

**SPEECH**

**BY**

**MR. HAKAINDE HICHILEMA**  
**THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA**

**DURING**

**THE OFFICIAL OPENING**

**OF**

**THE FOURTH SESSION**

**OF**

**THE THIRTEENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**ON**

**FRIDAY, 13TH SEPTEMBER 2024**

## **INTRODUCTION**

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

WE ARE PLEASED TO JOIN YOU TODAY ON THIS IMPORTANT OCCASION, MARKING THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE THIRTEENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

THIS YEAR MARKS THE CENTENARY ANNIVERSARY OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY IN OUR COUNTRY. WE CONGRATULATE THE HOUSE ON THIS SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN ADVANCING DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT IN OUR BELOVED COUNTRY.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

WE COMMEND YOU AND THE TWO DEPUTY SPEAKERS FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP IN GUIDING THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE. WE ALSO COMMEND THE LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, HER HONOUR THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA, FOR APTLY REPRESENTING GOVERNMENT IN THIS AUGUST HOUSE.

FURTHER, OUR GRATITUDE GOES TO YOU, HONORABLE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, FOR EFFECTIVELY REPRESENTING YOUR CONSTITUENCIES.

EQUALLY, WE RECOGNISE THE CLERK AND HIS TEAM FOR ENSURING EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT OPERATIONS OF THE HOUSE DURING THE LAST SESSION.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

DURING THE LAST SESSION, THE HOUSE CONSIDERED **400** QUESTIONS, **62** COMMITTEE REPORTS, **32** BILLS AND **62** MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS. THE HOUSE ALSO ADOPTED **SIX** REPORTS ON THE RATIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL TREATIES.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

THE HOUSE WAS ALSO PRIVILEGED TO HOST TWO HEADS OF STATE, WHO DELIVERED SPECIAL ADDRESSES.

HIS EXCELLENCY MR. FILIPE JACINTO NYUSI, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE, ADDRESSED THE HOUSE ON 28TH JUNE 2024, WHILE HIS EXCELLENCY MR. EVARISTE NDAYISHIMIYE, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BURUNDI, DELIVERED HIS ADDRESS ON 2ND AUGUST 2024.

### **THEME OF THE ADDRESS**

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

THIS ADDRESS IS BEING DELIVERED AT A TIME WHEN OUR COUNTRY IS GOING THROUGH A VERY CHALLENGING PERIOD. THIS IS IN VIEW OF THE SEVERE DROUGHT WE HAVE EXPERIENCED CAUSED BY EL NIÑO WEATHER CONDITIONS. THE DROUGHT HAS HAD A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON MOST SECTORS OF OUR ECONOMY, ESPECIALLY THE AGRICULTURE, WATER, AND ENERGY SECTORS.

INEVITABLY, THIS HAS AFFECTED THE LIVELIHOODS OF OUR PEOPLE. OUR FOOD SECURITY HAS BEEN THREATENED. OUR WATER LEVELS ARE AT A RECORD LOW. OUR ELECTRICITY GENERATION IS AT ITS LOWEST, RESULTING IN LONG HOURS OF LOAD SHEDDING TO COMPLETELY NO POWER FOR DAYS FOR SOME. THIS IS REGRETTABLE, AND WE SYMPATHIZE WITH OUR FELLOW CITIZENS.

FOLLOWING OUR DECLARATION OF THE DROUGHT AS A NATIONAL DISASTER AND EMERGENCY, GOVERNMENT HAS PUT IN PLACE A DROUGHT RESPONSE PLAN. WE ARE PROVIDING HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO OUR PEOPLE. WE ARE ENHANCING COPING CAPACITIES FOR OUR COMMUNITIES. WE ARE IMPLEMENTING RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE INTERVENTIONS TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

IN LIGHT OF THESE INTERVENTIONS, WE COMMEND OUR CITIZENS FOR THEIR RESILIENCE AND PATIENCE AND THE CIVIL SOCIETY, THE CHURCH, AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY FOR THEIR SUPPORT.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

IT IS AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND THAT THE THEME FOR THIS YEAR'S ADDRESS IS **"ENHANCING NATIONAL RESILIENCE: SUSTAINING SOCIO-ECONOMIC GAINS IN THE FACE OF ADVERSE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE."**

## **MACROECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS**

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

NOTWITHSTANDING THE EFFECTS OF THE DEVASTATING DROUGHT, WE HAVE RECORDED A NUMBER OF SUCCESSES IN UNLOCKING THE GROWTH POTENTIAL OF OUR ECONOMY.

IN THE LAST THREE YEARS, OUR GOVERNMENT HAS PLACED THE ECONOMY ON A POSITIVE GROWTH TRAJECTORY. GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP) HAS POSTED POSITIVE GROWTH, AVERAGING **5.3 PERCENT** IN THE LAST 3 YEARS.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

DUE TO THE DEBILITATING EFFECTS OF THE DROUGHT, THE ECONOMIC GROWTH FORECAST FOR 2024, THIS YEAR, HAD TO BE REVISED DOWNWARDS FROM **4.7 PERCENT** TO **2.3 PERCENT**. FURTHER, WE HAD TO RE-ALIGN THE 2024 NATIONAL BUDGET TO ACCOMMODATE THE NECESSARY EXPENDITURE OF **K41.9 BILLION**. THIS WAS TO FINANCE DROUGHT RESPONSE INTERVENTIONS, RESUME SERVICING OF THE RESTRUCTURED EXTERNAL DEBT AND DISMANTLING OF THE COSTLY FUEL ARREARS. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT EVEN AFTER RESTRUCTURING, OUR COUNTRY IS STILL CARRYING A HEAVY DEBT BURDEN FROM THE PAST YEARS OF EXTRAVAGANCE.

WE APPRECIATE THE HOUSE FOR PASSING THE SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET TO MAKE THIS POSSIBLE.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

THE GLOBAL ECONOMY IN WHICH ZAMBIA IS FIRMLY INTERTWINED IS EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES THAT INCLUDE RISING INFLATION AND HIGH INTEREST RATES, LEADING TO SHORTAGE OF CAPITAL AS WELL AS DEPRECIATION OF CURRENCIES. THIS, TOGETHER WITH DOMESTIC

CHALLENGES, IS NEGATIVELY AFFECTING THE COST OF LIVING. OUR GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO WORK DILIGENTLY TO ADDRESS THE COST OF LIVING THROUGH MULTIPLE MEASURES.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

WE WILL NOW PROCEED TO HIGHLIGHT THE ACHIEVEMENTS WE HAVE MADE AND THE POLICY MEASURES THAT WE WILL PURSUE IN LINE WITH OUR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA, AS ESPOUSED IN THE EIGHTH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

OUR ADMINISTRATION CONTINUES TO IMPLEMENT KEY MACROECONOMIC REFORMS. FOLLOWING THE REACHING OF AGREEMENTS WITH THE OFFICIAL CREDITORS COMMITTEE AND EUROBOND HOLDERS, WE ARE GLAD TO INFORM THIS AUGUST HOUSE THAT OUR GOVERNMENT HAS SINCE RESUMED SERVICING OF THE EXTERNAL DEBT SINCE DEFAULTING IN 2020.

WE HAVE RESTORED OUR COUNTRY'S CREDIBILITY IN THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL SYSTEM.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND NATIONAL PLANNING WILL SOON PRESENT THE 2025 NATIONAL BUDGET TO THIS AUGUST HOUSE. THE BUDGET WILL OUTLINE SPECIFIC POLICIES TO SAFEGUARD MACROECONOMIC STABILITY, RESTORE AND MAINTAIN DEBT SUSTAINABILITY AS WELL AS ADDRESS OUR SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES. WE REQUEST THIS AUGUST HOUSE TO SUPPORT THE BUDGET ONCE IT IS TABLED IN THIS HOUSE.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

## **ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION AND JOB CREATION**

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

IN OUR LAST ADDRESS, WE ANNOUNCED MEASURES TO STIMULATE MAIZE PRODUCTION. THESE INCLUDED THE INCREASE IN THE MAIZE PURCHASING PRICE, ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AGRICULTURAL CREDIT WINDOW AND GUARANTEEING A READY MARKET FOR EARLY MAIZE PRODUCTION. OUR PEOPLE RESPONDED FAVOURABLY BY PLANTING A RECORD **2.2 MILLION**

**HECTARES** OF LAND UNDER MAIZE CULTIVATION, COMPARED TO **1.8 MILLION HECTARES** IN THE PREVIOUS SEASON.

AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE SEVERE DROUGHT EXPERIENCED IN THE 2023/24 AGRICULTURAL SEASON, ONLY **684,000 HECTARES**, WHICH IS **31 PERCENT** OF THE AREA PLANTED, WAS HARVESTED. THIS SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED MAIZE PRODUCTION TO **1.5 MILLION TONNES** FROM AN EXPECTED HARVEST OF **4.4 MILLION TONNES**. THIS LARGELY, IS THE CAUSE OF OUR CURRENT CHALLENGES ON FOOD SECURITY.

WE COMMEND OUR CITIZENS FOR THEIR REMARKABLE RESPONSE TO THE CALL TO GROW MORE MAIZE AND FOOD IN GENERAL.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

TO COVER THE MAIZE DEFICIT, WE ARE IMPORTING MAIZE FROM NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES. WE WANT TO REASSURE OUR PEOPLE THAT NO ONE WILL GO HUNGRY IN OUR COUNTRY DURING THIS CHALLENGING PERIOD.

TO FURTHER MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF THE DROUGHT, WE ARE ENCOURAGING THE CULTIVATION OF WINTER AND EARLY MAIZE BY ALL OUR FARMERS. GOVERNMENT WILL SOON CONTRACT FARMERS TO SUPPLY EARLY MAIZE TO BE DELIVERED BY APRIL 2025.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

TO PROMOTE RESILIENCE AMONG SMALLHOLDER FARMERS AMID CLIMATE CHANGE, GOVERNMENT IS PROVIDING AFFORDABLE FINANCING FOR MECHANISATION AND IRRIGATION. THE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL FINANCING FACILITY, WITH IRRIGATION, WILL ENABLE OUR FARMERS TO GROW CROPS ALL-YEAR ROUND.

IN THE 2024/25 AGRICULTURAL SEASON, THE FINANCING FACILITY WILL BE ENHANCED TO THE TUNE OF OVER **K1.2 BILLION FROM K400 MILLION IN THE 2023/2024** AGRICULTURE SEASON. THIS IS IN ORDER TO INCLUDE ADDITIONAL CROPS, LIVESTOCK AND AQUACULTURE. IT IS GRATIFYING TO NOTE THAT THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING BANKS HAS INCREASED FROM **FIVE TO NINE** WITH MORE EXPECTED TO COME ON BOARD.

TO IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY AMONG OUR FARMERS, WE HAVE CONTINUED TO EXPAND COVERAGE OF EXTENSION SERVICES COUNTRYWIDE.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

FOR THE FORTHCOMING SEASON, THE DISTRIBUTION OF INPUTS UNDER THE FARMER INPUT SUPPORT PROGRAMME (FISP) WILL BE CARRIED OUT USING THE E-VOUCHER SYSTEM IN **74 DISTRICTS** AND THE DIRECT INPUT SUPPLY (DIS) SYSTEM IN **42 DISTRICTS**, BENEFITING OVER **1 MILLION FARMERS**. THE BENEFITS OF THE E-VOUCHER MODEL ARE THAT IT EMPOWERS FARMERS TO CHOOSE INPUTS BEST SUITED TO THEIR SPECIFIC NEEDS AND SUPPORTS JOB CREATION IN OUR RURAL AREAS BY INCREASING MARKET PARTICIPATION OF SUPPLIERS AND AGRO-DEALERS.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

THE GROWTH OF THE LIVESTOCK SUB-SECTOR HAS LONG BEEN CONSTRAINED BY DISEASE OUTBREAKS. GOVERNMENT HAS, THEREFORE, INTENSIFIED EFFORTS IN FIGHTING LIVESTOCK DISEASES. WE MANAGED TO CONTROL THE OUTBREAK OF ANTHRAX IN EASTERN, SOUTHERN AND WESTERN PROVINCES TOWARDS THE END OF 2023.

WE HAVE ALSO HEIGHTENED OUR VACCINATION CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE CONTAGIOUS BOVINE PLEUROPNEUMONIA, AFRICAN SWINE FEVER, ANTHRAX AS WELL AS FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASES ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

WE ARE PROUD THAT, AS A COUNTRY, WE ARE MAKING PROGRESS IN PRODUCING ANIMAL VACCINES. FOR INSTANCE, BY MID-AUGUST THIS YEAR, **880,400 DOSES** OF ANTHRAX VACCINE HAD BEEN PRODUCED LOCALLY. WE ARE DETERMINED TO BE SELF-SUFFICIENT IN THE PRODUCTION OF VACCINES.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

THE MINING SECTOR REMAINS KEY IN DRIVING ECONOMIC GROWTH, PROVIDING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND REVENUE GENERATION. OUR ADMINISTRATION IS, THEREFORE, RESOLVED TO BRING ALL OUR MINING ASSETS TO FULL PRODUCTION IN OUR QUEST TO ATTAIN OUR TARGET OF **3 MILLION METRIC TONNES** OF COPPER BY 2031.

WE ARE PLEASED TO REPORT THAT MOST OUTSTANDING ISSUES AT MOPANI AND KONKOLA COPPER MINES HAVE SINCE BEEN SUCCESSFULLY RESOLVED. THE COMPANIES ARE BACK IN BUSINESS.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

AT MOPANI COPPER MINES, INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES HOLDINGS, IS INVESTING A TOTAL OF **US\$1.1 BILLION** WHICH IS WELL ON COURSE. WITH RESPECT TO KONKOLA COPPER MINES, VEDANTA RESOURCES IS EXPECTED TO **INVEST US\$1.2 BILLION**. OUT OF THIS AMOUNT, **US\$250 MILLION** HAS ALREADY BEEN PAID TO DISMANTLE ARREARS OWED TO CONTRACTORS, SUPPLIERS OF GOODS AND SERVICES AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

FURTHER, CHINA NONFERROUS METAL MINING CORPORATION (CNMC) HAS BEGAN INVESTING **US\$500 MILLION** IN REVIVING PRODUCTION AT 28 SHAFT IN LUANSHYA. THE DE-WATERING OF THE MINE, WHICH IS EXPECTED TO TAKE UP TO 21 MONTHS, HAS SINCE COMMENCED. THIS WILL SEE 28 SHAFT AND THE LUANSHYA COMMUNITY SPRING BACK TO LIFE AFTER MORE THAN 20 YEARS OF DORMANCY.

IN CHILILABOMBWE, LUBAMBE IS ALSO ON COURSE TO BEING REVIVED WITH AN INVESTMENT FROM JCHX OF **US\$300 MILLION**.

WITH THE REVIVAL OF THESE MINING ASSETS, THE LOCAL ECONOMY ON THE COPPERBELT IS SURELY REBOUNDED. WE ARE GLAD THAT ZAMBIANS CONTINUE TO OWN A STAKE IN ALL THESE ASSETS THROUGH ZCCM-IH.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

OTHER INVESTMENTS ARE BEING MADE IN GREENFIELD MINES. THESE INCLUDE THE **US\$600 MILLION** KITUMBA MINING PROJECT BY SINOMINE IN MUMBWA DISTRICT. KOBOLD METALS AND ZCCM INVESTMENT HOLDINGS ARE DEVELOPING A **US\$2 BILLION** MINGOMBA MINE IN CHILILABOMBWE. BARRICK LUMWANA IS ALSO INVESTING **US\$2 BILLION** IN THE SUPER PIT IN NORTHWESTERN PROVINCE TO BE COMMISSIONED THIS YEAR.

OTHER ONGOING PROJECTS INCLUDE KASENSELI GOLD AND KALENGWA MINE ALSO IN NORTHWESTERN PROVINCE AS WELL AS MIMBULA MINERALS IN CHINGOLA.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

IN OUR LAST ADDRESS, WE ANNOUNCED THAT GOVERNMENT WOULD EMBARK ON A NATIONAL GEOLOGICAL MAPPING EXERCISE TO UNLOCK THE UNTAPPED POTENTIAL OF OUR MINERAL RESOURCES.

WE ARE PLEASED TO REPORT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE HIGH-RESOLUTION AERIAL GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY TO EXPLORE MINERAL AND GROUNDWATER DEPOSITS.

THE MAPPING EXERCISE WILL ENHANCE OUR ABILITY TO REALISE THE TRUE MARKET VALUE OF OUR MINERALS AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCES. THIS IS FURTHER EXPECTED TO REDUCE EXPLORATION COSTS AND PROMOTE INVESTMENT IN THE MINING SECTOR GOING FORWARD. WE CALL UPON OUR CITIZENS TO SUPPORT AND COOPERATE WITH THIS EXERCISE.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

THE ACTIVITIES OF ILLEGAL MINING ARE A BIG CHALLENGE THAT OUR GOVERNMENT IS FULLY COMMITTED TO ADDRESSING. THIS SCOURGE HAS RESULTED IN THE NEEDLESS LOSS OF LIFE AND POSED A SIGNIFICANT THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY. TO COMBAT THIS, OUR GOVERNMENT IS READY AND WILLING TO ISSUE MINING LICENSES TO ZAMBIANS AND FACILITATE ACCESS TO CREDIT, ENABLING THEM TO MEET NECESSARY SAFETY STANDARDS. FURTHERMORE, WE WILL CONTINUE TO APPLY THE LAW AND MAINTAIN ORDER TO ERADICATE ILLEGAL MINING ACTIVITIES.

WE, THEREFORE, CALL UPON OUR TRADITIONAL LEADERS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO JOIN FORCES WITH THE GOVERNMENT TO STOP ILLEGAL MINING.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

TO SUPPORT EXPANSION IN AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION AND OTHER ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES, GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE LAND AVAILABLE TO OUR PEOPLE AND PROTECT THEIR RIGHTS TO OWN LAND. WE WILL WORK WITH OUR TRADITIONAL LEADERS TO ENSURE THAT ALL LAND, WHETHER STATE OR TRADITIONAL, IS PROTECTED FROM ENCROACHMENT AND OTHER VICES. GOING FORWARD, THERE IS NEED TO ADDRESS LAND DISPUTES

SO THAT LAND CAN BE PUT TO ECONOMIC USE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

TOURISM REMAINS AN IMPORTANT ECONOMIC SECTOR, CREATING JOBS FOR OUR PEOPLE AS WELL AS FOREIGN EXCHANGE AND REVENUE FOR THE COUNTRY. IN THE FIRST HALF OF THIS YEAR, INTERNATIONAL TOURIST ARRIVALS TREMENDOUSLY INCREASED AS COMPARED TO THE SAME PERIOD IN 2023.

TO ENCOURAGE LOCAL TOURISM, GOVERNMENT IS ACTIVELY ENGAGING TOURISM ESTABLISHMENTS, TOUR OPERATORS AND OTHER PLAYERS IN THE SECTOR, TO DESIGN ATTRACTIVE PACKAGES FOR OUR LOCAL PEOPLE.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

TO PROMOTE THE TOURISM SECTOR AND ENHANCE ITS CONTRIBUTION TO WEALTH AND JOB CREATION, TOURIST PROMOTION ACTIVITIES ARE BEING SCALED UP. IN THIS REGARD, A NUMBER OF TRADITIONAL CEREMONIES WERE ACTIVELY MARKETED AND SUPPORTED.

GOVERNMENT HAS CONTINUED TO MARKET AND PROMOTE ZAMBIA AS A TOURIST DESTINATION OF CHOICE IN KEY TOURISM SOURCE MARKETS. WE WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO PROMOTE TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR. REGIONAL COLLABORATION IN THE SECTOR IS ALSO ENCOURAGED.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

THE ENERGY SECTOR, WHICH IS AN ENABLER OF ECONOMIC GROWTH, HAS BEEN SEVERELY AFFECTED BY THE DROUGHT. THE ELECTRICITY SUB-SECTOR, WHICH IS PREDOMINANTLY HYDROELECTRIC, HAS EXPERIENCED A SIGNIFICANT DECLINE IN ELECTRICITY GENERATION DUE TO LOW WATER LEVELS.

TO MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF THE DROUGHT ON ELECTRICITY GENERATION AND THE GROWING ELECTRICITY DEFICIT, GOVERNMENT IS IMPLEMENTING A NUMBER OF INTERVENTIONS.

IN A BID TO ENHANCE RESILIENCE AND REDUCE OVER-DEPENDENCE ON HYDROELECTRIC POWER, WE ARE PROMOTING ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF ELECTRICITY GENERATION. TO THIS END, WE COMMISSIONED THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE **300 MEGAWATTS** THERMAL POWER PLANT IN MAAMBA. THIS POWER PLANT IS EXPECTED TO COME ON STREAM BY MID-2026.

TO DIVERSIFY THE ENERGY MIX AND ADDRESS THE COUNTRY'S CURRENT POWER DEFICIT, ZESCO LIMITED, WITH VARIOUS PARTNERS, INCLUDING THOSE FROM CHINA, IS SPEARHEADING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SEVERAL SOLAR ELECTRICITY PROJECTS. THIS IS IN ADDITION TO A NUMBER OF PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVES.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

TO BOOST ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES, GOVERNMENT HAS ISSUED THE ELECTRICITY (NET METERING), REGULATIONS OF 2024. THE NET METERING SYSTEM WILL ALLOW CUSTOMERS WHO PRODUCE THEIR OWN ELECTRICITY TO FEED EXCESS ELECTRICITY GENERATED INTO THE NATIONAL GRID. WE ENCOURAGE CITIZENS TO EXPLORE AND ADOPT ALTERNATIVE SUSTAINABLE ENERGY SOURCES, REDUCING OUR RELIANCE ON TRADITIONAL HYDROPOWER.

**MADAM SPEAKER**

OVER THE PAST DECADES, WE MUST ALL AGREE THAT WE ABDICATED OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO INVEST IN THIS VERY IMPORTANT SECTOR. HENCE, OUR GOVERNMENT IS WORKING AROUND THE CLOCK TO FIND LASTING SOLUTIONS TO THIS HISTORICAL CHALLENGE. WE SHARE THE PAIN OUR CITIZENS ARE GOING THROUGH. OUR RESOLVE IS TO TURN THESE CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE ZAMBIA ENERGY SURPLUS.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

IN THE PETROLEUM SUB-SECTOR, WE HAVE CONTINUED TO ENSURE SECURITY OF SUPPLY OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS. WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO ENSURING EFFICIENT SUPPLY AND STABLE PRICING OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

YOUR GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO PROMOTE INVESTMENTS AND GROWTH OF THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR. WE HAVE PUT IN PLACE A LEGAL FRAMEWORK THAT HAS PROVIDED INCENTIVES FOR THE EXPANSION OF EXISTING PROJECTS.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

GOVERNMENT HAS CONTINUED TO USE SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES AS A MODEL FOR INDUSTRIALISATION AND JOB CREATION. THE LUSAKA SOUTH MULTI-FACILITY ECONOMIC ZONE AND THE JIANGXI MULTI-FACILITY ECONOMIC ZONE IN CHIBOMBO HAVE CONTINUED TO ATTRACT A NUMBER OF INVESTMENTS AIMED AT VALUE ADDITION.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

TO FURTHER EXPAND THE LOCAL MANUFACTURING BASE, GOVERNMENT IS PROMOTING THE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION OF LOCAL PRODUCTS. TO ACHIEVE THIS, WE ARE DEVELOPING LEGISLATION TO SUPPORT LOCAL MANUFACTURERS BY ENCOURAGING PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS TO PROCURE LOCALLY PRODUCED GOODS AND SERVICES. WE, THEREFORE, CONTINUE TO PROMOTE THE “**PROUDLY ZAMBIAN**” CAMPAIGN.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

GOVERNMENT HAS INTENSIFIED EFFORTS IN ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY SO AS TO INCREASE EXPORTS OF ZAMBIAN PRODUCTS INTO REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MARKETS. THIS HAS BEEN ACHIEVED THROUGH ENGAGING STRATEGIC TRADING PARTNERS IN ORDER TO REMOVE TRADE BARRIERS AFFECTING ZAMBIA’S EXPORTS.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMES) PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN FOSTERING INNOVATION AS WELL AS CREATING EMPLOYMENT AND WEALTH. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT REVISED THE MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT POLICY.

RECENTLY, WE PROMOTED PREFERENTIAL PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS AIMED AT SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASING THE PARTICIPATION OF **MSMES** IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

TO SUPPORT THE MSMES, THE CITIZENS ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT COMMISSION (CEEC) DISBURSED **670** LOANS THIS YEAR, AMOUNTING TO **K189.2 MILLION**.

IN ADDITION, GOVERNMENT HAS CONTINUED TO PROVIDE FINANCING UNDER THE ZAMBIA CREDIT GUARANTEE SCHEME. THE NUMBER OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES ACCESSING FINANCING UNDER GUARANTEES FROM THE COMMERCIAL BANKS HAS INCREASED.

THE NUMBER OF BANKS THROUGH WHICH THE SCHEME PROVIDES GUARANTEES HAS ALSO RISEN, WITH EXPANDED OUTREACH IN RURAL AREAS.

FURTHER, WE ARE PROVIDING EMPOWERMENT FUNDS IN FORM OF GRANTS AND LOANS UNDER THE CONSTITUENCY DEVELOPMENT FUND (CDF). THIS YEAR, SO FAR, MORE THAN **K485 MILLION** HAS BEEN DISBURSED COUNTRYWIDE TO BENEFIT THE YOUTH, WOMEN, COMMUNITY GROUPS, AND OTHER BUSINESSES.

WE ARE WALKING THE TALK IN ENSURING THAT OUR CITIZENS, ESPECIALLY THE MOST VULNERABLE, INCLUDING YOUTHS, WOMEN, AND PERSONS DIFFERENTLY ABLED, ARE EMPOWERED TO EFFECTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF OUR COUNTRY.

IN LIGHT OF THE ABOVE, WE CALL UPON THE BENEFICIARIES TO PAY BACK THE LOANS IN ORDER FOR MORE ZAMBIANS TO BENEFIT FROM THESE INITIATIVES.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE REMAINS A PRIORITY FOR OUR ADMINISTRATION. THIS WILL ENHANCE CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY TO ALL PARTS OF OUR COUNTRY, BOTH RURAL AND URBAN.

IN THIS VEIN, GOVERNMENT HAS CONTINUED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE PARTICULARLY THROUGH THE PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP (PPP).

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

UNDER THE PPP MODEL, WE HAVE DELIVERED AND COMMISSIONED THE **35-KILOMETRE** CHINGOLA TO KASUMBALESA ROAD. IN MAY THIS YEAR, WE ALSO COMMISSIONED THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE **327-KILOMETRE** LUSAKA TO NDOLA DUAL CARRIAGEWAY AND REHABILITATION OF THE **45-KILOMETRE** LUANSHYA VIA FISENGE TO MASANGANO ROAD.

WE ARE PLEASED TO REPORT THAT THE WORKS ARE PROGRESSING VERY WELL. THE PROJECT IS BEING UNDERTAKEN AT A COST OF **US\$650 MILLION**. THE PROJECT IS EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED WITHIN **36 MONTHS**.

THIS IS WHAT WE CALL VALUE FOR MONEY. RIGHT PRICE. RIGHT QUALITY. TIMELY DELIVERY. THE PROJECT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO ACTUALISING OUR ASPIRATION OF BECOMING A TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS HUB IN THE REGION.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

THROUGH OTHER FINANCING MECHANISMS, GOVERNMENT IS IMPLEMENTING THE **US\$270 MILLION** TRANSPORT CORRIDORS FOR ECONOMIC RESILIENCE PROJECT. UNDER THE PROJECT, WE WILL REHABILITATE THE **238-KILOMETRE SERENJE** TO MPIKA ROAD. WE WILL ALSO UPGRADE THE NAKONDE BORDER POST INTO A MODERN ONE-STOP BORDER POST. YOUR GOVERNMENT IS ALSO WORKING ON THE KATETE-CHAINDA ROAD IN EASTERN PROVINCE.

WE ALSO COMMISSIONED THE REHABILITATION WORKS ON THE LUSAKA-MONGU ROAD FROM TATAYOYO GATE TO KATUNDA/LUKULU JUNCTION, COVERING **87.3 KILOMETRES**.

IN ADDITION, THE NORTH-SOUTH AND DAR-ES-SALAAM CORRIDOR WILL BE TRANSFORMED INTO A MULTI-MODAL SMART TRANSPORT CORRIDOR WITH QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND LOGISTICS FACILITIES.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

A GOOD RURAL ROAD NETWORK IS EQUALLY CRITICAL TO OUR DEVELOPMENT AGENDA. DURING THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW, OVER **2,980 KILOMETRES** OF FEEDER ROADS WERE REHABILITATED AND MAINTAINED BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. THIS HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE ENHANCED CONSTITUENCY DEVELOPMENT FUND THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT IS PROVIDING TO ALL THE CONSTITUENCIES.

FURTHER, **186 KILOMETRES** OF FEEDER ROADS HAVE BEEN REHABILITATED UNDER THE IMPROVED RURAL CONNECTIVITY PROJECT.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

THE DEVELOPMENT OF AVIATION INFRASTRUCTURE IS ANOTHER STRATEGY WE ARE IMPLEMENTING IN OUR QUEST TO BECOME A TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS HUB OF THE REGION.

TO THIS END, WE HAVE EMBARKED ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SECOND RUNWAY AT THE KENNETH KAUNDA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. THIS WILL, NOT ONLY MAKE THE AIRPORT MORE EFFICIENT AND SAFER, BUT WILL ALSO ATTRACT MORE INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES.

WITH REGARD TO PROVINCIAL AIRPORTS, WE ARE GLAD TO REPORT THAT THE UPGRADING OF KASAMA AIRPORT HAS BEEN COMPLETED FOLLOWING THE INSTALLATION OF AIRFIELD GROUND LIGHTING. WE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF UPGRADING MANSA, NAKONDE AND CHINSALI AIRPORTS.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

RAILWAY TRANSPORT REMAINS THE MOST COST-EFFECTIVE MODE FOR THE HAULAGE OF HEAVY AND BULK CARGO. IN THIS REGARD, THE GOVERNMENT HAS PRIORITISED THE DEVELOPMENT AND REHABILITATION OF THE RAILWAY NETWORK TO IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY AT BOTH NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS.

THE MAIN PROJECTS TO BE UNDERTAKEN INCLUDE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOBITO RAILWAY TO THE ATLANTIC OCEAN THROUGH ANGOLA, THE REVITALISATION OF THE TANZANIA ZAMBIA RAILWAY(TAZARA), AND REHABILITATION OF ZAMBIA RAILWAYS.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

THE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY SECTOR HAS DEMONSTRATED A REMARKABLE DEGREE OF VERSATILITY EVEN IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE. TO DRIVE INNOVATION FOR IMPROVED SERVICE DELIVERY AND JOB CREATION, WE ARE ENHANCING INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE AND DIGITAL CAPABILITIES.

TO ENHANCE DIGITAL INCLUSION AND CONNECTIVITY IN THE UNSERVED AND UNDERSERVED AREAS, GOVERNMENT IS UNDERTAKING NATIONWIDE CONSTRUCTION OF **202** COMMUNICATION TOWERS. IN ADDITION, THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS CONSTRUCTING **212** TOWERS.

ONCE COMPLETED, THESE TOWERS WILL TRANSFORM THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF OUR PEOPLE. OUR PEOPLE WILL BE ABLE TO ACCESS A NUMBER OF KEY SERVICES ELECTRONICALLY, SUCH AS SOCIAL CASH TRANSFER, AGRICULTURAL, LEGAL SERVICES AND HEALTH SERVICES AMONG OTHERS.

FURTHER, IMPROVED RURAL CONNECTIVITY IS CRITICAL IN THE ATTAINMENT OF OUR VISION OF HAVING SMART VILLAGES SUCH AS THE RECENTLY LAUNCHED MUCHILA SMART VILLAGE IN NAMWALA DISTRICT.

THE CONCEPT OF SMART VILLAGES WE HAVE ADOPTED ENTAILS THE PROVISION OF ELECTRICITY USING ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES, SUCH AS SOLAR, TO HOMES, SCHOOLS, AND CLINICS WITHIN THE LOCALITY OF THE PROJECT. THIS ALSO INCLUDES INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION SERVICES.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

GOVERNMENT IS IMPLEMENTING INTERVENTIONS TO HARNESS SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT TO PROMOTE INDUSTRIALISATION AND GREEN GROWTH.

WE ARE ENHANCING THE CAPACITY OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH TO FACILITATE INNOVATION, AS WELL AS TECHNOLOGICAL TRANSFER AND ADAPTATION. WE ARE ALSO REVISING THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK, TO PROVIDE FOR VENTURE CAPITAL FUNDING FOR INNOVATORS.

FURTHER, GOVERNMENT IS ALLOCATING MORE RESOURCES TO PROMOTE PRODUCTIVITY AND OUTPUT ENHANCING TECHNOLOGIES IN SECTORS SUCH AS AGRICULTURE. THE TECHNOLOGIES INCLUDE EARLY MATURING, DISEASE AND PEST TOLERANT, HIGH YIELDING AND CLIMATE SMART SEED VARIETIES OF MAIZE, CASSAVA, RICE, SORGHUM, PIGEON PEA AS WELL AS GROUNDNUTS. WE WILL INCREASE MULTIPLICATION OF THE IMPROVED SEED VARIETIES TO MAKE THEM ACCESSIBLE ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

OUR RESEARCHERS HAVE ALSO DEVELOPED A RAIN-FED WHEAT VARIETY TO ENABLE SMALL-SCALE FARMERS TO ENGAGE IN WHEAT PRODUCTION.

## **HUMAN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

EDUCATION REMAINS HIGH ON OUR DEVELOPMENT AGENDA. IT IS OUR CONVICTION THAT AN EDUCATED CITIZENRY CONTRIBUTES TO ENHANCED NATIONAL RESILIENCE REQUIRED FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. TO THIS END, GOVERNMENT POLICY IS TO INCREASE ACCESS AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION.

OUR FREE EDUCATION POLICY HAS LED TO A HUGE INCREASE IN ENROLMENT LEVELS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. OUR YOUNG PEOPLE NOW HAVE A FAIR CHANCE TO A BRIGHTER FUTURE. OUR YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOW BEING EMPOWERED TO OVERCOME POVERTY. OUR YOUNG PEOPLE NOW HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME KEY PLAYERS IN THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF OUR COUNTRY.

FURTHER, OUR FREE EDUCATION POLICY IS HELPING CURB EARLY MARRIAGES AND TEEN PREGNANCIES IN THE COUNTRY, ESPECIALLY IN RURAL AREAS.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

TO INCREASE ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION FOR OUR LEARNERS, WE HAVE CONTINUED TO EXPAND INFRASTRUCTURE IN OUR SCHOOLS.

UNDER THE CONSTITUENCY DEVELOPMENT FUND, WE HAVE CONSTRUCTED **1,551** NEW CLASSROOM BLOCKS WHILE **332** EXISTING CLASSROOM BLOCKS HAVE BEEN REHABILITATED COUNTRYWIDE. THIS BRINGS THE TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPLETED CLASSROOM BLOCKS TO **1,883** SO FAR.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

TO MAINTAIN OUR POLICY THAT NO LEARNER SITS ON THE FLOOR, WE HAVE CONTINUED WITH THE PROCUREMENT OF DESKS THROUGH THE CONSTITUENCY DEVELOPMENT FUND AND OTHER FORMS OF FINANCING.

THIS HAS NOT ONLY IMPROVED THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT BUT HAS ALSO CONTRIBUTED TOWARDS EMPLOYMENT CREATION FOR OUR PEOPLE, AS THE DESKS ARE NOW PRODUCED LOCALLY.

IN OUR CONTINUED EFFORT TO IMPROVE THE TEACHER-PUPIL RATIO, **7,222** TEACHERS WERE RECRUITED LAST YEAR. THIS YEAR, WE WILL RECRUIT MORE TEACHERS AND SUPPORT STAFF TO FURTHER REDUCE THE TEACHER DEFICIT AND IMPROVE THE LEARNING OUTCOMES.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

THE NEW DAWN UPND ADMINISTRATION HAS EMBARKED ON EDUCATIONAL REFORMS. SO FAR, THE NEW NATIONAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK HAS BEEN DEVELOPED TO PROMOTE LIFE-LONG LEARNING, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND PRACTICAL SKILLS REQUIRED BY INDUSTRY. THIS IMPLIES MAKING OUR EDUCATION CURRICULA MORE APPROPRIATE TO THE NEEDS OF INDUSTRY AND THE ECONOMY.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

GOVERNMENT IS SCALING UP THE HOME-GROWN SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME TO CUSHION LEARNERS FROM THE EFFECTS OF THE DROUGHT AND KEEP THEM IN SCHOOL IN ORDER TO IMPROVE LEARNING OUTCOMES. CURRENTLY, THE PROGRAMME IS BENEFITING **2.3 MILLION** LEARNERS IN **70** DISTRICTS ACROSS THE **10** PROVINCES.

WE WILL EXTEND COVERAGE FOR THE SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME FROM **70 DISTRICTS** TO ALL THE **116 DISTRICTS** IN 2025.

FURTHER, TO KEEP THE GIRL CHILD IN SCHOOL, YOUR GOVERNMENT HAS CONTINUED TO PROVIDE FREE SANITARY WEAR, ESPECIALLY IN RURAL AREAS.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

THE SHORTAGE OF QUALITY AND AFFORDABLE STUDENT HOUSING IN OUR PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES CONTINUES TO BE A CHALLENGE.

TO THIS END, GOVERNMENT IS EXPEDITING THE COMPLETION OF THE STALLED HOSTEL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS IN PUBLIC TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS. ONCE COMPLETED, MORE BED SPACES FOR STUDENTS WILL BE BROUGHT ON BOARD.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IS KEY TO ENHANCING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND EMPLOYABILITY, ESPECIALLY FOR OUR YOUTH. THROUGH CDF BURSARIES, STUDENT ENROLMENT IN TRADES TRAINING INSTITUTES AND YOUTH RESOURCE CENTRES CONTINUES TO GROW.

TO ENHANCE QUALITY AND ACCESS TO VOCATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING, WE HAVE COMPLETED THE CONSTRUCTION OF LUNDAZI AND MPOROKOSO TRADE TRAINING INSTITUTES. IN ADDITION, WE HAVE REHABILITATED **16** OF THE **23 YOUTH RESOURCE CENTERS**.

FURTHER, THE NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY HAS BEEN REVISED AND A MULTI-SECTORAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY HAS BEEN FORMULATED.

BY INVESTING IN EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, WE ARE LAYING A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR COUNTRY. A MORE PROSPEROUS, INNOVATIVE AND RESILIENT ZAMBIA.

AS CHAMPION OF FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING IN AFRICA, COURTESY OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN AFRICA (ADEA), IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO STRENGTHEN EARLY LEARNING AND EDUCATION IN GENERAL WHICH IS THE CORNERSTONE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANY NATION.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

THE VISION FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH CANNOT BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT A HEALTHY PRODUCTIVE WORKFORCE TO DRIVE IT. THEREFORE, YOUR GOVERNMENT REMAINS COMMITTED TO STRENGTHENING ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTHCARE FOR ALL CITIZENS AND ENHANCING NUTRITION STATUS OF OUR PEOPLE. TO IMPROVE HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL, ESPECIALLY IN RURAL AREAS, GOVERNMENT HAS DECENTRALISED DISTRICT HEALTH SERVICES.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT WE BRING HEALTH SERVICES AS CLOSE TO THE PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE, YOUR GOVERNMENT HAS ACCELERATED INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT. THE GOVERNMENT HAS COMPLETED SEVEN LEVEL 1 HOSPITALS AND **111 MINI-HOSPITALS** OUT OF THE TARGET **115 MINI-HOSPITALS**. WE ARE NOW COMMENCING PHASE TWO OF MINI-HOSPITAL CONSTRUCTION AIMING TO COMPLETE **120 MORE FACILITIES** BY 2027.

**MADAM SPEAKER**

GOVERNMENT RECRUITED OVER **3,500 HEALTH WORKERS** IN 2023 AND AN ADDITIONAL **4000 HEALTH WORKERS** ARE TO BE RECRUITED THIS YEAR, EQUIPPING OUR HEALTH SERVICE WITH THE MUCH-NEEDED WORKFORCE.

TO REDUCE MATERNAL MORTALITY, AND IN LINE WITH OUR EARLIER PRONOUNCEMENT, THE GOVERNMENT HAS CONSTRUCTED **166 MATERNAL ANNEXES** IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, WITH **123 COMPLETED THIS YEAR**.

TO FURTHER SAFEGUARD OUR CITIZENS FROM PUBLIC HEALTH THREATS, THE GOVERNMENT HAS STRENGTHENED SURVEILLANCE, DETECTION, AND RESPONSE. WE ARE PLEASED TO CONFIRM THAT WE HAVE TAKEN STEPS TO BEGIN LOCAL CHOLERA VACCINE MANUFACTURING TO SAFEGUARD OUR PEOPLE AND CREATE JOB OPPORTUNITIES.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

WE ARE STABILISING THE AVAILABILITY OF MEDICINES AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES IN OUR HEALTH FACILITIES. TO THIS END, WE HAVE PROCURED **42,000** HEALTH CENTRE KITS AND ESSENTIAL MEDICINES UNDER BULK PROCUREMENT.

WE ARE PLEASED TO REPORT THAT STOCK AVAILABILITY OF ESSENTIAL MEDICINES IN OUR HEALTH FACILITIES HAS IMPROVED. THE STOCK AVAILABILITY HAS INCREASED TO AN AVERAGE OF **85 PERCENT** AT HEALTH CENTRES AND **76 PERCENT** AT HOSPITAL LEVELS THIS YEAR. THIS IS ABOVE THE **75 PERCENT WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)** MINIMUM LEVEL REQUIREMENT.

GOING FORWARD, GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN THE SUPPLY AND MANAGEMENT OF DRUGS TO ENSURE AVAILABILITY OF ESSENTIAL MEDICINES IN ALL OUR HEALTH FACILITIES AT ALL TIMES. ADDITIONALLY, YOUR GOVERNMENT IS PUTTING IN MEASURES TO SAFEGUARD THE DRUGS AGAINST PILFERAGE.

**MADAM SPEAKER**

GOVERNMENT RECOGNISES THE CHALLENGE OF MENTAL HEALTH ON OUR PEOPLE AND WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO IMPLEMENTING MEASURES TO ADDRESS THIS PROBLEM.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

THE DROUGHT HAS NEGATIVELY AFFECTED THE NUTRITION STATUS OF PEOPLE LIVING IN DROUGHT-HIT DISTRICTS. IN THIS REGARD, GOVERNMENT IS DISTRIBUTING HIGH-ENERGY, HIGH PROTEIN SUPPLEMENTS TO PREGNANT AND BREAST-FEEDING MOTHERS AS WELL AS CHILDREN TO AVOID MALNUTRITION.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

WE ENVISAGE A ZAMBIA WHERE EVERY CITIZEN HAS ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTHCARE AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTHY LIVING. A HEALTHY NATION IS A WEALTHY NATION.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

PRUDENT MANAGEMENT OF WATER RESOURCES IS CRITICAL TO BUILDING RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE. GOVERNMENT HAS, THEREFORE, CONTINUED TO IMPLEMENT INTERVENTIONS TO DEVELOP AND MANAGE OUR WATER RESOURCES.

IN THIS REGARD, GOVERNMENT HAS REVISED THE NATIONAL WATER POLICY TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT EMERGING CHALLENGES IN THE SECTOR.

GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO PROMOTE WATER HARVESTING AND OTHER CLIMATE-SMART TECHNOLOGIES TO ENHANCE WATER STORAGE AND SUPPLY. GREAT ATTENTION WILL BE PLACED ON PROTECTING HEADWATERS, WATER CATCHMENT AREAS AND WATER BODIES FROM ENCROACHMENT, DEGRADATION AND POLLUTION.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

THE DROUGHT HAS ALSO POSED CHALLENGES IN THE WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION SECTOR. THE LOW WATER LEVELS HAVE NEGATIVELY AFFECTED MOST OF OUR MAJOR SOURCES OF WATER SUPPLY. UTILITY COMPANIES ARE EXPERIENCING DRYING WATER SOURCES, COMPOUNDED BY LOAD SHEDDING. THIS HAS RESULTED IN REDUCED AMOUNTS OF WATER SUPPLIED TO OUR COMMUNITIES.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO WATER, GOVERNMENT HAS SCALED UP THE COMPLETION OF ONGOING WATER SUPPLY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS. WE HAVE CONTINUED TO IMPLEMENT PIPED WATER SCHEMES AND DRILLING OF BOREHOLES ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO CONSTRUCT AS WELL AS UPGRADE WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION FACILITIES IN OUR COMMUNITIES. THIS IS WITH A VIEW TO PROVIDING CLEAN AND SAFE WATER TO OUR CITIZENS AND MITIGATE RISKS POSED BY POOR SANITATION.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

TO IMPROVE THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE NEEDY AND VULNERABLE, GOVERNMENT HAS CONTINUED TO IMPLEMENT SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMMES, SUCH AS THE SOCIAL CASH TRANSFER AND FOOD SECURITY PACK PROGRAMMES. UNDER THE REGULAR SOCIAL CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMME, THE NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLD BENEFICIARIES INCREASED FROM **1,027,000** IN 2022, TO **1,311,000** AS AT 31 AUGUST 2024.

TO FURTHER CUSHION BENEFICIARY HOUSEHOLDS FROM THE EFFECTS OF THE DROUGHT, THE REGULAR SOCIAL CASH TRANSFER BENEFICIARY HOUSEHOLDS ARE NOW RECEIVING A TOP-UP OF **K200** PER MONTH FOR A PERIOD OF 12 MONTHS, STARTING FROM JUNE THIS YEAR. THIS MONEY IS MAKING A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF OUR PEOPLE.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

GOVERNMENT IS ALSO IMPLEMENTING THE DROUGHT EMERGENCY CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMME TO ENHANCE FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY. UNDER THE PROGRAMME, **952,570** HOUSEHOLDS THAT EXPERIENCED CROP FAILURE AND ARE NOT ON REGULAR SOCIAL CASH TRANSFER ARE BENEFITING. THE CASH TRANSFER VALUE FOR HOUSEHOLDS ON THIS PROGRAMME IS **K400** PER MONTH FOR A PERIOD OF 12 MONTHS. CURRENTLY, THE TOTAL NUMBER OF BENEFICIARY HOUSEHOLDS FOR BOTH REGULAR AND DROUGHT EMERGENCY CASH TRANSFER STANDS AT **2,263,671**.

AS AN ADDITIONAL DROUGHT RESPONSE INTERVENTION, GOVERNMENT IS IMPLEMENTING THE CASH-FOR-WORK PROGRAMME. THE PROGRAMME IS PROVIDING FINANCIAL RELIEF TO INDIVIDUALS IN EXCHANGE FOR THEIR LABOUR TO UNDERTAKE PUBLIC WORKS ON A TEMPORARY BASIS.

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR COOPERATING PARTNERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT TO THESE INITIATIVES.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

GOVERNMENT HAS INTRODUCED THE COMMUNITY MAIZE SALES PROGRAMME IN DEFICIT AREAS TO IMPROVE AVAILABILITY OF THE COMMODITY. UNDER THE PROGRAMME, MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY ARE BUYING MAIZE AT **K330** PER **50KG** BAG FROM THE FOOD RESERVE AGENCY (FRA). BY MID-AUGUST THIS YEAR, MORE THAN **92,000 METRIC TONNES** OF MAIZE HAD BEEN SOLD ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

WE ARE ALSO PROVIDING FOOD RELIEF TO VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS IN THE **84** DROUGHT-AFFECTED DISTRICTS. A TOTAL OF **40,865 METRIC TONNES** OF RELIEF WHITE MAIZE HAD BEEN DISTRIBUTED BY MID-AUGUST THIS YEAR. OF THIS AMOUNT, **28,755 METRIC TONNES** WERE ISSUED TO BENEFICIARY HOUSEHOLDS.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

TO FURTHER ADDRESS FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY AMONG THE NEEDY AND VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS, GOVERNMENT IS PROVIDING BASIC FARMING INPUTS TO VULNERABLE BUT VIABLE FARMERS UNDER THE FOOD SECURITY PACK PROGRAMME.

CURRENTLY, **242,000** BENEFICIARY HOUSEHOLDS ARE BEING SUPPORTED. OUT OF THIS NUMBER, **200,000** ARE UNDER THE RAIN-FED COMPONENT, **40,000** UNDER THE WETLANDS COMPONENT WHILE **2,000** ARE SUPPORTED UNDER THE ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOOD INITIATIVE.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND ECOSYSTEMS HAVE CONTINUED TO BE UNDER THREAT. WE HAVE WITNESSED INCREASED INCIDENCES OF ADVERSE CLIMATE CHANGE EFFECTS, SUCH AS DROUGHTS, FLASH FLOODS AND EXTREME TEMPERATURES. THIS HAS BEEN COMPOUNDED BY UNSUSTAINABLE EXPLOITATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES.

TO ENHANCE PREPAREDNESS AND RESILIENCE OF OUR COMMUNITIES TO THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE, GOVERNMENT IS STRENGTHENING EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS. IN THIS REGARD, OVER **200** MODERN WEATHER STATIONS HAVE BEEN INSTALLED IN ALL THE **116** DISTRICTS AND AROUND OUR MAJOR WATER BODIES.

WE WILL EQUALLY ENSURE THAT OUR FARMERS ARE PROVIDED WITH INFORMATION ON THE WEATHER IN A TIMELY MANNER IN ORDER FOR THEM TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

GOVERNMENT HAS CONTINUED TO IMPLEMENT THE ZAMBIA INTEGRATED FOREST LANDSCAPE PROJECT IN EASTERN PROVINCE. WE ARE ALSO IMPLEMENTING THE TRANSFORMING LIVELIHOODS FOR RESILIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN LUAPULA, MUCHINGA AND NORTHERN PROVINCES.

TO CONSERVE AND PROTECT FORESTS, WE HAVE ESTABLISHED **10** COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT GROUPS COVERING AN ESTIMATED **183,000 HECTARES** OF FOREST WHILE **515 HECTARES** HAVE BEEN PUT UNDER NATURAL FOREST REGENERATION. FURTHER, **26 HECTARES** OF LAND HAS BEEN PLANTED WITH **21,000** PINE TREE SEEDLINGS IN MPULUNGU DISTRICT AND **7,300** IN NSAMA DISTRICT.

IN EASTERN PROVINCE, **72,800 HECTARES** OF FOREST HAS BEEN PLACED UNDER LAND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES. IN ADDITION, **162,300 HECTARES** HAVE BEEN BROUGHT UNDER SMART AGRICULTURE. THIS HAS HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE LIVES OF OUR PEOPLE IN THE TARGETED COMMUNITIES, WITH INCREASED MONETARY AND NON-MONETARY BENEFITS. OVER **162,000** PEOPLE HAVE BENEFITED FROM THE PROJECT.

IT IS GRATIFYING TO NOTE THAT OUR PEOPLE ARE INCREASINGLY ADOPTING ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS, SUCH AS BEEKEEPING, LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION AND VEGETABLE PRODUCTION THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

TO REVERSE FOREST AND LAND DEGRADATION, GOVERNMENT HAS PLACED **7.6 MILLION HECTARES** OF FORESTS UNDER SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY MANAGEMENT. THE FORESTS HAVE BEEN DESIGNATED AS COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT AREAS AND ARE BEING MANAGED BY OVER **284** RECOGNISED COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT GROUPS ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

WE URGE OUR TRADITIONAL LEADERS, CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE CHURCH TO COLLABORATE WITH GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO HELP SENSITIZE OUR PEOPLE TO DESIST FROM BUSH BURNING, A HARMFUL VICE THAT THREATENS THE ECOSYSTEMS AND EXACERBATES EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

GOING FORWARD, GOVERNMENT WILL ENSURE THAT THE LIVELIHOODS OF OUR PEOPLE AND ENVIRONMENT ARE PROTECTED, EVEN AS WE ENDEAVOR TO DEVELOP OUR COUNTRY.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOOD GOVERNANCE**

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

THE RULE OF LAW, RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND CONSTITUTIONALISM ARE AT THE CORE OF OUR GOVERNANCE. WE ARE COMMITTED TO UPHOLDING AND PROTECTING THESE PRINCIPLES.

THE NEW DAWN UPND ADMINISTRATION, THEREFORE, CONTINUES TO UPHOLD THE RULE OF LAW AND TO DEEPEN OUR DEMOCRATIC CREDENTIALS AS DEMONSTRATED BY OUR RESPECT FOR THE PRINCIPLE OF SEPARATION OF POWERS AND THE STRENGTHENING OF OVERSIGHT INSTITUTIONS. YOUR GOVERNMENT REMAINS COMMITTED TO RESPECT, PROTECT, AND UPHOLD THE RIGHTS OF **ALL CITIZENS**. WITH EVERY RIGHT, HOWEVER, COMES OBLIGATION AND RESPONSIBILITY.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

THE CONSTITUTION REMAINS AN IMPORTANT DOCUMENT FOR OUR IDENTITY AS A PEOPLE. THE COUNTRY HAS, HOWEVER, FAILED TO REACH A CONSENSUS ON THIS VERY IMPORTANT NATIONAL DOCUMENT. AS A COUNTRY, WE STILL NEED TO REFORM OUR CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER TO ENSURE THAT IT TRULY REFLECTS THE ASPIRATIONS OF ALL CITIZENS. THE NEW DAWN UPND GOVERNMENT, GIVEN THE SUBSTANTIAL WORK THAT HAS BEEN DONE IN THE PAST, IS COMMITTED TO FACILITATING A LEAST-COST, EFFICIENT, AND CREDIBLE PROCESS.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

WE ARE DETERMINED TO ERADICATE ALL FORMS OF CORRUPTION AND REMAIN FIRMLY COMMITTED TO THE ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY AGAINST THE VICE.

ALL SUSPECTED CASES OF CORRUPTION ARE BEING THOROUGHLY INVESTIGATED AND PROSECUTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAW. THROUGH THE ASSET RECOVERY EFFORTS, ADDITIONAL ASSORTED PROPERTIES WORTH OVER **K100 MILLION** AND CASH AMOUNTING TO **US\$30.8 MILLION**, AS WELL AS **K56.6 MILLION** HAVE BEEN FORFEITED TO THE STATE. WE ARE RESTORING VALUE TO THE OWNERS, THE CITIZENS OF ZAMBIA.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

AS A DEMONSTRATION OF OUR ADMINISTRATION'S COMMITMENT TO FIGHTING THE VICE, WE LAUNCHED THE REVISED NATIONAL POLICY ON ANTI-CORRUPTION EARLY THIS YEAR. THE POLICY IS, AMONG OTHERS, GUIDING LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS TO STRENGTHEN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION.

WE ARE PLACING A PREMIUM ON MORALITY AND DISINCENTIVISING CORRUPTION. WE WILL CONTINUE TO FIGHT PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE CORRUPTION.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

TO ENABLE OUR COUNTRY BENEFIT FROM INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND FOREIGN RELATIONS, GOVERNMENT HAS CONTINUED TO ENSURE THAT BILATERAL TRADE, ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION CONTINUE TO BE THE HALLMARK OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY. OUR FOREIGN POLICY IS ANCHORED ON THREE PILLARS: **PEACE, SECURITY, AND ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY.**

ACCORDINGLY, GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO CREATE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS TO PROMOTE TRADE AND FACILITATE HIGH-LEVEL ENGAGEMENTS TO ATTRACT INVESTMENTS.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

WE EFFECTIVELY PRESIDED OVER THE SADC ORGAN ON POLITICS, DEFENCE AND SECURITY COOPERATION, DURING WHICH WE FULFILLED SADC'S MANDATE OF PROMOTING PEACE, SECURITY AND STABILITY IN THE REGION AND ULTIMATELY CREATING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES.

WE SUCCESSFULLY LED THE SADC ELECTORAL OBSERVER MISSIONS TO ZIMBABWE, ESWATINI, MADAGASCAR, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO, LESOTHO AND SOUTH AFRICA, WHERE WE CONTRIBUTED TOWARDS ENHANCEMENT OF DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE FOR OUR REGION.

THIS IS WHO WE ARE. THIS IS WHAT WE STAND FOR. THIS IS WHAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

THE MEDIA PLAYS A PIVOTAL ROLE IN PROMOTING GOOD GOVERNANCE AS WELL AS IN INFORMING, EDUCATING AND ENTERTAINING OUR PEOPLE.

WE CHERISH THE FOURTH ESTATE AND REMAIN COMMITTED TO FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION. OUR PEOPLE ARE NOW FREE TO VOICE THEIR CONCERNS WITHOUT FEAR OF RETRIBUTION. WE HAVE INCREASED THE CIVIC AND DEMOCRATIC SPACE.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

NOT A SINGLE MEDIA INSTITUTION HAS BEEN CLOSED DOWN FOR POLITICAL OR OTHER CONSIDERATION SINCE WE ASSUMED OFFICE THREE YEARS AGO. RATHER, THERE ARE NOW MORE COMMUNITY RADIO AND TELEVISION STATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN OPENED AND ARE OPERATING FREELY. ALL POLITICAL PLAYERS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS, ARE USING MEDIA PLATFORMS TO REACH OUT TO THE PUBLIC WITHOUT ANY HINDRANCE.

TO ENHANCE ACCESS TO INFORMATION, THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT NO. 24 OF 2023 WAS ENACTED. THE LEGISLATION ENABLES OUR CITIZENS TO ACCESS INFORMATION FROM PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS.

WITH THESE FREEDOMS, WE URGE CITIZENS TO AVOID ABUSING SOCIAL AND OTHER MEDIA BY SPREADING HATE SPEECH, MISINFORMATION, AND PROPAGANDA THAT HAS THE POTENTIAL TO THREATEN NATIONAL SECURITY. NO ONE SHOULD HIDE IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA SPACE TO COMMIT CRIMES. CRIMINALITY IS CRIMINALITY AND IT WILL BE PROSECUTED.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

WE HAVE CONTINUED TO DEVOLVE PUBLIC SERVICES TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES. BY DECEMBER THIS YEAR, AGRICULTURE SERVICES, LIVESTOCK AND FISHERIES SERVICES, AS WELL AS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES AT DISTRICT LEVEL WILL BE DEVOLVED. THIS WILL BRING THE NUMBER OF DEVOLVED FUNCTIONS TO **13**. THIS IS SUPPORTED WITH RESOURCE ALLOCATION AS APPROPRIATE.

WE ARE TAKING DECISION-MAKING CLOSER TO THE PEOPLE AND ENHANCING THEIR PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

THE ENHANCED CONSTITUENCY DEVELOPMENT FUND CONTINUES TO TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES AND THE LIVES OF OUR PEOPLE. TO ENHANCE THE ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FUND, THE CONSTITUENCY DEVELOPMENT FUND ACT HAS BEEN REPEALED AND REPLACED. THE NEW ACT HAS PROVIDED FOR ADDITIONAL MEASURES INCLUDING BROADER REPRESENTATION IN THE CONSTITUENCY DEVELOPMENT FUND COMMITTEE.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

THE NEW DAWN UPND ADMINISTRATION VALUES THE ROLE THAT OUR TRADITIONAL LEADERS PLAY IN OUR DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS.

AS SUCH, TO UPLIFT THE STATUS AND DIGNITY OF OUR TRADITIONAL LEADERS, WE HAVE MADE A SPECIAL PROVISION UNDER THE CDF FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF CHIEFS' PALACES. WE ARE CURRENTLY CONSTRUCTING **110** NEW CHIEFS' PALACES ACROSS THE COUNTRY. GOOD PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

IN OUR QUEST TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUITY AND EQUALITY GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO ENHANCE AFFORDABLE AND SPEEDY ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE. GOVERNMENT HAS CONTINUED TO CONSTRUCT FAST-TRACK COURTS. THIS YEAR, NEW COURTS HAVE BEEN CONSTRUCTED IN SOLWEZI, KASAMA, MANSA AND CHINSALI DISTRICTS. THIS BRINGS THE NUMBER OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE FAST-TRACK COURTS IN THE COUNTRY TO **10**.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO PROMOTE A GOOD GOVERNANCE ENVIRONMENT IN THE COUNTRY. WE WILL ENSURE THAT THE POLICY, LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS ARE STRENGTHENED.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

WE PROUDLY SALUTE OUR TALENTED SPORTSMEN AND WOMEN FOR FLYING THE ZAMBIAN FLAG HIGH OVER THE PAST YEAR, PARTICULARLY DURING THE WORLD'S GREATEST SPORTS SPECTACLE, THE PARIS OLYMPIC GAMES 2024.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION GOES TO OUR RESILIENT WOMEN'S FOOTBALL TEAM, WHO BRAVELY FACED OFF AGAINST SOME OF THE WORLD'S TOP TEAMS.

MUZALA SAMUKONGA BROUGHT IMMENSE GLORY AND PRIDE TO OUR NATION BY WINNING A BRONZE MEDAL, AND WE ALSO COMMEND THE OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE OF OTHER OLYMPIC COMPETITORS ACROSS VARIOUS DISCIPLINES.

SPORT HAS ONCE AGAIN PROVEN ITSELF TO BE THE GREATEST UNIFIER OF OUR NATION, SHOWCASING ITS POTENTIAL TO NOT ONLY BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER BUT ALSO PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

THROUGH SPORT, WE WITNESS THE BEST OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT - DETERMINATION, PERSEVERANCE, AND TRIUMPH.

**CONCLUSION**

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

AS A COUNTRY, WE HAVE MADE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN MANY SPHERES DESPITE THE CHALLENGES FACED.

OUR NATION HAS EXPERIENCED THE HARSH REALITIES OF THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE DEVASTATING DROUGHT.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

THE MILESTONES ATTAINED UNDER DEBT RESTRUCTURING HAVE GIVEN US FISCAL SPACE TO PLACE OUR ECONOMY BACK ON TRACK.

THE REVIVAL OF OUR MINES ON THE COPPERBELT HAS GAINED TRACTION. WE ARE WITNESSING THE RESTORATION OF HOPE AND RESURGENCE OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN OUR MINING TOWNS. MOPANI, KONKOLA, 28 SHAFT, NAME THEM, ARE BEING REVIVED, A SIGNAL THAT LIVES WILL BE BETTER ON THE COPPERBELT AND ELSEWHERE.

OUR FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION AND RECOVERY OF ASSETS IS ON COURSE. WE ARE EQUALLY ON COURSE IN EMPOWERING OUR PEOPLE THROUGH THE DECENTRALISATION AGENDA.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

AS CITIZENS OF THIS GREAT COUNTRY, WE OWE IT TO OURSELVES AND FUTURE GENERATIONS TO RAPIDLY ENHANCE OUR RESILIENCE TO NATURAL AND ECONOMIC DISRUPTIONS. YES, CLIMATE CHANGE PRESENTS US WITH CHALLENGES. MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR US TO DEVISE SOLUTIONS TO OUR CHALLENGES, IT IS A CALL TO ACTION, AND A CATALYST FOR INNOVATION.

LET US SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY TO FIND SOLUTIONS TO BUILD A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE. LET US HARNESS THE POWER OF OUR NATIONAL UNITY, COLLABORATION AND DETERMINATION. LET US EMBRACE SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES, INVEST IN GREEN TECHNOLOGIES AND EMPOWER OUR COMMUNITIES TO ADAPT AND THRIVE.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

A PROSPEROUS AND BETTER ZAMBIA IS NOT A MERE DREAM, BUT A TANGIBLE ASPIRATION WITHIN OUR REACH. WE MUST COMMIT TO WORKING TOGETHER AND EMBRACING AN INCLUSIVE AND SHARED FUTURE FOR ALL. WE MUST COMMIT TO SERVING OUR NATION AND THE ENTIRETY OF HUMANITY. WE MUST CONTINUE TO COMMIT TO AND BE PASSIONATE ABOUT BUILDING A PEACEFUL, UNITED AND PROSPEROUS ZAMBIA.

WITH DETERMINATION, RESILIENCE, AND HARD WORK, LET US BUILD A ZAMBIA THAT STANDS TALL AS A BEACON OF HOPE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

AS WE SAID IN THE THEME FOR OUR 60TH INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY, LET US HONOUR OUR HERITAGE AND EMBRACE OUR FUTURE.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

IT IS NOW OUR HONOUR AND PRIVILEGE TO DECLARE THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE THIRTEENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OFFICIALLY OPENED.

GOD BLESS OUR COUNTRY.  
GOD BLESS OUR PEOPLE.  
MAY GOD'S GRACE BE UPON US ALL.

**MADAM SPEAKER,**

WE THANK YOU.