

SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY MR MICHAEL CHILUFYA SATA,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA ON THE
OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE
SECOND SESSION OF THE ELEVENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
21ST SEPTEMBER, 2012

INTRODUCTION

MR. SPEAKER,

IT IS WITH PLEASURE THAT I JOIN YOU TODAY AND THE REST OF THE HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT TO OPEN THE SECOND SESSION OF THE ELEVENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

ALMOST ONE YEAR HAS ELAPSED SINCE I ADDRESSED THIS AUGUST HOUSE ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE ELEVENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

OBITUARY

MR. SPEAKER,

BEFORE I GO ANY FURTHER, I NOTE WITH SADNESS THAT DURING THE FIRST SESSION OF THE ELEVENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, THE HOUSE LOST THE HONOURABLE MEMBER FOR MUCHINGA PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY, THE LATE MR GEORGE KUNDA, SC, MP, FORMER VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA, WHO PASSED AWAY ON 16TH APRIL, 2012. MAY HIS SOUL REST IN PEACE.

MAY I NOW ASK THE HOUSE TO STAND AND OBSERVE A MINUTE OF SILENCE IN HONOUR OF OUR DEAR DEPARTED COLLEAGUE.

BY-ELECTIONS

MR. SPEAKER,

FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF HONOURABLE KUNDA, SC, MP, THE RESIGNATIONS OF SOME MEMBERS FROM THE PARTIES WHICH SPONSORED THEM TO THE HOUSE, AS WELL AS THE NULLIFICATION OF SOME PARLIAMENTARY SEATS, THE LAST SESSION SAW SEVEN BY-ELECTIONS TAKE PLACE IN CHONGWE, NAKONDE, MAGOYE, MSANZALA, LIVINGSTONE, CHAMA NORTH AND MUCHINGA CONSTITUENCIES.

IN THIS REGARD, I WISH TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CONGRATULATE THE SEVEN HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT WHO EMERGED WINNERS IN THESE BY-ELECTIONS.

LET ME, HOWEVER, REGISTER MY DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE VIOLENCE THAT CHARACTERISED SOME OF THE BY-ELECTIONS. I WISH TO EMPHASISE THE NEED TO EXERCISE SELF RESTRAINT AND TOLERANCE BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER ELECTIONS.

PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS

MR. SPEAKER,

MY GOVERNMENT ACKNOWLEDGES THAT DEMOCRACY, GOOD GOVERNANCE AND THE RULE OF LAW, AS WELL AS AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT, ARE ESSENTIAL FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

I AM DELIGHTED THAT THE FIRST SESSION OF THE ELEVENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WAS VERY PRODUCTIVE IN MANY RESPECTS. DURING THAT SESSION, THIS AUGUST HOUSE DEALT WITH MATTERS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO OUR PEOPLE. HONOURABLE MEMBERS DEBATED THESE MATTERS CANDIDLY. THIS IS A CLEAR TESTIMONY OF OUR GROWING AND MATURING DEMOCRACY.

IN THIS REGARD, LET ME COMMEND YOU, MR. SPEAKER, FOR THE IMPARTIAL AND ABLE MANNER IN WHICH YOU GUIDED AND PRESIDED OVER THE BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE DURING THE LAST SESSION.

IN THE SAME VEIN, LET ME ALSO CONGRATULATE THE HONOURABLE DEPUTY SPEAKER, THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES OF THE WHOLE HOUSE AND THE CHAIRPERSONS OF ALL THE PARLIAMENTARY SESSIONAL AND SELECT COMMITTEES FOR THE EFFECTIVE MANNER IN WHICH THEY DISCHARGED THEIR FUNCTIONS. THEIR OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP ENABLED THE HOUSE TO FULFIL ITS FUNCTIONS OF LEGISLATING AND EXERCISING OVERSIGHT OVER THE EXECUTIVE.

MR. SPEAKER,

I WILL BE FAILING IN MY DUTY IF I DID NOT CONGRATULATE HIS HONOUR THE VICE-PRESIDENT AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS IN THE HOUSE FOR THE EXCELLENT MANNER IN WHICH HE LED GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.

IN SO DOING, ALLOW ME TO ALSO RECOGNISE THE ROLE OF THE WHIPS OF OUR VARIOUS POLITICAL PARTIES REPRESENTED IN THE HOUSE. THIS HOUSE CONTINUES TO FUNCTION WELL BECAUSE OF THE EXCELLENT SERVICES IT RECEIVES FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. I, THEREFORE, COMMEND THE CLERK OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND HER STAFF FOR THEIR CONTINUED GOOD WORK AND DEDICATION TO DUTY.

LET ME ALSO THANK THE ZAMBIAN PEOPLE FOR EXERCISING THEIR PATIENCE AND FOR CONTINUING TO SUPPORT MY GOVERNMENT AS IT REMAINS STEADFAST IN ADDRESSING THEIR MANY AND VARIED NEEDS.

MR. SPEAKER,

I AM HAPPY TO NOTE THAT THE HOUSE WAS ABLE TO CONSIDER AND PASS A TOTAL OF **12 BILLS**. IN ADDITION, THE HOUSE CONTINUED TO EXERCISE ITS ROLE AND OBLIGATION TO HOLD MY GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABLE TO THE ZAMBIAN PEOPLE BY DEBATING **609** PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS, **SEVEN** PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS AND **23** MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS.

I FURTHER NOTE THAT **21** MOTIONS TO ADOPT THE REPORTS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY SESSIONAL COMMITTEES AND **FIVE** MOTIONS TO ADOPT THE SELECT COMMITTEE REPORTS FOR THE RATIFICATION OF PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEES TO CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICES WERE CONSIDERED AND ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE.

FURTHER, A TOTAL OF 61 PAPERS AND ANNUAL REPORTS WERE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE BY GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES AND QUASI-GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS. THESE PAPERS AND ANNUAL REPORTS ARE EVIDENCE OF MY ADMINISTRATION'S DESIRE TO FOSTER GOOD GOVERNANCE AND REMAIN TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE TO THE ZAMBIAN PEOPLE.

DESPITE THE DIVERSE POLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN THE HOUSE, MEMBERS WERE ABLE TO WORK TOGETHER FOR THE PURPOSE OF FOSTERING DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVING THE WELFARE OF OUR PEOPLE.

PARLIAMENTARY REFORMS

MR. SPEAKER,

I AM HAPPY TO NOTE THAT, IN ADVANCING OUR DEMOCRACY, THE FIRST SESSION OF THE ELEVENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CONTINUED WITH THE PARLIAMENTARY REFORMS.

I AM PARTICULARLY IMPRESSED WITH THE ON-GOING CONSTRUCTION OF CONSTITUENCY OFFICES; COMPLETION OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MEDIA AND VISITORS CENTRE; INSTALLATION OF SOLAR EQUIPMENT IN SOME CONSTITUENCY OFFICES; STRENGTHENING OF PARLIAMENT RADIO; AND CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND STAFF OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. ALL THESE WILL ENSURE THAT WE BRING PARLIAMENT CLOSER TO THE PEOPLE.

LET ME ASSURE THIS AUGUST HOUSE AND THE PEOPLE OF ZAMBIA THAT MY GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING THESE PARLIAMENTARY REFORMS.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

MR. SPEAKER,

IN MY LAST ADDRESS TO THIS HOUSE, I REFLECTED ON THE MANY DEVELOPMENTAL CHALLENGES FACING OUR COUNTRY, WHICH INCLUDED HIGH YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND HIGH POVERTY LEVELS. I ALSO OUTLINED MY GOVERNMENT'S DEVELOPMENT AGENDA TO MEET THE EXPECTATIONS OF OUR PEOPLE.

MY GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO MAKING ZAMBIA A BETTER PLACE FOR ALL. THIS IS IN LINE WITH THE PATRIOTIC FRONT VISION WHICH IS, AND I QUOTE, *"THE CITIZENS OF THIS GREAT LAND NOT ONLY DESERVE BETTER LIVES BUT ARE ENTITLED TO BETTER LIVES"*, END OF QUOTE.

THIS OCCASION, THEREFORE, PROVIDES US WITH A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO REFLECT ON OUR ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE LAST SESSION NOT ONLY AS A PARTY IN GOVERNMENT, BUT ALSO AS A PEOPLE.

IT ALSO ENABLES US TO SERIOUSLY REFLECT ON WHAT WE INTEND TO DO IN ADDRESSING THE MANY CHALLENGES THAT LIE AHEAD TO IMPROVE THE WELFARE OF THE MAJORITY OF OUR PEOPLE AS THE FIRST CALL OF DUTY.

MR. SPEAKER,

THE ZAMBIAN ECONOMY IS ON COURSE TO ATTAIN A GROWTH RATE HIGHER THAN THE **SEVEN PER CENT** THAT WAS PROJECTED FOR THIS YEAR. OUR OPTIMISM IS BASED ON EVOLVING PROSPECTS CHARACTERISED BY SINGLE DIGIT INFLATION AND DECREASING INTEREST RATES.

OTHER INDICATORS IN THE MACROECONOMIC AREA INCLUDE WELL MANAGED GOVERNMENT BORROWING, STABLE EXCHANGE RATE AND INCREASED PRIVATE SECTOR CREDIT AND INVESTMENT.

ON 18TH MAY, 2012 GOVERNMENT ISSUED A STATUTORY INSTRUMENT NUMBER 33 OF 2012 WHICH PROHIBITS THE QUOTING, PAYING OR DEMANDING TO PAY OR RECEIVING OF FOREIGN CURRENCY AS LEGAL TENDER FOR GOODS, SERVICES OR ANY OTHER DOMESTIC TRANSACTIONS. THIS IS IN DEFENCE OF SOVEREIGNTY OVER OUR NATIONAL CURRENCY AS IS THE PRACTICE IN ALL OTHER COUNTRIES WITH STABLE ECONOMIES.

IN ORDER TO ENSURE SUSTAINABLE HIGHER GROWTH RATES, MY GOVERNMENT WILL STRIVE TO IMPROVE FURTHER ON THESE MACRO-ECONOMIC PARAMETERS.

BUDGET EXECUTION CONTINUES TO IMPROVE. BY THE END OF JUNE 2012, GOVERNMENT HAD RELEASED MORE THAN 75 PER CENT OF THE BUDGET WITH MOST OF THE MINISTRIES AND SPENDING AGENCIES HAVING RECEIVED MORE THAN HALF OF THEIR 2012 ALLOCATIONS.

IN THIS VEIN, MY GOVERNMENT IS IN THE PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING A GOVERNMENT WIDE MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM WHICH WILL ENHANCE RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND EVALUATION SYSTEM TO PROJECTS AND TRACKING OF POLICY PERFORMANCE INCLUDING SUPPORT OF RESULTS BASED MANAGEMENT.

MR. SPEAKER,

DESPITE THE FAVOURABLE MACRO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE ZAMBIAN ECONOMY IN THE PAST ONE YEAR, THE COUNTRY IS STILL FACED WITH A NUMBER OF CHALLENGES. IN PARTICULAR, POVERTY LEVELS REMAIN HIGH ESPECIALLY IN RURAL AREAS.

THERE IS ALSO UNACCEPTABLY HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT, ESPECIALLY AMONG THE YOUTH. FURTHER, THE SHORTAGE OF ELECTRICITY HAS CONTINUED TO HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE.

MY GOVERNMENT RECOGNISES THE NEED TO INTENSIFY EFFORTS IN CLOSING THE DEVELOPMENT GAP BETWEEN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS, AND CREATE OPPORTUNITIES TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DIVERSIFICATION, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION.

LET ME ASSURE THIS AUGUST HOUSE THAT MY ADMINISTRATION IS READY TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES THAT THE ZAMBIAN ECONOMY IS FACED WITH. IN THIS REGARD, THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN STRONG FISCAL PRUDENCE TO ENSURE THAT RESOURCES ARE USED WISELY.

FURTHER, IT WILL CURTAIL NON-PRIORITY EXPENDITURES TO ENSURE THAT KEY PROGRAMMES AIMED AT POVERTY REDUCTION AND EMPLOYMENT CREATION ARE GIVEN DUE PRIORITY.

MR. SPEAKER,

GOING FORWARD, MY GOVERNMENT IS DETERMINED TO FOSTER INCLUSIVE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. IN THIS RESPECT WE SHALL:

- 1) ENHANCE THE EXPANSION AND DIVERSIFICATION OF THE ECONOMY;

- 2) ENSURE THE PROMOTION OF FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT WHILE DOING EVERYTHING TO FOSTER LOCAL INVESTMENT;

- 3) SUSTAIN A SINGLE DIGIT INFLATION RATE AND CONTINUE TO WORK TOWARDS EFFECTIVELY REDUCING THE INTEREST RATE;
- 4) ENHANCE DOMESTIC RESOURCE MOBILIZATION;
- 5) SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE EMPLOYMENT; AND
- 6) LIMIT GOVERNMENT BORROWING TO SUSTAINABLE LEVELS TO AVOID PUTTING A HUGE BURDEN ON POSTERITY.

MR. SPEAKER,

THE OVERALL GROWTH STRATEGY IS TO INCREASE GROWTH TO AN AVERAGE OF EIGHT PER CENT PER ANNUM.

WHILE IN THE MEDIUM AND LONG TERM, THE SIXTH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND VISION 2030 WILL REMAIN THE MAIN DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS OF THE COUNTRY, GOVERNMENT SHALL PURSUE THE GROWTH STRATEGY IN LINE WITH THE PATRIOTIC FRONT MANIFESTO.

NATIONAL BUDGET 2013

MR. SPEAKER,

THE 2013 NATIONAL BUDGET WHICH WILL BE PRESENTED TO THIS AUGUST HOUSE WILL BE THE FIRST UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT GOVERNMENT.

IN THIS REGARD, THE BUDGET WILL ENSURE THAT ECONOMIC GROWTH IS INCLUSIVE AND PRO-POOR. THE FOCUS WILL BE ON THE STRATEGIC AREAS OF EDUCATION, HEALTH, AGRICULTURE, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING AND IMPROVED GOVERNANCE, WITH EMPHASIS ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT.

TO ENHANCE GOVERNMENT REVENUE, THE FOCUS WILL BE ON REVIEWING THE CURRENT TAX SYSTEM. FURTHER, GOVERNMENT IS DETERMINED TO SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE TAX EVASIONS LEAKAGES THROUGH STRENGTHENING THE FRAMEWORK FOR GRANTING FISCAL INCENTIVES AND ENHANCING AUDIT TRAILS TO ENSURE EXPORT VOLUMES ARE ACCURATELY DECLARED.

FURTHER, GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE THE PROCESS OF WIDENING THE TAX BASE BY; AMONG OTHER MEASURES, ENSURING TAX COMPLIANCE.

EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT

MR. SPEAKER,

EDUCATION, SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, AND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ARE KEY TO IMPROVING THE PRODUCTIVITY OF OUR PEOPLE AND FACILITATING NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT. GUIDED BY THE PATRIOTIC FRONT MANIFESTO, MY GOVERNMENT HAS COMMENCED THE REVIEW OF THE EDUCATION POLICY AND THE EDUCATION ACT OF 2011.

GOVERNMENT IS ALSO WORKING ON THE HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY BILL SO AS TO AUGMENT THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK. MY GOVERNMENT APPRECIATES THE INITIATIVES TAKEN BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO ESTABLISH UNIVERSITIES AND OTHER TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

I AM, HOWEVER, CONCERNED WITH THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION THAT IS BEING OFFERED IN MANY OF THESE INSTITUTIONS. THEREFORE, THERE IS NEED FOR A REGULATORY BODY THAT WILL ENSURE CONFORMITY TO ACCEPTABLE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS.

ACCORDINGLY, I AM DIRECTING THE RESPONSIBLE MINISTER TO WORK ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EDUCATIONAL REGULATORY BODY TO MONITOR AND IMPROVE STANDARDS.

MR. SPEAKER,

IN MY ADDRESS TO THE OPENING SESSION OF THE ELEVENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, I DID ANNOUNCE THE TRANSFORMATION OF SOME COLLEGES INTO UNIVERSITIES, AS WELL AS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LUBWA UNIVERSITY IN HONOUR OF THE FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA.

I AM GLAD TO INFORM THIS AUGUST HOUSE THAT PREPARATORY WORK FOR THESE PROJECTS HAS ALREADY STARTED AND ACTUAL CONSTRUCTION IS EXPECTED TO COMMENCE DURING THE COURSE OF THIS YEAR AT LUBWA, CHALIMBANA AND PALABANA.

MY GOVERNMENT HAS ACCELERATED CONSTRUCTION OF MULAKUPIKWA UNIVERSITY IN CHINSALI. IN ADDITION, EXPANSION PROGRAMMES ARE BEING UNDERTAKEN AT THE COPPERBELT, KWAME NKRUMAH AND MULUNGUSHI UNIVERSITIES. THE INTENTION OF GOVERNMENT IS TO HAVE AT LEAST ONE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN EACH PROVINCE.

MR. SPEAKER,

NEW TRADES TRAINING INSTITUTIONS ARE ALSO BEING CONSTRUCTED IN KALABO, MILENGE AND ISOKA, WHILE REHABILITATION AND EXPANSION WORKS HAVE CONTINUED IN A NUMBER OF TRAINING INSTITUTIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

CONSTRUCTION OF OTHER INSTITUTIONS IN LUNDAZI, SESHEKE AND MUMBWA WILL COMMENCE BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR. ADDITIONALLY, SUBSTANTIAL FUNDING WAS RELEASED TOWARDS REHABILITATION OF SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE.

MR. SPEAKER,

IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND RELEVANCE OF EDUCATION, THE CURRICULUM HAS UNDERGONE REVIEW.

THE NEW CURRICULUM, WILL INTEGRATE BOTH ACADEMIC AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING. THIS WILL FACILITATE THE ACQUISITION OF SKILLS TO ENABLE STUDENTS BE SELF EMPLOYED WHEN THEY CANNOT SECURE FORMAL EMPLOYMENT. ANOTHER KEY ASPECT OF THE CURRICULUM WILL BE THE INCLUSION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING.

HEALTH

MR. SPEAKER,

MY GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO RE-ORGANISE AND MANAGE THE HEALTH SECTOR TO ENSURE SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY. ON 27TH JANUARY 2012, GOVERNMENT LAUNCHED THE NATIONAL HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 2011 TO 2015. THIS STRATEGY IS AIMED AT ADDRESSING BOTH NON-COMMUNICABLE AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASES.

IN ORDER TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF INFRASTRUCTURE, MY GOVERNMENT ALLOCATED FUNDS FOR THE REHABILITATION OF HEALTH FACILITIES AND CONSTRUCTION OF NEW HOSPITALS. WE ARE CURRENTLY CONSTRUCTING A CANCER DISEASES HOSPITAL AT THE UNIVERSITY TEACHING HOSPITAL WITH A TOTAL CAPACITY OF **220** BEDS.

GOVERNMENT WILL SOON COMMENCE THE CONSTRUCTION OF **650** HEALTH POSTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

MR. SPEAKER,

OVER THE YEARS, OUR COUNTRY HAS EXPERIENCED AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS, THEREBY STRETCHING OUR CAPACITY TO ADEQUATELY PROVIDE EMERGENCY HEALTH CARE.

TO ADDRESS THIS PROBLEM, MY GOVERNMENT HAS PROCURED INTENSIVE CARE UNIT EQUIPMENT FOR ALL PROVINCIAL HOSPITALS AND THIS EQUIPMENT IS CURRENTLY BEING INSTALLED.

MR. SPEAKER,

IN LINE WITH THE PATRIOTIC FRONT MANIFESTO, MY GOVERNMENT ABOLISHED USER FEES AT PRIMARY LEVEL, THEREBY GIVING RELIEF TO MANY ZAMBIANS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO COULD NOT AFFORD TO PAY FOR HEALTH SERVICES .

IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF PATIENTS REFERRED FOR TREATMENT ABROAD, WE HAVE EMBARKED ON A PROGRAMME TO TRAIN SPECIALISTS AND ACQUIRE MODERN MEDICAL EQUIPMENT INCLUDING COMPUTERISED TOMOGRAPHY SCANNERS.

ALL IN ALL, THIS HOUSE WILL BE PLEASED TO LEARN THAT MY GOVERNMENT INCREASED THE BUDGET TO THE HEALTH SECTOR BY 47 PER CENT. THE INCREASE HAS IMPROVED AND STABILISED THE AVAILABILITY OF ESSENTIAL DRUGS IN ALL HEALTH FACILITIES. OUR VISION IS TO HAVE A HEALTHY NATION WITH HEALTHY PEOPLE.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

MR. SPEAKER,

MY GOVERNMENT'S POLICY OBJECTIVE ON AGRICULTURE IS TO ACHIEVE A DYNAMIC, COMPETITIVE, DIVERSIFIED AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR WHICH ASSURES NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY AND INCREASED INCOMES AT ALL LEVELS.

IN THIS REGARD, GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTION AND TO PROMOTE INVESTMENT IN AGRO-PROCESSING THEREBY INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

MR. SPEAKER,

IN LINE WITH THE PATRIOTIC FRONT MANIFESTO, MY GOVERNMENT WILL ESTABLISH ASSOCIATED IRRIGATION SCHEMES FOR SMALLHOLDER, MEDIUM AND LARGE SCALE COMMERCIAL FARMING IN HIGH POTENTIAL AREAS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, GOVERNMENT SHALL PROGRESSIVELY BRING **17,000** HECTARES OF LAND UNDER IRRIGATION.

GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO MAKE AVAILABLE ADDITIONAL LAND FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF FARM BLOCKS. THE INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FARM BLOCKS STARTED WITH NANSANGA AND HAS SINCE BEEN EXTENDED TO LUENA FARM BLOCK IN KAWAMBWA WITH MORE THAN **K40 BILLION** RELEASED THIS YEAR FOR THE DEVELOPMENT.

MR. SPEAKER,

MY GOVERNMENT HAS CONTINUED TO SUPPORT OUR SMALL SCALE FARMERS WITH AGRICULTURAL INPUTS UNDER THE FARMER INPUT SUPPORT PROGRAMME. DURING THE 2012/13 AGRICULTURAL SEASON, ABOUT **900,000** FARMERS WILL BE SUPPORTED WITH SEED AND FERTILIZER. TRADITIONALLY, THIS SUPPORT HAS BEEN FOCUSED ON MAIZE AND RICE. MY GOVERNMENT WILL THIS YEAR BROADEN SUPPORT TO SORGHUM, GROUNDNUTS AND COTTON.

PACKS FOR RICE AND THE NEW CROPS WILL ONLY BE AVAILABLE IN SELECTED DISTRICTS WITH COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

MR. SPEAKER,

THIS YEAR, MY GOVERNMENT WILL PURCHASE A TOTAL OF ONE MILLION METRIC TONNES OF GRAIN IN ORDER TO SAFEGUARD NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY. TO THIS END, I AM DIRECTING THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK TO URGENTLY FINALISE THE REVISION OF THE FOOD RESERVE AGENCY ACT IN ORDER TO PAVE WAY FOR PARTICIPATION OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

MY GOVERNMENT HAS STARTED THE PROCESS OF REHABILITATING FIVE PREVIOUSLY DISUSED GRAIN SILOS IN CHISAMBA, KABWE, KITWE, MONZE AND NDOLA.

FURTHERMORE, MY GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO CONSTRUCT SEVEN NEW GRAIN SILOS IN CHINSALI, KALOMO, KASAMA, MANSA, MUFUMBWE AND PETAUKE DISTRICTS WITH A TOTAL STORAGE CAPACITY OF 225,000 METRIC TONNES. OUR TARGET IS TO HAVE A NATIONAL STORAGE CAPACITY OF TWO MILLION METRIC TONNES AS A MINIMUM REQUIREMENT.

IN ADDITION, MY GOVERNMENT ENCOURAGES PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT IN THE CONSTRUCTION AND MANAGEMENT OF NEW GRAIN STORAGE FACILITIES.

MR. SPEAKER,

IN ORDER TO FURTHER DEVELOP THE LIVESTOCK SECTOR, MY GOVERNMENT HAS INTENSIFIED THE LIVESTOCK RESTOCKING PROGRAMME, CONSTRUCTION OF LIVESTOCK SERVICE CENTRES AND REHABILITATION OF BREEDING CENTRES IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY. WE HAVE ALSO INTENSIFIED ANIMAL DISEASE CONTROL MECHANISMS. MY GOVERNMENT ALSO PLANS TO REHABILITATE AND RESTOCK IDLE STATE RANCHES IN MPOROKOSO AND SENANGA.

MR. SPEAKER,

MY GOVERNMENT IS ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGE OF DEPLETING FISH STOCKS IN OUR RIVERS AND LAKES. IN THIS REGARD, THE LAST SESSION OF THIS AUGUST HOUSE ENACTED A NEW FISHERIES ACT.

IN ADDITION, FISH BREEDING CENTRES ARE BEING CONSTRUCTED ACROSS THE COUNTRY IN ORDER TO INCREASE THE STOCK OF FISH.

IN A BID TO GENERATE WEALTH AND EMPLOYMENT, MY GOVERNMENT WILL FACILITATE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMERCIAL FISH FARMING PARKS AROUND THE COUNTRY. UNDER THIS ARRANGEMENT, THE GOVERNMENT WILL ACQUIRE LAND, SERVICE IT AND LEASE IT TO BOTH LOCAL AND FOREIGN INVESTORS TO SET UP FISH FARMS.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING

MR. SPEAKER,

THE PATRIOTIC FRONT GOVERNMENT APPRECIATES THE IMPORTANCE OF DECENTRALISATION THROUGH DEVOLUTION OF POWER FROM THE CENTRE TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES. UNDOUBTEDLY, THIS IS ONE OF THE SUREST WAYS TO GUARANTEE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCED SERVICE DELIVERY.

MR. SPEAKER,

IN MY ADDRESS LAST YEAR, I INDICATED THAT GOVERNMENT WOULD DEVISE MECHANISMS TO STRENGTHEN THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES' REVENUE BASE.

I WOULD LIKE TO INFORM THE HOUSE THAT THE PROCESS OF REFORMING PROPERTY TAX ADMINISTRATION AND DECENTRALISATION OF THE PREPARATION OF THE VALUATION ROLLS HAS COMMENCED. THIS PROCESS IS SCHEDULED TO BE CONCLUDED BY 2013.

THE MEASURE IS AIMED AT ENSURING THAT MORE PROPERTIES ARE CAPTURED IN THE VALUATION ROLLS IN AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE MANNER. WHEN CONCLUDED, IT IS ENVISAGED THAT THE MEASURE WILL STRENGTHEN THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES' REVENUE BASE. FURTHERMORE, MY GOVERNMENT WILL COME UP WITH A MECHANISM FOR EQUITABLE SHARING OF TAX REVENUE BETWEEN THE CENTRAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

MR. SPEAKER,

AS A WAY OF BRINGING PUBLIC SERVICES, DECISION MAKING AND DEVELOPMENT CLOSER TO THE PEOPLE, THE PATRIOTIC FRONT GOVERNMENT HAS IN THE PAST YEAR CREATED 15 NEW DISTRICTS NAMELY; SINDA, VUBWI, CHEMBE, CHIPILI, LUNGA, MWANSABOMBWE, CHILANGA, CHIRUNDU, RUFUNSA, SHIBUYUNJI, NSAMA, CHIKANKATA, PEMBA, ZIMBA AND MULOBEZI. THIS HAS INCREASED THE NUMBER OF DISTRICTS IN THE COUNTRY FROM 74 TO 89.

THE CREATION OF THESE NEW DISTRICTS WILL LEAD TO INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT IN THE AREAS AS A RESULT OF INCREASED TRANSFERS OF RESOURCES FROM THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO THE DISTRICTS. THIS WILL IN TURN ATTRACT PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT IN THE NEW DISTRICTS AND CONSEQUENTLY EXPAND JOB OPPORTUNITIES AROUND THE COUNTRY.

IT MUST, HOWEVER, BE APPRECIATED THAT MAKING THESE NEW DISTRICTS FULLY OPERATIONAL WILL REQUIRE HUGE RESOURCES FOR INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER LOGISTICS, WHICH GIVEN THE SIZE OF OUR ECONOMY, WILL REQUIRE MORE TIME TO BE FULLY REALISED. IN SPITE OF THIS, MY GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO MOBILISING THE NECESSARY RESOURCES FOR THEM.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

MR. SPEAKER,

IN THE LIGHT OF THE LOW COVERAGE OF SOCIAL PROTECTION SERVICES, GOVERNMENT WILL ADOPT A COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICY.

THE POLICY WILL HOLISTICALLY ADDRESS AND INTEGRATE THE WIDE RANGE OF SOCIAL SAFETY-NET PROGRAMMES, INCLUDING THE SOCIAL CASH TRANSFER SCHEME, PUBLIC WELFARE ASSISTANCE SCHEME, AGRICULTURAL INPUT PACKS, DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND PENSION SCHEMES.

MR. SPEAKER,

I STATED IN MY LAST ADDRESS THAT IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE WELFARE OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, GOVERNMENT WOULD DOMESTICATE A NUMBER OF UNITED NATIONS CONVENTIONS ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES WHICH ZAMBIA IS A PARTY TO. I WISH TO INFORM THIS AUGUST HOUSE THAT THE PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT HAS SINCE BEEN ENACTED. MY GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO DOMESTICATED THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.

EMPLOYMENT CREATION

MR. SPEAKER,

I WISH TO EXPRESS MY DEEP CONCERN ABOUT THE CONTINUING HIGH LEVELS OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT, PARTICULARLY AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE. HENCE, THE NEED FOR STRATEGIES TO PROACTIVELY ADDRESS YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AT ALL LEVELS.

IT IS MY GOVERNMENT'S VISION TO INTEGRATE YOUTHS IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT BY PROVIDING SKILLS TRAINING AND VARIOUS YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES.

MY GOVERNMENT HAS IN THIS RESPECT DEVELOPED AND WILL SOON START IMPLEMENTING A NATIONAL STRATEGY ON INDUSTRIALISATION AND JOB CREATION, TARGETING FOUR GROWTH SECTORS OF AGRICULTURE, TOURISM, MANUFACTURING AND CONSTRUCTION. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS STRATEGY WILL RESULT IN THE CREATION OF ONE MILLION JOBS OVER A PERIOD OF FIVE YEARS.

MY GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO ESTABLISH PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE SERVICES IN THE TEN PROVINCIAL CENTRES. THESE WILL FACILITATE EASY ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET.

IN ADDITION, MY GOVERNMENT WILL DEVELOP AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME IN COLLABORATION WITH EMPLOYER ORGANISATIONS.

BEFORE I CONCLUDE THIS SECTION, MY GOVERNMENT IS HAPPY THAT WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO INSTITUTE AN UPWARD ADJUSTMENT TO THE MINIMUM WAGE FOR NON-UNIONISED AND DOMESTIC WORKERS.

COMMERCE, TRADE AND INDUSTRY

MR. SPEAKER,

MY GOVERNMENT SHALL STRIVE TO REMOVE ALL KINDS OF ADMINISTRATIVE BARRIERS FOR BUSINESSES AND IMPROVE THE FINANCING ENVIRONMENT TO PROMOTE SOUND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR. IN THIS REGARD WE SHALL ACCELERATE IMPLEMENTATION OF PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT REFORMS TO IMPROVE THE INVESTMENT CLIMATE.

TO ADDRESS THE MANY CHALLENGES FACING OUR ENTERPRISING MEN AND WOMEN IN ACCESSING CREDIT AND FINANCE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR BUSINESSES, MY GOVERNMENT, IN CONSULTATIONS WITH RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS WILL INTRODUCE LEGISLATION THAT WILL ENABLE OUR ENTREPRENEURS TO BORROW FROM FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS USING MOVABLE ASSETS SUCH AS EQUIPMENT, AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS AND INVENTORY AS COLLATERAL.

MY GOVERNMENT SHALL ENHANCE ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT BY ESTABLISHING BUSINESS REGISTRIES IN DISTRICT COUNCILS TO SIMPLIFY COMPANY REGISTRATION AND TO PROVIDE ENTREPRENEUR SKILLS. THIS IS IN LINE WITH THE PF MANIFESTO TO CREATE AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT TO PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOWNSHIP AND VILLAGE ENTERPRISES AND LIGHT MANUFACTURE INDUSTRY, THUS CREATE EMPLOYMENT.

FURTHER, GOVERNMENT WILL STEP UP EFFORTS TO PROVIDE SMALL MEDIUM ENTERPRISES WITH APPROPRIATE OPERATING INFRASTRUCTURE, EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING THROUGH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF INDUSTRIAL CLUSTERS.

MR. SPEAKER,

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT IS CRITICAL TO THE CONTINUED GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THIS COUNTRY. FOR 2012, THE TARGET FOR FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT WAS **4 BILLION UNITED STATES DOLLARS.**

THE APPROVED PROJECTS AS AT 30TH JUNE 2012 WERE ABOVE TARGET STANDING AT **4.7 BILLION UNITED STATES DOLLARS.** THIS IS A REFLECTION OF THE CONFIDENCE IN THE ZAMBIAN ECONOMY AND ATTRACTIVENESS OF OUR INVESTMENT CLIMATE.

LET ME REAFFIRM THAT AS A COUNTRY, WE SEEK BOTH LOCAL AND FOREIGN INVESTMENT.

IN THIS REGARD, MY GOVERNMENT WILL ENHANCE INVESTMENT PROMOTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS BY MERGING THE ZAMBIA DEVELOPMENT AGENCY AND THE PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP UNIT TO ESTABLISH AN INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION IN LINE WITH THE PF MANIFESTO.

THE NEW ENTITY SHALL, AMONG OTHER THINGS PROMOTE INVESTMENT, INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND DEEPEN REFORM OF STATE OWNED ENTERPRISES.

MR. SPEAKER,

REGIONAL INTEGRATION PRESENTS ZAMBIAN ENTERPRISES WITH A LARGE EXPORT MARKET WHOSE EXPERIENCE WE CAN USE TO PENETRATE THE INTERNATIONAL MARKETS. TO THIS END, MY GOVERNMENT SHALL REDUCE THE BUREAUCRATIC BURDEN FOR EXPORTERS AND IMPORTERS IN ORDER TO GAIN FROM INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL TRADE.

MINING

MR. SPEAKER,

THE MINING SECTOR HAS CONTINUED TO PERFORM WELL. THIS IS DUE TO THE FAVOURABLE INVESTMENT CLIMATE PREVAILING IN OUR COUNTRY, COUPLED WITH HIGH PRICES OF METALS.

GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE WITH THE MINES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME TO ATTRACT INVESTMENT IN BOTH LARGE AND SMALL SCALE MINES IN 2013. THE FOCUS WILL BE ON IMPROVING AVAILABILITY OF GEOLOGICAL INFORMATION IN ORDER TO STIMULATE EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES AND SUBSEQUENT OPENING OF NEW MINES.

GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT ZAMBIANS ARE EMPOWERED TO OWN SMALL SCALE MINES. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT MY ADMINISTRATION IS TAKING APPROPRIATE MEASURES TO REVIEW THE LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK IN ORDER TO MAKE THIS A REALITY. THROUGH THESE MEASURES, GOVERNMENT WILL ENSURE THAT THE PEOPLE OF ZAMBIA ALSO BENEFIT FROM THE BOOM IN THE MINING INDUSTRY.

TO ENHANCE CONTRIBUTION OF THE MINING SECTOR TO THE TREASURY, GOVERNMENT WILL PUT IN PLACE MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN VERIFICATION OF VOLUME AND VALUE OF MINERAL EXPORTS.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

MR. SPEAKER,

MY GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO ENERGETICALLY TAKE STEPS TO ACCELERATE GROWTH THROUGH BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE SUCH AS ROADS, RAIL, AIRPORTS, BORDER FACILITIES AND POWER STATIONS.

IN MY ADDRESS LAST YEAR, I COMMITTED GOVERNMENT TO EMBARKING ON A ROBUST ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMME.

I AM PLEASED TO INFORM THE HOUSE THAT UNDER THE LINK ZAMBIA PROJECT, GOVERNMENT WILL UPGRADE AT LEAST THREE MAJOR ROAD PROJECTS IN EACH OF ZAMBIA'S TEN PROVINCES OVER A FIVE YEAR PERIOD.

MR. SPEAKER,

THE RAILWAY NETWORK IN THE COUNTRY IS IN A STATE OF DISREPAIR AND URGENT ATTENTION IS NEEDED IN ORDER TO REDUCE STRESS ON OUR ROADS. IN THIS REGARD, GOVERNMENT WILL REPOSITION ITSELF IN IMPROVING THE RAIL SECTOR TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

IN A BID TO HAVE ADDITIONAL RAILWAY LINES, THE GOVERNMENT HAS COMMISSIONED A PRE-FEASIBILITY STUDY TO EXTEND THE CHIPATA-MCHINJI RAILWAY LINE TO JOIN THE TANZANIA-ZAMBIA RAILWAY AUTHORITY LINE AT EITHER MPIKA OR SERENJE.

FURTHERMORE, IN ORDER TO EASE AIR TRANSPORT, PLANS TO UPGRADE PROVINCIAL AIRFIELDS ARE IN PLACE. FUNDS HAVE ALSO BEEN DISBURSED TOWARDS REHABILITATION OF SOME DISTRICT AERODROMES.

MR. SPEAKER,

MY GOVERNMENT SHALL CONTINUE TO PROMOTE INVESTMENT IN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND EXPAND THE FIBER OPTIC NETWORK. THIS WILL ENSURE THAT TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES ARE AFFORDABLE AND AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, INCLUDING THE RURAL AREAS TO BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE.

ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

MR. SPEAKER,

MY GOVERNMENT REMAINS COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT SECURITY OF SUPPLY OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS TO THE NATION IS MAINTAINED AT ALL TIMES.

WE ARE ALSO COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT THE PRICE OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY IS MAINTAINED AT AFFORDABLE LEVELS IN ORDER TO STIMULATE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES, ESPECIALLY IN RURAL AREAS.

IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES, GOVERNMENT HAS CONTINUED TO INCREASE FUEL STORAGE CAPACITY THROUGH THE CONSTRUCTION AND REFURBISHMENT OF PROVINCIAL FUEL DEPOTS.

CONSTRUCTION OF FUEL DEPOTS IN LUSAKA, MONGU, MPIKA AND SOLWEZI IS UNDERWAY AND WILL BE COMPLETED THIS YEAR.

THIS MEASURE WILL ENHANCE SECURITY OF SUPPLY OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS AS WELL AS ENSURE AFFORDABILITY OF FUEL THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. FURTHERMORE, MY GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNIFORM PETROLEUM PRICING PROGRAMME IN ORDER TO ACCELERATE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES.

MR. SPEAKER,

I REGRET TO NOTE THAT THE COUNTRY CONTINUES TO EXPERIENCE LOAD-SHEDDING WHICH HAS DISRUPTED MANY ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND PEOPLES' NORMAL WAY OF LIFE.

IN THIS REGARD, MY GOVERNMENT HAS PRIORITISED THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS AIMED AT INCREASING THE NATIONAL GENERATION CAPACITY OF ELECTRICITY AS WELL AS PROMOTING ENERGY EFFICIENCY.

THESE MEASURES WILL ENABLE US MEET THE UPSWING IN DEMAND CAUSED BY INCREASED ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES.

IN ORDER TO ENSURE RELIABILITY AND QUALITY OF SUPPLY OF ELECTRICITY IN OUR COUNTRY, PARTICULARLY IN NORTHERN, MUCHINGA, LUAPULA AND EASTERN PROVINCES, MY GOVERNMENT RECENTLY COMMISSIONED THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE 330 KILO VOLTS PENSULO-KASAMA TRANSMISSION LINE AND THE 330 KILO VOLTS PENSULO-LUSIWASI-MSORO-CHIPATA TRANSMISSION LINE. FURTHERMORE, GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN UP-SCALING THE CAPACITY AT KARIBA NORTH POWER STATION TO HELP MEET THE DEFICIT.

MR. SPEAKER,

GOVERNMENT IS PROMOTING OTHER ENERGY SOURCES SUCH AS COAL AND HEAVY FUEL OIL, TO GENERATE ELECTRICITY IN ORDER TO COMPLEMENT HYDRO POWER. IN THIS REGARD, GOVERNMENT IS FACILITATING CONSTRUCTION OF THE MAAMBA COAL-FIRED THERMAL 300 MEGA WATT POWER STATION.

THE HEAVY FUEL OIL 50 MEGA WATT PLANT IN NDOLA WILL COME ON-STREAM EARLY NEXT YEAR. THESE DEVELOPMENTS WILL ENSURE THAT THE ENERGY SECTOR PLAYS ITS MEANINGFUL ROLE IN NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

LAND REFORM AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

MR. SPEAKER,

IN MY ADDRESS TO THIS AUGUST HOUSE LAST YEAR, I STATED THAT MY GOVERNMENT, IN CONSULTATION WITH TRADITIONAL LEADERS, WOULD INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO ENSURE SECURITY OF TENURE FOR CUSTOMARY LAND. WORK ON THIS ISSUE HAS COMMENCED.

MY GOVERNMENT WILL, BEFORE THE END OF THIS YEAR, EMBARK ON A COMPREHENSIVE COUNTRY-WIDE LAND AUDIT FOR ALL CATEGORIES OF LAND. TO CARRY OUT THIS ACTIVITY, WHICH WILL CONTINUE INTO 2013, A LAND AUDIT COMMISSION WILL BE ESTABLISHED.

MR. SPEAKER,

TO GUARANTEE A CONTINUOUS SUPPLY OF TIMBER IN THE COUNTRY AS WELL AS MAINTAIN THE ECOLOGICAL BALANCE, MY GOVERNMENT WILL ESTABLISH NEW FOREST SITES ACROSS THE COUNTRY WHILE ENSURING THAT EXISTING FORESTS ARE REPLENISHED.

TOURISM

MR. SPEAKER,

MY GOVERNMENT CREATED THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND ARTS AS PART OF THE EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR OUR ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION PROGRAMME AND TO ENHANCE EMPLOYMENT AND WEALTH CREATION OPPORTUNITIES.

IN THIS REGARD I WISH TO DIRECT THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND ARTS TO ENHANCE THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY'S CONTRIBUTION TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BY ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL ARTS AND CULTURE COMMISSION IN LINE WITH THE PF MANIFESTO AND TO ACCELERATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TOURISM SITES SUCH AS THE NORTHERN CIRCUIT AND MANY OTHERS.

MR. SPEAKER,

ZAMBIA AND ZIMBABWE WILL BE CO-HOSTING THE 20TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS WORLD TOURISM ORGANISATION GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN AUGUST 2013.

I AM HAPPY TO INFORM THIS AUGUST HOUSE THAT PREPARATIONS FOR THIS IMPORTANT EVENT ARE ON COURSE. PRESIDENT MUGABE AND I GAVE A BOOST TO THE PREPARATORY PROCESS WHEN WE SIGNED THE CO-HOSTING AGREEMENT ON 30TH MAY, 2012.

GOVERNANCE AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE

MR. SPEAKER,

IN MY ADDRESS TO THIS AUGUST HOUSE LAST YEAR, I COMMITTED MY GOVERNMENT TO PROFESSIONALISING THE PUBLIC SERVICE, MAKING IT MORE COST-EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT AND RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF OUR PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY THOSE IN REMOTE AND HARD-TO-REACH RURAL AREAS.

I AM GLAD TO INFORM THE NATION THAT MY GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY COMPLETED THE EVALUATION OF ALL THE JOBS IN THE CIVIL SERVICE TO DETERMINE THEIR RELATIVE WORTH AND ENSURE THAT EMPLOYEE REMUNERATION IS RELATED TO THE JOB AND PERFORMANCE.

THIS EXERCISE WILL ENABLE US TO HAVE A MORE RATIONALISED SALARY GRADING STRUCTURE. GOVERNMENT WILL EXTEND THIS EXERCISE TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES, DEFENCE AND SECURITY AGENCIES AS WELL AS GOVERNANCE RELATED INSTITUTIONS.

IN THE SAME VEIN AND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MANY YEARS, MY GOVERNMENT SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDED NEGOTIATIONS WITH PUBLIC SERVICE UNIONS IN RECORD TIME. THE NEGOTIATIONS RESULTED IN IMPROVED SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE WORKERS, THEREBY PUTTING MORE MONEY IN THEIR POCKETS.

PROGRESS HAS ALSO BEEN MADE TOWARDS THE CREATION OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE CREDIT UNION BANK TO ENABLE PUBLIC SERVICE WORKERS ACCESS REASONABLE CREDIT AT COMPETITIVE INTEREST RATES.

MR. SPEAKER,

IN MY ADDRESS TO THIS AUGUST HOUSE LAST YEAR, I COMMITTED MY GOVERNMENT TO AMENDING THE ANTI-CORRUPTION ACT IN ORDER TO INTRODUCE STIFFER PENALTIES FOR CORRUPTION OFFENCES AND RE-INSTATING THE ABUSE OF OFFICE CLAUSE. I ALSO COMMITTED MY GOVERNMENT TO INVESTIGATING ANY ACTS OF CORRUPTION AND PROSECUTING CULPRITS WITHIN THE DUE PROCESS OF THE LAW.

I AM GLAD TO INFORM THE HOUSE THAT MY GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY, WITH THE SUPPORT OF THIS AUGUST HOUSE, RE-INSTATED THE "ABUSE OF OFFICE" CLAUSE. THE NEW ANTI-CORRUPTION ACT NUMBER 13 OF 2012 HAS SINCE BEEN ENACTED AND IS NOW IN FORCE. A NUMBER OF INVESTIGATIONS INTO CORRUPT PRACTICES HAVE ALSO BEEN SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDED AND THOSE FOUND WANTING HAVE HAD THEIR CASES BROUGHT BEFORE THE COURTS OF LAW.

MR. SPEAKER,

IN OUR EFFORT TO DEEPEN OUR DEMOCRACY AND PROMOTE GOOD GOVERNANCE, MY ADMINISTRATION HAS PROMULGATED AND IS IMPLEMENTING AN ALL-INCLUSIVE POLICY.

TO THIS END, MY ADMINISTRATION HAS ENDEAVOURED TO APPOINT, INTO GOVERNMENT MINISTERIAL POSITIONS, MEMBERS FROM THE OPPOSITION.

MY GOVERNMENT IS ALSO CONSTRUCTIVELY ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS INCLUDING TRADITIONAL LEADERS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS AND TRADE UNIONS ON MATTERS OF NATIONAL INTEREST SO AS TO BUILD CONSENSUS AND BRING ABOUT INCLUSIVENESS IN THE GOVERNANCE OF OUR COUNTRY.

MR. SPEAKER,

MY GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA ON THE MEDIA IS TO ENSURE THAT IT CONTINUOUSLY CHALLENGES GOVERNMENT TO SERVE THE PEOPLE OF ZAMBIA BETTER. TO ACHIEVE THIS, MY GOVERNMENT HAS, IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS, EMBARKED ON A WIDE RANGE OF POLICY INTERVENTIONS.

WE HAVE REMOVED GOVERNMENT CONTROLS ON PUBLIC MEDIA SO THAT THEY CARRY OUT THEIR ROLE OF INFORMING, EDUCATING AND ENTERTAINING THE PUBLIC FREELY AND PROFESSIONALLY. EVEN OUR COLLEAGUES IN THE OPPOSITION ARE NOW HAPPY BENEFICIARIES OF THIS OPEN POLICY OF MY GOVERNMENT.

MY GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO ACCELERATED THE ISSUANCE OF BROADCASTING LICENCES SO THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MORE RADIO AND TELEVISION STATIONS IS BOOSTED, BE THEY COMMERCIAL, COMMUNITY OR RELIGIOUS IN NATURE.

ADDITIONALLY, GOVERNMENT IS IN THE PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING REGIONAL TELEVISION STATIONS IN ALL THE TEN PROVINCES, AIMED AT SERVING OUR PEOPLE BETTER.

ONCE OPERATIONAL, THESE WILL MAXIMISE ON LOCAL PROGRAMMING AND PROMOTE THE USE OF OUR RESPECTIVE LOCAL LANGUAGES, IN ADDITION TO ENGLISH.

TO ENSURE FAIR PLAY IN OUR BROADCASTING INDUSTRY, MY GOVERNMENT HAS MADE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN ESTABLISHING THE INDEPENDENT BROADCASTING AUTHORITY, WHICH WILL BE OPERATIONAL BY THE END OF THE YEAR.

MR. SPEAKER,

ON THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION, THE HOUSE MAY WISH TO RECALL THAT DURING MY ADDRESS LAST YEAR, I COMMITTED MY GOVERNMENT TO DELIVERING A NEW PEOPLE-DRIVEN CONSTITUTION.

I ALSO ASSURED THE NATION THAT MY GOVERNMENT, IN CONSULTATION WITH VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS, WOULD ESTABLISH A COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS TO REVIEW THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF ALL THE PREVIOUS CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMISSIONS AND TO COME UP WITH A DRAFT CONSTITUTION.

I AM PLEASED TO INFORM THIS AUGUST HOUSE THAT GOOD PROGRESS HAS SINCE BEEN MADE. A TECHNICAL COMMITTEE OF COMPETENT MEN AND WOMEN WAS APPOINTED WITHIN NINETY DAYS OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT GOVERNMENT ASSUMING OFFICE. THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE HAS WORKED DILIGENTLY AND PRODUCED THE FIRST DRAFT CONSTITUTION IN BOTH ENGLISH AND SEVEN LOCAL LANGUAGES.

THIS APPROACH WILL ENABLE THE MAJORITY OF OUR PEOPLE TO EFFECTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN MAKING THEIR OWN CONSTITUTION. THE DRAFT IS NOW BEING SUBJECTED TO STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION.

MR. SPEAKER,

WHILE TIME MAY BE OF ESSENCE IN A NATIONAL EXERCISE SUCH AS THIS, IT SHOULD NOT BE AT THE EXPENSE OF AFFORDING OUR PEOPLE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE WITH AND FULLY PARTICIPATE IN THE PROCESS. IT IS FOR THIS VERY REASON THAT MY GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN RESPONSIVE TO OUR PEOPLE'S CALLS FOR MORE TIME ESPECIALLY DURING THIS CONSULTATION STAGE. IN ANY CASE, THIS IS WHAT DELIVERING A PEOPLE-DRIVEN CONSTITUTION ENTAILS.

IN THE SAME VEIN, I WISH TO CALL UPON ALL WELL MEANING ZAMBIANS TO TAKE THIS EXERCISE SERIOUSLY AND FULLY PARTICIPATE SO THAT THEIR VIEWS CAN BE HEARD AND CONSENSUS REACHED.

MR. SPEAKER,

THE HOUSE AND THE NATION AT LARGE ARE AWARE OF THE MANY CHALLENGES FACING OUR JUSTICE DELIVERY SYSTEM IN ZAMBIA. MANY OF OUR PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY THE POOR, VULNERABLE AND MARGINALISED, ARE UNABLE TO ACCESS JUSTICE.

THIS IS DUE TO MANY FACTORS, INCLUDING EXORBITANT LEGAL FEES, LONG DISTANCES TO ESTABLISHED COURTS, LIMITED INFRASTRUCTURE AND SHORTAGE OF PERSONNEL, RESULTING IN DELAYS IN DISPENSING JUSTICE.

MY GOVERNMENT IS, THEREFORE, DETERMINED TO ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES TO RESTORE PEOPLE'S CONFIDENCE IN THE JUDICIARY. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT MY GOVERNMENT FULLY SUPPORTS MEANINGFUL REFORMS IN THE JUDICIARY MEANT TO IMPROVE THE ADMINISTRATION AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE. TO THIS EXTENT, MY GOVERNMENT IS STRENGTHENING THE LEGAL AID BOARD WHOSE MANDATE IS TO PROVIDE FREE LEGAL SERVICES TO THE POOR AND VULNERABLE.

GOVERNMENT IS ALSO STRENGTHENING THE OPERATIONS OF THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS BY TRANSFORMING IT INTO A NATIONAL PROSECUTIONS AUTHORITY. THIS WILL GUARANTEE ITS INDEPENDENCE AND PROMOTE TRANSPARENCY IN THE DISPENSATION OF JUSTICE.

TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGE OF CONGESTED PRISONS, EFFORTS ARE UNDERWAY TO PUT IN PLACE AN INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NON-CUSTODIAL COMMUNITY SERVICE SENTENCING. IN ADDITION, NEW PRISONS IN LUSAKA, LUWINGU, KALABO, AND MWEMBESHI MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON, ARE BEING CONSTRUCTED.

MR. SPEAKER,

MY GOVERNMENT IS GRAVELY CONCERNED WITH THE ESCALATION OF CASES OF SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, ESPECIALLY AGAINST OUR WOMEN FOLK. THIS IS NOT ONLY CRUEL BUT ALSO A SERIOUS VIOLATION OF WOMEN RIGHTS AS ENSHRINED IN OUR CONSTITUTION.

IT IS ALSO AGAINST THE DECLARATION OF "ZERO TOLERANCE NOW" AGAINST SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN ALL ITS VARIOUS MANIFESTATIONS SIGNED BY HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT FROM THE ELEVEN MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE GREAT LAKES REGION ON THE 15TH DECEMBER, 2011.

MY GOVERNMENT WILL, THEREFORE, STAND IN LEAGUE WITH INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL EFFORTS AND PROVIDE ALL THE NECESSARY SUPPORT TO FIGHT ALL FORMS OF SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.

GOVERNMENT WILL DOUBLE ITS EFFORTS TO ENSURE THAT THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THESE HEINOUS CRIMES ARE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE AND THE PEACE AND TRANQUILLITY FOR WHICH OUR COUNTRY IS RENOWNED AND ON WHICH INVESTOR CONFIDENCE IS PREMISED, ARE UPHELD.

OUR PEOPLE MUST LIVE IN A PEACEFUL AND SECURE ENVIRONMENT SO THAT THEY CAN ENJOY THEIR RIGHTS TO THE FULLEST.

TO ENSURE THAT OUR LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES ARE MOTIVATED AND UP TO THE TASK, MY GOVERNMENT HAS REMAINED COMMITTED TO IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE UNDER WHICH THEY OPERATE.

IN THIS RESPECT, MY GOVERNMENT IS IN THE PROCESS OF HARMONISING THE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE FOR OUR MEN AND WOMEN IN UNIFORM. MY GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO MOBILISED FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO CONSTRUCT OVER FOURTEEN THOUSAND HOUSING UNITS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

MR. SPEAKER,

THE FOREIGN POLICY THAT HAS GUIDED ZAMBIA'S INTERACTION WITH OTHER STATES AT THE BILATERAL, REGIONAL AND MULTILATERAL LEVELS WAS ADOPTED BACK IN 1996.

IN THE MEANTIME, OVER THE LAST DECADE AND A HALF THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE HAS EXPERIENCED CONSIDERABLE TRANSFORMATION, WITH NEW KEY ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PLAYERS EMERGING.

IN THE LIGHT OF THESE DYNAMICS, MY GOVERNMENT HAS EMBARKED ON A REVIEW OF ZAMBIA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN ORDER TO PROJECT THE COUNTRY'S RENEWED NATIONAL ASPIRATIONS.

THE REVIEW IS ALSO AIMED AT ALIGNING THE POLICY WITH INTERNATIONAL TRENDS AND CONCERNS SUCH AS CLIMATE CHANGE, INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY, TERRORISM, HUMAN AND DRUG TRAFFICKING, GENDER, HIV/AIDS, FOOD SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOOD GOVERNANCE.

CONCLUSION

MR. SPEAKER,

AS I CONCLUDE, I WOULD LIKE TO REAFFIRM MY GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT AS WELL AS CONTINUED AND STRENGTHENED INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, PARTICULARLY IN THE AREAS OF DIPLOMACY, FINANCE, TRADE AND TECHNOLOGY.

LET ME ALSO EMPHASIZE THAT TO ACHIEVE OUR DEVELOPMENT GOALS, INCLUDING SUSTAINED AND INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY, WE NEED INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS THAT ARE RESPONSIVE, EFFECTIVE, TRANSPARENT, ACCOUNTABLE AND DEMOCRATIC.

I WOULD LIKE TO URGE ALL GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS TO ENSURE THAT THEY IMPLEMENT POLICIES, PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS IN LINE WITH THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS ALIGNED TO THE PATRIOTIC FRONT MANIFESTO IN ORDER TO RESTORE HUMAN DIGNITY TO ZAMBIANS ESPECIALLY IN RURAL AREAS AND TOWNSHIPS.

MR. SPEAKER,

FINALLY, I WOULD LIKE TO SAY TO OUR PEOPLE THAT WE MUST RELY ON OUR EFFORTS, DEVELOP OUR OWN CREATIVITY AND PERSIST IN THE POLICY OF INDEPENDENCE AND SELF RELIANCE.

IT IS THIS SELF CONFIDENCE THAT WILL ENERGIZE US TO MOVE WITH PASSION AND PRIDE IN OUR JOURNEY TOWARDS INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL AND OUR GREAT COUNTRY ZAMBIA.

MR. SPEAKER, I THANK YOU.