

TUESDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER, 2018

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

ON THE

PREPARATIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FARMER INPUT SUPPORT
PROGRAMME IN 2018/2019 AGRICULTURAL SEASON

BY THE

HON. MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (MR KATAMBO), MP

Madam Speaker, before I issue my ministerial statement, allow me to take this opportunity to express my sincere and deepest sympathy on the tragic death of our beloved citizens who perished in a road accident in South Africa and have been laid to rest today. May their souls rest in eternal peace.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to deliver this ministerial statement on the preparations that the ministry has undertaken so far for the Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP) for the 2018/2019 Agricultural Season. This statement is a follow up to the one I delivered on 11th July, 2018, to this august House. In the statement delivered in July, 2018, I announced that the Government will use two approaches in the distribution of inputs to the farmers, namely, the FISP Electronic Voucher System and the direct supply of inputs to the farmers. The two approaches, will continue to have their data base managed by the Zambia Integrated Agriculture Management Information System (ZIAMIS). This means that farmers' deposits of K400 and the Government contribution of K1,700 will be captured under the ZIAMIS.

Madam Speaker, under the direct supply of inputs, a total of 373,616 farmers in fifty-four districts will be serviced. In preparation for the direct supply of inputs to the farmers, contracts for supply of D-compound and urea fertilisers have been awarded to four companies. To date, a total of 93,478 metric tonnes of D-compound and 65,751 metric tonnes of urea fertilisers have been distributed to the targeted districts.

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Madam, I am delighted to state that all the contracted fertiliser suppliers are currently delivering stocks to the designated districts. To-date, 65 per cent of D-compound and 81 per cent of urea fertiliser has been positioned in the targeted districts.

The ministry has also just completed the tender process for seed suppliers. A total of ten seed companies have been engaged to supply assorted seed varieties to beneficiary farmers. All seed stocks are expected to be in the district by 31st October, 2018.

Madam Speaker, the other sixty-one districts, target beneficiaries will be serviced through the e-voucher system using cardless mechanism with eligible agro-dealers participating in input supply. A total of 626,384 farmers are targeted under the e-voucher system for the 2018/19 Agriculture Season.

Under the cardless system, farmer deposits will be confirmed in the system. An electronic voucher or code will be generated and issued to the farmers. Farmers will use electronic voucher in some districts biometrics to redeem their inputs from any agro-dealer shop. The agro-dealers will then be issued an invoice for payments for all the redeemed inputs.

Madam Speaker, to facilitate the implementation of the Fertiliser Input Support Programme (FISP) under both direct input supply and the e-voucher, the ministry has engaged seven banks and two non-banking institutions to participate during the 2018/19 Season. The banks include: Barclays Bank, Zambia National Commercial Bank (ZANACO), Eco Bank, UBA Bank, NASAVE Bank, Indo Zambia and Atlas-Mara Bank. The two none banking institutions are Paycode and Mobile Payment Solution.

In addition, all districts have completed the cleaning up of the beneficiaries' database under the Zambia Integrated Agricultural Management Information System (ZIAMIS). The ministry has also completed sensitisation meetings for provincial and district staff on the implementation modalities of FISP programme for 2018/19 Season.

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Madam Speaker, as I have alluded to, the number of beneficiaries for 2018/19 Agricultural Season for FISP, under the two approaches, the targeted number of farmers remains the same at 1,000,000. The farmer contribution will still be K400.00 and Government contribution will be K1,700.00.

I have already called upon the targeted farmers to start depositing their K400.00 to the designated banks in their districts.

Madam Speaker, I thank you.