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Republic of Zambia

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT

**TO BE DELIVERED BY HON. HARRY KALABA, MP,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS REGARDING THE OUTCOME
OF THE 26TH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF
HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE AFRICAN
UNION HELD IN ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA FROM 30TH TO 31ST
JANUARY, 2016 AND THE OFFICIAL VISITS TO THE HOLY SEE
AND THE FRENCH REPUBLIC BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA FROM 4TH TO 9TH
FEBRUARY, 2016**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Lusaka

February, 2016

Mr. Speaker,

I wish to report to this August House that Zambia participated in the 26th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 30th to 31st January, 2016 under the theme "*African Year of Human Rights with a particular focus on Women Rights*".

The Zambian Delegation was led by His Excellency the President, Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, who was accompanied by myself; Hon. Dr. Ngosa Simbyakula, M.P., Minister of Justice; and Hon. Prof. Nkandu Luo, M.P., Minister of Gender and Child Development, and Senior Government Officials.

His Excellency the President also attended other sideline Summits, including; the 34th Summit of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee; the 24th Summit of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) of Heads of State and Government which were both held on 29th January, 2016; and the AU Committee of Ten (10).

Along the sidelines of the Assembly, His Excellency the President also signed three AU Treaties namely: the African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection; the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralisation, Local Governance and the Local Development; and the Agreement for the establishment of the African Risk Capacity (ARC) Agency.

Mr. Speaker,

I wish to now highlight some of the achievements Zambia scored during the Summit.

I am exceedingly happy to report that the Assembly fully supported and endorsed the bid by Zambia to host the Secretariat of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union (ECOSOCC) in Lusaka, which was unanimously supported by all Member States of the African Union. This is the first Organ of the

continental body that Zambia will host since becoming a member of the AU and its predecessor the OAU, more than 52 years ago.

The hosting of the ECOSOCC Secretariat will translate into employment creation for Zambian citizens as a result of the increased frequency of hosting meetings and conferences. This will not only boost the tourism sector but will subsequently promote growth in other sectors of the economy especially that the Secretariat will require a state of the art modern Headquarters to be constructed on a ten acre plot along the Great East Road.

Mr. Speaker,

Zambia was also elected as one of the 15 Members of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) for a three-year term, from 2016 to 2019. This is one of the most important decision-making bodies of the African Union responsible for the maintenance of continental peace and security. I am proud to state that out of the fifteen countries that were elected and re-elected accordingly, to sit on the Peace and Security Council, Zambia was the only country that received 100% endorsement by all Member States.

Zambia's membership to the Peace and Security Council during this period is significant, as the country will be accorded the opportunity to be more directly involved in preventative diplomacy, facilitation of peace making, establishment of peace support operations and the promotion of peace, security and stability for our continent.

Mr. Speaker,

Another achievement was the endorsement of the recruitment of Ms. Charity Nchimunya, a Zambian national, to the position of Executive Secretary for the 'AU Advisory Board on the Fight against Corruption.' This is indeed commendable as Zambia attaches great importance to the fight against corruption, as it hinders development for the country and the continent at large.

Mr. Speaker,

Regarding the Africa Centre for Disease Control (Africa CDC), Zambia had applied to be a Regional Collaborating Centre (RCC) for Southern Africa and received unanimous endorsement from SADC. I am glad therefore to report that Zambia has been selected as the African Union Centre for Disease Control for the Southern Africa Region. The centre will be based in Ndola.

Mr. Speaker,

The House may recall that at the 24th Ordinary Session of the AU in January, 2015, the Assembly adopted the continent's Agenda for the next 50 years, Agenda 2063, which is a strategic framework for inclusive growth and sustainable development in Africa, anchored on the AU vision of the "Africa We Want". Domestication of Agenda 2063 in Zambia entails that all Ministries, Provinces and Spending Agencies should ensure that their programmes, policies and development plans, including the 7th National Development Plan and the Medium Term Expenditure Frameworks, are all aligned to Agenda 2063.

The First Ten Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063 (from 2014 to 2023), adopted at the June, 2015 session of the Assembly, prioritized flagship programmes that need to be implemented. The flagship programmes requiring implementation among others include; the Pan African Integrated High-Speed Train Network; Establishment of the Continental Free-Trade area by 2017; Silencing of the Guns by 2020; Establishment of the Continental Financial Institutions; and the Grand Inga Dam Project.

This Government is determined to ensure that Zambia benefits from these programmes, for the benefit of her citizens.

In addition, **Mr. Speaker**, allow me to mention that key issues reflected in statements delivered by many of the speakers at the Summit, highlighted the continued absence of African representation in the United Nations Security Council. The Assembly committed itself to the need to create jobs and equip young people with the necessary skills required to implement the continent's transformational agenda; and

also underscored the issue of strengthening of democratic processes as several of our countries held successful elections in 2015, which served to reinforce the political stability on the continent.

Mr. Speaker,

As I have enumerated before to this august house, following the announcement of the austerity measures by His Excellency the President, the Head of State shall only undertake visits of strategic importance to Zambia. It is for this reason that at the invitation of His Holiness Pope Francis and His Excellency Mr. Francois Hollande, President of the French Republic, the Head of State, His Excellency Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu undertook a two-nation official visit from 4th to 9th February, 2016.

His Excellency the President began his European Visit to the Holy See on 4th February, 2016, where he was accompanied by the First Lady and myself. During private talks with His Holiness the Pope, His Excellency the President conferred on a number of important issues with the leader of the largest Christian Church. The meeting was of significance to the country in that the Pope, whose pastoral mission is to advocate for the less privileged in society, finds resonance with the Zambian situation and invariably his positive influence on the international scene cannot be overlooked.

His Excellency the President also held a bilateral meeting with the Secretary of State of His Holiness, His Eminence Cardinal Pietro Parolin who may be equated to the Prime Minister of the Holy See. His Eminence the Cardinal pledged the continued support of the Catholic Church to the development process of the country, including the reinforced advocacy of the impact of Climate Change on developing countries.

Whilst in Italy, His Excellency the President also met with the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the President of International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), where discussions focused on diversification of the country's economy and the reduction of rural poverty and hunger in the country.

His Excellency the President requested FAO to assist the Government in coming up with long term plans and programmes on how to address the negative impacts caused by poor and adverse weather patterns, as well as collaborative measures on improving the country's fish farming industry for both the domestic and export markets.

Mr. Speaker,

The Head of State discussed matters relating to the continued collaboration and support of the IFAD, which is a specialized UN financial institution and a leading multilateral investor in the livelihoods of poor rural producers in developing countries. There are currently three on-going IFAD projects in Zambia with a total value of US \$ 60.1 Million.

Mr. Speaker

After the official visit to the Holy See, the President proceeded to France where he was accompanied by the Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry, Minister of Energy and Water Development, and myself.

During the visit to France, His Excellency Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, held very important fruitful talks with His Excellency Mr. Francois Hollande, which covered a wide range of issues related to bilateral cooperation between our two countries. The two Heads of State also conferred on the political situation in the Great Lakes region which continues to impact on peace and security in the region.

During the discussions, the French leader reaffirmed his Government's dedication to the recently announced "Climate Change Aid for Africa" amounting to US\$ 2 billion, as a vehicle through which France would seek to work with African countries, including Zambia, in addressing their energy challenges.

Mr. Speaker,

The French Leader pledged to support Zambia in the establishment of a national airline including training in the Aviation industry and emphasised the need to explore the potential for cooperation between Zambia and France in this sector. I wish to remind the House

that it is the wish of this Government to develop the aviation industry and help turn Zambia into a regional travel hub for the sub-continent.

In the area of trade and investment, the two leaders expressed satisfaction that the bilateral agreement on cooperation between Zambia Development Agency (ZDA) and the French Agency for Development (ADF) could serve as a smooth vehicle through which the private sectors of Zambia and France could spur development.

President Hollande emphasized that, with an improved Zambian investment climate, the 40 million Euro worth of development assistance to Zambia could be significantly increased. The French Leader assured His Excellency the President that there was room for increased investment between the two countries, particularly in the area of solar energy.

The French Leader underlined his Government's commitment to focus bilateral cooperation in the area of transfer of technology, rather than serving as a mere supplier of goods and services, as the former was a more effective way of speeding up technological advancement of African countries.

Mr. Speaker,

At the same occasion, His Excellency the President and his counterpart witnessed the signing of six Memoranda of Understanding and Agreements in the education, tourism, culture, trade and investment promotion, financial and broadcasting sectors.

His Excellency the President also attended several business engagements including a well attended meeting with the CIAN French Council of Investors in Africa. He also held discussions with the Founder of "Energies for Africa Project" which is aimed at powering Africa using renewable energy with a Fund of up to US\$5 billion by 2018.

Mr. Speaker

One of the major highlights of the French visit was the Zambia-France Business Forum, organised by the renowned Movement of French Enterprises (MEDEF) and was attended by sixty French companies. The Business Forum, which was actually oversubscribed, was of great

Importance to Zambia as it created a platform to market and enhance the trade and investment relations between Zambia and France, as well as provide an opportunity for forging long lasting partnerships. His Excellency the President seized the opportunity to lure French investors to visit Zambia and explore the investment opportunities in various sectors including: the agriculture, energy, tourism, infrastructure, communication, and value addition in manufacturing sectors. His Excellency the President was also hosted by a business delegation on renewable energy and another focusing on agriculture and agro-processing industry events.

Mr. Speaker,

Zambia will continue to reach out to the international community in order to contribute to sustainable development and as such, our engagement with the outside world cannot be over-emphasised.

Lastly Mr. Speaker, I wish to state that the active participation of His Excellency the President in regional, continental and global affairs, as well as his increased interactions and engagements at bilateral level will continue to advance Zambia's standing on the international stage and serve to promote Zambia's national interests.

I thank you!