



**Republic of Zambia**

**MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORT**

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF YOUTH AND SPORT  
HONOURABLE VINCENT MWALE, MP  
ON THE ISSUE SURROUNDING MR. DARIO BONETTI A FORMER  
COACH FOR THE SENIOR ZAMBIA NATIONAL FOOTBALL TEAM:**

**Mr. Speaker Sir**

You may be aware that in July 2010, Mr. Dario Bonetti was engaged as Zambia National Football Team coach. His two years contract which was signed with the Football Association of Zambia (FAZ) was expected to run up to July 2012. However in August 2011 FAZ decided to terminate Bonetti's contract without prior consultations with the Ministry of Youth and Sport.

**Mr. Speaker Sir,**

The government only learnt of this development through the media reports carried out in both the print and electronic media. Following this the then Minister of Labour, Youth and Sport, Hon. Jackson Shamenda summoned FAZ to a meeting over the issue of Mr. Bonetti termination of contract. In consideration that the Ministry was not consulted or informed by FAZ over the decision to terminate the contract, the Hon Jackson Shamenda requested for an updated report from FAZ.

**Mr. Speaker Sir,**

During the meeting, FAZ confirmed the termination of the contract citing the following reasons:

- a. According to Football Association of Zambia, the coach was handpicked and as result he was not screened for international experience, past record and African experience.
- b. Despite qualifying the Zambia National Football Team to the 2012 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON), the FAZ President indicated that the players had complained about Bonetti's poor football expertise.
- c. Bonetti lacked respect for the FAZ Executive Committee Members, Management and the Zambian Technical Team.

**Mr. Speaker Sir,**

Honorable Jackson Shamenda who chaired the meeting advised FAZ against termination of contract and requested FAZ to consider reversing the decision to fire Mr. Bonetti. However, FAZ strongly indicated that it was not possible for them to reverse the termination of the contract. The FAZ President further emphasized that the association had acted within the realms of the contract to dismiss the coach on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2011 because they felt that the coach had performed poorly.

**Mr Speaker Sir,**

As a result of the stance FAZ made, the Honourable Minister cautioned FAZ that the decision was likely to attract cost implications that could have been avoided if FAZ had considered reversing the termination of Mr. Bonetti's Contract.

**Mr. Speaker Sir,**

FAZ was cautioned by the Minister to exercise thoughtfulness and adhere to the provisions of the labour laws and regulations in its processes of dealing with the issue of Mr. Bonetti to avoid getting into legal omissions. Thus, the Minister directed FAZ to handle the separation with Mr. Bonetti peacefully with orderliness.

**Mr. Speaker Sir,**

You may also wish to know that, in October 2011, the Minister of Labour, Youth and Sport also issued a Ministerial Statement in Parliament on the issue of Coach Bonetti. In his statement, the minister indicated that the Government does not interfere in the running of football in Zambia and but was not amused with the manner in which FAZ had fired Mr. Bonetti and recruited his replacement. He further indicated that the Government had no funds to pay the newly recruited coach but would meet the cost of terminating Mr. Bonetti's contract.

**Mr. Speaker Sir,**

It is clear that Mr. Bonetti's separation was not handled well by FAZ. This led to Mr. Bonetti to sue FAZ to the Federation of International Football Associations (FIFA) which ruled that he be paid his ***compensation claims to the tune of \$348,000 approximately k 2,644,800 at the exchange rate of 7.6 per dollar.***

**Mr. Speaker Sir,**

You may wish to know that in February this year after I took over office as Minister of Youth and sport, I called for a meeting with FAZ in which the following suggestions were made on how best to address the issue of Bonetti's overdue payment:-

1. Where FAZ undertakes to meet cost of dues from its resources as earlier agreed upon with the then Minister of Youth and Sport Honourable Jackson Shamenda;
2. where government meets 50% of the cost and FAZ also meets the other 50%;
3. Where Government meets entire cost of Bonetti outstanding dues on an understanding that FAZ meets the cost of salaries for senior national team coach and assistant in 2015.

**Mr. Speaker Sir,**

In the meeting FAZ indicated that they were not in position to meet the outstanding arrears. In this regard the Ministry proceeded to write to the Ministry of Finance to request for special funding. The amount requested for then was amounting to ***K2,296,800 at the exchange rate of 6.6.*** However we received new information from the lawyers for Mr Bonetti with regard to the amount outstanding to be paid. The new payment will take into account the interest accrued from the 30 days expiry period from the date of the notification of the judgment served on April 4<sup>th</sup> 2013. Therefore the total amount due now stands at **\$ 421,760.39** equivalent to ***k 3,289,731.04 at 7.8 exchange rate***

**Mr. Speaker Sir,**

kindly note that Zambia was given the dateline of 20 January 2014 to pay failure to which the case would be taken to the disciplinary committee. Considering that we failed to meet this obligation there is s scheduled hearing set for August 2015 to discuss the case and apply disciplinary sanctions in the evident that we do not pay then .

**Mr. Speaker Sir,**

Therefore, in order for the country not to suffer FIFA sanctions which may entail preventing the country from participating in international football competitions, the Ministry requested for intervention and consideration from treasury for special funding to quickly settle the issue.

**Mr. Speaker Sir,**

I am glad to inform this August house and the Nation at large that, Government through the Ministry of Finance yesterday released **K 3,289,731.04**. The payment to Mr. Bonnetti is in the process as I speak.

**Mr. Speak Sir, I THANK YOU.**