

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
BY THE
THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (MR M. PHIRI)
ON THE
DISTRIBUTION OF INPUTS UNDER FISP

Madam Speaker, thank you very much for granting me this opportunity to update the House and through the House, the nation, on the status of the 2022/2023 farming season and in particular the distribution of inputs under the Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP).

Madam Speaker, as you are aware, 1,024,434 farmers have been targeted for the 2022/2023 farming season using the direct input supply modality. This entails that all inputs will be procured by the Government and distributed to the farmers. The total tonnage of fertilizer for this farming season is 307,330.20 metric tonnes, of which 153,665.10 is Urea and the other half is D Compound.

Madam Speaker, with respect to seed, the Government has procured 10,244 metric tons of maize seed, 12,805.44 metric tonnes of soya bean seed and 10,244 metric tonnes of groundnut seed. The total cost to the Government on the seed procurement, which includes distribution to all districts, is K1.7 billion.

Madam Speaker, one of the conditions for a farmer to access these inputs is that a farmer has to make a contribution of K400. I wish to inform the House that deposits commenced on 14th October, 2022. As at 15th November, about 300,000 farmers had made deposits in participating banks, translating to almost a K100 million. Farmers started collecting their inputs on 10th November through the Zambia Integrated Agriculture Management Information System managed by the Smart Zambia Institute (SZI), which is a Government division.

Madam Speaker, the distribution of fertilizer commenced on 21st September, 2022 and is currently ongoing. As at 15th November, 2022, a total of 80,000 metric tonnes of D Compound

was delivered to all the ten provinces, leaving a balance of 73,665 metric tonnes out of the 153,665.10 allocation for the 2022/2023 farming season.

Madam Speaker, regarding Urea, 36,000 metric tonnes were delivered to all the ten provinces out of the 153,665.10 allocation for the 2022/2023 farming season, indicating a delivery rate of about 23 per cent, leaving a balance of 117,665 metric tonnes. Furthermore, the total fertilizer in holding depots of the supplies for Compound D is 49,490.9 metric tonnes. This brings the total tonnage of the fertilizer in the country to 104,797.33 metric tonnes, while the total in the holding depots for Urea is 44,256.20 metric tonnes, bringing the total tonnage to 70,017.95 metric tonnes. This is an important figure because this represents about 57 per cent of fertilizer supplies so far.

Madam Speaker, with regard to seed, as at 15th November, 2022, 2,306.12 metric tonnes of maize seed was distributed, leaving a balance of 7,938.22 metric tonnes. This indicates a delivery rate of about 23 per cent. In addition, 1,579.59 metric tonnes of groundnut seed were distributed, indicating a 16 per cent delivery rate. The balance remaining out of the allocation is 8,664.75 metric tonnes. Further, 2,376.9 metric tonnes of soya bean seed were delivered, indicating a delivery rate of about 19 per cent. The balance remaining out of the allocation is 10,429.57 metric tonnes. The process is ongoing and is being accelerated.

Madam Speaker, the following are the measures that the Government, through the Ministry of Agriculture and other co-operating departments, has put in place to ensure that fertilizer is delivered quickly by suppliers:

- (a) the ministry has appointed fertiliser contract managers to improve monitoring of deliveries. All contract managers underwent training. These are Government officials, in case I am misconstrued to indicate that these are private. These are Government officials;

- (b) daily reports on deliveries by the fertiliser companies are being submitted to the Permanent Secretary's office in the Ministry of Agriculture and suppliers are being engaged to expedite the deliveries; and
- (c) the Government is further expediting the delivery of fertiliser to all parts of the country by ensuring:
 - (i) that one, the Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA) facilities, that is, customs and clearance of trucks at borders such as Chanida, Chirundu and Nakonde are cleared expressly. The fertiliser suppliers have been requested to apply for pre-clearance of up to seven days prior to arrival at the border. If the pre-clearance formalities are completed, trucks can cross the border in less than an hour;
 - (ii) arrangements have been made with the Ministry of Transport and Logistics for an exemption to be made for fertiliser trucks to move at night. The process of formalising the exemption is in progress;
 - (iii) the Ministry of Infrastructure, Housing and Urban Development, through the Road Development Agency (RDA), has been engaged to facilitate night time clearing of trucks at weighbridges so that we isolate any possible delays;
 - (iv) the Zambia Police Service has been engaged to facilitate the smooth movement of fertiliser trucks at police check points; and
 - (v) the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation has written to the Zambian embassy in Maputo to engage the Mozambique Government to facilitate the timely dispatch of fertiliser from the port of Beira to Zambia. A team of officials from Zambia is departing for Mozambique to ensure smooth movement.

Madam Speaker, in conclusion, may I reaffirm the Government's commitment in ensuring that farmers countrywide receive farming inputs. Before I leave, allow me to repeat one line. The

fertilizer that is in the country that is being distributed within the borders of Zambia when added together constitutes 57 per cent.

I thank you, Madam.
