

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

ON

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTEGRATED NATIONAL REGISTRATION INFORMATION SYSTEM

Madam Speaker, I wish to thank you most sincerely for according me this opportunity to issue a ministerial statement on behalf of the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security.

Madam Speaker, thank you for affording me this opportunity to inform this august House and the nation at large, on the status of the implementation of the Integrated National Registration Information System (INRIS).

Madam Speaker, INRIS is the national and civil registration management system which is intended to provide biometric-enabled National Registration Cards (NRCs) and issuance of birth and death certificates by the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security through the Department of National Registration, Passport and Citizenship.

Madam Speaker, the ministry is charged with the responsibility of conducting national and civil registration. In addition, the ministry is authorised to issue travel documents and facilitate the acquisition of citizenship. The mandate is derived from the National Registration Act Chapter 126, the Passport Act No. 28 of 2016, the Citizenship Act No. 33 of 2016, the Births and Deaths Registration Act No. 51, the Marriage Act Chapter 50, and the Adoption Act Chapter 54 of the Laws of Zambia.

Madam Speaker, national registration covers registration of all eligible persons and issuing them with appropriate NRCs as legal identity in accordance with the National Registration Act Chapter 126 of the Laws of Zambia.

Madam Speaker, you may wish to note that in 1965, the country started the issuance of NRCs to citizens aged sixteen years and above using a manual and paper-based system. Since then, the manual and paper-based system has not changed despite it being susceptible to fraud and other

abuses. The manual system has also failed to respond to demands arising from continued growth in population and rapid changes in technology, which has resulted in problems such as duplication of NRC numbers, identity fraud, and challenges in records management.

Madam Speaker, the current manual-based system lacks mechanisms to prevent foreigners from registering as Zambians, especially during outreach programmes such as the mobile issuance of NRCs in border areas. Registration officers solely depend on the use of affidavits to register a person. The INRIS, however, will assign a national identity number at birth as opposed to when a citizen is sixteen years old. This will make it very difficult for any ineligible person to register as a Zambian citizen.

Madam Speaker, INRIS will provide wider services beyond issuance of biometric-enabled digital NRCs and civil registration. The benefits of INRIS will include:

- (a) enhanced security system through proper identification of citizens. Individuals will not easily change their identify as the case may be for some re-offenders;
- (b) the biometric identification system will contribute towards promotion of good governance and reduce cost of voter registration. The system will enhance the electoral process by facilitating effective voter registration and identification;
- (c) the Government will minimise wasteful expenditure as ministries, provinces, and other spending agencies will not need to invest in similar biometric identification infrastructure but ride on the INRIS platform;
- (d) optimisation of administration of various Public Service systems such as strengthened tax administration by broadening the tax base, strengthened social services administration by preventing double-dipping and ineligible beneficiaries, and promotion of health insurance administration by providing unique identity for beneficiaries; and

- (e) the biometric system will enable digital NRCs with financial wallets, which will contribute towards financial inclusion amongst the unbanked population.

Madam Speaker, the House may also wish to note that the national identity database for individuals is a primary platform for “Know Your Customer” or “Know Your Client” (KYC) guidelines in financial services, which require that institutions make an effort to verify their identity, suitability and risk involved with maintaining business relationships. In view of the aforementioned, the implementation of INRIS will enable financial institutions to know their customers and manage their risk prudently.

Madam Speaker, the development of INRIS has been completed and the hardware connectivity configuration has been set up. The INRIS has also been successfully deployed in eleven districts, namely Choma, Livingstone, Mongu, Solwezi, Ndola, Mansa, Kasama, Chinsali, Chipata, Lusaka and Kabwe. In addition, the House may wish to know that the enrolment of those obtaining NRCs has commenced in the above mentioned districts, which includes capturing of biometrics and registration of births as well as issuance of birth certificates using the system. Further, to curb the problem of ghost workers on the payroll in the Public Service, the Government has prioritised enrolment of all Public Service workers.

Madam Speaker, finally, I would like to assure the nation, through this august House, that the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security, through the Department of National Registration, Passport and Citizenship will do its best in ensuring that all citizens and eligible residents are uniquely identified to promote internal security and also to enhance service delivery by both the Government and the private sector.

Madam Speaker, the ministry is collaborating with stakeholders to make sure that this exercise is successfully undertaken. I, therefore, wish to implore the general public to appreciate the value of this migration and to co-operate during this very important national programme, as routine enrolment has commenced, while field mobile enrolments are planned to commence as soon as resources are made available. The exercise is estimated to cost a total of K1,069,366,200. This

includes deployment of the system to district offices, enrolment of citizens through routine and mobile registration, as well as issuance of cards.

Madam Speaker, with your permission, I would like to thank you most sincerely for this privilege that I have been accorded.

I thank you, Madam Speaker.