



Republic of Zambia

**SPEECH BY
HIS EXCELLENCY, MR EDGAR CHAGWA LUNGU
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA,
DURING THE FLAGGING OFF OF RELIEF DISTRIBUTION IN
SINDA DISTRICT, EASTERN PROVINCE
ON THURSDAY, 21ST MARCH 2019**

**STATE HOUSE
LUSAKA**

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN;

I GREET YOU ALL!

FROM THE OUTSET, I WISH TO EXPRESS GOVERNMENT'S CONCERN ON THE DRY SPELLS WHICH OUR COUNTRY IS CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING PARTICULARLY IN SOUTHERN PROVINCE AND HEAVY RAINS IN THE NORTHERN PART OF THE COUNTRY WITH HIGH TEMPERATURES.

AREAS OF THE COUNTRY WHICH ARE SEVERELY AFFECTED BY THE DRY SPELLS BESIDES SOUTHERN PROVINCE INCLUDE SOME PARTS OF CENTRAL, EASTERN, LUSAKA AND WESTERN PROVINCE.

THE DRY SPELLS COUPLED WITH HIGH TEMPERATURES HAVE RESULTED IN LOSS OF SOIL MOISTURE THEREBY CAUSING WILTING OF CROPS AND GRAZING PASTURE AS WELL AS DRYING OF SOME WATER RESERVOIRS (DAMS) IN THE AFOREMENTIONED PROVINCES.

MY GOVERNMENT IS AWARE OF THE PREVAILING SITUATION COUNTRYWIDE. THIS IS WHY THE MINISTER IN THE OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, THE NATIONAL COORDINATOR AND SOME PERMANENT SECRETARIES HAVE BEEN ON THE GROUND TO HAVE AN ON THE SPOT CHECK OF THE SITUATION.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

LET ME TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO INFORM THE NATION THAT MY GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN A PROACTIVE APPROACH BY PUTTING IN PLACE PREPAREDNESS AND MITIGATION MEASURES AIMED AT CUSHIONING THE IMPACT OF CLIMATIC SHOCKS ON THE AFFECTED PEOPLE IN ORDER TO PROTECT THEIR LIVES AND PROPERTIES INCLUDING LIVESTOCK.

AS GOVERNMENT, WE HAVE PRIORITISED PROGRAMMES IN THE SEVENTH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN AIMED AT BUILDING COMMUNITIES' RESILIENCE AND ENHANCING THEIR ADAPTIVE CAPACITIES TO CLIMATIC AND DISASTER SHOCKS.

THIS SITUATION WAS PREDICTED THROUGH SEASONAL FORECAST BY THE CLIMATE INFORMATION CENTRE OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC) AND THE ZAMBIA METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT.

FOLLOWING THIS, WE TOOK A PROACTIVE STANCE THROUGH OUR VARIOUS GOVERNMENT AGENCIES SUCH AS THE DISASTER MANAGEMENT MITIGATION UNIT (DMMU) UNDER THE OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT AND THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE WHICH EMBARKED ON THE DISSEMINATION OF EARLY WARNING INFORMATION, AS EARLY AS OCTOBER LAST YEAR.

THE PREDICTION APPARENTLY HAS COME TO PASS AND MY GOVERNMENT HAS TRIGGERED RESPONSE MECHANISMS THROUGH DMMU AND OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO ENSURE THAT OUR PEOPLE ARE PROTECTED.

ONE SUCH RESPONSE IS THE DISTRIBUTION OF RELIEF FOOD WHICH I AM FLAGGING OFF TODAY HERE IN SINDA DISTRICT.

I WISH TO NOTE THAT THE 2017/2018 AGRICULTURE SEASON WAS EQUALLY AFFECTED BY PROLONGED DRY SPELLS RESULTING IN MOST HOUSEHOLDS BEING FOOD INSECURE. THE SITUATION HAS FURTHER BEEN COMPOUNDED BY ANOTHER PROTRACTED DRY SPELL BEING EXPERIENCED IN THIS CURRENT SEASON.

I AM AWARE THAT THE DISTRIBUTION OF RELIEF FOOD TO FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS IN EASTERN PROVINCE HAS BEEN GOING ON SINCE DECEMBER THIS YEAR, AND A TOTAL OF **1, 600** METRIC TONNES HAS SO FAR BEEN DISTRIBUTED.

THUS FAR, THE DISTRICTS WHICH HAVE BEEN RECEIVING RELIEF INCLUDE NYIMBA, PETAUKE, SINDA, KATETE, MAMBWE, LUMEZI, LUSANGAZI, CHADIZA AND VUBWI.

SINDA IN PARTICULAR HAS SO FAR RECEIVED AND DISTRIBUTED **200** METRIC TONNES TO THE VULNERABLE IN THE DISTRICT. THE DISTRIBUTION WE ARE FLAGGING OFF TODAY WILL BRING THE TOTAL OF RELIEF SO FAR DISTRIBUTED TO **300** METRIC TONNES.

DUE TO THE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF AFFECTED HOUSEHOLDS, MY GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE WITH THE DISTRIBUTION OF RELIEF IN AN EXPANDED WAY. THIS ENTAILS THAT NEW AREAS WHICH HAVE ALSO BEEN AFFECTED THIS SEASON WILL BE CONSIDERED.

I WISH TO FURTHER TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO ASSURE THAT MY GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON RELIEF DISTRIBUTION IS NON DISCRIMINATORY AND IMPARTIAL. WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE PLIGHT OF OUR PEOPLE, HENCE WE WILL ENSURE THAT ALL THE VULNERABLE REGARDLESS OF THEIR RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, OR ANY OTHER AFFILIATIONS BENEFIT FROM RELIEF DISTRIBUTION.

AT THIS POINT, LET ME DIRECT DMMU AND THE DISTRICT DISASTER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES (DDMCs) TO SUPERVISE AND CLOSELY MONITOR RELIEF DISTRIBUTION IN THE COUNTRY, TO ENSURE THAT NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS HANDLING RELIEF DISTRIBUTION ON BEHALF OF GOVERNMENT, STRICTLY UPHOLD THE PRINCIPLE OF NON DISCRIMINATION AND IMPARTIALITY WITHOUT FAIL.

MY GOVERNMENT WILL NOT TOLERATE ANY MISAPPROPRIATION OF RELIEF MEANT FOR THE VULNERABLE.

LET ME ALSO INFORM THE NATION THAT DISTRIBUTION OF RELIEF MAIZE WILL BE CONDUCTED IN ALL THE AFFECTED PROVINCES IN THE COUNTRY PARTICULARLY SOUTHERN AND WESTERN PROVINCES, WHICH I WILL SOON BE VISITING.

IN THE SAME VEIN, I WISH TO DIRECT THE OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT TO ENSURE THAT AN IN-DEPTH VULNERABILITY AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT IS CONDUCTED SOON TO ESTABLISH AFFECTED AREAS AND THE NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS WHICH ARE FOOD INSECURE, TO AVOID LOSING LIVES TO HUNGER.

WITH THESE REMARKS, IT IS NOW MY SINGULAR HONOUR AND PRIVILEGE TO OFFICIALLY FLAG OFF THIS EXERCISE.

GOD BLESS YOU ALL
I THANK YOU.