

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

ON THE

**STATUS OF FISP FOR 2023/2024 FARMING SEASON**

BY THE

**THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (MR MTOLO), MP**

Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me this opportunity to present a ministerial statement on the status of the Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP) for the 2023/2024 Farming Season.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that the Government will continue to implement FISP in the 2023/2024 Farming Season. The total number of beneficiary farmers targeted is 1,024,434, small scale farmers countrywide.

Madam Speaker, I repeat that it is 1,024,434 small scale farmers countrywide. This is the same figure as the past two or three seasons. The programme will be implemented using two modalities, namely; direct input supply and the electronic-Voucher (e-Voucher) system. The direct input supply modality will be implemented in the Eastern, Northern, Luapula, Copperbelt, Muchinga and Western Provinces, covering a total of 551,187 small holder farmers.

Madam Speaker, I will repeat the provinces under direct input supply. They are the Eastern, Northern, Luapula, Copperbelt, Muchinga and Western Provinces. Meanwhile, the e-Voucher system will be implemented in Lusaka, Central, Southern and North-Western Provinces, covering a total of 473,247 small holder farmers.

Madam Speaker, the total estimated cost to the Government for the 2023/2024 FISP is K7,152,481,292.47. I will repeat that the cost is K7,152,481,292.47. Of this amount, the e-Voucher system will cost K1,549,273,497.68, while, of course, for direct input supply, it is K5,603,207,794.80.

Madam Speaker, the following is the eligibility criteria for one to qualify to receive inputs under FISP:

- (a) an individual farmer should be a member of a registered farmer organisation and selected by the Camp Agriculture Committee (CAC). These are the CACs which we were discussing yesterday;
- (b) be a registered small-scale farmer and actively involved in farming within the camp coverage area;
- (c) cultivating not more than 5 ha of land;
- (d) have the capacity to pay the prescribed farmer contribution of K400;
- (e) not employed by the Government, public institutions and not in formal employment;
- (f) should be a Zambian and possess a green National Registration Card (NRC);
- (g) should have an active phone number; and
- (h) not benefitting from a similar government programme such as the Food Security Pack under the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services.

Madam Speaker, each targeted farmer under direct input supply will be entitled to the following inputs in the pack:

- (a) 3 x 50 kg basal dressing fertiliser;

- (b) 3 x 50 kg top dressing fertiliser;
- (c) 1 x 10 kg bag maize seed; and either one of the following seeds,
- (d) 1 x 25 kg bag of soybean seed or 1 x 20 kg bag of groundnuts seed or 1 x 12.5 kg rice or 1 x 5 kg sunflower or 1x 20 kg common beans or 1 x 10 kg cowpeas and finally, 1 x 10 kg sorghum.

Madam Speaker, the other seeds, of course, I will repeat them. It will be soybeans, groundnuts, rice, sunflower, common beans, cowpeas or sorghum. More crops have been included in the input pack under FISP to encourage crop diversification for farmers and of course, to improve our dietary selection.

Madam Speaker, you may wish to note that farmers on e-Voucher will be at liberty to choose agriculture inputs which are not limited to fertilisers, maize and legumes. The fixed value of the pack is approximately K9,581.18.

Madam Speaker, allow me to correct the misconception that farming inputs under FISP for the 2023/2024 Farming Season have delayed. There is no delay whatsoever in the procurement of inputs. The procurement process for the 120,380 metric tonnes of compound D fertiliser was concluded way back in May, 2023 and two suppliers were shortlisted and awarded contracts to deliver fertiliser. As of Friday, 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2023, the United – let me correct this. As of today, the United Capital Fertilizer Zambia Company Limited had delivered 38,774.68 metric tonnes, which is about 50.3 per cent of what the company was asked to supply.

The Nitrogen Chemicals of Zambia (NCZ) is about to conclude its tender procedures for transport and warehousing because it is subject to the Government's procedures. Therefore, it is not as quick as a private company.

Madam Speaker, regarding the registration of farmers, this is an ongoing process which is done through CACs based in the camps. There are 468 agricultural extension blocks which are divided into 2,508 camps.

Madam Speaker, as I conclude, I wish to reaffirm the Government's commitment to a timely distribution of inputs and transparent selection for beneficiaries. The New Dawn Government under the leadership of His Excellency the President, Mr Hakainde Hichilema, is committed to improving the livelihoods of our people and increasing food security in the country. Among the many interventions that can actualise this aspiration is the prudent implementation of FISP, which the Government is undertaking together, of course, with this noble House.

Madam Speaker, I thank you.

---