

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

ON

2020 CENSUS MAPPING

BY

THE HON. MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING, MR CHITEME, MP

Mr Speaker, may I begin by expressing sincere apologies for the unfortunate miscommunication yesterday. Please, accept my apology on my behalf and that of the compliment of my staff from the ministry. Further, I should start by thanking you for giving me this opportunity again.

Sir, since Zambia attained its independence in 1964, five censuses of population and housing have been conducted. The first census was conducted in 1969 while the rest were held in 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2010. The 2020 Census will be the sixth for this country.

Mr Speaker, census data are also used by state and non-state actors to plan and provide critical goods and services. These include social services such as schools, hospitals, agriculture extension services, housing, police services, fire protection, roads, public transportation and skills training. The information provided by the Census of Population and Housing accurately reflects a country's demographic and social-economic characteristics of population. Sir, Zambia is not an exception.

Sir, a census is a complex, extensive and very expensive undertaking. It is for reason that it requires adequate preparation in terms of logistics. These include funds, human resources, transport, full stakeholders' engagement and citizens' participation among others. With this in mind, enumerators are critical to any census of population and housing. To ensure that each and every household is covered, a prior exercise called Census Mapping and Listing is carried out several months before the actual census of population and housing.

Mr Speaker, during the exercise, enumerators referred as map data collectors visit households, geo-tagging buildings, other structures and prominent features in their assigned areas.

Information regarding buildings such as their use, which is residential or non-residential and basic information on household size is also collected from the occupants.

During this year's census, the Map Data Collectors will record the responses from each household using an electronically designs from a computer gadget called a tablet. This is a complete departure from the use of paper and pen during the last five censuses. The census undertaking in Zambia is in conformity with the Statistic Act, No. 13 of 2918 of the Laws of Zambia. Given the foregoing, the nation may wish to know that the mapping and listing exercise in Lusaka Province was successfully conducted in 2019. The exercise is currently under way in five provinces namely; the Copperbelt, the Eastern, Luapula, the North-Western and the Western provinces.

Sir, mapping and listing is a foundation of any census and I am glad to inform the nation that despite several challenges, which include recent security disruptions in security, my ministry through the Zambia Statistics Agency has made notable progress. As at 23rd February, 2020, the mapping and listing was at 59 per cent complete in the five provinces. Luapula had the highest completion level at 88 per cent, followed by Western Province at 74 per cent. Mapping in Central, Northern and Southern provinces is expected to commence in March. The Zambia Statistics Agency will continue to work closely with provincial and district stakeholders to ensure successful mapping in these provinces as well as conducting a pilot census planned for March, 2020.

Mr Speaker, my Government would like to appeal to all stakeholders to do their part in ensuring a successful 2020 Census of population and Housing. Serious disruptions to the mapping exercise will make it impossible for us to conduct the 2020 Census. I will now outline some of the benefits of conducting the census include:

- (a) appropriate allocation of development projects to needy communities and minimise the geographical imbalances;

- (b) smooth delimitation of constituencies and wards in preparation for the 2021 Tripartite Election;
- (c) enhanced ability for Zambia to report on 97 (40 per cent) of the SDG indicators as Census of Population is the source;
- (d) a credible population form for the next National Development Plan;
- (e) enhanced support from our development partners with new and clear population census statistics;
- (f) updated social and economic needs of the country which will support our ability as a nation to formulate appropriate policy and strategy responses; and
- (g) the country's future socio-economic survey will be anchored on the right population form which will ensure appropriate and sound survey results.

Sir, before I conclude, let me touch on the subject of recruitment for the Map Data Collectors. To ensure transparency in the process of short-listing and recruiting of applicants for the mapping and listing exercise, the Ministry of National Development Planning through the Zambia Statistics Agency implemented an automated system which ran on a digital platform. This was to ensure objective and consistent application of candidates across all regions thereby reducing the problem related to compliance, discrimination and patronage.

The implementation of an e-recruitment platform followed a Cabinet decision, which in addition to the above reasons aimed at ensuring that the census is cost-effective. The recruitment exercise was advertised in the mainstream media inviting qualified Grade 12 school leavers to apply for the mapping and listing exercise for temporary jobs by simply sending the required information through SMSs to 8558 to mobile network operators; Airtel, Zambia, Zamtel and MTN. The requirements information were:

- (a) year of birth;
- (b) district of residence;
- (c) year completed of Grade 12; and
- (d) Grade 12 Examination Number.

With this system, it was easy for the agency to meet deadlines given the tight schedule of the census. In addition, applicants did not have to write application letters, posting them and high certificate authentication costs. Furthermore, applicants did not have worry about possible loss of their application letters or indeed how quickly it would reach the agency or possibility of favouratism.

Sir, appreciative of the youth unemployment challenge in the country, my ministry focused the recruitment on youths aged is to 25 years including eligible female applicants. Applicants were encouraged to apply for positions in their district of residence or enumeration areas which had some of the benefits such as:

1. ownership of the census activities by local communities;
2. minimisation of cultural language and terrain barriers or challenges;
3. supporting income equity in those areas through payment of allowances and spending in the local economies; and
4. transfers of critical census skills to the local youths.

Mr Speaker, the application database revealed overwhelming responses of 12,800 applications were received from all the 116 districts of Zambia and by the end of the closing date which was November 1st 2019.

Among other requirements applicants were required to have a minimum of Grade Twelve certificates. To this effect the Zambia Statistics Agency partnered with the Examination Council of Zambia (ECZ) to validate the grade twelve results of the applicants. A total of 1,916 examination numbers were not found in the ECZ database for various reasons leaving only 10,884 as valid examination numbers. Applicants with at least five 'O' level with Mathematics and English were shortlisted to sit for the aptitude tests. A total of 6,793 applicants were shortlisted and reported to the aptitude test centres in their respective districts. A total of 1,500 map data collectors were required to conduct the mapping and were selected after the aptitude test was administered. The 1500 selected applicants underwent specialised training and were later deployed in the respective districts.

Mr Speaker to oversee, the recruitments, districts recruitment committees were established in all respective districts in the five provinces where mapping is currently under way. The membership was drawn from the office of the District Commissioner, the Office of the President, the Zambia Police, Traditional Leadership and were represented the Human Rights Commission and the wards.

Finally, I would like to strongly appeal to the member of the public, tradition, political and community leaders as well as the church to actively send positive messages and assist map data collectors to complete this notational task. Let us do our best towards the census undertaking and ensure that it is a resounding success.

Mr Speaker, I thank you.