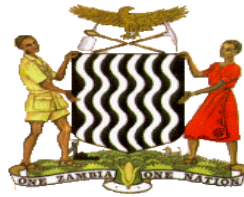


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REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

SPEECH

FOR THE

OFFICIAL OPENING

OF THE

SECOND SESSION

OF THE

TWELFTH NATIONAL

ASSEMBLY

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY, MR. EDGAR CHAGWA LUNGU,

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA,

ON

FRIDAY, 15TH SEPTEMBER, 2017

INTRODUCTION

MR. SPEAKER,

1. I AM GREATLY HUMBLLED TO HAVE THIS HONOUR TO OFFICIALLY OPEN THE SECOND SESSION OF THE TWELVETH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF ARTICLE 86 (1) OF THE CONSTITUTION OF ZAMBIA. THIS ADDRESS COMES ALMOST AT A MID-YEAR TERM OF OUR GREAT REPUBLIC'S VISION 2030. IT IS THEREFORE IMPERATIVE DURING THIS ADDRESS THAT I TAKE COGNISANT OF OUR DEVELOPMENT PATH IN TERMS OF HOW WE HAVE PROGRESSED IN OUR ENDEAVOUR TOWARDS MEETING OUR NATIONAL VISION.

2. AS WE COLLECTIVELY REFLECT ON HOW WE HAVE WALKED TOGETHER AS A COUNTRY IN IMPLEMENTING OUR NATIONAL VISION BY TAKING STOCK OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND INDEED WHAT LIES AHEAD OF US, LET ME PAY TRIBUTE TO MY PREDECESSORS WHO IN MANY WAYS MADE IMMENSE CONTRIBUTION IN IMPLEMENTING THE KEY MILESTONES CONTAINED IN THE VISION 2030.

MR. SPEAKER,

3. AS PER TRADITION THIS OCCASION ACCORDS ME AN OPPORTUNITY TO ARTICULATE TO THE NATION THE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA OF MY ADMINISTRATION. I WILL HIGHLIGHT WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED DURING THE PERIOD WE HAVE BEEN ENTRUSTED TO PRESIDE OVER THE AFFAIRS OF THE NATION BY THE PEOPLE OF ZAMBIA. I WILL ALSO SHARE WITH THE NATION, THROUGH THIS

HOUSE, OUR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STATUS AS WELL AS THE POLICY DIRECTION OF GOVERNMENT FOR THE COMING YEAR.

4. DURING THE SESSION, THE HOUSE APPROVED THE 2017 NATIONAL BUDGET, PASSED 18 BILLS, CONSIDERED 508 QUESTIONS AND 104 MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS. THE HOUSE ALSO APPROVED THE INVOCATION OF ARTICLE 31 OF THE CONSTITUTION IN ORDER TO PRESERVE PEACE AND ENSURE NATIONAL SECURITY, SAFETY OF PROPERTY AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC. I COMMEND THE SECURITY WINGS FOR THE PROFESSIONAL MANNER IN WHICH THEY HAVE ADMINISTERED THE REGULATIONS ON THE PRESERVATION OF PUBLIC SECURITY.

LET ME REASSURE THE NATION THROUGH THIS AUGUST HOUSE THAT THE INVOCATION OF ARTICLE 31 WAS NOT MEANT TO UNDULY INCONVENIENCE THE GENERAL PUBLIC, BUT TO PRESERVE PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE COUNTRY.

5. AT THIS JUNCTURE, LET ME COMMEND YOU, MR. SPEAKER, THE TWO DEPUTY SPEAKERS, HER HONOUR THE VICE PRESIDENT, AS LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS IN THE HOUSE, AND THE CLERK OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE ABLE MANNER IN WHICH YOU ALL MANAGED THE BUSINESS OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE TWELFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

MR. SPEAKER,

6. THE THEME OF MY ADDRESS TO THIS AUGUST HOUSE IS **“MOVING TOWARDS A PROSPEROUS SMART ZAMBIA IN PEACE AND TRANQUILLITY WITHOUT LEAVING ANYONE BEHIND.”**

7. THIS THEME IS INFORMED BY SEVERAL FACTORS. THEY INCLUDE THE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN OUR COUNTRY, AS WELL AS TRENDS AND BEST PRACTICES ON THE GLOBAL STAGE.

8. THE THEME CALLS UPON ALL OF US TO SERIOUSLY REFLECT ON THE STATE OF OUR NATIONAL UNITY AND, BY EXTENSION, OUR SENSE OF PATRIOTISM AND THE SPIRIT OF **ONE ZAMBIA, ONE NATION**. THE THEME IS ALSO UNDERPINNED BY THE NEED TO REMAIN FOCUSED ON OUR NATIONAL VISION WHILST EMBRACING THE TENETS OF A SMART DEVELOPMENT APPROACH.

9. THE SMART DEVELOPMENT APPROACH IS NOT NECESSARILY ABOUT WEARING SMART CLOTHES SUCH AS SUITS AND TIES. IT IS AN INNOVATIVE WAY OF GETTING WHAT WAS PREVIOUSLY SEEN AS DIFFICULT AND TIME CONSUMING TASKS, DONE RAPIDLY AND EASILY.

10. THROUGH E-EDUCATION FOR INSTANCE, A CHILD IN MUFUMBWE SHOULD BE ABLE TO RECEIVE EQUAL EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS AND LESSONS AS THE ONE IN KABULONGA. A GRAND MOTHER IN CHADIZA CAN RECEIVE FUNDS THROUGH A MOBILE PHONE AND AFFORD BASIC NECESSITIES OF LIFE. COMBINED SERVICES SUCH AS RENEWAL OF A DRIVER'S LICENSE, REGISTRATION OF A MOTOR VEHICLE, PAYMENT FOR ELECTRICITY, WATER AND OTHER SERVICES CAN BE MADE AT THE TOUCH OF A BUTTON IN THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME.

11. DOING THINGS IN A SMART WAY ENBALES US TO FREE UP TIME FOR OTHER PRODUCTIVE VENTURES. THE SMART DEVELOPMENT

APPROACH IS A GLOBAL TREND AIMED AT PROMOTING THE USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES TO ENHANCE PRODUCTIVITY, SERVICE DELIVERY AND THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF THE PEOPLE.

MR. SPEAKER,

12. DURING MY ADDRESS TO THIS AUGUST HOUSE ON 30TH SEPTEMBER 2016, I INDICATED MY DESIRE TO MOVE AWAY FROM THE USUAL THEMATIC APPROACH TO ADDRESSING NATIONAL ISSUES. I STATED THAT IN LINE WITH THE MODEL TAKEN IN THE SEVENTH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN WE WILL MOVE AWAY FROM STAND-ALONE THEMATIC LINES TO AN INTEGRATED MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH WHICH BUILDS ON MULTI-SECTORAL SYNERGIES.

13. THIS ADDRESS WILL FOLLOW THE SAME PATTERN. IT IS THE POLICY OF MY ADMINISTRATION TO CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE WHERE SECTORS SHOULD WORK TOGETHER IN A COMPLIMENTARY MANNER IF THEY ARE TO MEET COMMON DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES.

14. IN TODAY'S ADDRESS THEREFORE, I WILL HIGHLIGHT THE KEY RESULT AREAS OR STRATEGIC PILLARS OF FOCUS WHICH MY ADMINISTRATION HAS SET FOR ITSELF AS OUTLINED IN THE SEVENTH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN. UNDER EACH PILLAR, I WILL ELABORATE WHAT WE HAVE MANAGED TO ACHIEVE AND MAKE KEY POLICY PRONOUNCEMENTS WHICH WILL GUIDE DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRY GOING FORWARD.

15. TO MOVE FORWARD TOWARDS A PROSPEROUS SMART ZAMBIA IN PEACE AND TRANQUILITY WITHOUT LEAVING ANYONE BEHIND, WE ALL NEED TO TAKE A SOUL SEARCH. IT IS ONLY AFTER A THOROUGH SOUL SEARCH THAT WE COME TO THE REALISATION THAT OUR ONENESS IS EMBEDDED AND SECURED IN OUR COMMON HERITAGE, NATIONAL VALUES AND PRINCIPLES.

16. THIS IS UNDERSCORED BY OUR TRADITIONS AND CULTURE, OUR LINEAGE AND BLOOD RELATIONS ACROSS TRIBES AND INTRA-REGIONAL TERRITORIES, REINFORCED BY OUR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AS CHRISTIANS, WHICH MAKE US THE GREAT PEOPLE, WE ARE. ONE ZAMBIA, ONE NATION!

17. WE MAY DISAGREE AND QUARREL BUT WE REMAIN ONE. THE FACTORS THAT UNITE US ARE MUCH GREATER THAN THOSE THAT SEEK TO DIVIDE US. JUST LIKE WHEN ONE ARM CUTS THE OTHER WITH A RAZOR BLADE ONE DOES NOT GO OUT AND GET AN AXE TO CUT IT OFF.

18. THEREFORE, THE SPATE OF ACTS OF ARSON AND SABOTAGE, HATE SPEECH ON SOCIO MEDIA AND OTHER INJURIOUS ACTS AGAINST EACH OTHER ARE AN ASSAULT ON OURSELVES. NO IOTA OF EXPLANATION CAN JUSTIFY WHAT WE EXPERIENCED IN THE RECENT PAST.

19. WHO CAN COMPREHEND AND LATER JUSTIFY THE RATIONALE BEHIND BURNING DOWN OF SCHOOLS WHICH ARE ESSENTIAL FOR OUR PEOPLE'S FUTURE, COURT BUILDINGS AND MARKETS WHERE THE POOR AND DEPRIVED MEMBERS OF OUR SOCIETY ARE TRYING

TO EARN A LIVING? CUTTING DOWN POWER LINES SUPPLYING ELECTRICITY TO THAT LIFE SUPPORT MACHINE IN A HOSPITAL WHERE THAT BROTHER OR SISTER IS FIGHTING FOR SURVIVAL, CAN NEVER EVER BE A NORMAL WAY OF PURSUING ONE'S POLITICAL AMBITION.

20. DURING MY STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS IN MARCH THIS YEAR, I DISCUSSED BEFORE THIS AUGUST HOUSE OUR APPLICATION OF THE NATIONAL VALUES. I STATED THAT PATRIOTISM AND NATIONAL UNITY SHOULD SPEAK TO THE HEART AND SOUL OF EVERY ZAMBIAN IN OUR QUEST TO SUSTAIN OUR SOVEREIGNTY AND BUILD A BETTER COUNTRY FOR OURSELVES AND FUTURE GENERATIONS. THESE WORDS ARE AS ALIVE TODAY AS THEY WERE ON THE DAY I STATED THEM.

21. THAT IS THE MORE REASON WHY IT IS HARD TO COMPREHEND THE REASONING OF THOSE BEHIND THESE CRIMES COMMITTED AGAINST OUR COUNTRY AND OUR PEOPLE, RECENTLY.

22. A ZAMBIA PROUD OF 53 YEARS OF PEACE, STABILITY AND UNITY SHOULD NOT ALLOW EVEN ONE INCIDENCE OF SELFISHNESS TO DIVIDE US. THAT IS WHY THE THEME SPEAKS TO OUR COMMON DESIRES, ASPIRATIONS AND DESTINY.

MR SPEAKER,

23. LOVE, HUMILITY, TRUTHFULNESS, SELFLESSNESS AND INTEGRITY SHOULD BE AT THE CORE OF OUR ACTIONS. THIS IS CONSISTENT WITH THE VALUES WE HAVE CHOSEN FOR OURSELVES AS A NATION. THESE VALUES ARE ABOUT THE CHANGE OF MIND-SET

IN THE WAY WE THINK AND THE MANNER WE DO THINGS. WE MUST ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT ZAMBIA IS BIGGER THAN ANYONE OF US. THOSE OF US THAT SEEK PUBLIC OFFICE SHOULD ADVANCE MUCH HIGHER LOVE FOR OUR PEOPLE.

MR SPEAKER,

24. IN ADDITION TO UPHOLDING PEACE AND TRANQUILLITY AS ONE PEOPLE, THE THEME OF MY ADDRESS SPEAKS TO OUR COLLECTIVE QUEST FOR PRO-POOR DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPERITY FOR ALL, IN ALL SPHERES OF OUR HUMAN ENDEAVOUR. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE FOR ALL, RICH OR POOR, DIFFERENTLY ABLED PERSONS, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO ARE ABLE BODIED. WE WILL CONTINUE TO DRIVE EFFORTS TO ACHIEVING A BETTER LIFE AND A BETTER ZAMBIA FOR ALL.

25. WE WILL THEREFORE CONTINUE AS PATRIOTIC FRONT GOVERNMENT TO DIRECT OUR DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS IN A TARGETED MANNER SO THAT OUR CHILDREN AND OUR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN INHERIT A ZAMBIA WITH ABUNDANT OPPORTUNITIES AND GREATER HOPE REGARDLESS OF THEIR STATUS. THAT IS THE ESSENCE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WHICH, IS PRO-POOR.

26. AS A PARTY AND GOVERNMENT WE DRAW GREAT INSPIRATION TO MOVE IN THE DIRECTION WE HAVE TAKEN FROM OUR FOUNDING FATHER MR. MICHAEL CHILUFYA SATA. AS OUR LEADER AND FIFTH PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA, HE SERVED THIS COUNTRY WITH IMMENSE PASSION FOR THE POOR.

27. HE WAS ALWAYS TROUBLED BY THE POOR STANDARDS OF LIVING OF OUR PEOPLE AND AS A RESULT HE PREMISED OUR PARTY ON IMPROVING THE LIVING STANDARDS OF THOSE WHO WERE MOST IN NEED. THIS IS A LEGACY WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO.

28. THIS IS ATTESTED TO BY OUR PARTY MANIFESTO WHICH SAYS AND I QUOTE, “...WE ARE EVEN MORE ASSURED IN OUR ABILITY TO CONTINUE WITH OUR COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING THE WELFARE OF ALL ZAMBIANS”, END OF QUOTE.

29. HAVING ELABORATED ON THE THEME OF MY ADDRESS AND ITS LINK TO OUR PEACE, NATIONAL VALUES AND PRINCIPLES, LET ME HIGHLIGHT THE CONTENTS OF MY ADDRESS TO THIS AUGUST HOUSE. FIRSTLY, I WILL DWELL ON THE MACRO-ECONOMIC SITUATION OF OUR COUNTRY. SECONDLY, I WILL DISCUSS THE DEVELOPMENT FOCUS OF MY ADMINISTRATION UNDER WHICH I WILL DISCUSS ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION AND JOB CREATION, REDUCING POVERTY AND VULNERABILITIES, REDUCING DEVELOPMENT INEQUALITIES, ENHANCING HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND CREATING A CONDUCTIVE GOVERNANCE ENVIRONMENT FOR A DIVERSIFIED ECONOMY. THEREAFTER I WILL CONCLUDE MY ADDRESS.

MACRO-ECONOMIC SITUATION

MR. SPEAKER,

30. A STRONG ECONOMY WHICH ENABLES THE POOR TO AFFORD NECESSITIES OF LIFE AND MINIMISES THEIR EXPOSURE TO VULNERABILITIES OF WHATEVER FORM IS FUNDAMENTAL TO

ACHIEVING DEVELOPMENT WHICH IS PRO-POOR AND INDEED INCLUSIVE. A STABLE MACRO-ECONOMY WHICH PROVIDES A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL TO CREATE WEALTH AND ACCESS JOBS LEADING TO POVERTY, VULNERABILITY AND INEQUALITY REDUCTION, WILL BE A KEY PRIORITY OF FOCUS FOR MY GOVERNMENT.

31. THIS IS IN LINE WITH OUR ASPIRATIONS CONTAINED IN THE VISION 2030 AND THE SEVENTH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN. THESE ASPIRATIONS ARE ALSO FIRMLY ANCHORED IN THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND THE AFRICAN UNION AGENDA 2063 ALL OF WHICH HAVE BEEN MAINSTREAMED IN THE SEVENTH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

MR. SPEAKER,

32. AFTER SUBDUED ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES WHOSE GROWTH RATE WAS REDUCED BY 2.9 PERCENT, IN 2015, THE ZAMBIAN ECONOMY HAS REBOUNDED IN 2017.

33. IT IS WORTH NOTING THE FACTORS THAT ADVERSELY AFFECTED THE GROWTH RATE IN THE RECENT PAST IN ORDER TO INFORM OUR POLICIES GOING FORWARD. COPPER PRICES DECLINED, POWER GENERATION CAPACITY ALSO DECLINED DUE TO POOR RAINFALL. THIS NEGATIVELY AFFECTED INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION AND PROVISION OF SERVICES. AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION ALSO DROPPED DUE TO POOR RAINFALL PATTERNS.

34. CONSEQUENTLY, DOMESTIC PRESSURES ARISING FROM HUGE DEMAND TO MEET CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS MAINLY IN THE

INFRASTRUCTURE SECTOR INCREASED. MY GOVERNMENT REACTED BOLDLY WITH WELL INTENDED MEASURES TO REMOVE SUBSIDIES AND EASE PRESSURES ON EXPENDITURES. THIS MOVE WAS ALSO INTENDED TO ATTRACT INVESTMENT ESPECIALLY IN THE POWER SECTOR FOLLOWING OUR MOVE TO MIGRATE TO COST REFLECTIVE TARIFFS.

35. GROWTH IS PROJECTED TO STRENGTHEN AT ABOUT 4.1 % OF GDP IN 2017 AND THIS IS FURTHER EXPECTED TO BE BUOYANT IN THE YEARS AHEAD AS WE IMPLEMENT OUR ECONOMIC STABILISATION PROGRAMME. THE HARVEST AND ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION WILL CONTINUE TO BE STRONGER DUE TO THE ANTICIPATED FAVOURABLE WEATHER PATTERNS, COPPER PRODUCTION WILL ALSO INCREASE BECAUSE OF THE IMPROVED TECHNOLOGY IN THE MINES AND GOOD PRICES AT THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET.

36. THE APPRECIATION OF THE KWACHA AS WITNESSED IN THE RECENT PAST – THANKS TO OUR GOOD POLICIES - HAS HELPED EASE THE COST OF SERVICING THE EXTERNAL AND DOLLAR DENOMINATED DEBT. INFLATION HAS CONTINUED TO REMAIN AT SINGLE DIGIT. THIS IS ATTRIBUTED TO OUR FISCAL CONSOLIDATION EFFORTS WHICH HAVE RESULTED IN THE ECONOMY BEING STABLE AND WORKING WELL FOR THE MAJORITY OF THE ZAMBIANS. MEALIE PRICES HAVE DECLINED SIGNIFICANTLY. FOR THOSE IN BUSINESS IT IS NOW CHEAPER TO IMPORT INDUSTRIAL EQUIPMENT THAN BEFORE AND PASS ON THE BENEFITS IN THE COST OF IMPORTED GOODS TO CONSUMERS.

37. IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN A STRONGER ECONOMY, GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO DISMANTLE THE STOCK OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ARREARS AND IMPROVE COMMITMENT CONTROLS AND MONITORING WITH A VIEW TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS NO UNCRONTROLLED BUILD UP OF ARREARS.

38. TO AUGMENT PUBLIC EXPENDITURE MANAGEMENT FURTHER, INCLUDING CASH-FLOW MANAGEMENT, GOVERNMENT WILL ROLL-OUT THE TREASURY SINGLE ACCOUNT TO ALL ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS UNDER THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. THIS ENTAILS CONSOLIDATING SEVERAL ACCOUNTS HELD BY GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS, THEREBY IMPROVING UTILISATION OF PUBLIC FUNDS AND REDUCING ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.

MR. SPEAKER,

39. IN THE AREA OF DEBT MANAGEMENT, GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO PUT IN PLACE MEASURES TO ENSURE THAT OUR NATIONAL DEBT REMAINS WITHIN SUSTAINABLE LEVELS. GOVERNMENT WILL, THEREFORE, CONTRACT LOANS ONLY FOR ECONOMICALLY VIABLE PROJECTS. FURTHER, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION, THIS AUGUST HOUSE WILL CONTINUE PROVIDING OVERSIGHT ON PUBLIC DEBT CONTRACTION AS DEBT SUSTAINABILITY IS PIVOTAL IN RE-BALANCING THE ECONOMY.

MR. SPEAKER,

40. THE MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR FINANCE WILL SOON PRESENT THE 2018 NATIONAL BUDGET TO THIS AUGUST HOUSE FOR CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL. THE BUDGET IS GOING TO

OUTLINE MANY REVENUE REFORMS AIMED AT INCREASING REVENUE COLLECTION TO FUND PLANNED EXPENDITURES. THE BUDGET WILL ALSO INDICATE PROGRESSIVE MEASURES AIMED AT KEEPING THE FISCAL DEFICIT AT REASONABLE LEVELS AND AVOIDING EXPENDITURE CUTS ON PLANNED PROGRAMMES. I, THEREFORE, URGE THE HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THIS AUGUST HOUSE TO INTERROGATE, DEBATE AND EVENTUALLY SUPPORT THE 2018 NATIONAL BUDGET.

DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

MR. SPEAKER,

41. IN MY LAST ADDRESS TO THIS AUGUST HOUSE, I PROMISED TO LAUNCH THE SEVENTH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN. I AM HAPPY TO INFORM THE HOUSE THAT THE PLAN WAS LAUNCHED IN JUNE THIS YEAR. THE THEME OF THE PLAN IS **“ACCELERATING DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS TOWARDS VISION 2030 WITHOUT LEAVING ANYONE BEHIND”**. UNLIKE PREVIOUS NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS, THE SEVENTH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN HAS ADOPTED AN INTEGRATED MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT.

THIS IS A SMART AND MORE PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR NATION.

42. THIS SMART APPROACH ENTAILS THAT SECTORS WILL NOW WORK TOGETHER IN CLUSTERS TO ACHIEVE THE DESIRED DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES OUR PEOPLE HAVE BEEN YEARNING FOR. THE APPROACH WILL ENSURE THAT RESOURCES ARE NOT THINLY

SPREAD TO THE VARIOUS SECTORS. IN THIS MANNER AND TOGETHER, WE WILL END HUNGER AND REDUCE POVERTY. NO ONE WILL BE LEFT BEHIND.

43. ACCORDINGLY, THE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA FOR THE COUNTRY FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS WILL FOCUS ON FIVE STRATEGIC AREAS, NAMELY;

- I. ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION AND JOB CREATION;
- II. POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY REDUCTION;
- III. REDUCING DEVELOPMENTAL INEQUALITIES;
- IV. ENHANCING HUMAN DEVELOPMENT; AND
- V. CREATING A CONDUCTIVE GOVERNANCE ENVIRONMENT FOR A DIVERSIFIED AND INCLUSIVE ECONOMY.

44. THE REST OF MY ADDRESS WILL FOCUS ON THESE FIVE DEVELOPMENTAL PILLARS IN DETAIL.

ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION AND JOB CREATION

MR. SPEAKER,

45. THE ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION AGENDA IS DRIVEN BY A STRONGER MACRO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT. AS OUTLINED ABOVE, OUR ECONOMIC GROWTH WAS LOWER THAN TARGETED WITH 3.4 PERCENT GROWTH RATE AGAINST A TARGET OF 7 PERCENT CONTAINED IN THE REVISED SIXTH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN. WITH THE EXPERIENCED CONTRACTION IN THE ECONOMY OUR ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION AND JOB CREATION PROSPECTS WERE EQUALLY AFFECTED.

46. INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO JOB CREATION STALLED DUE TO THE ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES WE EXPERIENCED. SIMILARLY, AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AND FISHING WHICH ARE, THE LEADING EMPLOYING SECTORS IN THE ECONOMY SLOWED DOWN IN OUTPUT ON ACCOUNT OF POOR ECONOMIC GROWTH RATE.

47. MINING RECOVERED FROM A GROWTH RATE OF 0.2 PERCENT IN 2015 TO 7 PERCENT IN 2016 BUT THE RECOVERY WAS NOT ACCOMPANIED BY JOB CREATION AS THE SECTOR LAID OFF AN AVERAGE OF 10, 576 WORKERS IN 2016 COMPARED TO 2,341 AND 5686 SEPARATED IN 2015 AND 2014 RESPECTIVELY. THE VALUE OF NON-TRADITIONAL EXPORTS AND TOTAL EXPORTS ALSO DECREASED AND THESE ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO SLUGGISH GROWTH IN JOBS.

48. DESPITE THE ABOVE SET BACKS EXPERIENCED IN THE PREVIOUS YEARS, GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO ATTAINING A RESILIENT AND DIVERSIFIED ECONOMY. AN ECONOMY WHERE ALL ZAMBIANS, YOUNG AND OLD, FEMALE AND MALE, RICH OR POOR, NOT ONLY BENEFIT FROM DEVELOPMENT, BUT ALSO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN ITS REALISATION.

49. WE ARE PURSUING ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION AND JOB CREATION THROUGH VALUE ADDITION AND INDUSTRIALISATION ANCHORED ON AGRICULTURE, MINING AND TOURISM. THE OVERALL SUCCESS IN THIS STRATEGIC AREA WILL BE DRIVEN BY PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT, WHILE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY ITS ROLE OF IMPROVING THE POLICY AND BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT.

MR. SPEAKER,

50. I WANT TO STRESS GOVERNMENTS COMMITMENT TO DIVERSIFYING FROM AN ECONOMY MAINLY DEPENDANT ON MINING TO DEPEND HEAVILY ON AGRICULTURE. THIS MUST BE ACHIEVED AGAINST ALL ODDS.

51. IN THIS REGARD, TO THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR, DIVERSIFICATION HAS INVOLVED ENHANCING INVESTMENT IN AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE, MECHANISATION, AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAINS, CROP AND LIVESTOCK DIVERSIFICATION, INCREASING ACCESS TO FINANCE FOR PRODUCTION AND EXPORTS, AND PROMOTING SMALL SCALE AGRICULTURE. ULTIMATELY, THESE MEASURES ARE STEADILY IMPROVING PRODUCTION AND PRODUCTIVITY.

MR SPEAKER,

52. WITH REFERENCE TO ENHANCING MECHANISATION IN AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION, THE GOVERNMENT IS FACILITATING THE CONSTRUCTION OF A TRACTOR ASSEMBLY PLANT BY URSUS, A LEADING EUROPEAN MANUFACTURER OF TRACTORS. THE CONSTRUCTION WILL COMMENCE IN 2018 AND IS EXPECTED TO CREATE 700 DIRECT JOBS AND REDUCE THE PRICE OF TRACTORS AND AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT BY 20 PERCENT.

53. TO FURTHER ACCELERATE PRODUCTION AND PRODUCTIVITY, GOVERNMENT IS INCREASING THE AREA UNDER IRRIGATION, EXPANDING HECTARAGE UNDER CULTIVATION AND INCREASING THE NUMBER OF OUR PEOPLE INVOLVED IN FARMING. THESE INITIATIVES ARE BEING AUGMENTED BY ENHANCED EXTENSION SERVICES.

54. I AM PLEASED TO INFORM THIS AUGUST HOUSE THAT DURING THE 2016/2017 FARMING SEASON, GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR MANAGED TO BRING ON BOARD AN ADDITIONAL 8,000 HECTARES OF LAND UNDER IRRIGATION. THIS HAS INCREASED THE TOTAL AREA UNDER IRRIGATION FROM 192,000 HECTARES IN THE 2015/2016 FARMING SEASON TO 200,000 HECTARES IN THE 2016/2017 SEASON.

55. LET ME REITERATE MY CALL TO PUBLIC SERVICE WORKERS TO ACTIVELY ENGAGE IN AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES NOW AND NOT WAIT UNTIL THEY ARE TIRED AND RETIRED. I AM HAPPY TO INFORM THE HOUSE THAT SO FAR, 80 PUBLIC SERVICE WORKERS HAVE ACCESSED AGRO-EQUIPMENT THROUGH THE PUBLIC SERVICE MICRO-FINANCE COMPANY AT AN ESTIMATED VALUE OF 8.9 MILLION KWACHA. OUT OF THIS AMOUNT, A TOTAL OF 6.8 MILLION KWACHA HAS BEEN DISBURSED TO FEMALE APPLICANTS.

56. TO PROMOTE VALUE ADDITION, GOVERNMENT IS SUPPORTING A NUMBER OF PIPELINE PROJECTS TO BE DELIVERED IN THE NEXT TWO YEARS. THESE INCLUDE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MANGO PROCESSING FACILITY IN EASTERN PROVINCE; INVESTMENT IN A PALM OIL PLANTATION AND PALM OIL PROCESSING PLANT IN

LUAPULA PROVINCE; INVESTMENT IN A CASHEW NUT PROJECT IN WESTERN PROVINCE AND RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF A PINEAPPLE PROCESSING FACILITY IN NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCE.

MR. SPEAKER,

57. GOVERNMENT IS AWARE OF THE CHALLENGES THAT OUR FARMERS ARE FACING IN MARKETING THEIR PRODUCE. GOVERNMENT IS PLEASED TO NOTE THAT THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS ALREADY PARTICIPATING IN CROP MARKETING THROUGH THE ZAMBIA AGRICULTURE COMMODITY EXCHANGE. I WISH TO CALL UPON FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS TO ACTIVELY SUPPORT SUCH PRIVATE SECTOR LED INITIATIVES.

58. ACCORDINGLY, THE FUNCTIONS OF THE FOOD RESERVE AGENCY ARE BEING STREAMLINED TO ENABLE IT EFFECTIVELY PERFORM ITS ORIGINAL MANDATE OF PROCURING STRATEGIC FOOD RESERVES. THE REVIEW OF THE FOOD RESERVE AGENCY LEGISLATION IS EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR IN READINESS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THIS HOUSE.

MR. SPEAKER,

59. THE DIVERSIFICATION AGENDA IN AGRICULTURE IS ALSO BEING PROMOTED USING THE E-VOUCHER SYSTEM BY WAY OF SUPPORTING VARIOUS INPUTS FOR CROPS, LIVESTOCK AND FISHERIES. THE E-VOUCHER SYSTEM IS ALSO AIMED AT ENSURING PROPER TARGETING OF BENEFICIARIES, EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES, INCREASED PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION IN THE

SUPPLY OF INPUTS AS WELL AS GIVING CHOICES TO THE FARMERS FOR VARIOUS FARM INPUTS.

60. THE E-VOUCHER SYSTEM THAT WAS PILOTED IN 39 DISTRICTS WILL NOW BE ROLLED OUT TO THE REST OF THE COUNTRY BEFORE THE START OF THE 2017/2018 FARMING SEASON, TARGETING ONE MILLION BENEFICIARIES.

MR. SPEAKER,

61. THE LIVESTOCK SECTOR IN ZAMBIA HAS POTENTIAL TO CONTRIBUTE TO WEALTH CREATION AS WELL AS POVERTY REDUCTION. CURRENTLY, THE SECTOR CONTRIBUTES ABOUT 3.6 PERCENT TO THE OVERALL GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT AND 42 PERCENT TO THE AGRICULTURAL GDP.

62. GIVEN OUR ABUNDANT WATER AND PASTURE LAND, THE SECTOR HAS A GREAT POTENTIAL TO DRIVE OUR DIVERSIFICATION AGENDA. THE MARKET OPPORTUNITIES FOR SMALL LIVESTOCK IS VAST. SAUDI ARABIA ALONE, HAS EXPRESSED INTEREST TO IMPORT OVER ONE MILLION GOATS AND SHEEP FROM ZAMBIA PER ANNUM. GOVERNMENT IS ACTIVELY ENSURING THAT THE SECTOR'S PRODUCTIVITY IS ENHANCED AND THE POTENTIAL MARKETS ARE FULLY EXPLOITED.

MR. SPEAKER,

63. GOVERNMENT IS THEREFORE, SUPPORTING LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE CONSTRUCTION OF MODERN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR LIVESTOCK BREEDING, MILK COLLECTION

AND SATELLITE ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION SERVICE CENTRES. THE LIVESTOCK SERVICE CENTRES ARE INTENDED TO BE USED AS EXTENSION SERVICE DELIVERY POINTS.

64. I AM HAPPY TO REPORT THAT WE NOW HAVE 16 LIVESTOCK BREEDING CENTRES ACROSS THE COUNTRY. OUT OF THESE, 4 CENTRES, NAMELY KANCHINDU IN SINAZONGWE, MBESUMA IN CHINSALI, MUKULAIKWA IN SHIBUYUNJI AND KANYAMA IN MWINILUNGA, ARE OFFLOADING IMPROVED BREEDING STOCK TO ELIGIBLE BENEFICIARIES.

MR. SPEAKER,

65. GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO PROMOTE AQUACULTURE. THE MEASURES PUT IN PLACE ARE ALREADY BEARING FRUIT AS EVIDENCED BY THE INCREASE IN FISH PRODUCTION FROM 22,713 METRIC TONNES IN 2015 TO 27,658 METRIC TONNES IN 2016, REPRESENTING A 22 PERCENT INCREASE. BY MID THIS YEAR, FISH PRODUCTION STOOD AT 34,573 METRIC TONNES. THIS IS INDEED COMMENDABLE. TO IMPROVE FISH PRODUCTION, 17 GOVERNMENT AND 11 COMMUNITY-BASED FINGERLING PRODUCTION CENTRES HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

MR. SPEAKER,

66. WE CANNOT RUN AWAY FROM THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR MINING SECTOR AND OUR DIVERSIFICATION AGENDA, WHICH INCLUDES DIVERSIFYING NOT ONLY FROM MINING, BUT ALSO WITHIN THE MINING SECTOR.

MR. SPEAKER,

67. TO DIVERSIFY WITHIN THE MINING SECTOR, AVAILABILITY OF GEOLOGICAL INFORMATION IS CRITICAL AS IT FACILITATES DISCOVERY OF NEW MINERAL DEPOSITS. GOVERNMENT HAS TO DATE GEOGRAPHICALLY AND STRUCTURALLY MAPPED 60 PERCENT OF THE COUNTRY. THIS HAS ENABLED PROVISION OF NECESSARY INFORMATION TO INVESTORS IN THE SECTOR AND FOR LAND USE PLANNING. I URGE INVESTORS TO UTILISE THE AVAILABLE GEOLOGICAL INFORMATION.

68. GOVERNMENT COMMITS ITSELF TO CONTINUE THE MAPPING PROGRAMME FOR THE REMAINING PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, NAMELY MUCHINGA, LUAPULA, NORTHERN AND WESTERN PROVINCES.

MR. SPEAKER,

69. GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO CARRY OUT MINERAL SURVEYS FOR GEMSTONES, CLAY AND LIMESTONE IN ORDER TO PROMOTE THEIR EXPLOITATION. SPECIFIC AREAS TO BE SURVEYED INCLUDE NORTH- WESTERN PROVINCE FOR GEMSTONES, WHILE LIMESTONE EXPLORATION WILL BE CONDUCTED ON THE COPPERBELT, NORTH- WESTERN AND LUAPULA PROVINCES. INCREASED EXPLOITATION OF LIMESTONE WILL CONTRIBUTE TO GROWTH OF THE AGRICULTURE AND CONSTRUCTION SECTORS WHILE INCREASED GEMSTONES PRODUCTION WILL ENHANCE FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS.

MR. SPEAKER,

70. OUR PEOPLE HAVE TO BENEFIT MORE FROM OUR COUNTRY'S MINERAL RESOURCES. SMALL SCALE MINING ACTIVITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY PROVIDE SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY AND AN AVENUE FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SECTOR. I, THEREFORE, URGE OUR PEOPLE TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THIS SECTOR, BUT WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THE LAW.

71. TO BUILD THE CAPACITY OF SMALL SCALE MINERS, GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT MINERAL CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME. THE PROGRAMME IS BUILDING CAPACITY IN THE EXPLOITATION OF DEVELOPMENT MINERALS THROUGH TRAINING, CREATION OF MARKET LINKAGES AND PROVISION OF GRANTS. OVER 70 SMALL SCALE MINERS HAVE SINCE UNDERGONE A TRAINER OF TRAINERS PROGRAMME IN GEOLOGY, MINING, PROCESSING, ENVIRONMENT, SAFETY, VALUE ADDITION, QUARRY MANAGEMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS.

MR SPEAKER,

72. IN MY ADDRESS LAST YEAR, I INFORMED THE HOUSE THAT GOVERNMENT WOULD PUT IN PLACE MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN MECHANISMS FOR MONITORING PRODUCTION AND EXPORT OF MINERALS. THIS WAS IN ORDER TO PROMOTE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF BOTH GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR SO AS TO ENHANCE REVENUE COLLECTION FROM MINING ACTIVITIES.

73. I AM GLAD TO REPORT THAT AN ON-LINE SYSTEM THAT LINKS THE MINISTRY OF MINES WITH THE ZAMBIA REVENUE AUTHORITY IS NOW OPERATIONAL. THROUGH THE SYSTEM, MOST LARGE COPPER MINES NOW REPORT THEIR PRODUCTION LEVELS. THE SYSTEM HAS FACILITATED ACCESS TO MORE DETAILED DATA AND IMPROVED THE TRACKING OF REPORTED PRODUCTION. THE SYSTEM HAS ALSO ENABLED THE INCORPORATION OF DATA ON PREVIOUSLY UN-REPORTED PRODUCTS. WORK IS IN PROGRESS TO INCLUDE EXPORT, IMPORT AND TRADE PERMITS ON THE SYSTEM.

74. FURTHER, THE GOVERNMENT IS ENHANCING ITS CAPACITY TO EFFECTIVELY MONITOR THE PRODUCTION AND EXPORT OF GEMSTONES THROUGH THE ACQUISITION OF GEMOLOGICAL EQUIPMENT.

MR SPEAKER,

75. THE EXTRACTION OF PETROLEUM IN ZAMBIA IS STILL IN ITS INFANCY WITH ACTIVITIES LIMITED TO EXPLORATION. TO ATTRACT MORE PROSPECTING ACTIVITIES, WE REQUIRE AN APPROPRIATE REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT. GOVERNMENT WILL, THEREFORE, HASTEN THE REVIEW OF THE PETROLEUM (EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION) ACT CAP 440 OF THE LAWS OF ZAMBIA.

MR. SPEAKER,

76. OUR COUNTRY IS RICHLY ENDOWED WITH ABUNDANT NATURAL RESOURCES. EACH REGION, HAS ITS UNIQUE COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE THAT CAN BE LEVERAGED TO PROMOTE INVESTMENT. COMPREHENSIVE RESOURCE MAPPING AND

MARKETING OF PROVINCES AND DISTRICTS IS CRUCIAL TO THE PROMOTION OF INVESTMENT.

77. IN THIS REGARD, I WOULD LIKE TO COMMEND THE LUAPULA PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION FOR HOSTING A SUCCESSFUL EXPO AND INVESTMENT CONFERENCE. THANK YOU LUAPULA FOR SETTING THE BAR. I IMPORE OTHER PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATIONS TO EMULATE THIS COMMENDABLE EFFORT, THE DESTINY OF OUR COUNTRY IS IN OUR HANDS.

MR. SPEAKER,

78. LET ME REITERATE GOVERNMENT'S RESOLVE TO REALISING THE POTENTIAL OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IN CONTRIBUTING TO ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION AND JOB CREATION.

79. FOR A LONG-TIME NOW, FOCUS IN OUR TOURISM PROMOTION HAS BEEN ON HANDICRAFTS, WILDLIFE AND THE VICTORIA FALLS. HOWEVER, THE COUNTRY HAS NUMEROUS OTHER POTENTIAL ATTRACTIONS THAT CAN BE EXPLOITED.

80. WE ARE THEREFORE, WORKING ON ENSURING THAT THESE SITES, WONDERS AND CULTURAL EVENTS ARE WELL MARKETED DOMESTICALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY. I CALL UPON THE TOURIST OPERATORS AND ASSOCIATIONS TO FIND WAYS AND MEANS OF PROMOTING LOCAL TOURISM. I FURTHER URGE OUR PEOPLE TO SAMPLE OUR LOCAL TOURISM PRODUCTS.

MR. SPEAKER,

81. GOVERNMENT IS DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING ETHNO TOURISM THROUGH SUCH EVENTS AS THE PAMODZI CARNIVAL, WHICH IS AN ANNUAL EVENT AIMED AT SHOWCASING ZAMBIAN ART AND CULTURE. IN ADDITION, GOVERNMENT HAS EMBARKED ON HOLDING CARVING AND CRAFTS FAIRS AS CENTRES OF CULTURAL TOURISM.

82. OTHER EFFORTS IN DIVERSIFYING THE TOURISM SECTOR INCLUDE PROMOTION OF NON-TRADITIONAL TOURISM PRODUCTS SUCH AS SPORTS EVENTS, MINE TOURS, MEDICAL TOURISM, MEETINGS, CONFERENCES AND EVENTS.

MR. SPEAKER,

83. IN AN EFFORT TO CONSERVE AND PROTECT WILDLIFE AND ENSURE SUSTAINABLE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT, GOVERNMENT IS INVOLVING COMMUNITIES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF WILDLIFE. IN THIS REGARD, GOVERNMENT HAS MADE PROGRESS IN FACILITATING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNITY RESOURCE BOARDS. SO FAR, 76 COMMUNITY RESOURCE BOARDS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED IN GAME MANAGEMENT AREAS, EMPLOYING 914 SCOUTS FROM WITHIN THE COMMUNITIES.

84. AS PART OF THE PROGRAMME TO PROMOTE SAFARI AND PHOTOGRAPHIC TOURISM, GOVERNMENT WILL RESTOCK NATIONAL PARKS. GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO FACILITATE THE RESTOCKING OF ELEVEN NEWLY ESTABLISHED PRIVATE GAME RANCHES. THIS WILL DEVELOP THE WILDLIFE TOURISM PRODUCT TO SATISFY BOTH LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS.

MR. SPEAKER,

85. TO SUPPLEMENT GOVERNMENT FUNDING IN THE AREAS OF TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT, MARKETING, PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT, TRAINING AND RESEARCH, A TOURISM LEVY WAS INTRODUCED IN MARCH THIS YEAR. THE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FUND HAS SINCE BEEN ESTABLISHED AND SO FAR 3.4 MILLION KWACHA HAS BEEN COLLECTED.

MR. SPEAKER,

86. ENERGY IS A CATALYST TO ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION AND JOB CREATION. DEMAND FOR ELECTRICITY IN 2015 STOOD AT 1,949 MEGAWATTS AND IS PROJECTED TO INCREASE TO 3,000 MEGAWATTS BY 2020.

87. THE 2015 ELECTRICITY CRISIS IS FRESH IN OUR MINDS AND ITS NEGATIVE IMPACT IS STILL FELT EVEN TODAY WITH REGARD TO THE FOREGONE INCOME GENERATION OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS THE ECONOMY. THIS WAS MAINLY DUE TO OUR OVER-DEPENDENCE ON HYDRO POWER AS A SOURCE OF ENERGY. THERE IS NEED, THEREFORE, TO DIVERSIFY SOURCES OF ENERGY FROM HYDRO TO SOLAR, WIND, BIO-MASS AND NUCLEAR. IN ADDITION, WE NEED TO HARNESS THE HUGE POTENTIAL OF HYDRO POWER GENERATION IN THE RAIN- RICH NORTHERN PART OF THE COUNTRY.

MR SPEAKER,

88. TO MEET THE INCREASE IN DEMAND, INVESTMENTS IN ENERGY PROJECTS ARE ON-GOING. SO FAR, THE ITEZHI-TEZHI

HYDRO POWER PLANT, DEVELOPED UNDER A PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP, IS OPERATIONAL AND HAS ADDED 120 MEGAWATTS TO THE NATIONAL GRID. IN ADDITION, PHASE ONE OF THE MAAMBA COAL FIRED POWER PLANT IN SINAZONGWE BECAME OPERATIONAL IN DECEMBER, 2016 AND IS ADDING 300 MEGAWATTS TO THE NATIONAL GRID. AN ADDITIONAL 15 MEGAWATTS FROM THE LUSIWASI UPPER HYDRO SCHEME IS EXPECTED TO COME ON STREAM IN 2018.

89. THESE PROJECTS ARE INCREASING POWER SUPPLY AND CONTRIBUTING TO JOB CREATION. SO FAR, THE MAAMBA COAL FIRED POWER PLANT HAS CREATED 1,800 DIRECT JOBS.

MR. SPEAKER,

90. TO PROMOTE MORE PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN ELECTRICITY GENERATION, GOVERNMENT IS IMPLEMENTING A GRADUAL MIGRATION TOWARDS A COST REFLECTIVE TARIFF REGIME. TO THIS EFFECT, A SEVENTY-FIVE PERCENT TARIFF ADJUSTMENT HAS SINCE BEEN IMPLEMENTED. THIS MIGHT APPEAR AS A HARSH DECISION ON THE PART OF GOVERNMENT IN THE SHORT TERM. HOWEVER, IN THE LONG TERM, THE COUNTRY WILL BENEFIT FROM INCREASED INVESTMENT IN THE SECTOR, WHICH WILL GENERATE THE MUCH NEEDED ELECTRICITY FOR OUR INDUSTRIALIZATION AND DIVERSIFICATION PROGRAMME.

MR. SPEAKER,

91. TO ENSURE THAT OUR CITIZENS IN THE RURAL AREAS ARE NOT LEFT BEHIND, GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE PROMOTING AND

EXPANDING RURAL ELECTRIFICATION PROGRAMMES THAT WILL INCREASE ACCESS TO ELECTRICITY BY RURAL COMMUNITIES AT AN AFFORDABLE COST. UNDER THE RURAL ELECTRIFICATION PROGRAMME, 19 GRID EXTENSION PROJECTS ARE BEING IMPLEMENTED. THESE INCLUDE MILENGE GRID EXTENSION PROJECT, KASANJIKU MINI HYDRO POWER STATION IN MWINILUNGA DISTRICT AND CHUNGA SOLAR MINI GRID IN MUMBWA DISTRICT.

92. AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2016, SEVEN GRID EXTENSION PROJECTS WERE COMPLETED. THESE INCLUDE THE MUSHINDAMO GRID EXTENSION PROJECT IN MUSHINDAMO DISTRICT, MWINUNA GRID EXTENSION PROJECT IN MPONGWE DISTRICT AND KANKOLONKOLO GRID EXTENSION PROJECT IN KASEMPA DISTRICT.

MR. SPEAKER,

93. GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO PLACE EMPHASIS ON AN EXPORT ORIENTED ECONOMY. IN THIS REGARD, WE ARE DEVELOPING A NATIONAL TRADE POLICY THAT WILL SEEK TO PROMOTE BOTH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE WITH A VIEW TO TRANSFORMING ZAMBIA FROM BEING AN EXPORTER OF PRIMARY PRODUCTS TO A NET EXPORTER OF VALUE ADDED PRODUCTS. GOVERNMENT WILL EXPEDITE THE FINALISATION OF THE POLICY.

94. TO SECURE ACCESS TO REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MARKETS AS WELL AS REDUCE BARRIERS TO TRADE, GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO ENGAGE WITH ITS TRADING PARTNERS AT BILATERAL, REGIONAL, CONTINENTAL AND MULTILATERAL LEVELS.

WE WILL ALSO CONTINUE IMPLEMENTING TRADE FACILITATION PROGRAMMES TO REDUCE THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS. THE INITIATIVES INCLUDE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ONE-STOP BORDER POSTS, INTER-MODAL CARGO DEPOTS, INLAND DRY PORTS AND PROVISION OF OTHER REQUISITE INFRASTRUCTURE.

MR. SPEAKER,

95. OUR QUEST IS TO MAKE ZAMBIA A TRANSPORT HUB IN THE REGION AND BEYOND. GOVERNMENT WILL, THEREFORE, CONTINUE TO INVEST IN THE EXPANSION AND MODERNISATION OF INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT THE DIVERSIFICATION AND JOB CREATION PROGRAMME WHILE PROMOTING PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION. IN THIS REGARD, GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT THE LINK ZAMBIA 8,000, LUSAKA 400 AND COPPERBELT 400 PROJECTS.

96. TO ENSURE SUSTAINABLE FINANCING FOR ROAD MAINTENANCE, GOVERNMENT EMBARKED ON THE ROAD TOLLING PROGRAMME WHICH COVERS TOLL GATES, WEIGHBRIDGES AND PORTS OF ENTRY. CURRENTLY, TOLLS ARE BEING COLLECTED FROM 10 PORTS OF ENTRY, 6 WEIGHBRIDGES AND FIVE INLAND TOLL GATES. GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO CONSTRUCT MORE TOLL GATES ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

97. BETWEEN JANUARY AND JUNE THIS YEAR ABOUT 345 MILLION KWACHA HAS BEEN COLLECTED FROM THE ROAD TOLLING PROGRAMME. ABOUT 1.6 BILLION KWACHA HAS BEEN COLLECTED

BETWEEN NOVEMBER 2013, WHEN THE PROGRAMME WAS LAUNCHED, AND JULY 2017. THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS GOVERNMENT HAS IMPLEMENTED.

MR. SPEAKER,

98. WITH REGARD TO GREENFIELD RAILWAY PROJECTS, I AM HAPPY TO INFORM THIS AUGUST HOUSE THAT FEASIBILITY STUDIES AND DETAILED ENGINEERING DESIGNS FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE CHIPATA-MUCHINJI RAILWAY LINE TO CONNECT TO THE TAZARA RAILWAY LINE AT SERENJE HAVE BEEN COMPLETED. WORKS ARE EXPECTED TO COMMENCE SOON AT AN ESTIMATED COST OF 2.3 BILLION UNITED STATES DOLLARS. THIS RAILWAY LINE IS EXPECTED TO CREATE 8,000 DIRECT JOBS DURING CONSTRUCTION.

ONCE COMPLETED, THE RAILWAY LINE WILL PROVIDE A VITAL TRADE LINK TO THE PORT OF NACALA IN MOZAMBIQUE.

99. FURTHER, FEASIBILITY STUDIES ON THE NSELUKA-MPULUNGU RAILWAY HAVE BEEN CONCLUDED, WHILE THE STUDY ON THE LIVINGSTONE VIA KAZUNGULA TO SESHEKE RAILWAY LINE HAS COMMENCED.

100. IN ADDITION, FEASIBILITY STUDIES FOR THE GREENFIELD RAILWAY LINE FROM CHINGOLA TO JIMBE WILL COMMENCE IN 2018. FEASIBILITY STUDIES FOR THE KAFUE-LIONS DEN RAILWAY LINE BETWEEN ZAMBIA AND ZIMBABWE WILL ALSO COMMENCE IN 2018.

101. ONCE COMPLETED AND OPERATIONAL, THESE PROJECTS WILL CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS EXTENDING THE LIFE-SPAN OF OUR ROADS, REDUCING ROAD MAINTENANCE COSTS AS WELL AS THE COST OF FERRYING BULK CARGO.

MR. SPEAKER,

102. GOVERNMENT IS CONSTRUCTING A NEW TERMINAL AT KENNETH KAUNDA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IN LUSAKA. THE PROJECT IS EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED BY THE END OF 2018 AT A COST OF 360 MILLION UNITED STATES DOLLARS. NOTABLE PROGRESS HAS BEEN RECORDED AND THE PROJECT IS AT 52 PERCENT COMPLETION. THIS YEAR, GOVERNMENT ALSO LAUNCHED THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE COPPERBELT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AT A TOTAL COST OF 397 MILLION UNITED STATES DOLLARS.

MR. SPEAKER,

103. GOVERNMENT RECOGNISES THE ROLE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY PLAYS, NOT ONLY IN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION, BUT ALSO IN ATTAINING A SMART ZAMBIA. ACCORDINGLY, GOVERNMENT IS UNDERTAKING AN AMBITIOUS INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME TO ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO COMMUNICATION SERVICES.

104. UNDER PHASE ONE OF THE PROGRAMME, 204 COMMUNICATIONS TOWERS HAVE BEEN CONSTRUCTED ACROSS THE

COUNTRY. DURING PHASE TWO, 1,009 TOWERS WILL BE CONSTRUCTED IN UNSERVED AND UNDER-SERVED AREAS WITH THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF ENSURING THAT COMMUNICATION SERVICES ARE NOT ONLY ACCESSIBLE, BUT AFFORDABLE IN ZAMBIA. THE SERVICES WILL ALSO PROMOTE INCREASED PRODUCTION AND PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH FACILITATION OF E-EXTENSION SERVICES AND MARKET INFORMATION.

MR. SPEAKER,

105. GOVERNMENT ALSO RECOGNISES THE NEED TO ACCELERATE UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO INFORMATION THROUGH RADIO AND TELEVISION. TO THIS EFFECT, THE DIGITAL MIGRATION ROLL OUT PROGRAMME IS BEING IMPLEMENTED AND PROGRESSING WELL. SO FAR, 10 DIGITAL BROADCASTING TRANSMITTERS HAVE BEEN INSTALLED ALONG THE LINE OF RAIL, THEREBY BRINGING DIGITAL TELEVISION SERVICES TO THOUSANDS OF HOMES AT MINIMAL COST.

106. 36 MORE TRANSMITTERS WILL BE INSTALLED IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE COUNTRY AND BECOME FULLY OPERATIONAL BEFORE THE END OF THIS YEAR. THE INSTALLATION OF THESE TRANSMITTERS WILL MARK THE COMPLETION OF THE DIGITAL MIGRATION ROLL OUT AND ENSURE THAT THE DIGITAL BROADCASTING SIGNAL REACHES EVERY TOWN, VILLAGE AND HOUSEHOLD IN ZAMBIA.

MR. SPEAKER,

107. TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL CONTENT AND PROMOTE A HOME-GROWN FILM INDUSTRY, GOVERNMENT IS

IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL FILM POLICY. THE POLICY GIVES CLEAR GUIDELINES ON FILM PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION AND MARKETING IN THE COUNTRY. PARTICULAR EMPHASIS IS ON THE USE OF LOCAL TALENT AND LOCATIONS IN ORDER TO CREATE THE MUCH NEEDED JOBS FOR OUR PEOPLE AND MARKET OUR COUNTRY, WITH ITS RICH NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE.

MR. SPEAKER,

108. TO FURTHER SUPPORT DIVERSIFICATION AND JOB CREATION, GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO UNDERTAKE BUSINESS REFORMS TO, AMONG OTHERS, ENHANCE ACCESS TO FINANCE AND PROMOTE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND QUALITY ASSURANCE.

109. DURING MY ADDRESS TO THIS AUGUST HOUSE LAST YEAR, I INDICATED THAT GOVERNMENT WOULD EXPEDITE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MOVEABLE PROPERTY (SECURITY INTEREST) ACT NO. 3 OF 2016 TO INCREASE ACCESS TO FINANCE, ESPECIALLY FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES.

110. I AM HAPPY TO INFORM THIS AUGUST HOUSE THAT WE NOW HAVE A REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACT AND A PROVISIONAL COLLATERAL REGISTRY HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED.

111. DURING THIS YEAR ALONE, MORE THAN 500 CLIENTS HAVE ACCESSED FINANCES USING MOVEABLE ASSETS SUCH AS HOUSEHOLD GOODS AND VEHICLES AS COLLATERAL. IT IS NOW EASIER FOR A FARMER IN CHIEF MULENDEMA'S AREA IN MUMBWA TO USE CATTLE AS COLLATERAL TO ACCESS FINANCES. THIS IS A

GOOD START. I URGE FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS TO INCREASE SUPPORT TO MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES AS PART OF THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION AND JOB CREATION.

MR. SPEAKER,

112. DESPITE THE SUCCESSES RECORDED, A LOT REMAINS TO BE DONE TO MAKE OUR LOCAL ENTERPRISES MORE COMPETITIVE AND CONTRIBUTE TO OUR INDUSTRIALISATION AND JOB CREATION AGENDA. TO THIS EFFECT, GOVERNMENT IS SUPPORTING THE LINKAGES OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES TO POTENTIAL MARKETS FOR THEIR PRODUCTS THROUGH CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMMES.

113. IN THE AREA OF FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE, FOR INSTANCE, SOME PRODUCTS MANUFACTURED BY SMALL ENTERPRISES, SUCH AS LUMUNO ORGANICS LIMITED, ARE NOW BEING SUPPLIED TO CHAIN STORES. SIMILAR INTERVENTIONS WILL CONTINUE UNDER THE AGRIBUSINESS AND TRADE PROJECT WHERE SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES WILL BE SUPPORTED IN THE AREAS OF STANDARDISATION, QUALITY ASSURANCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF MARKET LINKAGES.

MR SPEAKER,

114. IN LINE WITH GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT MADE LAST YEAR TO LIST STATE OWNED ENTERPRISES ON THE LUSAKA STOCK

EXCHANGE WITHIN THE NEXT 5 TO 10 YEARS, I AM GLAD TO INFORM THE HOUSE THAT WE HAVE MADE PROGRESS. GOVERNMENT HAS APPROVED THE CONVERSION OF ZAMBIA FORESTRY AND FOREST INDUSTRIES CORPORATION LIMITED, ZSIC LIFE LIMITED, ZSIC GENERAL LIMITED, MULUNGUSHI VILLAGE COMPLEX LIMITED, ZAMBIA RAILWAYS LIMITED AND INDENI OIL REFINERY LIMITED INTO PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANIES.

115. THIS MEASURE IS AIMED AT TRANSFORMING THE COMPANIES INTO SMART INSTITUTIONS WITH IMPROVED GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY, WHILE INCREASING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE ECONOMY.

MR. SPEAKER,

116. GOOD CORPORATE GOVERNANCE IS A CATALYST FOR PRIVATE SECTOR GROWTH AND COMPETITIVENESS. I AM GLAD TO INFORM THE HOUSE THAT BOTH THE COMPANIES AND INSOLVENCY BILLS HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR CONSIDERATION. ONCE ENACTED, THE BILLS WILL CREATE AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR PRIVATE SECTOR GROWTH AND COMPETITIVENESS.

117. TO PROMOTE PRODUCTION OF QUALITY PRODUCTS, GOVERNMENT ENACTED THE COMPULSORY STANDARDS ACT NO. 3 OF 2017, THE STANDARDS ACT NO. 4 OF 2017, THE NATIONAL TECHNICAL REGULATIONS ACT NO. 5 OF 2017, AND THE METROLOGY ACT NO. 6 OF 2017. THIS WILL ALSO ENHANCE ACCESS TO REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MARKETS FOR LOCALLY MANUFACTURED

PRODUCTS. I, THEREFORE, URGE THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO EMBRACE QUALITY ASSURANCE AND CONTINUOUS PRODUCT AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT IN LINE WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF A SMART ZAMBIA.

MR. SPEAKER,

118. IN REPOSITIONING THE COUNTRY TO ADOPTING AND ADAPTING SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY TO THE TRANSFORMATIONAL AND DEVELOPMENT AGENDA, GOVERNMENT IS PRIORITISING INVESTMENT IN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT. THIS IS TO ENHANCE THE APPLICATION OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN ALL SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY.

119. TO THIS END, GOVERNMENT WILL STRENGTHEN HUMAN AND INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH CAPACITIES IN VARIOUS AREAS SUCH AS SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION. THIS WILL BE COMPLEMENTED BY AN EFFECTIVE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS PROTECTION REGIME IN ORDER FOR INNOVATORS TO BENEFIT FROM THEIR INNOVATIONS.

120. FURTHER, GOVERNMENT IS DEVELOPING A POLICY, LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK ON NUCLEAR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND ITS UTILISATION IN THE AREAS OF ENERGY, HEALTH, MINING AND AGRICULTURE.

121. GOVERNMENT WILL STREAMLINE THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT TO ENSURE

COORDINATION, RATIONALISATION OF RESOURCES AND EFFECTIVE LINKAGES AMONG RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS.

MR. SPEAKER,

122. GOVERNMENT IS ALSO CREATING CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE TO SPEARHEAD RESEARCH IN INFECTIOUS DISEASES AND SUSTAINABLE MINING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA AND THE COPPERBELT UNIVERSITY, RESPECTIVELY. THIS WILL NOT ONLY CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN CAPITAL, BUT ALSO ENHANCE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CAPACITIES.

123. IN THE SAME VEIN, GOVERNMENT HAS ESTABLISHED A STRATEGIC RESEARCH FUND. THE FUND IS SUPPORTING RESEARCH IN IMPROVED, DROUGHT RESISTANT AND HYBRID SEED VARIETIES AS WELL AS OUT-GROWER SUPPORT TECHNOLOGIES. THESE INTERVENTIONS WILL NOT ONLY FACILITATE THE DIVERSIFICATION PROCESS, BUT ALSO IMPROVE INCOMES FOR RURAL FARMERS, THEREBY REDUCING POVERTY AMONG OUR PEOPLE.

MR. SPEAKER,

124. TO PROMOTE INDUSTRIALISATION, GOVERNMENT IS CREATING INCUBATION CENTRES THAT WILL NURTURE START-UP ENTERPRISES IN ALL SECTORS. THIS WILL CONTRIBUTE TO CREATING JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE YOUTH AND REDUCE INEQUALITIES. THE FIRST INCUBATION CENTRE HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED AT KABWE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY.

MR SPEAKER,

125. I HOPE MEMBERS OF THIS AUGUST HOUSE CAN SEE THAT MY CURRENT ADDRESS IS REPORTING SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS FOR MY PREVIOUS ADDRESSES. YOUR GOVEDRNMENT IS INDEED WORKING.

POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY REDUCTION

MR. SPEAKER,

126. POVERTY LEVELS IN THE COUNTRY REMAIN UNACCEPTABLY HIGH, WITH 54.4% OF OUR PEOPLE LIVING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE. POVERTY IN OUR COUNTRY IS OVERWHELMINGLY A RURAL PHENOMENON WITH A RATE ALMOST THREE TIMES THE LEVEL OBSERVED IN URBAN AREAS. MORE THAN HALF OF THE RURAL POPULATION AT 55% IS AFFECTED BY POVERTY WHILE IN URBAN AREAS THE EXTREME POVERTY IS AT 13%.

127. OUR VULNERABLE INCLUDE ORPHANS, FEMALE AND CHILD HEADED HOUSEHOLDS, DIFFERENTLY ABLED PERSONS, THE CHRONICALLY ILL ON PALLIATIVE CARE AND OLDER PERSONS. OUR INTERVENTIONS, THEREFORE, SHOULD GIVE THEM HOPE FOR A BETTER LIFE AND THAT OF THEIR CHILDREN AND CHILDREN'S CHILDREN.

128. CLIMATE CHANGE REMAINS AN OBSTACLE TO POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY REDUCTION AND HAS THE POTENTIAL TO ERODE ZAMBIA'S STRIDES TO DIVERSIFYING THE ECONOMY AND ATTAINMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

129. IN ORDER TO MITIGATE THIS PROBLEM, SEVERAL CLIMATE-PROOFING INITIATIVES HAVE BEEN PUT IN PLACE IN OUR NATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY WITH A VIEW TO HELP INTEGRATE CLIMATE CHANGE RELATED ASPECTS IN DEVELOPMENT. MAKING OUR ECONOMY RESILIENT TO CLIMATE CHANGE VARIABILITY CALLS FOR TAKING DRASTIC AND DECISIVE MEASURES AIMED AT ARRESTING DISRUPTION OF LIVELIHOODS, PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION COUPLED WITH A NUMBER OF MEASURES THAT WILL RESULT IN INCREASED ENERGY GENERATION, BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE, AND INDEED BUILDING BACK BETTER, ARE SOME OF THE KEY STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS WE HAVE EMBARKED ON.

MR. SPEAKER,

130. OUR SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMMES SERVE THREE NOBLE PURPOSES. FIRST, THEY ARE CHANNELS FOR ACHIEVING POVERTY REDUCTION; SECOND, THEY ARE EFFECTIVE AND VISIBLE MEANS FOR REDUCING INEQUALITY; AND THIRD, THEY CONTRIBUTE TO THE ATTAINMENT OF INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT.

131. GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN INCREASING BUDGETARY ALLOCATIONS TO SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMMES. THE ALLOCATION INCREASED FROM 2.7 PERCENT OF THE NATIONAL BUDGET IN 2015 TO 4.2 PERCENT IN 2017. THIS HAS INCREASED THE SCOPE AND COVERAGE OF KEY SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMMES WHICH INCLUDE THE SOCIAL CASH TRANSFER, THE FOOD SECURITY PACK AND THE PUBLIC WELFARE ASSISTANCE SCHEME.

MR. SPEAKER,

132. I AM PLEASED TO REPORT THAT THE SOCIAL CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMME HAS BEEN SCALED UP FROM 78 DISTRICTS IN 2016 TO ALL THE DISTRICTS IN 2017. THE NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLD BENEFICIARIES HAS ALSO INCREASED FROM 242,000 TO 590,000 BENEFICIARY HOUSEHOLDS. FURTHER, THE TRANSFER AMOUNT PER BENEFICIARY HOUSEHOLD HAS INCREASED BY 28 PERCENT FROM 70 TO 90 KWACHA PER MONTH.

133. GOVERNMENT WILL IN 2018, INCREASE THE CASELOAD OF BENEFICIARY HOUSEHOLDS FROM THE CURRENT 590,000 TO 700,000 TRANSLATING INTO 4.2 MILLION INDIVIDUAL BENEFICIARIES.

MR. SPEAKER,

134. THROUGH THE SOCIAL CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMME, CHILUFYA KANAKASHI OF LUWINGU WAS ABLE TO ATTEND SCHOOL AND BUY A NEW UNIFORM. 38 YEAR-OLD SIMUTONDO WHO LIVES WITH HER SON, CHOOLWE AND HER SISTER'S SON, SICHIMWA, IN KAZUNGULA WAS ABLE, OVER TIME, TO BUILD HER OWN HOUSE, PAY SCHOOL FEES AND BUY UNIFORMS FOR HER CHILD AND NEPHEW BECAUSE OF THE SOCIAL CASH TRANSFER.

135. AN 83 YEAR-OLD GRANDMOTHER OF KALOMO DISTRICT, LOOKING AFTER TWO TEENAGE GRANDCHILDREN, HAS ALSO GREATLY BENEFITED FROM THE SOCIAL CASH TRANSFER. WITH THIS MONEY, SHE WAS ABLE TO JOIN A VILLAGE SAVINGS GROUP WHERE SHE HAS BEEN SAVING SOME OF HER CASH AND WAS LATER ABLE TO PAY FOR A FERTILIZER PACK, PAY PEOPLE TO PLOUGH HER FIELD

AND HARVESTED ENOUGH MAIZE FOR BOTH HOME CONSUMPTION AND SALE. SHE IS NOW ABLE TO AFFORD MOST OF THE THINGS SHE PREVIOUSLY FAILED TO BUY SUCH AS COOKING OIL, SUGAR AND SOAP AS WELL AS MEETING SOME SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS FOR HER GRANDCHILDREN. THIS IS A CLEAR DEMONSTRATION OF OUR PRO-POOR POLICIES AT WORK.

MR. SPEAKER,

136. GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO CONTINUED TO SUPPORT INCAPACITATED HOUSEHOLDS THROUGH THE PUBLIC WELFARE ASSISTANCE SCHEME. THE SCHEME IS ENABLING POOR AND VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS TO ACCESS THE MUCH NEEDED HEALTH AND EDUCATION SERVICES. THIS IS EFFECTIVELY BREAKING THE CYCLE OF INTER-GENERATIONAL POVERTY AND GUARANTEEING INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT.

137. TO ENHANCE FOOD SECURITY AT HOUSEHOLD LEVEL AS WELL AS ACCELERATE POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY REDUCTION, GOVERNMENT IS IMPLEMENTING THE FOOD SECURITY PACK PROGRAMME. THIS PROGRAMME MANAGED TO REACH 35,000 VULNERABLE BUT VIABLE HOUSEHOLDS IN THE 2016/2017 FARMING SEASON AS COMPARED TO 32,300 IN THE PREVIOUS SEASON.

138. THE PROGRAMME ALSO MANAGED TO SUCCESSFULLY WEAN OFF 50% OF BENEFICIARIES FROM THE 2015/2016 FARMING SEASON UPON ATTAINING THE THRESHOLD OF BECOMING FOOD SECURE. BASHIKULU CHIPILI OF KAPUTA DISTRICT USED THE FOOD SECURITY

PACK ON 1.5 HECTARES OF LAND TO GROW ASSORTED CROPS, KEEP GOATS AND LOOK AFTER TWO ORPHANED CHILDREN.

139. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT 45,000 HOUSEHOLDS ACROSS THE COUNTRY WILL BENEFIT FROM THIS EFFECTIVE AND ECONOMICALLY LIBERATING PROGRAMME IN 2018.

MR. SPEAKER,

140. IT IS OUR COLLECTIVE RESOLVE TO REDUCE POVERTY BY 20% BY THE END OF THE SEVENTH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN PERIOD.

141. WE ARE COMMITTED TO ESTABLISHING A SUSTAINABLE PENSION SYSTEM THAT WILL HELP TO MOTIVATE WORKERS AND GIVE A DECENT LIFE TO PENSIONERS. THE NEW SYSTEM WILL BE EXTENDED TO STATE OFFICE BEARERS AND CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICE HOLDERS TO REDUCE DESTITUTION IN RETIREMENT. GOVERNMENT WILL EXPEDITE FINALISATION OF THE SOCIAL PROTECTION BILL AND ENSURE THAT IT IS TABLED BEFORE THIS HOUSE DURING THIS SESSION.

REDUCING DEVELOPMENTAL INEQUALITIES

MR. SPEAKER,

142. INEQUALITY ANYWHERE IS A THREAT TO LONG TERM SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND UNITY. ALTHOUGH THE COUNTRY HAS IN THE PAST DECADE EXPERIENCED IMPRESSIVE

ECONOMIC GROWTH AVERAGING 6.9 PERCENT, DEVELOPMENTAL INEQUALITIES HAVE NOT REDUCED. THE GAP BETWEEN THE RICH AND THE POOR REMAINS WIDE.

143. HIGH LEVEL OF INEQUALITY HAS A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE WHICH MY ADMINISTRATION HAS IN THE SEVENTH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN RESOLVED TO TACKLE DECISIVELY. FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT WHICH TEND TO GENERATE POSITIVE SPILL OVERS SUCH AS TECHNOLOGICAL TRANSFERS, EMPLOYMENT CREATION, SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES HAS BEEN CONCENTRATED IN THE MINING SECTOR.

144. SINCE 2000 FIVE MINING FIRMS HAVE ACCOUNTED FOR THE BULK OF FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT INFLOWS INTO THE COUNTRY. MANUFACTURING AND AGRICULTURE SECTORS WHICH CREATE AND SUSTAIN PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT HAVE NOT YET RECEIVED SUFFICIENT INVESTMENTS TO TRIGGER THE REQUIRED GROWTH AND EMPLOYMENT GENERATION ESPECIALLY IN RURAL AREAS.

145. MY ADMINISTRATION IS POISED TO STIMULATE TARGETED INDUSTRIALISATION AND FIGHT OVER-DEPENDENCE IN COPPER MINING WHICH HAS LOW SPREAD EFFECTS IN TERMS OF WAGE EARNINGS. TO REDUCE HIGHER INCOME INEQUALITIES, MY GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE MEASURES TO ACCELERATE INVESTMENT IN VENTURES SUCH AS FORESTRY, TEA, COTTON, COFFEE, AND AQUACULTURE PRODUCTION INCLUDING THEIR VALUE CHAINS. THESE ARE SECTORS WHICH CAN ABSORB HUGE UNEMPLOYED

POPULATION FROM THE UNSKILLED TO THOSE WITH HIGH LEVEL OF SKILLS.

146. MY ADMINISTRATION IS ALSO AWARE THAT POCKETS OF INEQUALITY EXIST EVEN WITHIN URBAN AREAS. THESE TRENDS HAVE BEEN ANALYSED WITH A VIEW TO UNDERSTAND THE FACTORS AT PLAY IN DIFFERENT REGIONS AND DISTRICTS IN ORDER TO PROVIDE EVIDENCE BASED AND TARGET SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS.

MR. SPEAKER,

147. OUR RESOLVE TO INCREASE RURAL AREAS' ACCESS TO SOCIAL SERVICES AND REDUCE INFRASTRUCTURE DEFICITS REMAIN UNWAVERING. IT IS UNACCEPTABLE TO CONTINUE WITH TRENDS WHERE 42% OF MATERNAL DELIVERIES OCCUR AT HOME IN RURAL AREAS COMPARED TO 11% IN URBAN AREAS. NINETY-FOUR% OF THE URBAN POPULATION IS LITERATE COMPARED TO 74% OF THOSE IN RURAL AREAS.

148. THERE IS NO JUSTIFICATION TO HAVE 51% OF RURAL HOUSEHOLDS ACCESSING CLEAN AND SAFE WATER COMPARED TO 89% OF HOUSEHOLDS IN URBAN AREAS. WE CANNOT CONTINUE TO ALLOW A SITUATION WHERE IN THE SAME COUNTRY ONLY 4.4% OF THE RURAL HOUSEHOLDS ARE CONNECTED TO ELECTRICITY COMPARED TO 67.3 % OF HOUSEHOLDS IN URBAN AREAS.

149. WE ARE ALSO COGNISANT OF HUGE DISPARITIES THAT EXIST BETWEEN PLANNED AND UNPLANNED SETTLEMENTS WITHIN URBAN AREAS IN TERMS OF ACCESSING SOCIAL SERVICES.TOGETHER WE

CAN, TOGETHER WE SHOULD AND TOGETHER WE WILL BRING THIS TO AN END

MR. SPEAKER,

150. TO ADDRESS DEVELOPMENTAL INEQUALITIES, GOVERNMENT WILL PROMOTE INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROVIDE MARKET LINKAGES BETWEEN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS. WE WILL ALSO ENHANCE INCOME REDISTRIBUTION MEASURES THROUGH A VARIETY OF SOCIAL PROTECTION INTERVENTIONS AND STRENGTHENING GENDER AFFIRMATIVE ACTION.

151. FURTHER, GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO PRIORITISE URBAN AND RURAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND UPGRADE INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS IN CITIES AND PERI-URBAN AREAS.

MR. SPEAKER,

152. GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO UNDERTAKE REHABILITATION AND MAINTENANCE OF DISTRICT AND FEEDER ROADS WHICH PROVIDE ACCESS TO MARKETS FOR RURAL FARMERS. THIS IS AIMED AT ENHANCING RURAL CONNECTIVITY AND IMPROVING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION. THE TARGET IS TO REHABILITATE APPROXIMATELY 4,000 KILOMETRES OF THE FEEDER ROAD NETWORK IN ALL THE PROVINCES, COMMENCING IN 2018.

153. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MULTI FACILITY ECONOMIC ZONES WILL SEE STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION OF OUR ECONOMY WITH A VIEW TO INCORPORATE AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY INTO THE SUPPLY CHAINS. THIS WILL IN THE MEDIUM TERM BE INTEGRATED

WITH IMPROVEMENTS OF TRADE ROUTES AND BORDER ADMINISTRATION, ACCESS TO DEPENDABLE AND SUSTAINABLE ELECTRICITY IN BOTH THE RURAL AND URBAN PRODUCTIVE SECTORS, DEVELOPMENT OF ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS BUTTRESSED BY THE DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLED LABOUR AND SUBSTANTIALLY EMPLOY MORE PEOPLE IN GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT.

MR. SPEAKER,

154. THE STRATEGIES TOWARDS REDUCING DEVELOPMENT INEQUALITIES ARE AT THE CORE OF OUR VALUES AS A PARTY. WE WERE FOUNDED ON THAT BASIS. WE WILL REMAIN RESOLUTE TO THIS CAUSE. WE WILL SOLDIER ON TO SEE IMPROVEMENTS OF THE WELL-BEING OF THE POPULATION. WE WILL EUSURE WE SEE A BETTER ZAMBIA FOR ALL, REGARDLESS OF ONE’S SOCIAL STANDING OR WHERE THEY LIVE. LUSAKA OR MILENGE, NDOLA OR LUNGA, KABULONGA OR KALIKILIKI, EVERYONE IS INCLUDED.

ENHANCING HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

MR. SPEAKER,

155. HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT IS CRITICAL FOR A SMART ZAMBIA AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT. ACCORDINGLY, GOVERNMENT HAS CONTINUED TO PRIORITISE INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FOR A HEALTHY, SKILLED, PRODUCTIVE AND INNOVATIVE CITIZENRY.

MR. SPEAKER,

156. A HEALTHY CITIZENRY IS VITAL TO ECONOMIC PRODUCTIVITY. TO ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES, GOVERNMENT HAS CONTINUED TO CONSTRUCT, EXPAND AND MODERNISE HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE. CURRENTLY, 35 DISTRICT HOSPITALS ARE AT VARIOUS LEVELS OF CONSTRUCTION, OUT OF WHICH 12 ARE OPERATIONAL.

157. FURTHER, NINE PROVINCIAL HOSPITALS HAVE BEEN EXPANDED AND UPGRADED TO TERTIARY LEVEL HOSPITALS. MODERNISATION IS ON-GOING AT VARIOUS TERTIARY LEVEL HOSPITALS SUCH AS UNIVERSITY TEACHING HOSPITALS IN LUSAKA, LIVINGSTONE CENTRAL HOSPITAL AND NDOLA TEACHING HOSPITAL.

158. UNDER MY ADMINISTRATION WE HAVE RECORDED HUGE SUCCESS IN CHILD IMMUNISATION COVERAGE WHICH IS OVER 91 %. OUR TB TREATMENT RATE HAS EQUALLY INCREASED WHILE UNDER FIVE MORTALITY AND MARTENAL MORTALITY RATES HAVE EQUALLY REDUCED.

159. WHILE HIV AND AIDS STILL REMAIN A CHALLENGE IN THE COUNTRY, WE HAVE MADE SIGNIFICANT STRIDES IN COMBATING THE PANDEMIC. THIS IS EVIDENCED IN THE REDUCTION OF THE HIV PREVALENCE IN THE ADULT POPULATION FROM 13.3 PERCENT IN 2014 TO 11.6 PERCENT IN 2016. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT GOVERNMENT LAUNCHED THE **“TEST AND TREAT TOWARDS**

ENDING HIV AND AIDS” POLICY. HIV TESTING AND TREATMENT IN ZAMBIA MUST BE UNDERTAKEN ON A ROUTINE BASIS.

MR. SPEAKER,

160. TO IMPROVE HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY, GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE WITH THE RECRUITMENT OF FRONT LINE HEALTH STAFF. SINCE MY ADDRESS TO THIS AUGUST HOUSE LAST YEAR, A TOTAL OF 7,400 HEALTH WORKERS HAVE BEEN RECRUITED. THIS DEMONSTRATES OUR COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING THE HEALTH WORKER/PATIENT RATIO.

MR. SPEAKER,

161. THE PROMOTION OF PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT IN THE MANUFACTURING OF ESSENTIAL DRUGS IS EQUALLY KEY ON GOVERNMENTS AGENDA. I AM GLAD TO REPORT THAT FOUR MAJOR PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING COMPANIES ARE LOCALLY MANUFACTURING SOME OF THE ESSENTIAL MEDICINES WE USE IN THE COUNTRY. THESE ARE N.R.B PHARMA, PHARMANOVA, BAXY PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING COMPANY AND IDC LIMITED.

MR. SPEAKER,

162. TO PROMOTE CHILD HEALTH, GOVERNMENT HAS MADE PROGRESS IN THE ELIMINATION OF MOTHER-TO-CHILD TRANSMISSION OF HIV. TRANSMISSION RATES HAVE REDUCED FROM 3.7 % IN 2014 TO 2.5 % IN 2016. IN ADDITION, PREVALENCE OF ACUTE MALNUTRITION IN CHILDREN HAS REDUCED FROM 2.2 % IN 2014 TO 1.6% IN 2016.

163. GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO INCREASE CHILD IMMUNISATION AGAINST VACCINE PREVENTABLE DISEASES TO MAINTAIN A SUSTAINED FULLY IMMUNISED COVERAGE.

164. WE FURTHER REMAIN COMMITTED TO REDUCING MALARIA-RELATED DEATHS AND ACHIEVING A MALARIA FREE ZAMBIA BY 2020. TO THIS END, WE ARE DISTRIBUTING 10 MILLION LONG-LASTING INSECTICIDE-TREATED MOSQUITO NETS AND SPRAYING A MINIMUM OF 85 PERCENT OF ELIGIBLE STRUCTURES AGAINST MOSQUITOES.

MR. SPEAKER,

165. GOVERNMENT IS DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE POLICY THAT WILL ADDRESS ALCOHOL AND OTHER SUBSTANCE ABUSE TO ENSURE WHOLESOME DEVELOPMENT OF OUR PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY THE YOUTH. IN ADDITION, REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES HAVE COMMENCED AT CHAINAMA HILLS HOSPITAL IN LUSAKA AND WILL BE ROLLED OUT TO ALL PROVINCES. SPECIAL EMPHASIS IS BEING PLACED ON REHABILITATION AND RE-INTEGRATION, INTO SOCIETY, OF THOSE AFFLICTED WITH VARIOUS SUBSTANCE ADDICTIONS, INCLUDING ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO.

166. FATALITIES ARISING FROM NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES SUCH AS DIABETES, HYPERTENSION, OBESITY AND TRAUMA ARISING FROM ROAD-TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS ARE RISING IN ZAMBIA. IN AN EFFORT TO PROMOTE HEALTHY LIVING AND WELLNESS, IN MAY THIS YEAR, I INITIATED THE ANNUAL NATIONAL HEALTH WEEK

THAT IS AIMED AT ENTRENCHING A NATIONAL CULTURE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT, HEALTHY DIET, REGULAR MEDICAL CHECK-UPS AND REDUCTION IN SUBSTANCE ABUSE, PARTICULARLY ALCOHOL. I URGE OUR CITIZENRY TO TAKE UP THIS HEALTH CULTURE AT PERSONAL, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEVEL.

MR. SPEAKER,

167. TO ENSURE SUSTAINED LOCAL FINANCING FOR UNIVERSAL HEALTH ACCESS, THE MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR HEALTH WILL TABLE THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE BILL DURING THIS SESSION.

MR. SPEAKER,

168. ANOTHER CRITICAL COMPONENT OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IS EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE CURRENT AND SUBSEQUENT GENERATION OF ZAMBIANS ARE ADEQUATELY EQUIPPED WITH REQUISITE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS FOUNDED ON OUR NATIONAL VALUES AND PRINCIPLES.

MR. SPEAKER,

169. GOVERNMENT RECOGNISES THE IMPORTANCE OF UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT. THEREFORE, GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE WITH RECRUITMENT OF QUALIFIED TEACHERS. LAST YEAR, 84 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TEACHERS, 2,298 PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS AND 3,410 SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS WERE RECRUITED. GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO CONTINUE WITH CONSTRUCTION OF NEW SCHOOLS,

PARTICULARLY AT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL. DURING THE SAME YEAR, 62 NEW SECONDARY SCHOOLS WERE COMPLETED AND ARE NOW OPERATIONAL.

170. TO SUPPORT THE VULNERABLE FEMALE LEARNERS, ESPECIALLY IN RURAL AREAS, GOVERNMENT IS IMPLEMENTING A BURSARY SCHEME RUNNING UNDER THE TITLE “**KEEPING GIRLS IN SCHOOL**” PROJECT. THROUGH THIS PROJECT, OVER 14,000 GIRLS FROM EXTREMELY POOR HOUSEHOLDS ARE BEING SUPPORTED TO ACCESS SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION.

MR. SPEAKER,

171. UNDER UNIVERSITY EDUCATION, GOVERNMENT HAS CONTINUED TO MAKE HUGE INVESTMENTS IN ORDER TO ENHANCE ACCESS AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION. TO THIS EFFECT, WE ARE CONSTRUCTING ADDITIONAL UNIVERSITIES AND UPGRADING SOME EXISTING COLLEGES TO UNIVERSITIES. CONSTRUCTION OF KAPASA MAKASA UNIVERSITY AND THE UPGRADING OF CHALIMBANA, MUKUBA AND KWAME NKRUMAH COLLEGES INTO UNIVERSITIES HAS SINCE BEEN COMPLETED AND THE INSTITUTIONS ARE OPERATIONAL. WORKS ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF KING LEWANIKA AND FTJ UNIVERSITIES ARE EXPECTED TO COMMENCE SOON.

172. THESE INTERVENTIONS WILL INCREASE ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY EDUCATION FROM THE CURRENT 44,000 LEARNERS TO APPROXIMATELY 60,000 LEARNERS BY 2021. ADDITIONAL COLLEGES

WILL ALSO BE CONSTRUCTED TO PROVIDE SPECIALISED TRAINING IN THE FIELDS OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND MATHEMATICS.

MR. SPEAKER,

173. IN A BID TO TRANSFORM THE TECHNICAL EDUCATION, VOCATIONAL AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING SECTOR AND INCREASE ACCESS TO SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, GOVERNMENT INTRODUCED THE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT LEVY ACT NO. 46 OF 2016. THE ACT PROVIDES FOR COLLECTION OF A LEVY FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR INTO A FUND, WHICH IS PROVIDING FINANCING FOR INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT, EQUIPMENT UPGRADING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT.

174. TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND RELEVANCE OF TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING, CONTINUOUS REVIEW OF CURRICULA WILL BE UNDERTAKEN TO ALIGN IT TO THE NEEDS OF INDUSTRY AND OUR DIVERSIFICATION AGENDA.

175. GOVERNMENT WILL FURTHER INCREASE ACCESS TO SKILLS TRAINING THROUGH THE COMPLETION OF ON-GOING CONSTRUCTION WORKS AT TRADES TRAINING INSTITUTES AND YOUTH RESOURCE CENTRES ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

CREATING A CONDUCTIVE GOVERNANCE ENVIRONMENT FOR A DIVERSIFIED AND INCLUSIVE ECONOMY

MR. SPEAKER,

176. GOOD GOVERNANCE CANNOT BE OVER-EMPHASIZED. GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO UPHOLD AND PROMULGATE

TENETS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE. THIS IS A PRE-REQUISITE TO OUR POLITICAL STABILITY, HUMAN SECURITY, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

MR. SPEAKER,

177. GOVERNMENT REMAINS COMMITTED TO THE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS IN THE GOVERNANCE OF THE COUNTRY. IN THIS REGARD, GOVERNMENT HAS CREATED A SMART PLATFORM FOR CONSULTATION THROUGH CLUSTER ADVISORY GROUPS AT NATIONAL AND SUB-NATIONAL LEVELS. WE WILL, THEREFORE, EXPEDITE THE FINALISATION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK TO BUTTRESS THE OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CLUSTER ADVISORY GROUPS.

178. THE SECTOR ADVISORY GROUPS WHICH WE ARE REPLACING WITH CLUSTER ADVISORY GROUPS DID NOT LIVE UP TO OUR EXPECTATIONS. THIS IS BECAUSE THEY WERE CONFIGURED ALONG MINISTERIAL THEMATIC LINES AND INHIBITED THE DEVELOPMENT OF CROSS SECTOR SYNERGIES. THIS RESULTED IN PERVASIVE SPREADING OF RESOURCES THINLY AMONG SECTORS WITH WEAK FOCUS ON ATTAINMENT OF RESULTS WHICH OFTEN REQUIRE SECTORS TO MUTUALLY REINFORCE EACH OTHER THROUGH STRONGER LIINKAGES.

179. WITH MULTIPLE ADVISORY BODIES UNDER SECTOR ADVISORY GROUPS WE EXPERIENCED HIGHER TRANSACTION COSTS IN PLANNING, BUDGETING AND SERVICE DELIVERY. UNDER THE GOVERNANCE PILLAR OF THE SEVENTH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PLAN MEASURES HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO ARREST THIS TREND WHICH IS INIMICAL TO DEVELOPMENT THROUGH A COORDINATED APPROACH.

180. I AM GLAD TO REPORT THAT THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING THIS YEAR HELD BUDGET POLICY HEARING MEETINGS IN CLUSTERS AND THE RESULTS WILL BE SEEN IN THE PLANNING AND BUDGETING PROCESS FROM NEXT YEAR ONWARDS.

MR. SPEAKER,

181. IT IS ALSO GRATIFYING TO NOTE THAT MORE THAN EVER BEFORE, BOTH THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND THE TECHNOCRATS ARE RESOLVED WITH GREAT ZEAL AND ENTHUSIASM TO EMBARK ON A NEW DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM OF INTEGRATION. IF THERE ARE ANY SCEPTICS, PLEASE BE AWARE THAT THE TRAIN HAS TAKEN OFF, YOU EITHER HAVE TO JUMP IN OR REMAIN WATCHING. WE CANNOT HOPE TO DEVELOP USING THE SAME MODEL WHICH HAS FAILED US IN THE PAST.

182. TO AUGMENT THIS AND IMPROVE ON OUR QUEST TO JOINTLY ACCOUNT FOR DEVELOPMENT RESULTS, THE QUARTERLY REPORTS WHICH I HOLD WITH MINISTERS WILL BE HELD IN CLUSTERS SO THAT MINISTRIES DEMONSTRATE TO MY OFFICE AND INDEED THE GENERAL PUBLIC ON HOW THEY ARE FORGING LINKS AND WORKING TOGETHER AND DELIVER ON COMMON DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES.

183. AT NATIONAL LEVEL THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE INCLUDING THEIR CLUSTER ADVISORY

GROUPS HAVE STARTED MEETING. THE PROVINCIAL COORDINATING COMMITTEES WHICH HAVE BEEN ACTIVE HAVE ALSO BEEN REALIGNED TO CONFORM THEIR SUB-COMMITTEES TO THE PLAN'S DEVELOPMENT PILLARS. I AM GLAD TO NOTE THAT THE DESIRE TO FOCUS ON RESULTS IS UNPRECEDENTED.

MR. SPEAKER

LET ME TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO URGE CHAIRPERSONS OF THE ADVISORY BODIES, TO ENSURE THAT THESE INSTITUTIONS HAVE BROAD PARTICIPATION FROM BOTH STATE AND NON-STATE ACTORS AND DISCUSSIONS CONTINUE TO FOCUS ON ACCOUNTING FOR DEVELOPMENT RESULTS WHICH IMPACT POSITIVELY ON THE MAJORITY OF ZAMBIANS.

MR. SPEAKER,

184. IN MY ADDRESS TO THIS AUGUST HOUSE LAST YEAR, I REITERATED GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO IMPLEMENTING THE DECENT WORK AGENDA AND ADDRESSING LABOUR MARKET DISTORTIONS. TO THIS END, GOVERNMENT IS FINALISING THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH POLICY AND THE SOCIAL PROTECTION BILL TO PROVIDE A CONDUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR WORKERS TO FULLY EXPLOIT THEIR POTENTIAL IN WORK PLACES WITHOUT WORRYING ABOUT OCCUPATIONAL ACCIDENTS. THE SOCIAL PROTECTION BILL IS AIMED AT ENHANCING COORDINATION AMONG PLAYERS IN SOCIAL PROTECTION WITH A VIEW TO LIFT MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE WHO ARE TRAPPED IN THE VICIOUS

POVERTY CYCLE SO THAT THEY TOO CAN LEAD DECENT LIVELIHOODS WITH DIGNITY.

185. TO ENHANCE AND PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS, WHILE SAFEGUARDING INVESTMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY OF ENTERPRISES, GOVERNMENT HAS EMBARKED ON A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF LABOUR LAWS. THESE INCLUDE THE EMPLOYMENT ACT CAP 268 AND THE INDUSTRIAL AND LABOUR RELATIONS ACT CAP 269 OF THE LAWS OF ZAMBIA. THE BILLS WILL BE PRESENTED TO THIS AUGUST HOUSE FOR CONSIDERATION DURING THIS SESSION.

MR. SPEAKER,

186. ACCELERATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL DECENTRALISATION POLICY REMAINS CARDINAL. THE DEVOLUTION OF FUNCTIONS FROM CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES, WITH MATCHING RESOURCES, REMAINS A CORNERSTONE OF THE POLICY. I WISH TO INFORM THE HOUSE THAT THE BILLS TO AMEND THE PUBLIC FINANCE ACT NO. 15 OF 2004 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT CAP 281 OF THE LAWS OF ZAMBIA WILL BE TABLED BEFORE THE HOUSE DURING THIS SESSION.

MR. SPEAKER,

187. IN 2015, I LAUNCHED THE SMART ZAMBIA AGENDA, WHICH ENTAILED EMBRACING THE USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES AND INNOVATION IN THE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC SERVICES. IN THIS REGARD, GOVERNMENT HAS ESTABLISHED THE SMART ZAMBIA INSTITUTE TO SPEARHEAD THE TRANSFORMATION OF GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS INTO A

SMART GOVERNMENT. A SMART GOVERNMENT DOING THINGS BETTER, BUILDING SMART CITIES, ENSURING SMART AND EASY ACCESSIBILITY ON THE COMMUNICATIONS PLATFORM.

188. TO DATE, A TOTAL OF 19 E-GOVERNMENT SYSTEMS HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED, DEPLOYED AND ARE FUNCTIONAL. THESE INCLUDE THE ELECTRONIC TAX SYSTEM, ELECTRONIC PATENTS AND BUSINESS REGISTRATION AND ELECTRONIC ENTRY VISA SYSTEM. FROM JANUARY 2016 TO JUNE 2017, MORE THAN 4,000 BUSINESSES HAVE ACCESSED E-BUSINESS RELATED SERVICES ONLINE.

189. GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO INTRODUCE ELECTRONIC PAYMENT SYSTEMS FOR PUBLIC SERVICES. THIS IS WITH A VIEW TO INCREASING COLLECTION OF NON-TAX REVENUE AND MINIMISING LEAKAGES.

MR. SPEAKER,

190. FURTHER, GOVERNMENT IS IN THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTING AN ELECTRONIC CABINET SYSTEM ACROSS ALL GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES. CABINET BUSINESS WILL SOON BE CONDUCTED UNDER A PAPERLESS ENVIRONMENT. THIS WILL IMPROVE ON TIME AND COST EFFICIENCY AS WELL AS CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS ATTAINING A GREEN ECONOMY.

191. GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO IMPLEMENT THE E-PAMODZI, WHICH IS AN INTEGRATED ELECTRONIC PLATFORM. THE E-PAMODZI WILL ENABLE OUR PEOPLE TO ACCESS GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND

INFORMATION ON-LINE FROM ANY LOCATION, AT ANY TIME WITH EASE. THIS WILL CONTRIBUTE TO REDUCING THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS AND ELIMINATING CORRUPTION BY REDUCING HUMAN CONTACT.

MR. SPEAKER,

192. GOVERNMENT HAS MADE COMMENDABLE STRIDES TOWARDS PROMOTING FURTHER LIBERALISATION OF THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTOR THROUGH THE REVISED LEGAL AND LICENSING FRAMEWORK. THE NEW LICENSING FRAMEWORK IN THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTOR WILL ENHANCE COMPETITION, INNOVATION, ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT IN NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND ULTIMATELY LEAD TO IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES TO BE ACCESSED BY OUR PEOPLE.

193. LET ME COMMEND THE PRIVATE SECTOR PLAYERS THAT HAVE EMBRACED ELECTRONIC COMMERCE UNDER THIS ENABLING LICENCING REGIME. TO THOSE THAT ARE YET TO COME ON BOARD, I URGE YOU TO JOIN US SO THAT TOGETHER, WE CAN USHER ZAMBIA INTO AN ERA OF COST AND TIME EFFICIENCY AS WELL AS COMPETITIVENESS.

MR. SPEAKER,

194. LAND CAN BE A SERIOUS BINDING CONSTRAINT TO DEVELOPMENT IF IT IS NOT PROPERLY ADMINISTERED. I AM CONCERNED THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAND POLICY AND REVIEW OF LEGISLATION HAS TAKEN LONG TO CONCLUDE. TO RESTORE SANITY AND PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN LAND

ADMINISTRATION AS WELL AS BENEFIT MORE ZAMBIANS. I AM DIRECTING THE DEVELOPMENTAL CLUSTER AND RELEVANT MINISTRIES AND INSTITUTIONS TO EXPEDITE FINALISATION OF THE NATIONAL LAND POLICY AND AMENDMENT OF THE LANDS ACT, CHAPTER 184 OF THE LAWS OF ZAMBIA.

MR. SPEAKER,

195. TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ARE IMPORTANT GOVERNANCE TENETS THAT ARE CRITICAL TO NATIONAL UNITY AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT. TO THIS END, GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE STRENGTHENING OVERSIGHT INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS THE ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION, OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC PROTECTOR AND THE NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE.

196. IN OUR CONTINUED FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION, GOVERNMENT IS REVIEWING THE NATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION POLICY AND DEVELOPING REGULATIONS TO GIVE EFFECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE ACT NO. 4 OF 2010. THE REGULATIONS WILL PROVIDE GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES TO ENHANCE PROTECTION OF WHISTLE-BLOWERS, AMONG OTHERS.

MR. SPEAKER,

197. THE HOUSE MAY RECALL THAT IN 2014, GOVERNMENT APPROVED THE NATIONAL PLANNING AND BUDGETING POLICY TO GUIDE THE PREPARATION OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND ANNUAL BUDGETS. TO GIVE EFFECT TO THE POLICY AND ENHANCE THE INTEGRATION OF NATIONAL PLANNING AND THE BUDGET,

GOVERNMENT WILL TABLE THE NATIONAL PLANNING AND BUDGETING BILL BEFORE THE HOUSE DURING THIS SESSION.

MR. SPEAKER,

198. GOVERNMENT REMAINS COMMITTED TO IMPROVING PUBLIC PROCUREMENT SYSTEMS SO AS TO GET VALUE FOR MONEY. CONSEQUENTIALLY, PROCUREMENT REFORMS HAVE REACHED AN ADVANCED STAGE. GOVERNMENT WILL TABLE A BILL TO AMEND THE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT ACT NO. 12 OF 2008. THE BILL, ONCE ENACTED, WILL INCREASE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT EFFICIENCY, TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY.

MR. SPEAKER,

199. GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO ADDRESSING INCONSISTENCIES IDENTIFIED BY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE AMENDED CONSTITUTION REMAINS UNWAVERING. TO THIS EFFECT, WE ARE WORKING OUT MODALITIES ON HOW TO MOVE FORWARD IN ADDRESSING THOSE INCONSISTENCIES.

MR. SPEAKER,

200. WE REMAIN RESOLVED TO AMENDING THE PUBLIC ORDER ACT CAP 113 OF THE LAWS OF ZAMBIA. IT IS, HOWEVER, SAD TO NOTE THAT DESPITE APPEALS BY GOVERNMENT FOR SUBMISSIONS, POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE NOT BEEN FORTHCOMING. I WISH TO REITERATE GOVERNMENT'S CALL FOR POLITICAL PARTIES AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS TO MAKE THEIR SUBMISSIONS.

201. WE HAVE ALSO CONTINUED TO DEEPEN THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN THE COUNTRY BY GRANTING MORE RADIO AND TELEVISION LICENCES. TO DATE, A TOTAL OF 111 RADIO STATIONS ARE OPERATIONAL ACROSS THE COUNTRY, WHILE 43 TELEVISION STATIONS ARE ALSO FREELY OPERATING IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE COUNTRY.

MR. SPEAKER,

202. ON CONSTITUTIONALISM, I AM AWARE THAT THERE ARE MANY LACUNAS THAT ARE IN THE CONSTITUTION WHICH WE NEED TO RESOLVE WITH UTMOST OBJECTIVITY. THERE ARE MANY LESSONS WHICH REQUIRE DEEP REFLECTIONS AS WE EMBARK ON THE JOURNEY TO IMPROVE ON THE CONSTITUTION STARTING FROM WHAT PREVAILED BEFORE AND DURING THE 2016 GENERAL ELECTIONS.

203. I AM THEREFORE DIRECTING THE GOOD GOVERNANCE DEVELOPMENTAL CLUSTER AND RELEVANT MINISTRIES AND INSTITUTIONS, TO ENSURE THAT ALL PROVISIONS THAT HINDER ENHANCEMENT OF GOOD GOVERNANCE AND OTHER PROVISIONS ARE ADDRESSED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY. MAY I CALL UPON ALL THREE ARMS OF GOVERNMENT TO WORK TOGETHER PUTTING IN PLACE A CONSTITUTION THAT WILL WORK FOR ALL OF US IN PROVIDING A SUPPORTIVE GOVERNANCE ENVIRONMENT.

CONCLUSION

MR. SPEAKER,

204. I CAN CONFIDENTLY SAY THAT WE ARE ON COURSE IN OUR SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONAL JOURNEY. A JOURNEY AIMED AT ACHIEVING PROSPERITY FOR ALL. A JOURNEY AIMED AT ENHANCING NATIONAL UNITY, A JOURNEY ANCHORED ON OUR NATIONAL MOTTO “ONE ZAMBIA, ONE NATION.” IT, THEREFORE, NOW REMAINS FOR US TO CONTINUE BUILDING UPON OUR SUCCESSES AS A UNITED ZAMBIA.

205. WE ONLY HAVE THIS ONE ZAMBIA AND WE CANNOT TAKE FOR GRANTED THE PEACE THAT WE HAVE ENJOYED SINCE INDEPENDENCE. WE SHOULD LEARN FROM OTHER COUNTRIES ON THE CONTINENT THAT HAVE EXPERIENCED CIVIL STRIFE OUT OF GREED AND SELFISH INTERESTS. WE SHOULD BE THANKFUL TO GOD AND ENSURE THAT WE GUARD OUR PEACE AND NATIONAL UNITY JEALOUSLY.

MR. SPEAKER,

206. DEVELOPMENT IS NOT AN ACCIDENT, BUT A RESULT OF A SERIES OF CONSCIOUS DECISIONS. FOR THIS REASON, WE HAVE SET OURSELVES A TRANSFORMATIONAL AGENDA TO ATTAIN A SMART ZAMBIA. A ZAMBIA WHERE EVERY CITIZEN EMBRACES A TRANSFORMATIONAL CULTURE. A ZAMBIA THAT IS PROMOTING AND MAINTAINING A CLEAN, HEALTHY AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT. A ZAMBIA WHOSE CITIZENS ARE PATRIOTIC AND PUT THE NATION FIRST BEFORE SELF.

MR. SPEAKER,

207. THE PATH WE HAVE TAKEN IN ACCELERATING DEVELOPMENT, THROUGH THE MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH IN OUR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN, IS EXPECTED TO ACHIEVE MORE FOR LESS. WITH THIS APPROACH, I AM CONFIDENT THAT THERE WILL BE REDUCTION IN DEVELOPMENTAL INEQUALITIES, POVERTY LEVELS AND VULNERABILITY.

MR. SPEAKER,

208. I URGE ALL ZAMBIANS WHO USE THE VARIOUS MEDIA PLATFORMS, TO DO SO RESPONSIBLY, TO COMMUNICATE AND PROMOTE A POSITIVE IMAGE OF OUR COUNTRY, LOCALLY AND ABROAD. THIS WILL CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS ENHANCING UNITY, PEACE, INVESTMENT AND TOURISM.

209. LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS CITIZENS OF THIS GREAT COUNTRY. LET US USE OUR COLLECTIVE WISDOM TO BUILD A BETTER ZAMBIA FOR OUR CHILDREN AND CHILDRENS CHILDREN. NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH GOD ON OUR SIDE.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL. GOD BLESS OUR PEOPLE AND MAY GOD INDEED BLESS MOTHER ZAMBIA.

I THANK YOU.