



Republic of Zambia

STATEMENT DELIVERED BY

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

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE ANNUAL GREETING OF
THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS**

HELD ON THURSDAY, 23RD JANUARY, 2020

**STATE HOUSE
LUSAKA**

- **HON. MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MR. JOSEPH MALANJI, MP;**
- **YOUR EXCELLENCY, DEAN OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND HIGH COMMISSIONER OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE, MR. JERÓNIMO R. J. CHIVAVI;**
- **YOUR EXCELLENCIES, AMBASSADORS AND HIGH COMMISSIONERS ACCREDITED TO ZAMBIA;**
- **YOUR EXCELLENCIES, HEADS OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS;**
- **SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS;**
- **DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

IT IS INDEED AN HONOUR TO WELCOME YOU ALL, ESPECIALLY THE NEW MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY IN LUSAKA, TO STATE HOUSE TODAY. I WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND WARM NEW YEAR GREETINGS AND BEST WISHES FOR A PROSPEROUS 2020, TO YOUR EXCELLENCIES AND YOUR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES.

THIS OCCASION PROVIDES AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY FOR US TO COLLECTIVELY REVIEW, AT NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL LEVELS, THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES OF THE PAST YEAR IN ORDER FOR US TO CHART OUR COURSE FOR THE YEAR AHEAD.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

THE YEAR 2019 STARTED ON A POSITIVE NOTE WITH THE ZAMBIAN ECONOMY PROJECTED FOR ROBUST GROWTH BASED ON ASSUMED NORMAL FARMING SEASON, STABLE ELECTRICITY GENERATION AND IMPROVED COPPER PRICES ON THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET.

AT GLOBAL LEVEL, THERE WAS HOPE THAT VARIOUS FACTORS WHICH WERE SLOWING GROWTH SUCH AS TRADE TENSIONS WOULD SUBSIDE, AND THIS WAS EXPECTED TO IMPACT POSITIVELY ON ECONOMIES ACROSS THE WORLD, INCLUDING THAT OF ZAMBIA.

HOWEVER, LIKE MANY OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGION AND BEYOND, THE ZAMBIAN ECONOMY DURING THE REST OF 2019 WAS NEGATIVELY AFFECTED BY VARIOUS ISSUES NOTABLY, ADVERSE CLIMATIC CONDITIONS CAUSED BY POOR RAINFALL DURING THE **2018/2019** FARMING SEASON.

THIS, IN TURN, NEGATIVELY AFFECTED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND ELECTRICITY GENERATION WHICH LED TO SPILL-OVER EFFECTS IN OTHER SECTORS. ECONOMIC GROWTH WAS ALSO AFFECTED BY A DECLINE IN COPPER OUTPUT, COUPLED WITH LOWER COPPER PRICES CAUSED BY A REDUCTION IN GLOBAL DEMAND.

YOUR EXCELLENCIES:

CLIMATE CHANGE CONTINUES TO BE A MAJOR GLOBAL CHALLENGE WHOSE DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATIONS WE SHOULD NOT GROW WEARY OF, CONSIDERING THE DEVASTATING MULTI-FACETED EFFECTS IT IS HAVING ON OUR SOCIETIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

IT IS IN THIS REGARD THAT WORLD LEADERS MET AT THE UNITED NATIONS' CONFERENCE OF PARTIES (COP 25) CLIMATE CONFERENCE IN MADRID, SPAIN, IN DECEMBER, 2019. THE MEETING, AS WE KNOW, FAILED TO COME UP WITH THE TARGETED CARBON EMISSION CUTS.

THEREFORE, I, WISH TO REECHO THE WORDS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL, HIS EXCELLENCY MR. ANTÓNIO GUTERRES, WHO CALLED ON THE WORLD NOT TO GIVE UP ON THE AMBITION OF MITIGATION, ADAPTATION AND FINANCE TO TACKLE THE CLIMATE CHANGE CRISIS. THE ZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT LOOKS FORWARD TO PROGRESS IN THE CARBON EMISSION CUTS AT THE FORTHCOMING COP 26, SCHEDULED TO BE HELD THIS YEAR IN GLASGOW, SCOTLAND.

THE ZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT DURING THE COURSE OF **2020** WILL INTENSIFY PROGRAMMES AIMED AT MITIGATING THE DEVASTATING EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AS WELL AS ENSURING THE PRUDENT USE, AND MANAGEMENT OF OUR DIMINISHING RESOURCES.

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT AREAS OF FOCUS WILL BE THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE COUNTRY'S WATER RESOURCES. THIS WILL REQUIRE CONCERTED EFFORTS OF VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING THE PRIVATE SECTOR, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND OUR COOPERATING PARTNERS, IN ORDER FOR ZAMBIA TO ULTIMATELY MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE OVERALL GLOBAL CAUSE.

YOUR EXCELLENCIES:

GIVEN THE ENERGY DEFICIT ZAMBIA IS FACING, THE GOVERNMENT WILL AIM AT ENHANCING THE SECTOR BY, AMONG OTHER WAYS, ENCOURAGING INVESTMENT, AND DIVERSIFICATION TO INCLUDE ALTERNATIVE SOURCES, SUCH AS SOLAR AND WIND.

THIS CALLS FOR CONCERTED COLLABORATION WITHIN THE SADC REGION AND BEYOND THROUGH POOLING OF RESOURCES, EXCHANGE OF BEST EXPERIENCES, TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY, CAPACITY BUILDING, AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN THE REGION'S ENERGY SECTOR. I AM OPTIMISTIC THAT IN THIS MANNER, THE ENERGY SITUATION WILL IMPROVE ON A LARGE SCALE FOR ALL OUR COUNTRIES.

IN THE AREA OF FOOD SECURITY, MOST PARTS OF ZAMBIA WERE FOOD SECURE IN 2019 EXCEPT FOR SOUTHERN AND WESTERN PROVINCES AS WELL AS SOME PARTS OF EASTERN PROVINCE WHICH WERE ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY CLIMATE CHANGE.

I AM HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE PROJECTIONS INDICATE THAT THE COUNTRY HAS SUFFICIENT MAIZE STOCKS TO LAST UP TO JULY, **2020**. HARVESTS ARE ALSO EXPECTED IN APRIL, FROM THE EARLY MAIZE PROJECT FACILITATED BY GOVERNMENT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE ZAMBIA NATIONAL FARMERS UNION. MY GOVERNMENT IS GRATEFUL TO OUR COOPERATING PARTNERS FOR SUPPORTING OUR EFFORTS TO ENHANCE THE COUNTRY'S FOOD.

YOUR EXCELLENCIES:

REGARDING SOCIAL PROTECTION, THE ZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT THE SOCIAL CASH TRANSFER SCHEME, FOOD SECURITY PACK AS WELL AS WOMEN AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES, EVEN IN THE MIDST OF TIGHT FISCAL CONDITIONS.

I WISH TO ASSURE YOU THAT THE CHALLENGES WHICH WERE EXPERIENCED IN THIS AREA WERE APPROPRIATELY DEALT WITH IN THE PAST YEAR. THEREFORE, I, WISH TO ENCOURAGE YOU, OUR PARTNERS TO CONTINUE WITH YOUR GOODWILL ON SUCH PROGRESSIVE AND HUMANE INITIATIVES. I AM CONFIDENT OF YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT GOING FORWARD.

YOUR EXCELLENCIES:

THE ZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT HAS MADE CONSIDERABLE HEADWAY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 7TH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN, WHICH IS CURRENTLY IN ITS FOURTH YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION.

THE PLAN'S IMPLEMENTATION IS IN LINE WITH THE UNITED NATIONS **2030** AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE AFRICAN UNION AGENDA **2063**. IN THIS REGARD, I WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE, WITH GRATITUDE, THE INVALUABLE SUPPORT FROM OUR COOPERATING PARTNERS TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR DEVELOPMENT BLUEPRINT.

AT THIS JUNCTURE, I AM HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE TO YOUR EXCELLENCIES THAT THE ECONOMIC PROSPECTS FOR 2020 ARE POSITIVE. PROJECTIONS INCLUDE A REAL GROWTH RATE OF **3** PERCENT AND INFLATION TO BE MAINTAINED WITHIN THE RANGE OF **6** TO **8** PERCENT.

IN ADDITION, THE FISCAL DEFICIT IS EXPECTED TO REDUCE TO **5.5** PERCENT AND DOMESTIC REVENUE MOBILISATION IS PROJECTED TO INCREASE TO AT LEAST **22** PERCENT OF GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP). FISCAL CONSOLIDATION WILL CONTINUE TO BE A PRIORITY TO ENSURE SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH.

FURTHERMORE, I WISH TO ANNOUNCE THAT THIS YEAR, THE ZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO ANCHOR OUR EFFORTS ON THE FIVE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC AREAS OF THE 7TH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN. THESE ARE: ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION AND JOB CREATION; POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY REDUCTION; ENHANCED HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IMPROVEMENT; DEVELOPMENT INEQUALITIES REDUCTION, AND CREATING A CONDUCTIVE GOVERNANCE ENVIRONMENT FOR A DIVERSIFIED ECONOMY. I, THEREFORE, APPEAL, TO YOU ALL, FOR YOUR CONTINUED UNWAVERING SUPPORT.

YOUR EXCELLENCIES:

AS WE MAY BE AWARE, ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY CONTINUES TO BE AN IMPORTANT FOCUS OF ZAMBIA'S FOREIGN POLICY. IT IS ALSO STIPULATED IN OUR 7TH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

IT IS AGAINST THIS BACKDROP THAT, ZAMBIA IS PLEASED TO PARTICIPATE IN A NUMBER OF MEETINGS ON THE GLOBAL PLATFORM INCLUDING THE FORUM ON CHINA-AFRICA COOPERATION (FOCAC) COORDINATOR'S MEETING, THE TOKYO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT (TICAD), THE USA-AFRICA BUSINESS SUMMIT, THE RECENTLY INAUGURATED RUSSIA - AFRICA SUMMIT, ELEPHANT SUMMIT, UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, TO MENTION BUT A FEW.

IN ADDITION, IN 2019, I HAD THE HONOUR OF SUCCESSFULLY UNDERTAKING A STATE VISIT TO INDIA AND A WORKING VISIT TO THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, IN A BID TO ADVANCE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL COOPERATION.

ZAMBIA'S RECENT INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENTS HAVE CLEARLY BEEN SUCCESSFUL WITH OUTCOMES INCLUDING THE ONGOING LUSAKA CITY ROADS DECONGESTION PROJECT, CONSTRUCTION OF **650** HEALTH POSTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY, CONSTRUCTION OF THE CONVENTION CENTRE TO HOST THE HEADS OF STATES AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT IN 2022, COMMENCEMENT OF TURKISH AIRLINE FLIGHTS BETWEEN LUSAKA AND ANKARA, TO MENTION BUT A FEW.

FURTHER, ZAMBIA SIGNED MANY AGREEMENTS WITH COUNTRIES REPRESENTED HERE IN DIVERSE AREAS SUCH AS ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION, DEVELOPMENT OF ECONOMIC ZONES AND INDUSTRIAL PARKS, EXPORT OF HONEY, INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) AND RAILWAY TRANSPORT.

OTHER AREAS OF COOPERATION IN WHICH AGREEMENTS WERE SIGNED INCLUDE, MANUFACTURING OF LEATHER AND TEXTILE PRODUCTS, MINERAL PROCESSING, ENTREPRENEUR DEVELOPMENT, SPECIALISED HEALTH CARE AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A TRUCK AND BUS ASSEMBLY PLANT IN ZAMBIA.

THIS YEAR, THE ZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT WILL ENDEAVOUR TO BUILD ON THESE ACHIEVEMENTS, AND WE WILL DO EVEN MORE, TOGETHER.

FOCUS WILL BE GIVEN TO, AMONG OTHER AREAS, THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGREEMENTS SIGNED WITH MANY OF THE COUNTRIES REPRESENTED HERE, COMPLETION AND COMMENCEMENT OF JOINT PROJECTS, ENHANCED TRADE AND INVESTMENT PROMOTION IN PRIORITY SECTORS SUCH AS AGRICULTURE AND ENERGY, AS WELL AS SUPPORT FOR CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION.

IT IS GRATIFYING TO NOTE THAT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS HELD A TECHNICAL ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY FORUM IN DECEMBER, 2019, WHICH WAS HELD UNDER THE THEME "**PERSPECTIVES FOR 2020**". THE FORUM ENABLED VARIOUS ZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SECTOR STAKEHOLDERS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE DIRECTION OF ZAMBIA'S ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY IN 2020.

YOUR EXCELLENCIES:

ON TRADE AND INVESTMENT, THERE IS POTENTIAL FOR IMPROVED PARTNERSHIPS WITH YOUR RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS GIVEN OUR FOCUS ON ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION AS WELL AS THE MANY INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES ZAMBIA OFFERS.

ZAMBIA CONTINUES TO OFFER A FAVOURABLE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT BASED ON ITS STRATEGIC LOCATION IN THE REGION.

IN ORDER TO FOSTER MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL TRADE AND INVESTMENT LINKAGES, I ENCOURAGE COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS BETWEEN THE INVESTMENT PROMOTION AGENCIES, AND CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE IN YOUR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES, WITH THOSE IN ZAMBIA.

MAY I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS MY PROFOUND GRATITUDE FOR YOUR SUPPORT AT THE 2019 ZAMBIA AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCIAL SHOW, THE ZAMBIA INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR AND THE CHISAMBA AGRITECH EXPO.

THE ZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT IS GRATEFUL FOR YOUR SUPPORT TOWARDS THE SIX PROVINCIAL EXPOSITIONS WHICH WERE HELD IN LUAPULA, CENTRAL, NORTHERN, NORTH WESTERN, COPPERBELT AND SOUTHERN PROVINCES.

MY GOVERNMENT COUNTS ON YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT IN ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION FROM YOUR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES, AND ORGANISATIONS IN THE PROVINCIAL EXPOSITIONS TO BE HELD THIS YEAR AS WELL AS THE ANNUAL ZAMBIA INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR, AND THE ZAMBIA AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCIAL SHOW, WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE IN JULY AND AUGUST, 2020, RESPECTIVELY.

YOUR EXCELLENCIES:

ZAMBIANS IN THE DIASPORA HAVE CONTINUED TO BE IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTORS TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THROUGH SKILLS AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER, REMITTANCES AND INVESTMENT.

IN ORDER TO MAXIMISE THE PARTICIPATION OF THE DIASPORA, THESE CONTRIBUTIONS SHOULD BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH A FORMALISED, EFFICIENT AND INTERACTIVE ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE ROLE THAT THE DIASPORA PLAYS AS ECONOMIC PARTNERS, THE ZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT EMBARKED ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL DIASPORA POLICY.

THIS PROCESS, WHICH INVOLVED THE WIDE CONSULTATION OF VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS, CULMINATED IN THE SUCCESSFUL PUBLICATION AND LAUNCH OF THE NATIONAL DIASPORA POLICY IN APRIL, 2019. I WISH TO EXPRESS PROFOUND GRATITUDE TO YOU ALL FOR YOUR STEADY COMMITMENT AND SUPPORT TOWARDS THIS UNDERTAKING.

I AM EQUALLY PLEASED TO MENTION THAT IN GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO REACH OUT TO OUR NATIONALS IN THE DIASPORA, WE HAVE MADE SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF APPROVALS FOR DUAL CITIZENSHIP, IN LINE WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DUAL CITIZENSHIP CLAUSE.

YOUR EXCELLENCIES:

AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL, ZAMBIA CONTINUED TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN PEACE AND SECURITY ISSUES THROUGH ITS CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC) ORGAN ON POLITICS, DEFENCE AND SECURITY COOPERATION FROM AUGUST, 2018 TO AUGUST, 2019, AND AS OUT-GOING CHAIR FROM AUGUST, 2019 TO DATE.

SOME OF THE MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS DURING ZAMBIA'S CHAIRMANSHIP IN 2019 INCLUDE THE EXTENSION OF THE MANDATE OF THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANISATION STABILISATION MISSION IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (MONUSCO), FROM MARCH, 2019 TO DECEMBER, 2019.

THE ZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT, AS ORGAN CHAIR, ALSO LED THE SADC ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSIONS (SEOMS) TO SUCCESSFUL AND PEACEFUL ELECTIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA, MALAWI, THE DRC, MADAGASCAR, AND ALSO PARTICIPATED IN THESE MISSIONS IN BOTSWANA, MOZAMBIQUE, MAURITIUS AND NAMIBIA.

THE SUCCESSFUL HOLDING OF THE ELECTIONS, PARTICULARLY IN THE DRC IS A DEMONSTRATION OF ESTABLISHED NORMS IN THE REGION WHERE DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS ARE UTILISED AS A MEANS OF SELECTING LEADERS.

FURTHERMORE, THIS PROCESS ALSO HELPS IN CONSOLIDATING DEMOCRACY, AND CONTRIBUTING TO THE CREDIBILITY OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS OF MEMBER STATES, AND ABOVE ALL, ENHANCING PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE REGION.

IN THE SAME VEIN, THE ZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT WELCOMES OBSERVATION OF THE COUNTRY'S FORTHCOMING 2021 GENERAL ELECTIONS BY INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS.

YOUR EXCELLENCIES:

AT CONTINENTAL LEVEL, THE ZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT REMAINS COMMITTED TO THE AFRICAN UNION AGENDA **2063**, AND CONTINUES TO MAKE DELIBERATE STEPS AT BOTH THE BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL LEVELS IN ENSURING ITS FULL REALISATION.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE AFRICA CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AGREEMENT, THE WORLD'S LARGEST FREE TRADE AREA, IS THE CONTINENT'S SYMBOL OF OUR UNITY, PROGRESS AND A SHARED PURPOSE.

THE ZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT, THEREFORE, REAFFIRMS ITS UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO BUILDING GREATER SYNERGIES WITH OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS ACROSS THE AFRICAN CONTINENT UNDER THIS AMBITIOUS ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK.

YOUR EXCELLENCIES:

ON A MULTILATERAL LEVEL, WE ALL REMAIN SEIZED WITH IMPLEMENTING THE **2030** AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN OUR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES.

AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL, THE ZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO PRIORITISE ISSUES OF DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE AND SECURITY. MY GOVERNMENT, THEREFORE, CALLS FOR FURTHER ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE AFRICAN UNION AND THE UNITED NATIONS.

IN THE SPIRIT OF MULTILATERALISM, THE ZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO CALL FOR REFORMS OF THE UNITED NATIONS, INCLUDING THE SECURITY COUNCIL, WHERE MY GOVERNMENT ADVOCATES FOR TWO PERMANENT SEATS ON THE SECURITY COUNCIL FOR AFRICA, CONSIDERING THAT THE AFRICAN CONTINENT HAS THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF MEMBER STATES REPRESENTED AT THE UNITED NATIONS.

IT IS OUR CONSIDERED VIEW THAT REFORMS OF THE UNITED NATIONS, IF EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED, WILL RE-INVIGORATE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND COLLECTIVE ACTION REQUIRED TO ADDRESS GLOBAL CHALLENGES.

YOUR EXCELLENCIES:

I WISH TO END BY, ONCE AGAIN, THANKING ALL OF YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT TOWARDS ZAMBIA'S DEVELOPMENTAL UNDERTAKINGS IN 2019, AND TO REAFFIRM MY GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO CONTINUE WORKING WITH YOU, IN 2020.

I THANK YOU.