

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

ON

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVE TO EXEMPT HEALTH
INSTITUTIONS AND WATER INSTALLATIONS IN RESPECT OF THE COUNTRYWIDE
LOAD MANAGEMENT

BY

THE HON. MINISTER OF ENERGY, MR NKHUWA, MP

Mr Speaker, I thank you most sincerely for giving me this opportunity to update the nation through this august House, on the implementation of the presidential directive to exempt health institutions and water installations in respect of the countrywide load management. This is arising from a point of order raised by Hon. Jack Mwiimbu, the Leader of the Opposition in the House.

Sir, you may recall that in September 2019, I rendered a ministerial statement on the Floor of this House regarding the electricity situation in the country and the work that my ministry has done following the onset of the power deficit.

Mr Speaker, on 13th September, 2019, His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Zambia, Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu, when opening the Fourth Session of the Twelfth National Assembly, issued a directive that all health institutions and water installations be exempted from the load shedding programme currently being undertaken by the Zambia Electricity Supply Corporation Limited (ZESCO). The Patriotic Front (PF) Government is a pro-poor Government that will not take pleasure in losing the lives of our people due to load management.

Sir, the Government, through ZESCO, commenced load management on a twenty-four period on Saturday, 1st June, 2019, with customers experiencing the outage for about four hours daily. Further revision to a minimum of eight hours has since been implemented to help mitigate the effects of the low water levels in our major dams. We are currently implementing load management as a measure to prolong the operations of our main generation stations. The power deficit has been increasing and currently stands at an average of 690 MW with the deficit

reaching 700 MW during pick periods. An estimated average power deficit of about 600 MW is anticipated for the period 1st September to 31st December, 2019.

My ministry, through ZESCO, immediately implemented measures to comply with the directive and exempted a number of health institutions across the country from the ongoing load shedding programme. The House may wish to note that officials from the Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Health have come up with a mutually agreed regime to ensure smooth implementation of the presidential directive.

Sir, the nature of the distribution system is such that it places operational limitations on exempting some health institutions from load management. This is due to the fact that some of these health institutions are not on dedicated lines and are supplied on common networks which have other customers targeted for load management. It should be noted that this exercise cannot be done immediately for all health institutions because of the nature of our grid system. Going forward, we need to invest in smart grid solutions as a long-term measure.

Mr Speaker, in view of the above, we have adopted a phased approach on the implementation of the directive. In the first phase, the ministry started by looking at 133 secondary and tertiary health institutions across the country comprising of teaching hospitals, central hospitals, general hospitals, specialist hospitals, district hospitals and level one hospitals. So far, sixty-one of these hospitals have been exempted from the load shedding programme and these are consuming about 101 MW of energy countrywide.

Sir, we are in the process of finding ways of exempting the remaining seventy-two institutions which require capital investment and time. We have noted that forty-three of the seventy-two hospitals already have diesel generators at their institutions which can be used as standby supply. The House may further wish to note that thirty of the remaining institutions do not have standby generators. In addition, there could be need to secure funding to purchase new generators for hospitals that do have them. We also encourage the use of other alternative sources of energy like solar that comes with storage facilities.

Mr Speaker, at a meeting held among the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Energy and the Zambia Electricity Supply Corporation (ZESCO) officials, it was resolved that the Ministry of Health should request for financing to purchase alternative sources of energy to power hospitals that are not on dedicated supply lines and do not have generators. It was also resolved that ZESCO should assist in providing technical expertise in maintenance of generators whilst the Ministry of Health should provide the service parts and other requisites.

Sir, in the second phase, the ministry is currently analysing about 2,300 primary health care facilities which include rural health centres, urban health centres and health posts across the country. This analysis involves assessment of the various energy requirements for the health centres in order to complete the implementation strategy. In the implementation of this phase, a similar approach to phase one will be applied.

Mr Speaker, by design, water utilities are either on dedicated lines or in a ring circuit, which enables ZESCO to provide alternative supply during maintenance or load management.

Mr Speaker, I thank you.