

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

STATUS OF AQUACULTURE PARKS

The Minister of Fisheries and Livestock (Mr Chikote): Madam Speaker, I am grateful to be accorded this opportunity to inform this august House and, through it, the nation at large, on the progress made on the establishment of aquaculture parks in Zambia.

Hon. Members will recall that His Excellency Mr Hakainde Hichilema, the President of the Republic of Zambia, has emphasised the need to promote aquaculture development. This is in an effort to reduce the country's fish deficit of about 70,000 metric tonnes per year. It is also aimed at promoting job and wealth creation, especially for our women and youths.

Madam Speaker, the fish deficit in Zambia has been attributed to the decline in the capture fisheries over the past two decades. This has been caused by an increase in illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing coupled with an increased demand for the fish due to the growth in human population and high preference for white meat in the country.

Madam, to promote aquaculture development, the Government developed the National Aquaculture Strategy in 2006, which was followed by the National Aquaculture Development Plan in 2014. These strategies provided the strategic direction for aquaculture development in the following areas:

- (a) enhancing the supply of quality fingerlings;
- (b) enhancing the quality of fish feed;
- (c) improving access to affordable finance; and
- (d) providing effective extension services.

Madam Speaker, the strategies also identified aquaculture high potential zones in the Southern Province, the Northern Province, Lusaka Province, the North-Western Province and Luapula Province.

Madam, four districts, namely Kafue, Kasempa, Samfya and Mungwi were identified as areas with high aquaculture potential and were, therefore, earmarked as areas for establishment of aquaculture parks in Zambia.

Madam Speaker, this august House and, indeed, the nation may wish to note that aquaculture parks are established as a way of stimulating the growth of aquaculture within specific areas by bringing prerequisite services closer to the prospective fish farmers and other players along the aquaculture value chain.

Madam, by establishing aquaculture parks in areas of high aquaculture potential, it is the Government's hopes that people in these sites will take advantage of the service and begin to practice aquaculture. In this way, fish production will be increased, thereby leading to a reduction in the national fish deficit. This will, in turn, increase food and nutrition security, incomes for fish and farmers and promote aquaculture development.

Madam Speaker, to actualise this initiative, the Government formulated the Zambia Aquaculture Enterprise Development Project (ZAEDP), which is supported by the Africa Development Bank (AfDB), through a US\$50 million facility. The House may wish to note that part of this facility has been used for establishing five aquaculture parks in areas of high aquaculture potential.

Madam, allow me now to report to this august House the progress that has been made in establishing aquaculture parks in the five areas that were identified under the ZAEDP.

Mungwi Aquaculture Park

Madam, the first construction site of an aquaculture park was in Mungwi District. The construction works constitute an extension office block, ten medium-cost houses, feeder roads and electricity connections at K23.8 million. The contract was awarded to Shachitari Contractors Ltd. The works on the site commenced on 19th February, 2021 and the construction is now 65 per cent complete. Payments amounting to K11.8 have been made to the contractor thus far.

Madam Speaker, to promote private sector participation, the Government will partner with the private sector in these aquaculture parks. On one hand, the private sector is expected to establish the following:

- (a) establishing a feed plant;
- (b) establishing a hatchery; and
- (c) providing input supply

The Government, on the other hand, will support aquaculture farmers with extension services.

Samfya Aquaculture Park

Madam Speaker, Samfya has two sites. At site I, the works include an extension office block and ten medium-cost houses. To date, only 45 per cent of the works have been completed. The total cost of the project is K25 million and the contractor, Savenda Management Services Ltd, has been advanced a sum of K1.5 million.

Madam, the contract for site II was awarded to Sunshare Construction Ltd at a total cost of K30.5 million and works commenced in August 2021. The works include a hatchery and fishponds, a metal fabrication plant, a feed plant and a cold chain facility. The physical work is 45 per cent complete, and K7.6 million has been paid to date.

Kafue Aquaculture Park

Madam, the construction works in Kafue include an extension office block, cold storage, one high-cost and nine medium-cost houses and 2.7 km access roads. The contract was awarded to Kailjee Construction Zambia Ltd at K26 million. Currently, 40 per cent of the works have been completed costing K14.6 million.

Mushindamo Aquaculture Park

Madam Speaker, the works at Mushindamo Aquaculture Park include construction of a feed plant, a cold chain facility, six medium-cost houses, a hatchery, fish ponds, an extension block and an access road costing K19.9 million. The contract was awarded to Norwood Enterprises, which has completed 65 per cent of the works at a cost of K2.3 million.

Kasempa Aquaculture Park

Madam, the works include four medium-cost houses, one high-cost house, access roads and a cold chain facility at K24.3 million. The contract was awarded to M and N Industrial Merchants Ltd, which has completed 90 per cent of the works at a cost of K17.4 million.

Madam Speaker, on the way forward, the New Dawn Government is aware of the benefits that aquaculture parks will provide to the people in Mungwi, Kasempa, Kafue, Mushindamo and Samfya in promoting economic development and enhancing the livelihoods of the people in these areas. However, we have noted the slow pace at which the aquaculture parks are being established.

Madam, going forward, the New Dawn Government will restore confidence in the people in these areas by ensuring the construction works are completed on time so that benefits can accrue to the intended beneficiaries. In the last year, we have done the following:

- (a) held meetings with the contractors and all them are on site;

- (b) engaged all the contractors to speed up the construction works, in line with their contract terms and conditions; and
- (c) all the contracts have been renegotiated and are valid until 2023;

Madam, construction works are progressing well, so far, and we want to see buildings, not bushes. We will construct fish ponds as soon as we can. As the Minister in charge, I will not allow these projects to be white elephants, but will ensure that completion and handover to the community is done.

I thank you, Madam Speaker.