

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
ON THE
CONSTRUCTION OF TOLL PLAZAS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE TREASURY
BY THE
HON. MINISTER OF HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT, MR
CHITOTELA**

Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity given to me to render a ministerial statement on the construction of the toll plazas and their impact on the national treasury.

I wish to thank you sincerely for giving me this opportunity to appraise the nation through this august House on the status of the road toll fees collection in Zambia.

Mr Speaker, in line with the Tolls Act No. 14 of 2011, introduced by the Patriotic Front (PF) Government, His Excellency Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Sovereign Republic of Zambia, commissioned and launched the three conventional toll plazas namely; Mumbwa, Shimabala and Katuba at a ceremony that was held on 27th April, 2017 at Katuba Toll Plaza. The three toll stations were constructed at an estimated total cost of K90 million.

Sir, the completion of the construction of the three toll plazas brought the total number of operational inland toll stations in the country to five. Hon. Members of Parliament may wish to note that this number excludes the weigh bridges which are also toll collection points. The successful completion of the three toll plazas is a significant milestone in the implementation of the National Road Tolling Programme and the attainment of financial sustainability in road infrastructure development in our country.

Mr Speaker, in addition to the five toll plazas, road tolls are being collected from the ten points of entry and six weigh bridges in different parts of the country. As a minister responsible for housing and infrastructure development in the country, I am pleased to inform this august House that during the period of January to May 2017, we have collected a total number of K236,947,467.90 through these facilities. I further wish to note that about 141 direct and permanent jobs under the National Tolling Programme were created for our young men and women in Zambia.

Sir, as a Government that prioritises the expansion and modernisation of infrastructure base of our country and as a precursor to Zambia's economic transformation and development, provision of high quality and safe road network is, therefore, of paramount importance. In this regard, the National Road Tolling Programme will continue to be a beacon of hope and model for sustainable financing of the road infrastructure projects in the country in light of limited fiscal space and competing national needs.

Mr Speaker the plan of the Government under the visionary leadership of His Excellency Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia, is to construct a total of twenty inland toll plazas of various structural designs across the country by the end of 2017. The expected annual revenue from the twenty toll plazas is estimated at K670 million. By next year,

Mr Speaker, we intend to construct additional twenty toll plazas to bring the total number to forty toll stations. The selection of the roads along which the toll plazas will be constructed and situated will depend on the economic viability of the roads.

Sir, Government is fully aware that some road users may be negatively affected with the introduction of the road tolls. Being a caring and a pro-poor government, we have introduced measures to cushion the negative impact by providing a discount for frequent road users and local road user residing within 10 km radius of the toll facilities.

Mr Speaker, the Government would like to encourage road users who qualify for the local user discount to visit the respective toll stations to register to enable them enjoy this benefit, provided that they meet the set criterion. Further, frequent users are expected to apply for a discount after passing a total station ten times in a calendar month.

Sir, in conclusion, allow me to take this opportunity to assure my fellow Zambians and road users in particular, that Government will provide the leadership to ensure that the funds collected through the road toll stations are used for the intended purpose and prudently managed and accounted for, that is, every penny or single ngwee that we collect from the road users. This is important in order for us to continue to build public confidence in the road tolling and other national programmes.

Mr Speaker, we firmly believe that moving in this direction will make the Government realise the intended benefits, for all to see and appreciate. Further, this will ensure sustainable road maintenance which will bring down vehicle maintenance costs and reduce travel time. As I speak, the tolling programme has been rated as the highest non-tax contributor to the Treasury.

I thank you, Sir.