020**.

IN ADDITION TO THE CHIANSI WATER DEVELOPMENT PROJECT, MY GOVERNMENT IS IMPLEMENTING OTHER PROJECTS SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY WHICH ARE SUPPORTED BY THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, THE WORLD BANK AND THE JAPANESE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY (JICA).

THESE PROJECTS HAVE REACHED VARIOUS STAGES OF COMPLETION, AND ONCE THEY ARE DONE, OVER TWELVE THOUSAND HECTARES OF LAND WILL BE UNDER IRRIGATION. THESE ARE THE KIND OF PROJECTS WHICH WILL HELP US AS A NATION TO ADDRESS EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

AS THE CLIMATE IS CHANGING, OUR FARMERS TOO MUST EMBRACE CHANGE. FARMERS HAVE TO ADOPT GOOD AGRICULTURE PRACTICES TO BOOST FOOD PRODUCTION.

IT IS SAID, BAD TIMES ARE A LESSON, AND INDEED, WE SHOULD CHANGE WITH THE CHANGING WEATHER PATTERNS.

LET ME ALSO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO ADVISE FELLOW FARMERS TO ENSURE THAT YOU PREPARE YOUR LAND ON TIME AND PLANT EARLY BEFORE THE ONSET OF RAINS.

AS YOU PLAN FOR YOUR SEASON, TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF YOUR EXTENSION OFFICERS IN YOUR RESPECTIVE AREAS.

FOR SOUTHERN PROVINCE, I WANT TO PARTICULARLY ADVISE FARMERS TO ADOPT CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE AND PLANT EARLY MATURING VARIETIES OF MAIZE.

IT IS ALSO HIGH TIME YOU BEGAN TO CONSIDER PLANTING DROUGHT RESILIENT CROPS SUCH AS CASSAVA, SORGHUM AND MILLET. THIS IS WHAT CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE IS ALL ABOUT.

I WISH TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CHALLENGE ALL FARMERS TO GROW ENOUGH MAIZE TO FEED THE NATION BUT ALSO TO FEED THE REGION, STARTING IN THE **2019/2020** FARMING SEASON.

I AM AWARE THAT THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE HAS JUST CONCLUDED CONSULTATIONS WITH THE MAIZE INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS. I AM INFORMED THAT THE STAKEHOLDERS DISCUSSED WAYS ON HOW TO ENSURE MAIZE PRODUCTION IS INCREASED STARTING IN THE CURRENT SEASON.

I HAVE ALSO BEEN TOLD THAT THE MAIZE INDUSTRY IS VERY CONCERNED WITH GOVERNMENT POLICY, ESPECIALLY AS IT RELATES TO MAIZE EXPORTS, AND THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE FOOD RESERVE AGENCY ON THE MARKET.

LET ME ASSURE ALL STAKEHOLDERS IN THE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY THAT GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE A CONDUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT. WE WILL ADDRESS THE MARKET DISTORTIONS WHICH HAVE AFFECTED THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR. WE WILL INDEED DO OUR PART. IN THIS REGARD,



FARMERS SHOULD ALSO DO THEIR PART TO BOOST MAIZE PRODUCTION.

**DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

MY GOVERNMENT IS RESOLVED TO WORKING CLOSELY WITH FARMERS, MILLERS AND OTHER PRIVATE SECTOR PLAYERS, TO ENSURE THAT WE TRANSFORM THE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY.

I DO RECOGNISE THAT AS A FARMER, YOU ARE IN BUSINESS, AND YOU MUST RETURN REASONABLE PROFIT TO STAY IN BUSINESS.

IT IS GRATIFYING THAT GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE A JOINT AGREEMENT WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO GROW THE MAIZE INDUSTRY.

EQUALLY, I AM PLEASED THAT THE NEXT CROP THAT ZAMBEEF PLC WILL FOCUS ON IS CASSAVA, WHICH IS A VERY IMPORTANT CROP FOR WEALTH CREATION FOR MANY OF OUR SMALL-SCALE FARMERS. WE NEED TO INDUSTRIALISE CASSAVA IN A SIMILAR MANNER OTHER COUNTRIES SUCH AS NIGERIA HAVE DONE.

MY GOVERNMENT WILL DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO ENSURE THAT FARMERS ARE HAPPY IN THE COUNTRY. IT IS ONLY WHEN FARMERS ARE HAPPY THAT WE SHALL HAVE PLENTY OF FOOD, AND STABILISE FOOD PRICES IN THE COUNTRY.

GOING FOWARD, I URGE OTHER FARMERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY, WITH IRRIGATION FACILITIES, TO JOIN ZAMBEEF TO PRODUCE MAIZE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT WE CAN DEFINITELY ERADICATE THIS HUNGER, IF ALL OUR FARMERS ENGAGED IN WINTER MAIZE PRODUCTION AND MAKE THIS AN ALL YEAR-ROUND ACTIVITY.

WE CAN MAKE ZAMBIA THE FOOD BASKET FOR THE SADC REGION WITH MAIZE PRODUCTION. THERE IS A YAWNING MARKET IN THE REGION WHICH NEEDS TO BE SATISFIED. THIS IS ACCEPTABLE AFTER THE LOCAL MARKET HAS BEEN SATISFIED, AND PROCEDURE THROUGH GOVERNMENT POLICY GUIDELINES IS FOLLOWED.

AS I CONCLUDE, I WISH TO THANK THE ORGANISERS OF TODAY'S EVENT, WHERE WE HAVE WITNESSED THE HARVESTING OF WINTER MAIZE AND WHEAT.

TO ZAMBEEF, KEEP IT UP AND CONTINUE ON THE SAME PATH. WE WANT TO SEE YOU DOUBLE YOUR HECTARAGE NEXT TIME TO EVEN SURPASS THE NORMAL GOVERNMENT MAIZE RESERVE REQUIREMENTS.

TO ALL OF US, LET US CONTINUE WITH OUR EFFORTS TO GROW THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR. WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOU THE FARMERS TO PRODUCE OUR FOOD.

**GOD BLESS YOU ALL,**

**I THANK YOU.**