



Republic of Zambia

SPEECH BY

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

**AT THE COMMISSIONING OF THE COMPLETION OF
THE SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC PLANT FOR THE
BANGWEULU POWER COMPANY LIMITED**

IN LUSAKA SOUTH MULTI-FACILITY ECONOMIC ZONE

ON MONDAY, 11TH MARCH 2019

**STATE HOUSE
LUSAKA**

- **HON. MATHEW NKHUWA, MP, MINISTER OF ENERGY;**
- **HON. CABINET AND PROVINCIAL MINISTERS PRESENT;**
- **MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT PARTY;**
- **THE ACTING SECRETARY TO THE CABINET;**
- **YOUR WORSHIP THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF LUSAKA;**
- **SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS,**
- **THE GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER FOR THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (IDC);**
- **THE CHAIRPERSON AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF NEOEN;**
- **MEMBERS OF THE IDC BOARD OF DIRECTORS;**
- **THE WORLD BANK GROUP REPRESENTATIVE;**
- **YOUR EXCELLENCIES, MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS;**
- **DISTINGUISHED GUESTS;**
- **MEMBERS OF THE PRESS;**
- **LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

I AM DELIGHTED TO BE HERE TODAY TO GRACE THE COMMISSIONING OF THE COMPLETION OF THE SOLAR PHOTO VOLTAIC PLANT FOR BANGWEULU POWER COMPANY LIMITED, HERE IN THE LUSAKA SOUTH MULTI-FACILITY ECONOMIC ZONE.

IN 2015, THE COUNTRY EXPERIENCED A SEVERE ENERGY DEFICIT AND CRISIS ON ACCOUNT OF LOW WATER LEVELS RESULTING IN INADEQUATE POWER GENERATION. THE CRISIS WAS COMPOUNDED BY THE FACT THAT WE WERE OVERLY DEPENDENT ON HYDRO-ELECTRIC POWER.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

THIS PROMPTED ME TO DIRECT THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (IDC) TO IMMEDIATELY DEPLOY UP TO **600** MEGA WATTS-GRID CONNECTED SOLAR PHOTO VOLTAIC ("PV") POWER, AS A MEASURE TO DIVERSIFY OUR ENERGY SOURCES, AS WELL AS CREATE AN ENERGY MIX.

THEREFORE, OUR EVENT TODAY, IS AN IMPRINT AND DEMONSTRATION OF MY GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS AND COMMITMENT TO THE DEPLOYMENT OF RENEWABLE ENERGY SOLUTIONS, AS OUR COUNTRY THRIVES TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE ENERGY SECTOR.

I RECOGNISE EFFORTS OF VARIOUS KEY PLAYERS IN BRINGING THIS PROJECT TO FRUITION. I ALSO WISH TO CONGRATULATE NEOEN OF FRANCE AND THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION ON THIS INVESTMENT WHICH IS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN ZAMBIA.

YOUR PARTNERSHIP REPRESENTS THE DEVELOPMENT MODEL WHICH MY GOVERNMENT UPHOLDS. THIS IS A SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENT WITH LOCAL PARTICIPATION, A PROJECT ACTUALISED THROUGH A COMBINATION OF DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT.

IN THE SAME VEIN, I ALSO COMMEND THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCE CORPORATION AND THE WORLD BANK GROUP FOR THE TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT, GIVEN TO THE IDC AND THIS PROJECT IN PARTICULAR.

I URGE THE WORLD BANK GROUP TO CONTINUE SUPPORTING SUCH PROJECTS AND MANY OTHERS AIMED AT JOB CREATION IN OUR COUNTRY. YOUR SUPPORT TO THE SCALING SOLAR PROGRAMME WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN ATTRACTING SOME OF THE LARGEST RENEWABLE ENERGY COMPANIES TO ZAMBIA.

YOUR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE IDC INSTILLED CONFIDENCE IN INVESTORS TO BID FOR SOLAR PROJECTS. IT ALSO ATTRACTED OTHER FINANCIERS IN THE ZAMBIAN RENEWABLE ENERGY SPACE.

OTHER SECTORS SHOULD EQUALLY COLLABORATE IN ORDER TO STIR TRANSFORMATION, ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION AND CONSEQUENTLY, CREATE JOBS FOR OUR CITIZENS.

THIS PROJECT REPRESENTS WHAT COORDINATED EFFORTS CAN ACHIEVE. THE COLLABORATION AND COMMITMENT SHOWN BY THE KEY GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED IN THIS EFFORT SHOULD BE A MODEL OF HOW WE FACILITATE PRIVATE SECTOR GROWTH.

GOVERNMENT ALONE CAN NOT CREATE SUSTAINABLE JOBS BUT, THIS CALLS FOR COLLABORATION WITH VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS. THEREFORE, PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT IN SUCH PROJECTS IS VITAL.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

ZESCO LIMITED PLAYS A STRATEGIC NATIONAL ROLE IN FACILITATING THIS SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENT. THE 25 YEARS LIFE-SPAN OF THIS PROJECT IS INVARIABLY TIED TO ZESCO'S FUTURE. THE PROJECT SHOULD THEREFORE REPRESENT THE WORKING RELATIONSHIP THAT WE ALL WANT TO SEE BETWEEN ZESCO AND INVESTORS IN THE ENERGY SECTOR.

GOING FORWARD, ZESCO SHOULD CONTINUE TO INTERROGATE ITS WAY OF DOING THINGS. FOR A LONG TIME THE ELECTRICITY COMPANY HELD ON TO A TIME WHEN IT WAS THE ONLY PLAYER IN THE ENERGY SECTOR, EXPECTING TO DO ALL THE GENERATION PROJECTS. HOWEVER, THE ELECTRICITY COMPANY SHOULD BE READY FOR OTHER INVESTORS TO VENTURE INTO ENERGY GENERATION.

THE HIGH DEMAND FOR ENERGY IN ZAMBIA AND SIMILARLY, IN THE REGION WHERE IT IS EVEN HIGHER AS SOME NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES ARE CURRENTLY FACING POWER DEFICITS, MUST BE LEVERAGED, BY ATTRACTING MORE PLAYERS IN ZAMBIA'S ENERGY SECTOR.

LACK OF ELECTRICITY IN SOME PARTS OF THE COUNTRY HAS HINDERED THE CREATION OF JOBS AND WEALTH. THIS MUST BE ADDRESSED.

THUS, ZESCO HAS TO CO-EXIST WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN DEVELOPING OUR ENERGY SECTOR. THE PRIVATE SECTOR HAS SHOWN GREAT APPETITE TO INVEST IN POWER GENERATION SUCH AS IN COAL, SOLAR, WIND OR HYDRO.

THROUGH THIS PROJECT THAT WILL ROLL OUT SOON, ZESCO AND OTHER PLAYERS HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT THERE IS CAPACITY TO SET UP POWER PLANTS TO SUPPLY ZESCO WITH POWER AT LOW TARIFFS.

ZESCO SHOULD THEREFORE, POSITION ITSELF TO BE THE PRINCIPAL FACILITATOR OF PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT IN ENERGY GENERATION.

THE COMPANY MUST FOCUS ON ADDRESSING ACCESS TO POWER IN THE COUNTRY WHICH UNFORTUNATELY REMAINS UNACCEPTABLY LOW. THIS BRINGS ME TO AN ISSUE WHICH IS OF CONCERN I AM SURE NOT ONLY TO ME BUT THE ENTIRE NATION. ONE WONDERS WHY POWER SHOULD PASS THROUGH A DISTRICT WHILE THE PEOPLE IN THAT DISTRICT ARE DENIED THE SAME ELECTRICITY.

LET ME REITERATE THE NEED FOR ALL CITIZENS IN THE COUNTRY TO BENEFIT FROM ELECTRICITY. THAT IS WHY THE RURAL ELECTRIFICATION PROGRAMME MUST BE ESCALATED.

RECENTLY, I COMMISSIONED A PALM OIL OUTGROWER SCHEME IN KANCHIBIYA DISTRICT OF MUCHINGA PROVINCE. HOWEVER, IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT THE GROWTH OF THE LARGE PALM OIL INVESTMENT IS BEING CONSTRAINED BY LACK OF POWER.

PROVINCES LIKE LUAPULA, NORTHERN AND MUCHINGA HAVE AN ABUNDANCE OF AGRICULTURAL AND MINING POTENTIAL BUT REGRETABLY, WHICH REMAINS UNEXPLOITED BECAUSE POWER LINES HAVE NOT REACHED MANY AREAS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I, THEREFORE, EXPECT ZESCO TO FOCUS ON EXPANDING THE NATIONAL GRID AND IMPLEMENTING INTERCONNECTORS WITH ALL OUR NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES TO CREATE POWER EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES.

THE GROWTH OF PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT IN ENERGY GENERATION IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR US TO FOCUS OUR RESOURCES ON TAKING POWER LINES TO ALL PARTS OF THE COUNTRY AND BEYOND.

EVERY PART OF OUR COUNTRY DESERVES ELECTRICITY. OUR PEOPLE IN CHAVUMA, CHAMA, KAPUTA KAZUNGULA, SHANG'OMBO AND NAKONDE DESERVE POWER. IT CANNOT BE A PRESERVE OF A FEW.

WITH INCREASED ELECTRICITY GENERATION, WE WILL BE ABLE TO ATTRACT INVESTMENT THROUGHOUT THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF OUR COUNTRY.

ELECTRICITY HOLDS THE KEY FOR US TO UNLOCK OUR POTENTIAL AS A COUNTRY TO IMPROVE THE LIVELIHOODS OF OUR PEOPLE.

THERE IS NO REASON FOR OUR PEOPLE TO REMAIN POOR. THERE IS NO REASON FOR OUR CITIZENS TO HAVE NO JOBS. THERE IS NO REASON FOR OUR CITIZENS TO FAIL TO PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT MAINLY BECAUSE OF LACK OF ELECTRICITY.

THERE IS URGENT NEED TO INCREASE ELECTRICITY GENERATION, AND THE AREA OF RENEWABLE ENERGY GIVES US GREATER HOPE.

THE RECORD-LOW TARIFFS ACHIEVED FOR THE BANGWEULU POWER PROJECT IS A CLEAR DEMONSTRATION OF EFFORTS AIMED AT IMPROVING AFFORDABLE ELECTRIFICATION RATES. ONE OF THE FACTORS THAT HAS HINDERED THE GROWTH OF THE ENERGY SECTOR HAS BEEN HIGH TARIFFS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

OUR QUEST TO INDUSTRIALISE THE COUNTRY CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED THROUGH A MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL COOPERATION AMONG ALL STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING THE FINANCIERS, DEVELOPERS, AUTHORITIES AND THE COMMUNITIES IN WHICH WE OPERATE.

ONCE AGAIN, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FINANCIERS, DEVELOPERS, AUTHORITIES AND ALL STAKEHOLDERS WHO MADE THIS PROJECT A REALITY.

LET ME REITERATE MY COMMENDATION TO THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AND NEOEN FOR THE PARTNERSHIP WHICH IS POISED TO UPLIFT THE WELFARE OF OUR PEOPLE AND ENHANCE PRODUCTIVITY OF BUSINESSES. THE ENERGY FROM THIS PLANT WILL POWER NEARLY **30,000** HOUSEHOLDS ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

I WISH TO ALSO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO DIRECT THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION TO ACCELERATE ALL THE OTHER RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS WHICH ARE IN THE PIPELINE.

I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO COMMISSIONING MORE SOLAR PROJECTS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY. THIS IS THE ONLY SURE WAY WE CAN BE ABLE TO ENHANCE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN ALL PARTS OF OUR COUNTRY.

**DISTINGUISHED GUESTS;
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

MY GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO INVESTING AND IMPLEMENTING PROJECTS WHICH WILL PROMOTE INDUSTRIALISATION, JOB CREATION AND INDIVIDUAL ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE.

I AM OPTIMISTIC THAT WITH THE COLLABORATION AND CONCERTED EFFORT, IT WILL BE EASY FOR US TO FOSTER THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA AS ESPOUSED IN OUR 7TH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

IT IS NOW MY SINGULAR HONOUR AND PRIVILEGE TO DECLARE THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BANGWEULU POWER COMPANY PLANT OFFICIALLY COMPLETED.

MAY THE ALMIGHTY GOD BLESS YOU ALL.

I THANK YOU.