**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

ON

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT, MR EDGAR CHAGWA LUNGU’S VISITS TO CHINA AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

BY THE HON. MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MR MALANJI, MP

Mr Speaker, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to address the House with the following statement.

I have the honour to report to this august House on two recent international engagements by His Excellency, Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu, the President of the Republic of Zambia. Firstly, the visit to China to attend the Forum on China-Africa Corporation (FOCAC) 2018 Summit, and secondly, his recent visit to the United States of America to attend the high level segment of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Mr Speaker, His Excellency the President visited China from 31st August, 2018, to 6th September, 2018, to attend the FOCAC Summit which was held under the theme “Towards an Even Stronger China/Africa Community with a Shared Future. Zambia was among the fifty-three African countries that attended the summit. The major outcomes of the summit include the following:

*(a)* His Excellency Xi Jinping announced eight focus areas of cooperation with African countries namely, Industrial Promotion, Infrastructure Connectivity, Trade Facilitation, Green Development, Capacity Building, Health Care, People-to-People and Peace and Security in the next three years and beyond;

*(b)* the Chinese government offered US$60 billion financing to African countries towards the implementation of these focus areas. Zambia is expected to benefit from the funds which will be in the form of Government assistance, investment and financing by financial institutions and companies.

*(c)* Africa’s least developed countries, heavily indebted and poor countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing countries that have diplomatic relations with China were exempted from paying the debt incurred in the form of interest-free Chinese Government loans that are due to mature by the end of 2018.

*(d)* the summit adopted the 2018 Beijing Declaration and the 2019/2021 Action Plan which, among other things agreed that the exchanges cooperation would be enhanced between Parliaments of African Countries and the National People’s Congress of China as well as between Parliaments of African countries and the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Republic Consultative Conference.

Mr Speaker, the FOCAC framework is, therefore, of direct relevance to this august House. In addition to attending the FOCAC Summit, His Excellency the President held bilateral talks with his Excellency President Xi Jinping during which a wide range of bilateral cooperation as well as peace and security was discussed. Arising from the meeting, China, inter alia, undertook to construct an ultra-modern convention Centre in Lusaka that will host the African Union Summit in 2020.

The Republican President also held a meeting with His Excellency, Mr Li Zhanshu, the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress during which the two sides agreed to enhance cooperation between the National People’s Congress and this august House. This august House is further expected to benefit through exchanges between the two newly established Zambia-China Friendship groups.

His Excellency the President further met with His Excellency Mr Liu Qi, Secretary of the CPC Jiangxi Provincial Government where the two sides agreed to explore cooperation and exchanges between political parties and relevant provincial administrations. Whilst in Jiangxi, a Letter of Intent to twin Jiangxi and Muchinga Provinces as well as a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish an industrial park, were signed.

Mr Speaker, in advancing economic diplomacy, His Excellency participated into business fora which were attended by the business community from the two sides. Zambia is expected to benefit through the various Memoranda of Understanding signed during the business forum.

Mr Speaker, the impact from His Excellency’s visit to China include:

(i) projects that could be implemented in Zambia under the 2019-2021 FOCAC Action Plan in areas of industrialisation, infrastructure development, trade facilitation, climate change health, but to mention a few;

(ii) the benefits that will arise out of the operationalising the fourteen agreements that were signed in the areas of export of honey, value addition of leather, mineral processing, economic and technical cooperation, belt and road initiative, development of economic zones and industrial parks, ICT development, twinning and rail development;

(iii) supply of electricity to the Lusaka East Multi-Facility Economic Zone;

(iv) development of provinces in Zambia through the twinning programme with China; and

(v) support for the peace and security in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region during Zambia’s tenure as Chairperson of the SADC organ hence creating a favourable environment for trade and investment as well as the wellbeing of the Zambian people.

Mr Speaker, the visit was clearly successful and in line with Zambia’s foreign policy aimed at advancing national interests through the implementation of both political and economical diplomacy. In addition, the visit was in line with Zambia’s aspiration to promote value addition, industrialisation, diversification; and job creation, as articulated in the Seventh National Development Plan. Let me therefore; echo the sentiments of His Excellency the President during his recent Official Opening of the National Assembly, in condemning the false, malicious and distorted reports that have been circulating, which seek to malign Zambia’s mutually beneficial relationship with China. Such misleading reports should be completely ignored and dismissed as falsehoods.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, I wish to emphasise that Zambia’s relations with China are not that of a horse and the rider but that of mutual respect and equality. China is an all-weather friend and it is the Zambian Government’s desire to continue strengthening and deepening cooperation with China in various areas of mutual interest for both countries.

THE HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE 73RD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Mr Speaker, allow me also to highlight the outcomes of the visit by His Excellency the President to the United States of America to attend the High Level Segment of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly that took place in New York from the 23rd to 28th September, 2018.

Sir, the high level segment took place under the theme

“Making the United Nations Relevant to All People: Global Leadership and Shared Responsibilities for Peaceful, Equitable and Sustainable Socities.”

Mr Speaker during the United Nations (UN) Session, His Excellency the President projected Zambia’s national interests by *inter alia* delivering statements at the High-Level General Debate; the Nelson Mandela Centenary Peace Summit, the High-Level Meeting with the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases and the meeting on the fight against Tuberculosis.

Mr Speaker, I also wish to inform this august House that His Excellency the President participated in other High-Level Side Events and bilateral meetings during the visit. Allow me to highlight some of them.

Sir, His Excellency the President participated in the action for peacekeeping meeting convened by the UN Secretary-General on 25th September, 2018. During the meeting, His Excellency the President outlined Zambia’s credentials in peacekeeping and indicated its commitment to ensure that it adheres to the highest standards through their deployment in various missions.

Mr Speaker, arising from the meeting, Zambia signed onto the Canadian led Elsie Initiative which seeks to promote gender balance in peacekeeping. Zambia’s invitation to be part of this initiative is due to the recognition among countries that have the highest levels of female peacekeepers within the United Nations. The Canadian Government is set to provide support in various areas including training and capacity building.

Mr Speaker, I also wish to inform this august that His Excellency the President co-chaired a roundtable discussion on “Accelerating Action to End Child Marriage” on 26th September, 2018. The leadership role in co-chairing is based on the recognition that His Excellency the President has been bestowed with the honour as the African Union (AU) Champion on Ending Child Marriage.

Sir, it should be noted that his Excellency the President has received a wide range of support in this fight, notably from the traditional establishment, amongst other stakeholders. This august House may also to note that the inclusion on the official delegation and participation in this side event by Her Royal Highest Chieftainess Muwezwa of Itezhi-tezhi District underscored the collaboration and support which His Excellency the President is enjoying in this fight. We commended Her Royal Highness for ably representing our traditional leaders at the event.

Mr Speaker, I wish to inform this august House that His Excellency attended the 6th annual board meeting of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Centre for Africa, where he was inaugurated as a member. Earlier on 23rd September, 2018, Zambia signed the Host Agreement for Sustainable Development Goals Centre Sub-Region Centre for Southern African that will be based in Lusaka. The Sub-Region Office operating under the ambit of the Sustainable Development Solution Network that was launched by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in August, 2012, will coordinate resources and programmes to be implemented in the fourteen Southern African countries.

In addition, Sir, to attend the highlighted events, His Excellency also held a number of bilateral meetings, among which were His Excellency the Presidents of Mauritius, the Right Honourable Prime Minister of Belgium, His Excellency the President of St Vincent and Grenadines and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) management. His Excellency the President also held fruitful discussions with the United States of America’s Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Mr Tibor Nagy Jr, which focused on peace and security in the region, as well as the need for enhanced bilateral trade and increased investment in Zambia by American companies. The two sides also reaffirmed the good relations between the two countries. The meeting with the officials from the Millennium Challenge Corporation, focused on the on-going work in the area of water sanitation, generously funded by the American people as well as on future cooperation.

As is clearly evident, the Zambian Government is committed and ready to work with its co-operating partners from all parts of the world, in line with Zambia’s Foreign Policy, in order to uplift the living standards of our people to even higher heights. His Excellency the President also took time to address the Zambian community in New York on developments in Zambia. It is important that the Diaspora are kept abreast to ensure patriotism and their effective participation in the country’s development.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, I wish to state that active participation of His Excellency the President in the regional, continental and global affairs, coupled with interactions at bilateral level, will continue to advance Zambia’s standing on the international stage and serve to promote the country’s interests.

Mr Speaker, I thank you.