



MINISTRY OF ENERGY

STATEMENT

BY HON. DAVID MABUMBA, MP

MINISTER OF ENERGY

STATEMENT

ON THE SABOTAGE OF 330KV PYLONS IN KAFUE

27.06.17

The Minister of Energy (Mr Mabumba): Mr Speaker, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to update the august House and Zambians on the sabotage of the 330 KV pylons in Kafue West on Friday, 23rd June, 2017.

Sir, Friday, 23rd June, 2017, at 1654 hours, a system disturbance was experienced on the Interconnected Power System. This was a result of the tripping of the 330 KV Lusaka West-Kafue Line on differential protection. The line tripped and locked out at both ends, and was, therefore, left isolated for ground patrols to identify the fault. As a result, about 250 MW of system load was lost. Especially affected were the mines and some industries on the Copperbelt.

Sir, early morning on Saturday, 24th June, 2017, the Zambia Electricity Supply Corporation (ZESCO) Line Maintenance Team discovered that Tower No. 7 on the 330 KV Kafue West-Lusaka West Line had collapsed to the ground as a result of sabotage. Further evidence of sabotage was discovered on the adjacent a tower on the adjacent 330 KV Kafue West-Leopards Hill Line, which was barely held in position. That was on a private farm in the Munga area of Kafue West.

Sir, the nature of the sabotage revealed that unknown people had used gas torches to cut the steel legs of the pylon from the base, just above the foundation. They also cut the four diagonally-placed galvanised steel ropes that hold the tower in position, thus exposing the structures to failure.

Mr Speaker, ZESCO maintenance teams quickly assessed the extent of the damage, and started mobilising spares and equipment to commence repair works. Tower No. 5 on the Leopards Hill Line was repaired and the line was brought back to service in the evening of Saturday, 24th June, 2017, while the assembly of a

replacement tower for the one that collapsed commenced on 24th June, 2017, and was completed on Monday, 27th June, 2017. As I speak, the line that had collapsed has been reconstructed and energised to carry power to customers.

Sir, as a consequence of the incident, ZESCO experienced challenges in delivering evacuating power to some customers, especially those on the Copperbelt and North-Western provinces due to capacity constraints on the remaining lines. The Lusaka West Sub-Station is also a key intermediate for power supply to Kalumbila Mine. Consequentially, during peak consumption periods, some emergency load-shedding had to be implemented in the mentioned areas.

Mr Speaker, initial the estimates for cost of the repairs to the damaged system stand at approximately US\$1.1 million. That includes the replacement tower and associated accessories, galvanised steel, wire anchors, hire of specialised lifting equipment, labour and energy load delivered to customers. There are also other economic losses that customers who were affected by the disruption in business activities suffered.

Sir, vandalism of ZESCO infrastructure poses a major risk to the security and reliability of power supply, and is costly to the corporation. It is, therefore, a major source of customer dissatisfaction due to the attendant power outages that disrupt businesses and commercial activities in country. Unfortunately, in the recent past, the vice has become rampant, with the latest incident being a clear case of sabotage by disgruntled and unpatriotic individuals. As Zambia has a legitimate leadership in His Excellency the President, Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu, people use the established mechanisms to channel their constructive criticism, grievances and

concerns. They should dialogue rather than resort to sabotage, which has a major bearing on the performance of the economy and wellbeing of our people.

Sir, clearly, the current strategies of foot patrols, community sensitisation and other policing methods are not sufficient to prevent sabotage of ZESCO infrastructure. Therefore, the company is looking at the use of technological platforms to create visibility on the transmission infrastructure. As a result of the geographical spread of the transmission lines, any such technological solutions and platforms will come at a great cost and, therefore, require working closely with other stakeholders. The Zambia Police Service and other investigative wings are carrying out investigations and will arrest the culprits so that they can face the judicial process.

Mr Mabumba: Mr Speaker, in conclusion, I thank the ZESCO team, the security wings, our equipment suppliers and the leadership in Kafue for responding to this emergency very rapidly. I also assure the people of Zambia people that the saboteurs will not match our resilience in responding to such emergencies. Zambians should lead their normal lives because we will not allow the threats and actions of extremists to disrupt our normal way of life or our economy.

I thank you, Sir.