

FRIDAY, 24 MARCH, 2016

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

BY THE

MINISTER OF HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT,

MR CHITOTELA,

ON THE

**FLOODING OF KAFUE RIVER AT KAFUE HOOK BRIDGE IN KAFUE NATIONAL
PARK – CENTRAL PROVINCE**

Mr Speaker, I wish to thank you most sincerely for granting me this opportunity to make a ministerial statement on the high water levels in Kafue River at Kafue Hook Bridge in Kafue National Park of Central Province.

Mr Chitotela: Sir, the Government, through my ministry, has prioritised infrastructure such roads and bridges as key to National development. Accordingly, the Government is heavily investing in the construction, upgrading, rehabilitation and maintenance of the all road infrastructure across the country. This commitment is demonstrated through the implementation of various road infrastructure projects being undertaken in the country under the charge of the Road Development Agency (RDA).

Mr Speaker, RDA was established by the Road Public Act of No. 12 of 2002 for the purpose of providing care, maintenance and construction of all public roads in Zambia, and to also regulate the maximum weight permissible for transmission on our roads.

Sir, the Government, through the Ministry of Transport and Communications, in September, last year, indicated through a press release that the country was likely to receive normal to above normal to above normal rainfall during the 2016/2017 rain season, with a possibility of flash floods. Institutions responsible for disaster management were requested to prepare for any eventuality that may arise during this period. Indeed, in January, February and March, 2017, the country has received normal to above normal rains that has exerted pressure on the road infrastructure across the country.

FRIDAY, 24 MARCH, 2016

Mr Speaker, on the 11th March, 2017, a report was received from Kafue Hook Bridge site office in Kafue National Park that the Kafue River had flooded and the water levels had exceeded the historical flood levels at Hook Bridge site. The water level has risen by 3m since December, 2016. This high level and velocity of water is posing a great danger to the old bridge structure which I must inform you, Sir, that it requires urgent attention.

Sir, RDA awarded a works contract to Messrs. China Henan International Co-operation Group Co. Ltd for the rehabilitation of the 270m Kafue Hook Bridge along the Lusaka/Mongu Road (M009) in Western Province at a contract sum of K147,539,014.61 Value Added Tax (VAT) inclusive, with a completion period of twenty-four months. The commencement of the contract was 19th August, 2015, and the planned completion is 8th August, 2017. This bridge links Western, Central and Lusaka provinces via Lusaka/Mongu Road.

Mr Speaker, the scope of works includes, but is not limited to the following:

- (a) provision of a temporary river crossing, a barge and temporary access roads;
- (b) pilling for the proposed bridge foundations;
- (c) clearing of bush and vegetation along the bridge approach roads;
- (d) construction and installation of sub-structure bridge components;
- (e) demolition of dysfunctional piers, crack sealing of the east abutment and the construction of five new piers;
- (f) removal and installation of new bridge bearings;
- (g) construction of selected embankments for the sub-base, base coarse and new double seal bituminous surfacing on the bridge approaching the road; and

FRIDAY, 24 MARCH, 2016

(h) bridge furniture.

Sir, works commenced in October, 2015, and the construction of a temporary bridge was completed in November, 2016. Following the completion of the temporary bridge, traffic will now be diverted from the main bridge. The maximum allowable load on that temporary bridge will be limited to 56 tonnes.

Mr Speaker, following the floods at the bridge, the Road Development Agency (RDA) engineers are tasked in liaison with other stakeholders on the ground to monitor the situation and advise accordingly when the situation changes.

Mr Speaker, the RDA has responded with haste to engage China Henan International Corporation who has since mobilised and started the repair works. It should be noted, however, that due to the amount of work involved, the contractor will only be able to commence works on the main bridge after the water level has gone down. The general public will be advised in due course on the requirement to adhere to the weight restrictions on the temporary bridge.

Mr Speaker, allow me to conclude by reaffirming that the Ministry of Housing and Infrastructure Development, through the RDA, will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that roads and bridges of good quality are constructed in our quest to transform Zambia from being landlocked to being land-linked. Further, maintenance of the road infrastructure has been prioritised by the Government. I wish to also take this opportunity to inform the nation that the ministry, together with the RDA, is monitoring the situation on the Kafue Hook Bridge to ensure we preserve this important bridge structure for the country and save lives.

Mr Speaker, I thank you.