

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

ON

WATER SOURCES POLLUTION IN ZAMBIA RESULTING FROM MINING ACTIVITIES

BY THE

HON. MINISTER OF WATER DEVELOPMENT, SANITATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION, MR KAZIYA

Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me this opportunity to deliver a ministerial statement on water sources pollution in Zambia as a result of mining activities.

Sir, I would like to remind this House that Parliament enacted the Environmental Management Act No. 12 of 2011, in order to repeal and replace the Environmental Protection and Pollution Control Act of 1990. This was also done to continue the existence of the Environmental Council and rename it as Zambia Environmental Management Agency (ZEMA). Allow me to state that the Environmental Management Act, *inter alia*, gives the mandate to ZEMA to undertake the prevention and control of pollution and environmental degradation in Zambia.

Mr Speaker, furthermore, I wish to inform hon. Members and the people of Zambia at large that in order to ensure that the agency undertakes necessary interventions of ensuring sustainable management of natural resources and environmental protection as well as prevention and control of pollution, the Act confers functions in the agency that include, but are not limited to the following:

- (a) develop and enforce measures aimed at preventing and controlling pollution;
- (b) develop standards and guidelines on the protection of air, water, land and other natural resources as well as the prevention and control of pollution, the discharge of waste and the control of toxic substances;
- (c) collaborate with appropriate authorities and other bodies and institutions to control pollution and protect the environment; and

- (d) carry out activities relating to environmental management and prevention as well as control of pollution.

Sir, a number of environmental problems including air pollution, water pollution and land degradation, amongst others, were identified as key problems during the National Conservation Strategy and the National Environment Action Plan in 1985 and 1992, respectively. Air and water pollution were attributed mainly, but not limited, to mining activities.

Mr Speaker, water pollution continues to be an environmental problem and the mining sector has continued to be a major source of pollution. Consequently, in exercise of its mandate under Section 48 (J) of the Environmental Management Act, which requires the agency to do all such things as necessary to ensure monitoring and control of water pollution, ZEMA, in conjunction with the Water Resource Management Authority (WARMA) and other key stakeholders, has over the years undertaken studies in selected parts of the country on industrial activities to assess associated impacts on the environment.

Sir, I further wish to inform this House that these studies were conducted and concentrated on the Copperbelt, Central and Lusaka Provinces as well as along the Kafue River Basin. Regrettably, the results from the studies have shown that there has been pollution and environmental change in some parts of the country's water resources which are highly linked to industrialisation.

Mr Speaker, for instance, the study carried out in 2005, under a project sponsored by the World Bank, revealed that the Kafue River Basin was constantly under stress from industrial activities, especially mining and mining related activities. Furthermore, the study showed that water quality varied throughout the stretch of the river in that the Upper Kafue on the Copperbelt was particularly affected by mining activities with base metal pollutants such as copper and cobalt, amongst others, being recorded. In addition, the study also showed the problem of acidity along the same stretch of the river. On the other hand, there have been recent reports of pollution of Kafue River and its tributaries from mining related activities. ZEMA has since instituted

investigations and increased the frequency of its monitoring of the industries in the mining catchment area.

Sir, other results from the study showed that the middle course of the Kafue River was affected by pollutants from manufacturing industries such as food processing and detergent manufacturing. Other pollutants were from activities such as agricultural activities along the lower basin whose main source is from agro-chemicals such as fertilisers, especially coming from Mazabuka District.

Mr Speaker, studies carried out in Lusaka in 2010, on the Chongwe/Ngwerere River system showed water pollution from agro-chemicals and industrial effluent amongst others. In addition, new studies have also revealed that water bodies in the North Western Province are also beginning to show signs of elevated mining related pollutants due to increased mining activities in the region.

Sir, allow me to state that through the compliance monitoring programme as well as the review of environmental returns, ZEMA has identified seven key facilities whose emissions exceeded national standards as prescribed in the Environmental Licensing Regulation Statutory Instrument No. 112 of 2013, which prescribes limits for various parameters such as copper, cobalt, lead, cadmium and similar metals. I further wish to inform the House that the said returns covered emissions from both air and water for the period from October to December, 2016.

Mr Speaker, investigations by ZEMA on the Copperbelt have revealed that some of the most affected water bodies by the high levels of pollution include, Mwambashi, Muntipa, Mushishimba and Chingola streams as well as the Kafue River. The major pollutants to the water bodies were copper, cobalt, iron, manganese and total suspended solids (TSS). I note with concern that these pollutants have adversely affected the said water bodies resulting in, amongst other effects, siltation of stream beds, changes in water chemistry and impacted aquatic life and adversely affecting other water users, like domestic users. Due to the serious consequences to the health of the people living along or around water bodies, the Ministry has since brought this to attention of the mining companies and stringent measures have been taken against them.

Mr Speaker, at this juncture, allow me to highlight some of the measures that the ministry, through the Zambia Environment Management Agency (ZEMA) has undertaken to ensure that there is enhancement of water pollution monitoring programmes with special emphasis on mining activities and other related industries.

Sir, in the short term, ZEMA has continued to institute investigations and has also increased the frequency of monitoring of industries to ensure control and compliance to national standards for emissions, not to water but on air, as well. Arising from this measure, and as stated above, ZEMA, working with other Government agencies was able to identify seven mining companies on the Copperbelt whose emissions were above prescribed pollution control limits, which were contrary to the provisions of Statutory Instrument (SI) No. 112 of 2013.

Mr Speaker, in light of these findings, the seven companies have since been issued with compliance orders to immediately institute measures to comply with national emission standards. In addition to the compliance order, one mining company has been served with an Environmental Restoration Order to remedy the pollution it has caused in the Mwambashi, Mushishima and Muntipa streams. Furthermore, the said mining company has been served with key conditions that included the following:

- (a) restoring the flow channels of the three streams, namely Chingola, Mushishima and Muntipa by de-silting their beds immediately;
- (b) development and implementation of programmes for continuous de-silting of the three streams namely Chingola, Mushishima, Muntipa and the pollution control dam (PCD) to immediately prevent the contribution which is causing water pollution;

- (c) conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the restoration of Chingola and Mushishima streams and the Hippo Pool.

Mr Speaker, in this regard, I wish to take this opportunity to assure the people affected by the pollution of the water bodies that ZEMA will utilise relevant provisions of the Environmental Management Act to ensure that all the seven companies comply with the conditions of the compliance and environmental restoration orders which they have been served with. Non-compliance of companies shall attract stringent measures including complete shutdown of companies and litigation.

Mr Speaker, allow me to stress that the enactment of the Environment Management Act, No. 12 of 2011, has broadened the mandate of the agency and consequently, require enhanced capacity for ZEMA in order to meet this broad mandate. The Government is, therefore, making strides in the continuous capacity building of staff for ZEMA, especially, with regard to emerging environmental issues such as e-waste, climate change, strategic environmental assessment as well as infrastructure development.

Sir, on the other hand, the agency is making strides in ensuring that it extends its geographical presence to all the ten provinces of Zambia. To this end, the Government, through ZEMA plans to open three offices in Solwezi, Nakonde and Chipata in 2017, to ensure close monitoring of the regulated industries such as mines. In addition, ZEMA plans to expand its workforce from the current ninety-one to 241 in the next five years to ensure that the agency is responsive to the needs of the country and, thus, having a ripple effect in the regulation of industries resulting in increased environmental compliance.

Mr Speaker, I further wish to take this opportunity to inform the people of Zambia that ZEMA is currently developing a strategic plan that will encompass enhancement of the current enforcement mechanism for environmental protection.

Sir, I would like to mention that the current legal framework provides for issuance of orders including the compliance orders to ensure that industries comply with the provisions of the law.

It is in this regard that ZEMA relies upon this mechanism coupled with capacity building programmes to ensure that enforcement is a priority. Further, I wish to take this opportunity to sound a timely warning that in addition to the measures I have highlighted above, ZEMA will undertake to institute criminal proceedings against perpetrators of water pollution and indeed, other pollution related offences.

Mr Speaker, I wish to make an earnest appeal to hon. Members of Parliament and the people of Zambia to support the efforts that ZEMA and indeed, the Government of the Republic of Zambia are making to ensure that our environment is managed in a sustainable manner.

Sir, in conclusion, I would like to assure the people of Zambia that the Government, through the able leadership of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Zambia, Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu remains focused in providing adequate support towards sustainable management of the environment in Zambia for our future generation.

I thank you, Sir.