



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND ARTS

STATEMENT  
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*ON THE ENCROACHMENT IN NATIONAL PARKS AND  
GAME MANAGEMENT AREAS*

SEPTEMBER 2015

**Mr. Speaker**

I thank you for according me this opportunity to issue a Ministerial Statement on the Encroachments in the National Parks and Game Management Areas in Zambia. I therefore, wish to shed more light on this subject.

**Mr. Speaker**

Members of this August House may wish to note that wildlife still remains the mainstay of leisure tourism in this country and has the potential to significantly contribute to the wealth creation, poverty reduction and employment creation. It is saddening to note that our citizens have continued not only to encroach in these wildlife protected areas, but have also depleted the available wildlife. As a consequence, some of these areas have become unattractive to both local and foreign direct investment.

## **Mr Speaker**

Members of this August House and the public at large may wish to note that settlement in our Notional Parks is prohibited under section 15 of the Zambia Wildlife Authority Act Number 12 of 1998. As a country we have 20 Notional Parks and 36 Game Management Areas. Whereas human settlement is not allowed in the Notional Parks, settlement is allowed in Game Management Areas in conformity with existing General Management Plans (GMPs). Game Management Areas are by design buffer zones for wildlife and this is the area where hunting takes place.

## **Mr Speaker**

I wish to inform this August House that a number of wildlife habitats have continued to be encroached by both citizens of this country and foreigners. Illegal settlements in protected areas need to be immediately stopped because it is inimical to the growth of the wildlife sub-sector in Zambia. Therefore, there is need to stop this destructive trend.

## **Mr Speaker**

In order to curb the situation, Government through the Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA) has devised a plan in consultation with key stakeholders to evict illegal settlers in National Parks and Game Management Areas in order to improve the conservation of Biodiversity and Tourism Development. These Stakeholders include, the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit under the Office of the Vice President, the Ministry of Lands, Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, the Traditional Leadership under the Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs and the Ministry of Local Government and Housing.

It is my ministry's hope that the removal of the people who have encroached on these protected areas will result in boosting of animal populations that have dwindled as a result of people settling along animal corridors.

Mr Speaker

Allow me at this juncture to inform members of this August House that the process of evicting illegal settlers from protected areas will continue in order to protect our National Parks and Game Management Areas. In this regard, My Ministry together with other relevant Government wings commenced the eviction of illegal settlers from Mumbwa Game Management Area where more than 1,000 households were evicted. The illegal settlements had caused serious destructions of the wildlife habitat as can be evidenced from Sichifulo and Mumbwa East GMAs where wild animals have disappeared. As a Government we do not want this to extend to other areas.

**Mr Speaker**

It is important to note that Government has time and again engaged affected communities to vacate illegally occupied land in protected areas to avoid unnecessary inconveniences. While some law abiding citizens have complied with this directive, others have continued to stay in these protected areas. When Government moves in to remove those who are resisting, Government is accused of being inhuman.

## **Mr Speaker**

I wish to emphasize here that the programme to remove illegal settlers from protected areas will continue. My Ministry is committed to ensuring that all protected areas are left free from human settlement. My Ministry is currently targeting **Lukusuzi National Park in Lundazi, Mweru wa Ntipa National Park in Kaputa, Lower Zambezi National Park in Chirundu and Lavushi Manda National Parks in Mpika including Blue Lagoon and Lochnivar National Parks in the Kafue Flats and Msoro — Lupande GMAs**. Should foreigners be found in any GMA or National Parks as illegal settlers, they shall be handed over to relevant Government wings for deportation.

## **Mr Speaker**

Allow me to take this opportunity to remind all people who have illegally settled in wildlife protected areas to voluntarily leave the areas before the combined team of Government security wings (Zambia Army, Zambia Police Service, the National Service and Drug Enforcement Commission) move in to remove them. Let us all encourage them to relocate these people to other areas voluntarily so as to avoid

conflicts with the law enforcement agencies.

In the same vein, I wish to implore our Traditional leaders to sensitize their subjects against settling in protected areas. In addition, I wish to appeal to our Traditional leaders to desist from allocating land in protected areas for settlement purposes and unplanned settlements.

### **Mr Speaker**

Members of this August House should know that the Government of the Republic of Zambia has a heart for its people and does not want to inconvenience them. I am earnestly appealing to our fellow citizens to respect and obey the laws passed by this August House in order to safeguard the wildlife sector which is the cornerstone of our tourism development. With the Government's resolve to diversify our economy, it is therefore imperative that my Ministry protects Zambia's wildlife estate by preventing encroachment of its wildlife protected areas.

**Mr Speaker,**

I wish to take this opportunity to inform this August House that some of our Honorable Members of Parliament (**Hon Imenda, MP Luena Constituence and Hon. Kampyongo, MP -Shiwang'andu Constituencies among others**) have been very supportive in the protection of the environment and wildlife. For instance, these Honourable Members of Parliament have become members of the Parliamentary Conservation Caucus (ZPCC), which is a non-partisan voluntary body of Zambian Parliamentarians with a shared vision to influence policy directions and implementations in the quest for environmental sustainability in Zambia.

**Mr Speaker,**

ZPCC is an initiative for MPs inspired by the belief that conservation is a fundamental component of sustainable development, poverty reduction, conflict prevention, good governance and regional security so as to promote sound long term policies of sustainable land, forest, and water and biodiversity management.

In this regard, I wish to thank the Honourable Members of Parliament for choosing to partner with Government to conserve our nature and wildlife in a non-partisan manner. In the same vein, I wish to lay the ZPCC Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020 on the Table for the perusal of our Honourable Members of Parliament.

**Mr. Speaker**

It is my sincere hope that members of the public will now understand that unplanned settlement in protected areas is illegal and is punishable by law. Further, it should be noted that eviction of illegal settlers from National Parks and Game Management Areas is well-informed and intended as

it is meant to enhance the conservation of wildlife and improve the economic well-being of local communities.

**Mr Speaker,**

Finally, I wish to appeal to all the Honourable Members of Parliament and the public at large to support these measures that Government has put in place to improve the wildlife sub-sector. Further, I wish to appeal to Honorable Members of Parliament to join hands with Government in sensitizing our citizens against illegal settlement in protected areas.

**Mr. Speaker,**

**I beg to Move.**