

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

ON

DELIMITATION SITTINGS IN DISTRICTS AND CONSTITUENCIES

BY

HER HONOUR THE VICE-PRESIDENT, MRS WINA, MP

Madam Speaker, thank you for according me this opportunity to issue a ministerial statement in response to a point of order raised by Hon. Jack Mwiimbu on Friday, 12th July, 2019, on the ongoing delimitation sittings in districts and constituencies.

Madam, the following was the point of order:

“Madam Speaker, you may be aware that the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) has made a programme of delimiting constituencies, and the scheduled meetings are starting tomorrow up to September 2019. Most of these meetings will be taking place when Parliament is sitting. We are all aware that hon. Members of Parliament have a particular interest in issues of delimitation. The issue which I am raising on Her Honour the Vice-President is that these delimitations are taking place during parliamentary sittings, and this will definitely affect the attendance in the House because most of the hon. Members of Parliament would want to go and attend these delimitation meetings. Therefore, is the Vice-President in order to allow delimitation meetings to take place while Parliament is sitting, taking into account that parliamentary duties take precedence?”

Madam, the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ), in accordance with Article 58 of the Constitution of Zambia (Amendment) Act No. 2 of 2016, is mandated to conduct the delimitation of constituencies and wards. Section 21 of the Electoral Process Act No. 35 of 2016 further mandates the commission to conduct the delimitation of polling districts. Delimitation is conducted at intervals of not more than ten years.

Madam Speaker, in view of this Constitutional and statutory mandate, the commission has commenced the process of conducting the delimitation of constituencies, wards and polling

districts. The district sittings which commenced on 8th July, 2019, are expected to be concluded on 28th September, 2019. The district sittings will then be followed by the provincial sittings which will commence on 14th October to 30th November 2019.

Madam Speaker, the delimitation exercise is a prerequisite for the registration of voters which the commission has earmarked to commence in 2020 as it prepares for the 2021 general elections. Therefore, the commission cannot afford to reschedule the district delimitation sittings as this will have an adverse impact on other key electoral activities such as voter registration. This may, therefore, affect preparations for the 2021 general elections, which, as we now all know, have a fixed date provided for in the Constitution.

Madam, a detailed schedule of the district delimitation sittings has been disseminated to the hon. Members. I, therefore, recommend that the hon. Members of Parliament take time to look at the dates as to when the sittings will be held in their respective districts and plan to participate in them.

Madam Speaker, the House will also recall that hon. Members of Parliament were consulted on Wednesday, 22nd June, 2019, through a workshop that was held here at Parliament Buildings by the ECZ. The ECZ accordingly took note of the submissions from the hon. Members of Parliament during that consultative meeting. The essence of that workshop was to consult the hon. Members of Parliament on the delimitation process before going to districts. Therefore, hon. Members of Parliament have been adequately consulted. However, hon. Members are at liberty to make written submissions on the delimitation process relating to their respective wards and constituencies, and such submissions can be sent to the chief electoral officer. These written submissions will be reviewed during the district and provincial sittings as a way of getting consensus among stakeholders.

I thank you Madam Speaker.