

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
ON THE
MEASURES TO EQUALISE INPUT DISTRIBUTION UNDER FISP
BY THE
HON. MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (MR M. R. PHIRI), MP

Madam Speaker, I thank you this opportunity to issue a ministerial statement on the measures that the Government has put in place to equalise input distribution under the Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP) in the 2021/2022 agriculture season.

Madam, in my ministerial statement, I will update the House on the following specific issues:

- (a) status on the ongoing audit of contracted input suppliers under FISP; and
- (b) measures that the Government has taken to ensure equity and fairness in the distribution of inputs.

Madam Speaker, as a preamble to my ministerial statement, I would like to mention that the update has become necessary because of the questions and enquiries that the Ministry of Agriculture has been receiving in relation to the implementation of FISP in the current agriculture season. In the 2021/2022 agriculture season, FISP will target a total of 1,024,434 farmers across the country. It is important to note that all beneficiaries of the programme each contribute K400 to be eligible to receive inputs, and from this contribution, K100 will be paid as a premium towards the weather index insurance.

Madam Speaker, allow me to update the House on the status of the FISP audit that the Government commissioned in September 2021. The hon. Members of the House may wish to know that as a precautionary measure to ensure that the right quantities have been physically delivered to all districts in the country, the Government commissioned an audit of the input distribution process under FISP. It is important to note that for the current agriculture season, the

Government has contracted various suppliers to deliver a total of 328,265 metric tonnes of fertiliser.

The audit is ongoing, and so far, the findings have revealed that some suppliers have partially delivered inputs in districts. To be specific, the preliminary audit report also indicates that approximately 63 per cent of the total contracted fertiliser has been delivered to date. It is for this reason that the Government has now engaged other relevant institutions to validate the findings of the audit in order to recommend a way forward.

Madam Speaker, over the years, the implementation of FISP has favoured those who receive inputs under the direct input supply modality. I wish to state that the increase in commodity prices has disadvantaged farmers on the Electronic-Voucher (e-Voucher) modality because the subsidy value has remained unchanged for a long time. It has been established that farmers under the e-Voucher modality have been receiving about two to three bags of fertiliser, whereas their counterparts under the direct input supply modality have been receiving up to six bags of fertiliser. This situation is unfair, and the new Government will correct it beginning this season.

Madam Speaker, given this picture, the Government has decided to ensure equity in inputs received on both the e-Voucher and the direct input supply modalities. I, therefore, state that the Government will now ensure that all farmers under FISP receive six bags of fertiliser and one 10 kg bag of maize seed in all the districts across the country. This entails that those farmers in the Southern Province, the Western Province, and parts of Lusaka Province who were planned to be on the e-Voucher modality will now receive the same inputs as those under the direct input supply modality.

Madam Speaker, all farmers in the country will receive equal inputs as contracted by the Government. Further, I would like to emphasise that the change in the modality to be used in Southern, Western and Lusaka Provinces under the E-voucher will result in slight delays, in the collections of inputs by the farmers in those areas.

Madam Speaker, as we await the completion of the audit, the Government has suspended the issuances of supplementary packs, such as soybeans, groundnuts and sorghum under FISP. Guidance on the distribution of the supplementary packs will be provided as soon as possible to ensure that we do not allow wastage of the supplementary packs of seed.

Madam Speaker, I would like to assure the nation that the Government is committed to ensuring that farmers receive their inputs on time and that there is equity in the distribution of inputs under FISP. I also wish to urge all implementing officers to ensure that the contracted inputs reach their intended beneficiaries on time.

Madam Speaker, allow me to take this opportunity to urge all officers under the ministry involved in the handling of the FISP to exercise the highest levels of professional and personal integrity and ensure that the inputs reach the intended beneficiaries and reach them on time.

Madam Speaker, as I conclude, I wish to urge the framers to begin collecting their inputs, utilise these inputs for the intended purpose in order to increase production and productivity.

Madam Speaker, I thank you.
