



Republic of Zambia

SPEECH BY
HIS EXCELLENCY MR. EDGAR CHAGWA LUNGU
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA,
AT THE 113TH ZAMBIA NATIONAL FARMERS UNION
(ZNFU) ANNUAL CONGRESS
AT MULUNGUSHI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTER IN
LUSAKA
ON FRIDAY, 19TH OCTOBER, 2018

- **THE PRESIDENT OF THE ZAMBIA NATIONAL FARMERS' UNION (ZNFU) – MR. JERVIS ZIMBA**
- **ZNFU BOARD AND TRUSTEES;**
- **MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE HON. MICHAEL KATAMBO MP;**
- **MINISTER OF FISHERIES AND LIVESTOCK, HON. KAMPAMBA MULENGA MP;**
- **OTHER CABINET MINISTERS PRESENT;**
- **SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS;**
- **COOPERATING PARTNERS;**
- **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF LEADING AGRIBUSINESS COMPANIES;**
- **FARMERS;**
- **DISTINGUISHED GUESTS;**
- **MEMBERS OF THE PRESS;**
- **LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

I AM EXCITED TO GRACE THE 113TH ZAMBIA NATIONAL FARMERS UNION ANNUAL CONGRESS. IT IS GRATIFYING TO BE IN THE MIDST OF OUR EVER HARD WORKING FARMERS WHO HAVE TRAVELLED FROM ALL PARTS OF THE COUNTRY.

THE CONGRESS WHICH IS BEING HELD TODAY IS MORE THAN A CENTURY. THIS IS NO MEAN ACHIEVEMENT. CONGRATULATIONS TO THE ZAMBIA NATIONAL FARMERS UNION ARE THEREFORE IN ORDER.

THIS YEAR'S THEME: "**MAIN STAYING AGRICULTURE AS A KEY ECONOMIC DRIVER**" IS IN LINE WITH GOVERNMENT'S VISION TO TRANSFORM AGRICULTURE INTO A BUSINESS VENTURE. THE THEME GIVES US AN IMPETUS TO CONTINUE SEEKING SOLUTIONS ON HOW BEST TO IMPROVE THIS SECTOR, WHICH IS NOT ONLY A MONEY SPINNER, BUT CREATES EMPLOYMENT FOR OUR PEOPLE, AND ENSURES FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY.

I MUST NOTE THAT THIS GATHERING IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR US TO REFLECT ON THE PAST FARMING SEASON AND SHARE EXPERIENCES IN AN EFFORT TO STEER THE PERFORMANCE OF THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR TO GREATER HEIGHTS, FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR PEOPLE AND BEYOND.

LET ME TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK ALL THE FARMERS IN ZAMBIA FOR WORKING SO HARD IN ENSURING THAT OUR COUNTRY ATTAINS FOOD SECURITY BY PRODUCING ENOUGH FOOD IN THE LAST AGRICULTURAL SEASON. THIS IS DESPITE HAVING EXPERIENCED PROLONGED DRY SPELLS BETWEEN NOVEMBER AND END OF JANUARY, 2018.

I AM HAPPY THAT DURING THE 2017/2018 AGRICULTURAL SEASON, OUR COUNTRY RECORDED INCREASES IN THE PRODUCTION OF GROUNDNUTS, RICE, MIXED BEANS, CASSAVA AND BARLEY TOBACCO, JUST TO MENTION BUT A FEW.

WE ALSO PRODUCED **2,394,907** METRIC TONNES OF OUR STAPLE FOOD CROP, MAIZE. THIS IS COMMENDABLE! I AM HOPEFUL THAT WE CAN PRODUCE EVEN MORE DURING THE COMING SEASONS.

DESPITE SCORING SOME SUCCESSES, WE STILL CONTINUE TO FACE SOME CHALLENGES IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR.

LOW LEVELS OF PRODUCTIVITY AND LACK OF COMPETITIVENESS ESPECIALLY AMONG THE SMALL-SCALE FARMERS STILL REMAINS A CHALLENGE.

FOR AGRICULTURE TO BECOME PROFITABLE AND MEET THE COST OF PRODUCTION THERE IS NEED FOR OUR FARMERS TO INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY. ONCE WE ACHIEVE HIGH LEVELS OF PRODUCTIVITY, WE WILL BECOME COMPETITIVE IN THE MARKET AT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

CLIMATE CHANGE IS YET ANOTHER CHALLENGE THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR IS FACED WITH.

YOU WILL AGREE WITH ME THAT OUR COUNTRY AND THE ENTIRE GLOBE IS EXPERIENCING CHANGING CLIMATIC PATTERNS AND THIS HAS SERIOUSLY AFFECTED AGRICULTURE.

HOWEVER, THE CHANGING CLIMATIC CONDITIONS WILL NOT IN ANY WAY DETER YOUR GOVERNMENT FROM PURSUING VIABLE INTERVENTIONS SUCH AS CLIMATE SMART TECHNOLOGIES TO SUPPORT YOU.

THEREFORE, INVESTING IN IRRIGATION IS NO LONGER OPTIONAL, BUT A SURE WAY OF MAKING FARMING VIABLE.

MR PRESIDENT:

IN TERMS OF AGRICULTURAL INPUT SUPPORT TO OUR FARMERS, MY GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THEM WITH INPUTS THROUGH THE FARMER INPUT SUPPORT PROGRAMME.

WE BELIEVE THAT THE FARMER INPUT SUPPORT PROGRAMME IS ONE OF THE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO INCREASED PRODUCTION OF A WIDE RANGE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS.

FOR THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR TO DEVELOP, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE EMPLOY PROGRESSIVE INITIATIVES WHICH BENEFIT OUR FARMING COMMUNITIES.

ON THE OTHER HAND, FARMERS MUST WORK HARD TO ENSURE THAT THEY GRADUATE FROM ONE LEVEL TO ANOTHER. THIS WAY WE WILL KNOW WHETHER WE ARE DEVELOPING OR NOT.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

EFFICIENT AGRICULTURAL MARKETS ARE KEY TO IMPROVING THE WELFARE OF OUR FARMERS. COLOSSAL AMOUNTS OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES ARE REQUIRED TO ENSURE THAT PRODUCE IS BOUGHT FROM FARMERS. HOWEVER, GOVERNMENT ALONE CAN NOT MANAGE TO PURCHASE SURPLUS PRODUCE FROM FARMERS.

I WISH TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO UNDERSCORE THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN CROP MARKETING.

PARTICIPATION OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN GRAIN MARKETING IS CARDINAL, AS THEY ARE ALSO KEY PLAYERS IN VALUE ADDITION PROCESSES.

I WISH TO THEREFORE IMPLORER THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO COME ON BOARD AND PLAY A LEADING ROLE IN AGRICULTURAL MARKETING.

TO THIS EFFECT, I URGE THE FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, NOTABLY THE BANKING SECTOR TO AVAIL THE MUCH NEEDED FINANCES TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR FOR THE PURCHASE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE AT REASONABLE TERMS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

TURNING TO AGRICULTURAL TRADE, THE DEMAND FOR AGRICULTURAL FOOD PRODUCTS, BOTH PROCESSED AND RAW IS HUGE BOTH DOMESTICALLY, REGIONALLY AND BEYOND. THIS IS AS A RESULT OF THE RISING POPULATION.

AS A COUNTRY, WE NEED TO FULLY LEVERAGE THIS BY INCREASING PRODUCTION OF A WIDE RANGE OF FOOD PRODUCTS, SUCH AS CROPS, LIVESTOCK AND FISH.

IN THIS REGARD, I URGE OUR FARMERS TO VENTURE INTO THE PRODUCTION OF HIGH VALUE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS SUCH AS FRUITS, FRESH VEGETABLES, SUGAR, COTTON, LIVESTOCK AND FISH SO THAT THEY CAPTURE THE GROWING DOMESTIC, REGIONAL AND OVERSEAS MARKET.

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN;
OUR DEAR FARMERS:**

YOUR GOVERNMENT IS WORKING HARD TO MAINTAIN STABILITY IN THE ECONOMY BY ADDRESSING CHALLENGES TRIGGERED BY DOMESTIC AND GLOBAL TRENDS.

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THESE DEVELOPMENTS HAVE BEEN IMPACTING NEGATIVELY ON KEY INDICATORS SUCH AS INFLATION, EXCHANGE RATES AND INTEREST RATES. THIS HAS EQUALLY AFFECTED THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR.

TO ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES, THERE IS NEED FOR COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND THE FARMERS IN OUR QUEST TO DEVELOP THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

DIVERSIFICATION OF AGRICULTURE IS KEY, IF OUR FARMERS ARE TO ACHIEVE FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY AND INCOME GENERATION.

TO YOU OUR FARMERS, LET US TAKE DIVERSIFICATION SERIOUSLY. WE WANT TO SEE OUR FARMERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY VENTURING INTO OTHER CROPS OTHER THAN MAIZE.

THIS CALLS FOR YOU OUR FARMERS TO GIVE OPTIONS OF INPUTS IN THE FARMER INPUT SUPPORT PROGRAMME E-VOUCHER SYSTEM.

FURTHER, THE PRODUCTION OF LIVESTOCK AND FISH IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR AGRICULTURAL DIVERSIFICATION AGENDA. THIS SECTOR IS A KEY CONTRIBUTOR TO FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY INCLUDING INCOME GENERATION FOR OUR FARMERS AND THE NATION AT LARGE.

THIS IS WHY MY GOVERNMENT WAS PROMPTED TO CREATE THE MINISTRY OF FISHERIES AND LIVESTOCK TO DRIVE THIS AGENDA.

MR PRESIDENT,

I AM AWARE THAT THE ROLE OF THE ZAMBIA NATIONAL FARMERS UNION IS TO LOBBY GOVERNMENT AND ADVOCATE FOR IMPROVED AGRICULTURAL POLICIES ON BEHALF OF FARMERS.

YOUR EFFORTS, THEREFORE, SHOULD BE DIRECTED COMPLEMENTING GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO BUILD CONSENSUS. IN DOING SO, THE FARMERS' VOICES WILL BE ADEQUATELY REPRESENTED, THEREBY IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR IN GENERAL.

THE SUCCESS OF OUR FARMERS IS NOT ONLY FOR THEMSELVES, BUT ALSO FOR GOVERNMENT AND THE ENTIRE NATION. THIS IS WHY MY GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH YOU OUR FARMERS.

WITH THESE REMARKS, IT IS NOW MY HONOUR AND PLEASURE TO OFFICIALLY DECLARE THE 113TH ANNUAL CONGRESS OF THE ZAMBIA NATIONAL FARMERS' UNION OFFICIALLY OPEN.

