

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

ON THE

2020/2021 RAINY SEASON FORECAST

BY THE

HON. MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION (MR KAFWAYA), MP

Mr Speaker, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to make a ministerial statement on the 2020/2021 Rainy Season Forecast. I feel duty bound to give this statement as whether and climate conditions affect all sectors of the economy across the country.

Sir, over time, we have observed the climate change as a severe impact on many social-economic sectors of our country and the same could be said for the future. Therefore, the importance of weather information for decision making across relevant sectors is critical. More importantly, it is essential to make reasonably accurate whether and climate forecast in a timely manner. Accordingly, the Government under the able leadership of His Excellency Dr Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia, we have continued to equip the Zambia Metrological Department. This is being done through the procurement and installation of modern automatic data collection equipment to aid the process of whether forecasting. I would like to register my appreciation and that of the Government for the invaluable contribution from cooperating partners in providing equipment and funding for the success of this program.

Mr Speaker, I wish to remind this august House that when the Patriotic (PF) Government came into power in 2011, there were only thirty-nine manual weather stations across the country. I wish to remind this august House that when the PF came into power in 2011, there were only thirty-nine manual whether stations across the country. I am therefore, glad to state that we have added over 110 automatic weather stations. Further, we are in the process of procuring 140

additional automatic weather stations under the Transforming Landscapes for Resilience and Development (TRALARD) and Strengthening Climate Change Resilience (SCRALA) in agro-ecological regions I and II projects. In addition, we have enhanced capacity for weather and climate modeling through the modern technological infrastructure.

Mr Speaker, the Seventh National Development Plan (7thSNDP), outlines aspirations to enhance economic diversification, job creation, poverty and vulnerability reduction as well as reducing developmental inequalities. In this regard, weather and climate information is fundamental in ensuring that we as a people realize these aspirations by timely sharing the information on weather and climate. The use of weather and climate information is a basis for building resilience in sectors and communities, as well as adapting to climate variability and climate change. Moreover, weather and climate information is key for the mitigation and fight against agriculture pests and diseases as well as managing the water resources and environment.

Mr Speaker, before I proceed with the 2020/2021 Rainy Season Forecast, allow me to offer a brief reflective view of the actual results of weather during the 2019/2020 Rainy Season.

Sir, you will recall that the negative effect of climate variability and climate change, were clear across the country. Many areas experienced extreme weather conditions ranging from prolonged dry spells in December, 2019, and part of January, 2020, especially over the Southern and Western provinces. In contrast, floods were experienced in many areas of the country between January and March with recording breaking, “Seasonal Rainfall in Excess of 2,000 mm over Misamfu, Mpulungu and Samfya Districts in Northern and Luapula provinces.”

Sir, further, dry conditions were witnessed in some parts of the Southern half of the country during the 2019/2020, Rainy Season. This resulted to reduced agricultural production. Moreover, the floods which were experienced in the Northern and Eastern parts of the country led to loss of lives, livelihoods and disruption in service delivery due to damaged road infrastructure such as the Lumezi Bridge and the Samfya/Mansa Road, among many others.

Mr Speaker, let me now give the forecast for the period 2020/2021 Rainy Season. Generally, the large part of Zambia is likely to receive normal to above normal rainfall. However, prolonged dry spells are likely to occur in some parts of the North Western, Muchinga, Luapula and Northern provinces. For the period of October, November and December, 2020, much of Zambia will have a high chance of receiving normal to above normal rainfall except for some parts of Chavuma, Zambezi, Kabompo, Manyinga, Mwinilunga, Ikeleng'i, Limulunga, Mongu and Kasama Districts, which are likely to receive normal to below normal rainfall.

Sir, during the period of November, December and January, most parts of the country have a likelihood of receiving normal to above normal rainfall. However, Ikeleng'i, Mwinilunga, Kabompo, Senanga, Kabwe, Kapiri Mposhi, Serenje, Chitambo, Lavushi Manda, Mambwe, Petauke, Sinda, Katete, Kasenengwa and surrounding areas have a high chance of receiving normal to below normal rainfall. For December, January and February, much of Zambia has a high chance of receiving normal to above normal rainfall apart from Kasama, Mungwi, Chama, Lundazi, Chasefu, Petauke and Kalabo Districts and indeed, surrounding areas which have a high chance of receiving normal to below normal rainfall.

Mr Speaker, in the last part of the rainy season of January, February and March, 2021, most parts of Zambia will have a high chance of receiving normal to above normal rainfall. However, parts of Muchinga and Northern Provinces. Districts such as Mansa, Ndola, Kabompo, Senanga, Livingstone and surrounding areas are likely to receive normal to below normal rainfall.

Mr Speaker, I wish to emphasise that every season has diverse implications across all sectors. During the 2020/2021 Rainy Season, the country is likely to experience the following:

- (a) dry spells across the country especially over Luapula, Muchinga and Northern Provinces, including the Northern districts of Eastern Province; and
- (b) increased chance of floods and flash floods in prone areas.

Mr Speaker, the 2020/2021 Rainy Season is likely to be fully established by the end of November, 2020. Although in some areas the rains may start earlier, the Northern, Luapula, Copperbelt, North Western and parts of the Western Provinces may experience thunder storms and showers by October. In this regard, I would like to advise farmers and the public at large to safe guard their harvested crops properly to avoid damage. It is also important to note that in every season, dry spells occur in the middle of the rainy season and in certain circumstances, lead to crop loss. I would therefore, urge our farmers and other stakeholders to regularly follow my ministry's regular metrological forecasts and updates which will be on most radio and television stations. They are also welcome to get in touch with the ministry for them to access the weather information.

Mr Speaker, let me similarly state that there are important aspects that come with the rainy season which affect our daily lives and activities. In this regard, I wish to encourage sectors and communities to undertake sensitisation programmes in good sanitation and hygiene practices and also, clear the drainage systems well in advance to avoid water pools that may serve as breeding grounds for germs. Likewise, there is need for institutions to stock relief materials, medicines and pesticides that may be required during the course of the season. To protect our environment contribute to mitigating the adverse effects of climate change and variability, I wish to encourage the public to plant trees. Trees are a natural measure that improve the rainfall performance and reduce impacts of extreme weather conditions such as floods and droughts.

Sir, the ministry will continue giving updates to the nation on the actual and expected weather conditions during the 2020/2021 Rainy Season. This will be done through community radio stations, the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) including other communication platforms.

Mr Speaker, as the old adage goes, 'To be forewarned is to be forearmed.' I am encouraging all sectors and communities to incorporate the 2020/2021 Rainy Season Forecast in their plans and decision making processes and get metrological updates on a regular basis.

Mr Speaker, I thank you.
