



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON MAIZE PACKS UNDER THE
FARMER INPUT SUPPORT PROGRAMME (FISP)**

BY

HON. GIVEN LUBINDA, MP

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE

10TH NOVEMBER, 2015

MR. SPEAKER,

THANK YOU FOR PERMITTING ME TO PRESENT THIS MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE INPUT PACKS ON THE FARMER INPUT SUPPORT PROGRAMME.

ON 1ST OCTOBER, 2015, I PRESENTED A MINISTERIAL STATEMENT TO THIS AUGUST HOUSE ON THE PREPAREDNESS OF THE FARMER INPUT SUPPORT PROGRAMME FOR THE 2015/2016 AGRICULTURAL SEASON.

IN THAT STATEMENT I STATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD TO SUPPORT 1,000,000 BENEFICIARY FARMERS UNDER THE FARMER INPUT SUPPORT PROGRAMME, DURING THE 2015/2016 AGRICULTURAL SEASON. I INDICATED THAT THIS WAS THE SAME NUMBER OF FARMERS THAT WERE TARGETTED DURING THE 2014/2015 AGRICULTURAL SEASON. THE DIFFERENCE IS THAT FOR THE 2015/2016 SEASON 769,000 FARMERS ARE TO BE UNDER THE CONVENTIONAL FISP AND 241,000 FARMERS UNDER THE ELECTRONIC VOUCHER SYSTEM IN 13 PILOT DISTRICTS.

MR. SPEAKER,

I HAVE STATED BEFORE BOTH IN THIS HOUSE AND OUTSIDE THAT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT GOVERNMENT IS DETERMINED TO DIVERSIFICATION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION.

THIS ENTAILS MOVING AWAY FROM SUPPORTING MONOCULTURE, SPECIFICALLY, PROMOTION OF MAIZE PRODUCTION ONLY. TO THIS END, GOVERNMENT DECIDED TO STIMULATE DIVERSIFICATION UNDER FISP BY INTRODUCING SOYA BEANS, ORANGE MAIZE, BEANS, COTTON AND SUNFLOWER. AS DIVERSIFICATION UNDER FISP HAD TO BE REALISED WITHIN THE BUDGET, IT IMPLIED TAKING AWAY SOME HECTARAGE THAT HAD BEEN UNDER MAIZE IN THE 2014/2015 AGRICULTURAL SEASON AND REPLACING IT WITH HECTARAGE OF THE NEW CROPS. WITH THIS SUBSTITUTION, THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PACKS UNDER FISP REMAINED 1,000,000 BUT THE MAIZE PACKS REDUCED TO 598,723.

FOR THE AVOIDANCE OF DOUBT LET ME REITERATE THAT THE NUMBER OF BENEFICIARY FARMERS REMAINED CONSTANT AT 1,000,000. THE DIFFERENCE IS THAT THERE WAS A REDUCTION

IN THE QUANTITY OF MAIZE SEED WITH A CORRESPONDING INCREASE IN THE SEEDS FOR THE NEWLY INTRODUCED CROPS.

NONE-THE-LESS THERE HAS BEEN COMPLAINTS FROM SOME FARMERS WHO FEAR THAT WITH THIS REDUCTION IN MAIZE SEED, THEY MAY ONLY GROW THE NEWLY INTRODUCED CROPS WITHOUT MAIZE. UNDERSTANDABLY FOR THE MAJORITY OF OUR SMALL SCALE FARMERS, FARMING IS NOT FARMING IF IT IS NOT GROWING MAIZE. OVER THE YEARS, THE SOCIETY HAS MADE OUR FARMERS SO MAIZE-CENTRIC THAT IT HAS BECOME DIFFICULT FOR SOME OF THEM TO READILY ACCEPT THAT ONE CAN BE AS SUCCESSFUL A FARMER GROWING GROUNDNNUTS AS THEY WOULD REARING GOATS AND CHICKENS AND GROWING CASHEW NUTS OR ANY OTHER CROP FOR THAT MATTER. INTERESTINGLY EVEN SOME OF MY COLLEAGUES IN PARLIAMENT HAVE MADE REQUESTS AGAINST THE REPLACEMENT OF A QUANTITY OF MAIZE BY ALTERNATIVE CROPS. SOME HAVE ARGUED THAT THE NEW CROPS SHOULD BE IN ADDITION TO THE QUANTITY OF MAIZE SEED THAT WAS PROVIDED DURING THE 2014/2015 SEASON.

MR. SPEAKER,

THE PF GOVERNMENT IS A PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT AND PRESIDENT EDGAR CHAGWA LUNGU IS A LISTENING PRESIDENT. HE PAID ATTENTION AND LISTENED TO THE SUBMISSIONS MADE BY THE FARMERS HE INTERACTED WITH WHEN HE RECENTLY VISITED THE COPPERBELT AS WELL AS THOSE HE HAS BEEN MEETING AT STATE HOUSE. HE HAS EQUALLY LISTENED TO THE CONCERNS RAISED BY VARIOUS OTHER COMMENTATORS INCLUDING MEMBERS OF THIS AUGUST HOUSE.

IN THIS VEIN THE GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO BRING BACK THE MAIZE PACK SUPPORT TO THE LEVELS OF THE 2014/2015 AGRICULTURAL SEASON.

WITH THIS DECISION, A TOTAL OF 162,572 MORE FARMERS WILL BENEFIT FROM MAIZE PACKS UNDER THE PROGRAMME. THE NUMBER OF FARMERS BENEFITING FROM MAIZE PACKS WILL INCREASE FROM THE CURRENT 598,723 TO 761,295. THIS MEANS THAT THE TOTAL NUMBER OF TARGETED BENEFICIARIES FARMERS WILL INCREASE FROM 1,000,000 TO 1,162,572.

THE UNDERTAKING WILL REQUIRE AN ADDITIONAL 32,514.4 METRIC TONNES OF FERTILISER AND 1,625.72 METRIC TONNES OF MAIZE SEED.

MR. SPEAKER,

ALL THE REQUIRED FERTILIZER QUANTITIES HAVE ALREADY BEEN PROCURED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND THEREFORE, ONLY THE MAIZE SEED IS YET TO BE PROCURED. AN ESTIMATED TOTAL OF K42 MILLION WILL BE REQUIRED TO PROCURE THE ADDITIONAL MAIZE SEED AND K11MILLION TO MOVE THE SEED AND FERTILISER. MY MINISTRY OF FINANCE HAS ALREADY COMMITTED ITSELF TO RELEASE THE FUNDS TO SUPPORT THIS PROGRAMME.

I APPEAL TO ALL MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT TO JOIN ME IN INFORMING THE FARMERS ACCORDINGLY. I ALSO INSTRUCT ALL EXTENSION OFFICERS TO PREPARE ALL THE FARMERS ACCORDINGLY AND TO ENSURE THAT THE DESERVING FARMERS RECEIVE THE REQUIRED MAIZE SEED AND ACCOMPANYING FERTILISERS. (I AM SURE HON. PANDE IS HAPPY THAT THIS TIME I AM NOT APPEALING BUT INSTRUCTING THE EXTENSION OFFICERS).

MR. SPEAKER,

GOVERNMENT IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE CURRENT HIGH PRICES OF AGRICULTURAL INPUTS, IN PARTICULAR FERTILISER. IN AN EFFORT TO MITIGATE AGAINST THE HIGH FERTILISER PRICES, GOVERNMENT HAS DIRECTED NITROGEN CHEMICALS OF ZAMBIA LIMITED (NCZ) TO PRODUCE 44,000MT OF COMPOUND 'D' FERTILISER FOR THE OPEN MARKET. THIS QUANTITY IS OVER AND ABOVE THE FISP TARGETED PRODUCTION OF 106,409.75 METRIC TONNES. THE FERTILISER FOR THE OPEN MARKET WILL BE PRICED AT NOT MORE THAN K320 PER 50KG BAG. FARMERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ACCESS THIS FERTILISER PRODUCED BY NCZ. THE FERTILISER WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO AGRO DEALERS SCATTERED ACROSS THE COUNTRY. ANY AGRO DEALER WHO SHALL INCREASE THE PRICE OF THE NCZ FERTILISER ABOVE THE STATED PRICE OF K320 SHALL BE PENALISED BY NOT BEING SOLD ANY FURTHER STOCKS BY NCZ. REMEMBER THAT THIS IS NCZ FERTILISER AND NCZ ON BEHALF OF GOVERNMENT HAS A RIGHT TO DETERMINE THE PRICE AT WHICH ITS PRODUCT IS TO BE RETAILED.

MR. SPEAKER,

AS A RESULT OF INCREASES IN INPUT PRICES, MONEY MADE AVAILABLE ON THE E-VOUCHER CARDS CAN NO LONGER BUY THE QUANTITIES OF INPUTS ORIGINALLY PLANNED. IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT FARMERS UNDER THE ELECTRONIC VOUCHER SYSTEM ARE NOT DISADVANTAGE IN ACCESSING INPUTS COMPARED TO BENEFICIARY FARMERS UNDER THE CONVENTIONAL FISP, GOVERNMENT IS IN THE PROCESS OF MOBILISING RESOURCES TO INCREASE ITS CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THE E-VOUCHER CARDS. K173.5 MILLION IS REQUIRED TO TOP-UP ON THE E-VOUCHER SUBSIDY.

MEANWHILE, FARMERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO USE THE AMOUNT OF MONEY ALREADY LOADED ON THEIR CARDS TO ACCESS INPUTS NOW, IN PARTICULAR, SEEDS AND 'D' COMPOUND FERTILIZER AND USE THE AMOUNT THAT WILL BE ADDED TO ACCESS ADDITIONAL INPUTS LATER.

MR. SPEAKER,

LET ME INFORM THIS AUGUST HOUSE THAT THIS COMING SATURDAY 14TH NOVEMBER, 2015, I AND A TEAM OF OFFICIALS FROM THE MINISTRY AND CONCERNED STAKEHOLDERS WILL BE

IN KABWE, CENTRAL PROVINCE TO KICK START THE ISSUANCE OF INPUTS UNDER THE E-VOUCHER PROGRAMME.

IT WILL BE REMEMBERED THAT I LAUNCHED THE FISP IN NDOLA WHERE I ANNOUNCED THAT WE WERE READY TO RECEIVE FARMERS' CONTRIBUTIONS. HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT TEN LAUNCHED THE E VOUCHER SYSTEM IN MBABALA WHERE THE VOUCHERS WERE RELEASED AND TESTED. ON SATURDAY WE SHALL FLAG OFF THE RELEASE OF INPUTS.

LET ME ASSURE THE NATION THAT THE MINISTRY IS FULLY COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT THE E-VOUCHER WORKS SUCCESSFULLY. WE WILL, THEREFORE ADDRESS ALL CHALLENGES THAT MAY BE FACED ALONG THE WAY.

IN CONCLUSION, I WISH TO URGE THE PROVINCIAL AGRICULTURAL COORDINATORS, DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL COORDINATORS AND INDEED MEMBERS OF THIS AUGUST HOUSE TO BRING THE INFORMATION IN THIS STATEMENT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE FARMERS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE AREAS.

MR. SPEAKER, I THANK YOU.