



**REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA**

**MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING**

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**BY**

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**MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING**

**ON THE EXTENSION OF BUSINESS HOURS**

**November, 2010**

Mr. Speaker,

I wish to thank you for giving me this opportunity to inform this August House and the Nation at large on the changes the Government is making in the extension of business hours.

Mr. Speaker,

Over the years Zambia has gone through the process of transformation with the significant changes being privatization and economic liberalisation policies which has resulted in massive investments and an increase in the number of sectors including mining, tourism and manufacturing services. During this period Zambia has seen the development of numerous shopping malls and trading activities which have resulted in increased jobs and increased household income and subsequently increase in shopping power.

Mr. Speaker,

One of the tenants of the free market economy is that players (both consumer and producers alike) have an opportunity to make a wide range of choices on how to conduct their business. Traditionally in Zambia ,trading hours have been between 08:00 hrs and 17:00hrs during the

week and 08:00hrs to midday on Saturdays, and on Sunday and public holidays the shops remained closed. This was seen as a challenge for the workers in the formal sector because the shops were closing at the time of knocking off from work. However, with the introduction of the market economy, most shops and shopping malls have been operating outside of these shopping hours.

Mr. Speaker,

The Government realized the need to provide for the extension of business hours and in 2005 the Government through the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry carried out a country wide consultation regarding security concerns, public transport consideration and labour laws. Through the consultations other findings were that;

Mr. Speaker,

- The tourism sector would benefit by allowing tourists accessing the shops at hours convenient to them
- The larger retail establishments would allow the consumers a wider freedom of choice to shop
- The deregulations of business hours would remove the restrictions on trade and personal freedom.

Mr. Speaker,

This consultation arose from the need to change the Zambian business trading hours to suit with the development of the private sector and market oriented economy such as ours. Various business houses had made representations on the need to extend business hours particularly from the retail business houses.

Mr. Speaker,

Since then numerous consultative meetings have been held among the line ministries namely the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Local Government and Housing, Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the Ministry of Justice to discuss this subject matter. Arising from the aforesaid consultations it was evidently clear that there was need to extend the business hours from the current scenario to give room to the retail businesses and the consumers to do business.

Mr. Speaker,

There is no doubt that in Zambia today, there has been a change in our social and work patterns, such as the increasing number of duo income households, more flexible and longer working hours and increased number of single

households. The above factors influence how and when people are likely to go shopping.

Mr. Speaker,

Government is aware that the proposed extension of Business Hours will have an effect on the statutory working hours, security system to guarantee safety of workers and on the conditions of service such as transportation of workers. Government through its line Ministries of Home Affairs; Labour and Social Security and Justice covered these concerns during the consultations process as they relate to particular statutes.

Mr. Speaker,

In a number of countries laws have been liberalized to allow freedom of choice in shopping and doing business for retail outlets. In view of the findings it has become necessary that current business hours as provided for by the Trades Licensing Act be extended from the obtaining 08:00 hours - 17:00 hours, to 08:00 hours - 22:00.

Mr. Speaker,

There is no doubt that the aforementioned extension will increase the economic activity in Zambia. One sure way of increasing the velocity of money is to extend the shopping hours so that exchange of goods and services for money can be encouraged for longer periods, particularly for the working category of population who are busy during working hours.

Following the cabinet decision to repeal the Trades Licensing Act, my ministry was adequately advised to anchor the statutory instrument to extend the shopping hours to the Local Government Act Cap 281 of the laws of Zambia which allows my Ministry to make regulations regarding matters falling within the area of jurisdiction of a Council. I hereby announce that the statutory instrument number 94 of 2010 has been issued under my Ministry providing for the extension of business hours as follows: **08.00 hrs to 22.00 hours** in all Council areas that is City, Municipal and District Councils in the Republic of Zambia.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.