

**FRIDAY, 16 JUNE, 2017**

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

ON THE

PROGRESS MADE IN CURBING THE INDISCIPLINE CUTTING OF INDIGENOUS  
TREES SUCH AS MUKULA

BY THE

HON. MINISTER OF LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCE, MS KAPATA

Mr Speaker, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to render a ministerial statement to this august House and the nation at large, on timber trade in Zambia and the progress made in curbing the indiscriminate cutting of indigenous trees, especially, Mukula tree.

Sir, as the august House and the nation may be aware, on 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2017, my ministry informed the nation on the measures that the Government, through my ministry took in addressing the illegal harvesting and trading of indigenous trees particularly, Mukula tree in according with the Forest Act No. 4 of 2015. Among the measures that my ministry took include:

- (a) suspension of export of round wood or logs of any timber tree species including Mukula tree;
- (b) ban of the transit of trucks carrying round wood or logs of various indigenous tree species from other countries through Zambia as contained in Statutory Instrument (SI) No. 31 of 2017. This measure is aimed at curbing the illegal harvesting of trees in Zambia which are being purported to have been harvested in the neighbouring countries on transit through Zambia;
- (c) prohibit the movement of round wood or logs for over 100 km from concession licence areas in accordance with SI No. 50 of 2016. This measure is aimed at promoting the value addition within the concession and surrounding areas, thereby, creating jobs;

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- (d) engage the Road Transport and Safety Agency (RTSA) and the Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA) to impound any trucks found transporting round wood or logs beyond 100 km radius of the forest concession area;
- (e) engage the defence and security winds to help curb illegal movement and trading of our natural resources; and
- (f) delegating some functions on the control of harvesting and trade to the Provincial Ministers to work with the Provincial Joint Operation Committees (PJOCs) in order to curb illegal timber activities.

Mr Speaker, I wish to inform this august House and the nation that these measures have yielded positive results. Between February and May, 2017, a total of 466 trucks carrying Mukula logs suspected to have been illegally harvested were interrupted and detained in various parts of the country.

Sir, further, between 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2017, and 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2017, the Central Joint Operation Committee (CJOC) together with officers from my ministry, ZRA and the Drug Enforcement Commission (DEC) conducted a verification exercise aimed at ascertaining whether the impounded trucks had legal documentation to transport through Zambia. The verification exercise revealed that 272 trucks had the necessary documentation while 194 did not have any.

Mr Speaker, in order to build on the positive effect of the early actions to curb illegal timber activities, my ministry has now put in place the following measures:

- (a) all the 272 trucks carrying timber logs which have legal documentation to transit through Zambia are being released and allowed to proceed to their respective destinations;
- (b) the 194 trucks carrying timber logs that are not supported with documentation will be dealt with on a case by case basis in accordance with the Laws of Zambia;

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- (c) my ministry has forthwith banned the export of all types of timber species until further notice. This measure is aimed at promoting value addition and attracting investment in the timber industry;
- (d) my ministry will allow concession licences to continue operating and supplying timber to the local industry in order to empower the local people and ensure sustainable operation of the timber industry;
- (e) production and conveyance permits will continue to be issued in accordance with Statutory Instrument No. 50 of 2016, which is the Forest Concession License Regulations;
- (f) the Government will put in place appropriate policy and legal framework to facilitate the establishment of the value addition enterprises within the country in the shortest possible time;
- (g) my ministry will continue to engage stakeholders in the timber industry to ensure sustainable management of the forest resources; and
- (h) the ministry has developed draft Community Forest Management Regulations that will ensure participation of the local communities in sustainable forest management.

In addition to the above stated measures, my ministry has commenced the process of revising Act No. 24 of 2015 of the Laws of Zambia to stiffen the penalties relating to illegal harvest and trade in our forests. The amendment Bill will soon be presented on the Floor of this House.

Sir, as I conclude, I wish to inform this House that the extra measures that have been put in place by my ministry are aimed at ensuring that our forest resources are preserved for the present and future generations without threatening the sustainable social economic development of this country.

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My ministry is determined and has resolved to put in measures in order to improve the conservation and management of forest resources. Furthermore, my ministry shall ensure and facilitate the effective participation of local communities in the development of relevant policies, plans and programmes in line with the Patriotic Front's (PF) Manifesto and the Constitution of Zambia.

I wish to appeal to our citizens to be patriotic in the management of forests.

Mr Speaker, I thank you.