MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
BY THE
THE MINISTER OF GREEN ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT (MR NZOVU), MP
ON THE
RAIN PATTERN FOR 2021/2022 SEASON

Madam Speaker, I have the honour and privilege to present the 2021/2022 Rainy Season forecast. This forecast has been prepared to aid the monthly to seasonal scale planning processes for the agriculture, water, energy, health, disaster risk management and all socio-economic sectors dependant and affected by the Rainy Season performance.

Madam Speaker, the information on the 2021/2022 Rainy Season forecast resonates very well with the mission of the new dawn Government of His Excellency, Mr Hakainde Hichilema, the President of the Republic of Zambia, which is to foster accelerated national development through the mobilisation and sustainable use of human and natural resources for the empowerment of every Zambian.

Madam Speaker, His Excellency, the President, Mr Hakainde Hichilema, in his maiden speech to open the First Session of the Thirteenth National Assembly on 10th September, 2021, outlined the broad policy direction of the Government for the next five years. A well-managed environment is critical for achieving economic recovery, sustained growth and improved livelihood for our people. It is for this reason that we have placed a premium on dealing with the serious threats posed by climate change.

High variability with frequent droughts, seasonal and flash floods, extreme temperatures and dry spells are expected to intensify with climate change. With the proposed Ministry of Green Economy and Environment, we will champion environmental sustainability and implement policies that will yield benevolent dividends for generations to come. The President highlighted agriculture and energy sectors as the key areas to economic transformation and the job creation agenda of the new dawn Government.

Madam Speaker, as you may be aware, weather and climate conditions affect all social and economic sectors across the country. Weather and climate information is thus central to decision making and planning across all spheres of social and economic undertakings in all our country. Once taken into account and mainstreamed in sector plans, weather and climate information has the potential to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change and contribute positively to national development.

Madam Speaker, the new dawn Government recognises that weather and climate information is a key ingredient to support the agricultural sector in raising production and productivity in crops and livestock and fisheries to ensure food security for the country. Further, weather and climate information is equally important for mitigating and fighting pests and diseases. Furthermore, the new dawn Government is aware that climate change has adversely impacted the energy sector. In this regard, weather and climate information will be fundamental in the establishment of energy facilities and power production and management to lessen the negative impacts of climate variability and climate change.

Madam Speaker, you may wish to note that weather and climate information is also a critical input in water resource management as well as water supply and sanitation. It is also cardinal in water transport in providing early warning of extreme winds and storms on water bodies that may be dangerous to lives and property. It is also a vital component to the safety and operations of air navigation and transportation.

Madam Speaker, allow me now to share with the nation through this august House, the 2021/2022 Rainy Season forecast to enable sectors and the general public prepare and make informed decisions for the forthcoming Rainy Season. The forecast generally indicates that most places in Zambia are likely to receive normal to above normal rainfall during the Rainy Season except for the north-western parts of the country which are likely to receive normal to below normal rainfall. The season is likely to be established by the end of November 2021 over most parts of the country. Areas over the Northern, Luapula, North-Western, Copperbelt, and Western provinces are likely to experience thunderstorms and showers by October 2021. The season is

likely to be characterised by drier conditions over the north-eastern portions of the country and water conditions over the southern and western parts of the country.

Madam Speaker, there is a high chance that the north-western part of the country will have a late start and early cessation of the rains. There is also an indication of an early start of the 2021/2022 Rainy Season especially over the western half of the country.

Madam Speaker, the whole forecast of the season has been segmented into four periods of three-month totals as follows. For the period October, November and December (OMD), areas over the North-Western, the Western, the Southern, Copperbelt, Lusaka, and Luapula provinces, including parts of the Central and the Eastern provinces are likely to receive normal to above normal rainfall. On the other hand, areas over the Northern and Muchinga provinces including Kabwe, Kapiri Mposhi, Serenje, Mkushi, Chitambo, Mambwe, Lumezi and Chasefu are likely to receive normal to below normal rainfall with a likelihood of delayed onset of rains.

Madam Speaker, for the period November, December and January (NDJ), areas over the North-Western, the Western, the Southern, the Copperbelt, Lusaka, the Eastern and Luapula provinces, including parts of the Central and Muchinga provinces are likely to receive normal to above normal rainfall. However, areas around Mwinilunga, Ikeleng'i, Choma, Chitambo, Mambwe and Mansa districts plus much of the Northern Province are likely to receive normal to below normal rainfall.

Madam Speaker, as we progress to December, January and February (DJF), most areas over Zambia are likely to receive normal to above normal rainfall. In contrast, Senanga, Sioma, Shang'ombo, Chilanga, Kasempa, Ndola, Kitwe, Masaiti, Luanshya, Kalulushi, Mkushi, Serenje, Lundazi, Chasefu, Chama, Isoka, Chinsali, Mungwi, Nakonde, Senga Hill, Mpulungu and Mbala districts and surrounding areas are expected to receive normal to below normal rainfall.

Madam Speaker, during the final three months of the season, January, February and March (JFM), areas over Luapula, the Copperbelt, the North-Western, the Western, the Southern, Lusaka and the Central Provinces, including parts of the Eastern Province, Lavushimanda and

Mpika districts are likely to receive normal to above normal rainfall, while most areas over the Northern and Muchinga provinces as well as Lundazi, Chasefu, Chipangali, Mazabuka, Monze and Livingstone districts are likely to receive normal to below normal rainfall.

Madam Speaker, during the 2021/2022 Rainy Season, areas that are projected to receive normal to below normal rainfall may experience the following:

(a) dry spells with a possibility of crop rotting;

(b) inadequate water for domestic consumption, agriculture, animals and energy production among others; and

(c) increased chance of agriculture pests and diseases.

Madam Speaker, areas that are likely to receive normal to above normal rainfall in a particular period may experience the following:

(a) floods including flash floods, especially in prone areas;

(b) fungal and waterborne diseases such as cholera, dysentery and typhoid;

(c) increase in rates of malaria transmission;

(d) infrastructure damage especially to civil structures such as roads, dams, bridges and culverts; and

(e) occurrence of agriculture pests across the country.

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Madam Speaker, generally, the rains are expected to be established by end of November 2021 in most parts of the country. However, some areas may receive rains earlier than expected. Therefore, farmers are advised to store their harvest properly to avoid damage. It is also important to note that in every season, dry spells occur and in certain circumstances may result into crop loss. In this regard, I wish to urge our farmers and other stakeholders to regularly get in touch with my ministry to access meteorological forecasts and updates.

Madam Speaker, I urge each sector to carry out sensitisation programmes on good sanitation and hygiene practices and clearing of drainage systems well in advance to avoid water pools that may lead to increased transmission of diseases. In addition, institutions may need to prepare and stockpile relief materials, medicines and pesticides that may be required during the season. My ministry further wishes to encourage the general public to plant trees as a measure to mitigate climate change and environmental degradation, thereby contribute to improving rainfall performance.

Madam, as this forecast is based on three-month averages, users of this forecast are advised to get regular updates on the actual and expected distribution of rainfall during the entire Rainy Season through community radio stations, the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) radio and television stations, including electronic platforms such as email, WhatsApp, and websites, among others. My ministry will continue giving these updates to the nation throughout the Rainy Season.

Madam Speaker, I wish to commend the Strengthening Climate Resilience for Agriculture Livelihoods in Agro-Ecological Regions I and II project, that is the Climate Forecast Enabled Knowledge Services (CLARA Project), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for supporting the generation of the 2021/2022 Rainy Season forecast. I further wish to extend my gratitude to stakeholders who collaborated with the Government to generate the projected rainfall performance for the 2021/2022 Rainy Season. These include the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Climate Services Centre, the Zambia Red Cross

Society, ZESCO Limited, the Zambezi River Authority (ZRA) and the World Food Programme (WFP), among others.

Madam Speaker, I wish all of you a very fruitful 2021/2022 Rainy Season. I thank you, and may God bless you and may God bless this great nation.

I thank you, Madam.

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