

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

ON

COMPLIANCE ON ANNUAL RETURNS BY REGISTERED SOCIETIES

THE HON. MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS, MR KAMPYONGO, MP

Mr Speaker, before I render my ministerial statement, allow me to be the first one to welcome the newly appointed hon. Minister of Finance, Dr Bwalya Ng'andu, to the House and congratulate him.

Sir, once again, let me thank you for according me this opportunity to render a ministerial statement on the obligation by registered societies to file annual returns in accordance with the law. The Societies Act, Cap. 119 of the Laws of Zambia, provides for registration, regulation and deregistration of societies.

Mr Speaker, I wish to remind this House that in March, 2019, I made a ministerial statement on the need for registered societies to be compliant with the rules and regulations of the Societies Act, Cap. 119 of the Laws of Zambia, especially on the filing in of annual returns. These returns are expected to be filed with the Registrar of Societies during the period 1st January to 31st March of each year.

Sir, out of the 22,000 societies registered with certificates of registration, 11,595 remitted their 2018/2019 annual returns and out of this figure, forty-one were political parties. It is of great concern that despite the statement I issued earlier encouraging registered societies to comply with the Societies Act, Cap. 119 of the Laws of Zambia, some societies have continued to operate in default.

In this regard, out of the fourteen political parties that were earmarked for deregistration in my earlier statement, the Department of the Registrar of Societies on 29th May, 2019, finally cancelled the registration of twelve of these political parties. Ten out of these were cancelled for

failure to comply with provisions of the Societies Act Cap. 119 of the Laws of Zambia. These parties are as follows:

- (a) People's Redemption Party;
- (b) National Alliance Party;
- (c) National Democratic Focus;
- (d) Untied Nationalist Party;
- (e) Party for Unity, Democracy and Development;
- (f) Movement for Democratic Process;
- (g) Zambia Conservative Party;
- (h) Zambia United Development Party;
- (i) Zambia Development Conference; and
- (j) Democratic Assembly.

Meanwhile, the cancellation of the registration of the other two political parties was based on the requests from the two parties to have their registration cancelled. These parties are the Heritage Party and Alliance for Better Zambia.

Mr Speaker, I wish to inform this august House and the nation that there is currently a total of sixty registered political parties of which forty-one successfully filed in their 2018/2019 annual returns. Meanwhile, fifteen political parties were found to be in default as at 31st March, 2019, due to non-remittance of returns. As such, these were served with default notices which gave a twenty-one day ultimatum for them to normalise their status, failure to which the process of cancellation was to be initiated. The affected political parties listed below were, therefore,

encouraged to engage the department for purposes of settling their penalties or indeed normalising their status to avoid unnecessary inconvenience.

Mr Speaker, like I promised last time, I will go through the names of those that are on default notices, which are as follows:

- (a) Agenda for Change;
- (b) National Restoration Party;
- (c) Federal Government Party;
- (d) Fourth Revolution Party;
- (e) Federal Democratic Party;
- (f) New Generation Party;
- (g) New Labour Party;
- (h) National Movement for Progress Party;
- (i) Revolutionary Communist Party;
- (j) United Progressive People;
- (k) United Democratic Forum Party;
- (l) Radical Revolutionary Party;
- (m) People's Democratic Party;
- (n) Ubuntu Democratic Party; and

(o) People's Alliance for Change.

Mr Speaker, I wish to state that arising from the action taken by the department, two political parties that were deregistered have since appealed their deregistration. These are Zambia Conservative Party and Democratic Assembly and their submissions are being processed by the ministry. However, from the fifteen political parties that were in default, five have so far settled their penalties and normalised their status accordingly. These are:

(a) National Restoration Party;

(b) United Progressive People;

(c) People's Alliance For Change;

(d) New Labour Party; and

(e) Ubuntu Democratic Party.

Meanwhile, the twenty-one day ultimatum having elapsed, the department has since gone further to issue notifications for intention to cancel the certificates of the remaining ten political parties that were in default and have not to-date normalised their status.

Sir, as regards other categories of societies, the department has commenced the process of cancellation for 500 societies that have not been compliant with the Act. Among them are associations, religious bodies and community service societies. The affected societies will to this effect be engaged in line with the prescribed procedure in the Societies Act on cancellation.

Mr Speaker, at this point, allow me to yet again take this opportunity to appeal to all registered societies and their branches through my fellow Parliamentarians to note that filing of annual returns is not the only obligation registered societies must comply with, but also that they are required to notify the registrar on matters regarding change of office bearers, amendments to

their constitutions and changes in physical address which should be done in the prescribed manner. Any changes proposed, therefore, would need to meet the requirements of the Societies Act, read together with the provisions of the constitution of that particular society.

Sir, finally, let me remind all societies that are operating illegally, especially religious organisations, that they are required by law to register with the Registrar of Societies in accordance with Section 6 of the Societies Act, Cap. 119 of the Laws of Zambia. I wish to warn all those societies operating illegally that once discovered the law will take its course. I, therefore, appeal to societies to comply with the provisions of the Societies Act, Cap. 119 of the Laws of Zambia.

Mr Speaker, I thank you.