

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

ON THE

PROGRESS MADE DURING THE PHASE II OF THE MOBILE NATIONAL REGISTRATION AND ISSUANCE OF NATIONAL REGISTRATION CARDS

BY THE

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (MR KAMPYONGO), MP

Mr Speaker, I wish to start by thanking you most sincerely for this opportunity to give a ministerial statement on the progress made during the Phase II of the Mobile National Registration and Issuance of the National Registration Cards as directed by Her Honour the Vice-President and by yourself.

Sir, the 2020 Mobile Issuance of National Registration Cards was intended to provide increased access to the acquisition of National Registration Cards (NRCs) by citizens who have attained the mandatory age of sixteen years and above, especially those who cannot easily reach District National Registration Offices. The exercise is meant to also empower citizens with NRCs to enable them participate in the economic activities and electoral processes of our country.

Mr Speaker, Phase II of the Mobile Issuance of National Registration Cards commenced on 20th September, 2020, in Central, Lusaka, Muchinga, Southern and Western provinces after the successful completion of Phase I in the other five provinces. Operations during the first five days were slow owing to the logistical challenges during the movement of materials and equipment from the Phase I provinces. As a result of this, registration teams could not be deployed to far flung areas during the first few days. It is for this reason that the Government saw it fit to extend the mobile registration period for five days to end on the 4th of November, 2020. Further, I want

to sincerely appreciate Her Honour the Vice-President's Office and the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) for understanding this position.

Mr Speaker, the target for Phase II of the Mobile National Registration exercise was to capture about 730,000 nationals and issue them with NRCs. So far, 632,363 NRCs have been issued, representing 87 per cent success rate. I wish to thank the hon. Members of Parliament, traditional leaders and other stakeholders for participating in the exercise by encouraging all eligible persons to obtain NRCs.

Sir, it goes without saying that some challenges were encountered during this mammoth undertaking, but the ministry worked closely with stakeholders to ensure that these challenges were addressed.

Mr Speaker, we had some instances where unscrupulous individuals were taking advantage of this exercise by charging applicants for affidavits. These are cases that were reported mainly in Lusaka District. However, the ministry quickly moved in to deploy police officers to keep the situation in check. In addition, there isolated cases of foreign nationals who attempted to obtain NRCs and also some Zambians who attempted to obtain two or more NRCs were equally reported. Fortunately, the law enforcement agencies were on hand to arrest perpetrators and the said offenders will be appearing in the courts of law soon.

Sir, arising from the complaints received on the Floor of this august House that the issuance of NRCs was selective, I personally went on the ground in Southern Province and other areas to see what was obtaining there. My visit established that in fact, the problem was simply lack of coordination and proper communication amongst the people on the ground.

Mr Speaker, it was discovered that the district leadership in the province made a schedule and allocated dates when the registration teams were going to visit each identified registration centre. However, due to lack of communication between the office of District Commissioners (DCs) and some hon. Members of Parliament, applicants were being ferried from centres which were yet to be attended to the district office or to registration centres where registration was on going. This

in many cases created long queues and led to many complaints that hon. Members were receiving from their constituencies. I am however, happy to report that during my visit this situation was addressed.

Sir, allow me to take this opportunity to thank His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Zambia, Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu, for the support during both phase one and two of the mobile national registration exercise. I also wish to thank Her Honour, the Vice-President for the support rendered to the officers on the ground. I will be failing in my duties if I did not appreciate and recognise the support that we got from the hon. Minister of Finance, Hon. Bwalya Ng'andu for releasing funds towards this important exercise. Generally the exercise has been successful.

Mr Speaker, I wish to conclude by saying that all districts and sub-district registration offices will remain open in case there are eligible persons who might have missed the mobile registration exercise. In order to afford those who have lost National Registration Cards (NRCs) and easy access to replacement, I have extended the suspension of the requirement of the police report until the end of the voter registration exercise.

I thank you, Sir.