

## **PRESIDENT LUNGU ATTENDS VIRTUAL SUMMIT ON COVID-19**

LUSAKA, Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2020---His Excellency, Dr Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia has attended the first ever virtual First Extraordinary Inter-Sessional summit of Heads of State and Government of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS).

The OACPS, formerly known as the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States, comprises 79 African, Caribbean and Pacific states, with all, save Cuba, signatories to the Cotonou Agreement which binds them to the European Union.

Speaking to other world leaders, who included Chair of the African Union and President of South Africa Cyril Ramaphosa, via teleconference at State House, President Lungu made an intervention statement citing five proposals that member states must consider in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The proposals include:

- (1) soliciting for debt relief or cancellation for OACPS member states;
- (2) establishing a virtual platform for sharing best practices and measures on the fight against Covid-19;
- (3) Enhancing research and local development of vaccines and treatment for Covid-19;
- (4) Adequately mobilizing resources from local and international community; and
- (5) Directing respective ambassadors and representatives in Brussels to lobby for enhanced support from the European Union.

The theme of the Summit, chaired by His Excellency, Mr Uhuru Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya, was *Transcending the Covid-19 pandemic: building resilience through global solidarity*.

The President said the Covid-19 pandemic has caused massive disruption to lives worldwide.

“Like other OACPS member states, Zambia has not been spared, recording 1062 cases and seven deaths reported as at 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2020,” the President said.

President Kenyatta said Covid-19 had hit industries hard and that there has been economic disruptions worldwide. He said the dire situation has been compounded by climate change where, Africa in particular, has suffered flooding.

He said the Summit was a great opportunity for Africa to speak with one voice and engage development partners to come up with concrete actions.

President Ramaphosa said Covid-19 has shown that countries of the world are interconnected and interdependent and feared that the worst could still come if the world did not act decisively in unison to stem the pandemic and its consequences.

Mr Ramaphosa, speaking as African Union chairman, called for a two-year debt relief and said sanctions against Zimbabwe and Sudan must be lifted. He said the AU also condemns the killing of African American George Floyd by a white policeman in the United States.

And during the discussions on the Key Strategic Partners, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said the world needs to come together because “we can only prosper when all of us prosper.” He said, “only together can we build stronger and resilient economies.”

The OACPS comprises 48 countries from Sub-Saharan Africa, 16 from the Caribbean and 15 from the Pacific.

Other leaders who spoke were United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, European Council President Charles Michel, French Prime Minister Emmanuel Macron, Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg, and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison.

The OACPS members who spoke included Barbados Prime Minister Ms Mia Mottley, Tuvalu Prime Minister, Mr Kausea Natano, Papua New Guinea Prime Minister James Marape, and Gambia President Adama Barrow.

Others were Fiji Prime Minister, Mr Frank Bainimarama, Jamaican Prime Minister, Mr Andrew Holness, Congo Brazzaville President Denis Sassou Nguesso, Seychelles President, Mr Danny Faure, and Guinea Bissau President Umaro Embaló.

Also present was OACPS Secretary General Georges Chikoti.

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