



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE PASSENGER TRAIN 602 ACCIDENT AT NATEBE STATION

Thank you Mr. Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to present a Ministerial statement on the preliminary findings on the passenger train 602 of 11th October, 2013 that was gutted by fire at Natebe station 20 km from Livingstone.

Mr. Speaker,

Zambia Railways Limited has been operating passengers on both the north and south routes i.e

Livingstone to Kitwe and Kitwe to Livingstone on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

On Friday 11th October, 2013, the North bound train 602 with 9 x coaches and 2 x baggage vans was scheduled to depart at 20:00 hours but was delayed for 50 minutes due to electrical repairs after it was found to have an electrical fault on the Distribution Box (DB) and repairs on the main jumper cable which sparked due to poor insulation as a result of aging of insulation and later on shear.

After these repairs on the DB and all other routine procedures conducted the train was declared ready for use. The coaches were being pulled by locomotive engine 01 -251 and had 199 passengers on board.

It left Livingstone with nine coaches and two baggage vans. All seemed to be well until after travelling for 20km at about 21:15 hours the passengers alerted the train crew of a suspected fire in the first coach as they noticed some smoke coming from the ceiling of the coach.

Zambia Railways Limited crew immediately stopped the locomotive and assisted all passengers to disembark with their luggage to safety.

The crew decoupled the coaches from the locomotive engine, first two which they thought had fire then in the process discovered that even the others were on fire as the fire had propagated through the cushions materials in the ceiling at a very fast rate.

By the time the Fire Brigade came to assist, the nine coaches and part of one baggage van which houses the generator were already in flames and were lost in the inferno. They would not be salvaged.

However, NO human life was lost and NO injuries were sustained by anyone.

POST ACCIDENT EVENTS:

1. Zambia Railways Limited hired 10 buses to ferry the passengers to Livingstone.
2. All 199 passengers were then refunded their monies both those who had and did not have tickets.

REVIVAL OF PASSENGER SERVICE TRAIN

Zambia Railways Limited would need about ZMW18.6 million or \$3.5 million to replace the lost coaches. However, despite the loss the Corporation has reorganised its existing coaches and the 4 x rehabilitated to ensure that the trains were operational again.

It will however, reduce the number of coaches the locomotive engine would be pulling from 9 to 7 per train.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN

INTERIM:

Some of the measures to be taken in the interim to prevent a recurrence are:

- a. All ballasts on electrical fittings be replaced on the coaches;
- b. Address communication system lapses on the train between both:
 - the crew and base stations
 - the crew and passengers
 - the station admin and clients at Livingstone

- c. Review the security, safety, fire fighting training methods and equipment on the train.
- d. Review all engineering maintenance inspections procedures, method and content.

LONG TERM

1. Replace all 40 year old coaches

This Mr. Speaker is a preliminary report as investigations are ongoing in order for us to find an optimum solution.

Mr. Speaker I thank you.