



Republic of Zambia

## **SPEECH BY**

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

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S  
DAY**

**HELD ON MONDAY 9TH MARCH, 2020**



**STATE HOUSE**

**LUSAKA**

- **THE CHIEF JUSTICE, HER LADYSHIP, JUSTICE IRENE MAMBILIMA;**
- **THE SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, RIGHT HON. DR. PATRICK MATIBINI, SC.;**
- **SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT PARTY, MR. DAVIES MWILA;**
- **HON. CABINET MINISTERS PRESENT;**
- **THE SECRETARY TO THE CABINET;**
- **HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF LUSAKA;**
- **LEADERS OF POLITICAL PARTIES;**
- **HON. MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT PRESENT;**
- **PERMANENT SECRETARIES PRESENT;**
- **THE UNITED NATIONS RESIDENT COORDINATOR, MS. COUMBA MAR GADIO;**
- **MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS;**
- **REPRESENTATIVES OF THE HOUSE OF CHIEFS;**
- **REPRESENTATIVES OF RELIGIOUS AND FAITH-BASED ORGANISATIONS;**
- **PRIVATE SECTOR AND CIVIL SOCIETY LEADERS;**
- **DISTINGUISHED GUESTS;**
- **MEMBERS OF THE PRESS;**
- **LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.**

I AM PLEASED TO BE HERE TO ADDRESS YOU ON THIS IMPORTANT OCCASION AS WE COMMEMORATE THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY FOR THE YEAR 2020.

IN RECOGNISING THE CENTRAL ROLE WOMEN PLAY IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS, THE WORLD LEADERS REALISED THAT THERE WAS NEED TO HAVE A SPECIFIC TIME WHEN NATIONS CAN CELEBRATE WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WELLBEING OF THE SOCIETY. THIS IS WHAT WE ARE DOING NOW. THIS YEAR, THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY IS BEING COMMEMORATED UNDER THE THEME, **"I AM GENERATION EQUALITY: REALISING WOMEN'S RIGHTS."**

THE THEME BUILDS ON THE SIXTEEN DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE FOR 2019 WHICH EMPHASISED ON GENERATION EQUALITY AS A STRATEGY FOR FIGHTING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE. IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT GENDER BASED VIOLENCE FLOURISHES IN ENVIRONMENTS OF HIGH GENDER INEQUALITIES.

### **LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

GENDER EQUALITY IS A RIGHT. IT IS INTRINSICALLY LINKED TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND VITAL FOR REALISING HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL.

THEREFORE, THE OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF GENDER EQUALITY IS TO ACHIEVE A SOCIETY IN WHICH WOMEN AND MEN; BOYS AND GIRLS; ENJOY THE SAME RIGHTS, SAME OPPORTUNITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN ALL SPHERES OF THEIR LIVES. WHEN THIS IS ACHIEVED, OUR COUNTRY WILL BE ABLE TO OVERCOME CHALLENGES CONFRONTING US, SUCH AS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, INADEQUATE HEALTH CARE FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN, CLIMATE CHANGE, INADEQUATE ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND PRODUCTIVE RESOURCES WHICH ARE CRITICAL FOR ENHANCED ECONOMIC GROWTH.

MY GOVERNMENT'S VISION IS TO HAVE A ZAMBIA FREE FROM GENDER INEQUALITIES. IN THIS REGARD, ZAMBIA HAS PURSUED THE GENDER EQUALITY OBJECTIVE SINCE THE HOLDING OF THE FIRST WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN IN 1975 IN MEXICO WHICH DECLARED THE FIRST DECADE FOR WOMEN, AND THE HOLDING OF THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE WHICH CAME UP WITH THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM OF ACTION.

HOWEVER, REALISING THIS OBJECTIVE OF GENDER EQUALITY HAS NOT BEEN EASY BECAUSE OUR SOCIETY IS STILL STRONGLY PATRIARCHAL AND IS GOVERNED BY MALE VALUES. THESE PATRIARCHIAL VALUES WHICH FIGHT A WOMAN WHICH BE FOUGHT STARTING WITH US NOW.

GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT WOMEN AND MEN, GIRLS AND BOYS ARE GIVEN EQUAL VALUE AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ALL AREAS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

I CALL UPON TRADITIONAL LEADERS TO HELP US ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY IN OUR SOCIETY.

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

THIS YEAR'S THEME DRAWS US TO THE IMPORTANCE OF DRIVING THE GENDER EQUALITY AGENDA ACROSS ALL GENERATIONS. HENCE, WE NEED TO CARRY EVERYONE ALONG REGARDLESS OF AGE.

THIS IS WHY THE CENTRAL THEME IN OUR DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AS ILLUSTRATED IN THE 7TH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN, IS NOT TO LEAVE ANYONE BEHIND. WE CANNOT ACHIEVE DEVELOPMENT IF GENDER INEQUALITIES REMAIN PERVASIVE IN OUR COUNTRY.

THIS YEAR MARKS 25 YEARS SINCE THE ADOPTION OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLATFORM OF ACTION. I AM HAPPY TO REPORT THAT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN CRITICAL AREAS OF ACTION ON THE PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY.

I AM ALSO PLEASED TO INFORM THE NATION THAT THE REVIEW OF PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLATFORM OF ACTION IN THE LAST 25 YEARS INDICATES THAT ZAMBIA IS PROGRESSIVELY REALISING THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE DECLARATION AND PLATFORM OF ACTION ACROSS ALL AREAS. WE CAN DO MORE.

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

THIS HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED BY A POSITIVE TREND IN THE GENDER INEQUALITY INDEX WHICH HAS CONTINUED TO FALL. IN ADDITION, ZAMBIA HAS STRENGTHENED ITS POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS. FOR INSTANCE, GENDER WAS MAINSTREAMED INTO THE LONGTERM DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCESS INCLUDING, THE CURRENT 7TH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

WITH REGARD TO LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK, THE CONSTITUTION OF ZAMBIA, AS AMENDED, ALLUDES TO THE EQUAL WORTH OF WOMEN AND MEN AND THEIR RIGHTS TO FREELY PARTICIPATE IN ALL SPHERES OF THE ECONOMY.

THE CONSTITUTION PROVIDES FOR VALUES AND NATIONAL PRINCIPLES WHICH INCLUDE EQUITY, EQUALITY, AND NON-DISCRIMINATION. WE SHOULD STRIVE TO REALISE EQUITY, EQUALITY, AND NON-DISCRIMINATION AS ENSHRINED IN THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA.

FURTHER, THE ENACTMENT OF THE GENDER EQUITY AND EQUALITY ACT, NO. **22** OF **2015**, PROVIDES FOR THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS, EMPOWERS WOMEN TO PARTICIPATE FULLY IN THE COUNTRY'S PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AFFAIRS. ZAMBIA IS AMONG THE FEW COUNTRIES IN AFRICA WHICH HAS ESTABLISHED FAST TRACK COURTS FOR GENDER BASED VIOLENCE SO THAT THERE IS INCREASED ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR GENDER BASED VIOLENCE VICTIMS.

WE HAVE ALSO ESTABLISHED AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE MECHANISM TO GENDER BASED VIOLENCE WHICH HAS RESULTED IN INCREASED LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO REPORT CASES OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE.

AS A RESULT OF THE RESPONSE MECHANISM THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN THE REPORTED NUMBER OF CASES OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE, FROM **15,153** IN 2014 TO OVER **22,000** TO DATE. THIS LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IS A GOOD INDICATION OF THE PEOPLE'S POSITIVE RESPONSE TOWARDS THIS SCOURGE BUT THE INCREASING NUMBERS IS A SOURCE OF CONCERN TO GOVERNMENT, HENCE, MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO ENSURE THAT THIS IS CURTAILED.

## **LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

GOVERNMENT HAS, THEREFORE, PUT IN PLACE A NUMBER OF INTERVENTIONS TO EMPOWER WOMEN, ESPECIALLY, THOSE IN RURAL AREAS TO ADDRESS THE CRITICAL CHALLENGES THAT THEY FACE. THESE INCLUDE:

1. A PROJECT CALLED GIRL'S EDUCATION AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND LIVELIHOODS WHICH IS KNOWN BY THE ACRONYM (GEWEL) AND HAS TARGETED TO EMPOWER WOMEN AND TO SUPPORT GIRLS IN RURAL AREAS WITH SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS IN ORDER TO KEEP THEM IN SCHOOL. SO FAR, PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE AND **33,674** OF THE **75,000** TARGETED WOMEN HAVE BEEN RECEIVING PRODUCTIVE GRANTS IN MORE THAN **51** TARGETED DISTRICTS. FURTHER, **19,486** GIRLS IN **27** DISTRICTS HAVE BEEN SUPPORTED WITH GRANTS.
2. MY GOVERNMENT IS IMPLEMENTING THE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND VALUE CHAIN ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME BY PROVIDING AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT TO CHIEFDOMS TO SUPPORT WOMEN'S COOPERATIVES TO IMPROVE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY. SO FAR, **120** CHIEFDOMS HAVE RECEIVED TRACTORS, TILLERS AND TRAILERS OUT OF **288** CHIEFDOMS TARGETED BY THE END OF THE 7TH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN IMPLEMENTING IN 2021. FURTHER, GOVERNMENT HAS PROCURED SOLAR POWERED DRIP IRRIGATION EQUIPMENT, SOLAR POWERED INCUBATORS AND PELLET MAKING MACHINES TO ENHANCE ENTERPRISE DIVERSIFICATION AMONG WOMEN'S COOPERATIVES.

IN 2020, THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALLOCATED OVER **10** MILLION KWACHA FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT;

3. THE PROGRAMME FOR ELIMINATING CHILD MARRIAGES IN ZAMBIA AND OFFERING SCHOLARSHIPS TO CHILD MARRIAGE SURVIVORS IS GOING ON, TARGETING TO SUPPORT OVER **1,200** GIRLS WHO ARE SURVIVORS OF CHILD MARRIAGES WITH SCHOLARSHIPS. THE PROGRAMME IS BEING SUPPORTED BY INDIA, BRAZIL, AND SOUTH AFRICA. THIS INITIATIVE IS AIMED AT ENDING POVERTY AND HUNGER IN AFRICA;
4. GOVERNMENT WITH SUPPORT FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION IS IMPLEMENTING A PROGRAMME TO FIGHT SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN AND LUAPULA PROVINCES AT A COST OF **25** MILLION EUROS OVER A PERIOD OF **5** YEARS; AND
5. FURTHER, GOVERNMENT WITH SUPPORT FROM THE IRISH AND SWEDISH GOVERNMENTS IS IMPLEMENTING A PROGRAMME TO FIGHT GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AT A COST OF SIX MILLION, SEVEN HUNDRED THOUSAND UNITED STATES DOLLARS.



**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

THERE IS NEED TO GET THE FULL INVOLVEMENT OF MEN AND BOYS IN OUR QUEST TO ADDRESS GENDER INEQUALITIES AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND GIRLS. WITH THIS APPROACH, WE WILL BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE OUR OBJECTIVES WITH THE SUPPORT OF COOPERATING PARTNERS WHO HAVE ALREADY DEMONSTRATED PROFOUND WILLINGNESS TO SUPPORT US IN THIS DEVELOPMENT AGENDA.

I WISH TO THEREFORE, TO ASK ALL OUR LEADERS, TRADITIONAL LEADERS AND MARRIAGE COUNSELLORS TO ENSURE THAT WE ADDRESS THE

I HAVE COME ACROSS TRADITIONAL COUNSELORS WHO PROMOTE GENDER INEQUALITY SUCH AS INCULCATING WRONG MESSAGES AMONG YOUNG GIRLS. PLEASE STOP IT. YOU ARE EMBARRASING US.

THIS MESSAGE IS ALSO FOR THE CHURCH. THE CHURCH HAS A ROLE TO PLAY TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY WITHIN THE SCRIPTURAL CONTEXT.

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL OUR COOPERATING PARTNERS, CIVIL SOCIETY AND FAITH BASED ORGANISATIONS FOR THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT IN MY GOVERNMENT'S DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS TOWARDS ELIMINATING GENDER INEQUALITIES IN ZAMBIA.

MY GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE NECESSARY SUPPORT TO ENSURE THAT GENDER EQUITY AND EQUALITY IS ATTAINED. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR US TO ACHIEVE THIS IN ONE DAY, BUT WITH POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES IMPLEMENTED BY MY GOVERNMENT, WE ARE HEADED FOR SUCCESS.

I, THEREFORE, MAKE A CLARION CALL TO ALL OF US TO COMMEMORATE THIS DAY, THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY BY SUPPORTING GENDER EQUITY AND EQUALITY. WITHOUT THE PARTICIPATION OF BOTH WOMEN AND MEN, AND BOYS AND GIRLS, OUR DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS ARE ALL IN VEIN.

**HAPPY INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

**MAY GOD BLESS US ALL, I THANK YOU.**