

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

ON THE

REDUCED LOADSHEDDING IN THE COUNTRY

BY THE

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (MR NKHUWA), MP

Madam Speaker, I wish to thank you for this opportunity to give a Ministerial Statement on the issue of loadshedding to the House and to the people of Zambia at large, and more importantly, the measures we have undertaken to completely eliminate loadshedding.

Madam Speaker, loadshedding is a term used when a utility decides to interrupt power supply to its customers due to the electricity supply system being overwhelmed by the connected loads or electricity demand. Loadshedding has mainly been caused by insufficient generation capacity due to reduced water levels in our major reservoirs following low rainfall patterns in recent past years. This is also attributed to an increase in demand which has been growing at about 150 to 200 mega watts per annum. Currently the country's installation capacity is 2 976 mega watts with hydro power at 80.45 per cent. The current peak demand is at 2 300 mega watts. However, due to reduced water levels only about 1 400 mega watts is available, creating a deficit of 810 mega watts.

Madam Speaker, in light of the foregoing, Zambia Electricity Supply Corporation (ZESCO) limited commenced implementation of loadshedding programmes with customers experiencing power outages for about ten to twelve hours daily⁶. This measure was introduced to prolong power generation operations at our major hydro power stations.

Madam Speaker, you may wish to note that strategic institutions such as health facilities, water utilities, mining firms and security wings, just to mention but a few were exempted from loadshedding where we had dedicated lines. Particularly, in instances where the dedicated lines of supply to the institutions were passing through huge load centres. In December, 2020, Zambia recorded reduced electricity demand that was caused by industrial breaks taken by most industries during the festive season. This phenomenon created surplus electricity which was channelled to the domestic customers. Therefore, loadshedding was relaxed from 23rd December, 2020 to 3rd January, 2021. Additionally, this was also attributed to steady rise of water levels in our major reservoirs following the onset of the 2020/2021 rainy season.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform this august House that the power deficit is expected to reduce as a result of the significant improvement in the rain pattern and subsequent positive water flows into the reservoirs leading to an increase in power generation. Further, with the coming of the 750 mega watts Kafue Gorge Lower Power Station this year, loadshedding is expected to end.

Madam Speaker, in conclusion, I wish to state that the Government is aggressively addressing the loadshedding problems throughout the country through various initiatives including, liberalisation of the electricity sub sector through introduction of the open access regime in the electricity Act No. 11 of 2019, a move which is meant to attract more investment and promote competition in the sector. Our expectation is that we will be energy secure this year and going forward.

Madam Speaker, I thank you.
