

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

ON THE

2020/2021 FARMER INPUT SUPPORT PROGRAMME PREPARATIONS

BY THE

HON. MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (MR KATAMBO), MP

Mr Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to deliver a ministerial statement on the preparations of the 2020/2021 Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP). I wish to update the nation on the progress made by the Ministry of Agriculture in the implementation of the 2020/2021 Agriculture Season.

Mr Speaker, the Patriotic Front (PF) Government remains committed to supporting our small-scale farmers with inputs under FISP in order to enhance agriculture production and productivity. Through FISP, we intend to help the farmers have access to affordable agriculture inputs which are delivered on time.

Mr Speaker, we are all aware that FISP has faced several challenges in its implementation. As the Government, we are resolved to overcoming these challenges. I am happy to inform this august House that the issue of late delivery of inputs to the districts has been addressed. As was the case last year, farmers have already started receiving their inputs for the 2020/2021 Agriculture Season.

Sir, let me now highlight some of the measures that we have put in place for FISP in the 2020/2021 Agriculture Season. During the 2020/2021 Agriculture Season, the programme will be implemented as follows:

- (a) Two modalities of implementation namely; the Electronic Voucher System (e-Voucher System) and the Direct Input Supply (DIS) will be used;
- (b) A total of 1 million farmers will be targeted to receive inputs under the programme; and
- (c) The farmer contribution remains unchanged at K400.

Mr Speaker, the distribution of the farming inputs for the 2020/2021 Agriculture Season was launched on 9th September, 2020 by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Zambia, Dr Edgar Chagwa Lungu. This is a clear demonstration of the importance that this Government attaches to supporting the small-scale farmers. For the 2020/2021 Agriculture Season, six fertilizer suppliers have been contracted to supply inputs under DIS. As I make this statement, the fertilizer has been delivered to the districts except in those districts except in the districts where there are no storage facilities.

Sir, for the districts without storage space, the fertilizer has been strategically pre-positioned so that it can easily be delivered to those districts when needed. Further, the ministry has contracted nine seed suppliers to supply various seed and to date, over 70 per cent of seed has been delivered to the districts.

Mr Speaker, under the e-Voucher System, we shall continue to work with agro-dealers to provide inputs to the farmers. To abate accumulation of arrears to agro-dealers, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Finance will this farming season ensure that agro-dealers are paid promptly during the 2020/2021 Farming Season.

Sir, I also wish to report that farmers have already begun their deposits for the 2020/2021 Farming Season and so far, over 945,866 farmers or 95 per cent of the targets have already deposited their K400 contribution. Let me take this opportunity to urge farmers to deposit their contributions and begin to collect their inputs. Farmers should not wait for the rains to start collecting their inputs.

Mr Speaker, as I conclude my ministerial statement, I wish to urge farmers and the public to be vigilant and report all fraudulent activities to law enforcement agencies. This is the only way we can ensure that the right beneficiaries benefit from this programme.

Mr Speaker, I thank you.