



Republic of Zambia

SPEECH BY

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

**AT THE GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONY FOR THE
CONSTRUCTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
CENTRE**

**HELD AT MULUNGUSHI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
CENTRE, LUSAKA**

ON FRIDAY, 28TH FEBRUARY, 2020

**STATE HOUSE
LUSAKA**

- **YOUR EXCELLENCY DR. KENNETH DAVID KAUNDA, FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA;**
- **YOUR EXCELLENCY MR. RUIPAH BWEZANI BANDA, FOURTH PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA;**
- **MR. DAVIES MWILA, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT;**
- **MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE PRESENT;**
- **HONOURABLE CABINET MINISTERS PRESENT;**
- **YOUR EXCELLENCY MR LI JEI, AMBASSADOR OF THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA TO ZAMBIA;**
- **MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORP;**
- **CIVIC LEADERS PRESENT;**
- **DISTINGUISHED GUESTS;**
- **MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA;**
- **LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

IN JULY 2022, ZAMBIA WILL HOST THE 39TH AFRICAN UNION ORDINARY SESSION OF THE HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT SUMMIT HERE AT THE MULUNGUSHI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE. THIS WILL BE THE THIRD TIME THAT OUR COUNTRY WILL BE HOSTING THIS IMPORTANT ORGAN FOR PEACE, UNITY AND DEVELOPMENT ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT.

ZAMBIA FIRST HOSTED THIS IMPORTANT SUMMIT IN 1974, WHEN THIS CONFERENCE FACILITY WAS BUILT, AND LATER IN 2001, WHEN THE ANNEX WAS ADDED.

THEREFORE, IT, IS WITH GREAT HONOUR THAT I STAND BEFORE YOU ALL, AND THE NATION AT LARGE, TO OFFICIATE AT THIS GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONY FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE TO HOST THE 2022 AFRICAN UNION HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT SUMMIT.

**DISTINGUISHED GUESTS;
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

THE CONFERENCE CENTRE, WHICH IS A THREE STOREY FACILITY TAKES THE SHAPE OF OUR NATIONAL SYMBOL- THE AFRICAN FISH EAGLE- AND IS A GIFT FROM THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA.

THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA HAS BEEN AFRICA'S UNWAVERING PARTNER AS WELL AS ZAMBIA'S ALL-WEATHER FRIEND FROM THE TIME OF OUR LIBERATION STRUGGLES AGAINST COLONIALISM.

DURING THE YEARS OF THE BLOCKADE BY THE IAN SMITH REGIME IN ZIMBABWE (THEN SOUTHERN RHODESIA), AFTER ITS UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, CHINA HELPED ZAMBIA TO OPEN UP THE NORTHERN CORRIDOR FOR EXPORTS AND IMPORTS THROUGH THE PORT OF DAR ES SALAAM IN TANZANIA.

CHINA HAS CONTINUED TO BE PART OF THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE, WITH INCREASED SUPPORT AND INVESTMENT ON THE CONTINENT. CHINA CONTINUES TO PARTNER WITH ZAMBIA IN DIFFERENT FIELDS INCLUDING TRADE, HEALTH, EDUCATION, MILITARY COOPERATION AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE AMONG MANY AREAS OF MUTUAL INTEREST.

THE PEOPLE OF ZAMBIA GREATLY TREASURE THE UNBREAKABLE BOND OF FRIENDSHIP AND BROTHERHOOD BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

THEREFORE, ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE OF ZAMBIA, I WISH TO EXTEND SINCERE GRATITUDE TO THE PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT OF CHINA FOR THIS IMPORTANT GESTURE. YOU ARE INDEED A TRUE BROTHER AND FRIEND.

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS;

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I AM AWARE THAT CHINA JIANGSU INTERNATIONAL WAS SELECTED BY THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT TO UNDERTAKE THIS IMPORTANT PROJECT. I WISH TO ENCOURAGE THE CONTRACTOR TO WORK EXPEDITIOUSLY TO ENSURE THAT THIS PROJECT IS DELIVERED TIMELY, WITH THE HIGHEST STANDARD AND QUALITY BEFITTING THE SUMMIT.

I AM ALSO AWARE THAT THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE WILL CREATE UP TO **500** DIRECT JOBS AND **1,000** INDIRECT JOBS THROUGH SUPPLY OF CONSTRUCTION AND RELATED SERVICES. I WANT TO ENCOURAGE THE CONTRACTOR TO ENSURE SKILLS TRANSFER AND CAPACITY BUILDING OF LOCAL ZAMBIANS INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT AT ALL LEVELS. THE CONFERENCE CENTRE WILL ALSO CREATE OVER **60** PERMANENT JOBS ONCE COMPLETED.

THIS ULTRA-MODERN CONFERENCE CENTRE WILL BOOST ZAMBIA'S INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY TO HOST HIGH LEVEL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS, LEVERAGING THE COUNTRY'S GEO-POLITICAL LOCATION. THE FACILITY WILL FURTHER CREATE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE-RELATED ENTERTAINMENT, FOOD AND BEVERAGE SERVICES AND OTHER ASSOCIATED SERVICES, THEREBY STIMULATING THE NATION'S ECONOMIC GROWTH.

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS;

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

IN LINE WITH THE GOVERNMENT POLICY OF **20** PERCENT SUB-CONTRACTING FOR ALL FOREIGN AWARDED CONTRACTS, I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO DIRECT THE MINISTER OF HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE CONTRACTOR TO ENSURE LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT.

THIS WILL ENSURE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TRANSFER BETWEEN THE CONTRACTOR AND LOCAL SMALL-SCALE CONTRACTORS AND SUPPLIERS.

I FURTHER URGE THE CONTRACTOR TO PROCURE AS MUCH MATERIAL FROM LOCAL SUPPLIERS AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO CONTRIBUTE TO LOCAL GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT.

**DISTINGUISHED GUESTS;
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

IT IS NOW MY HONOUR AND PRIVILEGE TO OFFICIALLY COMMISSION THE GROUNDBREAKING OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THIS ULTRA MODERN CONFERENCE CENTRE BEING CONSTRUCTED AS A GIFT FROM THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA TO THE PEOPLE OF ZAMBIA.

I THANK YOU AND MAY THE GOOD LORD BLESS YOU ALL.