



**THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE**

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

BY

**HON. DORA SILIYA, MP,
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE,**

ON

“THE FALL ARMY WORM/STALK BORER AND RED LOCUSTS”

FEBRUARY, 2017

MR. SPEAKER,

I THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME THIS OPPORTUNITY TO DELIVER A MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE CROP PESTS THAT HAVE BEEN A MENACE TO OUR FOOD SECURITY NAMELY; THE FALL ARMY WORMS, STALK BORERS AND RED LOCUSTS.

MR SPEAKER,

IN THE 2016/2017 AGRICULTURAL SEASON, THE COUNTRY EXPERIENCED AN OUTBREAK OF FALL ARMY WORMS WHICH ATTACKED THE MAIZE CROP IN SOME PARTS OF THE COUNTRY. THE FALL ARMY WORM IS NOT NATIVE TO AFRICA. IT IS NATIVE TO THE TROPICAL AND SUB-TROPICAL AREAS OF THE AMERICAS. SEVERAL WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES, NAMELY, SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE, NIGERIA AND GHANA WERE THE FIRST TO REPORT THE PRESENCE OF THE FALL ARMY WORM IN EARLY 2016.

MR SPEAKER,

THE OUTBREAK OF THE FALL ARMY WORM IN THE COUNTRY WAS FIRST REPORTED IN THE SECOND WEEK OF DECEMBER, 2016, ON

THE COPPERBELT PROVINCE, FOLLOWED BY EASTERN, LUAPULA, LUSAKA AND CENTRAL PROVINCES.

AS AT 16TH FEBRUARY, 2017 A TOTAL OF **234,147** FARMERS AND A TOTAL AREA OF **191,930** HECTARES OF LAND HAD BEEN AFFECTED BY THE OUTBREAK OF THE FALL ARMY WORM IN THE COUNTRY.

MR SPEAKER,

IN RESPONSE TO THIS OUTBREAK, GOVERNMENT PROCURED 101,804 LITRES OF VARIOUS CHEMICALS FOR THE CONTROL OF THE PEST WHICH WERE DISTRIBUTED TO THE AFFECTED FARMERS. THE VALUE OF THE CHEMICALS IS **K 18 MILLION**. THE CHEMICALS PROCURED INCLUDE CYPERMETHRIN, MALATHION, KARATE AND CHROLOPYROFOS.

IN ADDITION, TO THE PROCUREMENT OF THESE CHEMICALS, GOVERNMENT PROVIDED AN ADDITIONAL K3 MILLION FOR THE PURCHASE OF WORK SUITS, GUM BOOTS, SPRAYERS,

RESPIRATORS AND FOR OPERATIONAL FUNDS FOR ALL THE 10 PROVINCES.

MR SPEAKER,

THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE WORKED IN CLOSE COLLABORATION WITH THE DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND MITIGATION UNIT (DMMU), DISTRICT AND PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATIONS, ZAMBIA NATIONAL SERVICE, ZAMBIA AIRFORCE AND THE ZAMBIA CORRECTIONAL SERVICES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE FALL ARMY WORMS.

THIS COLLABORATION IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE FALL ARMY WORM IS A DEMONSTRATION OF EFFECTIVE COORDINATION AMONG VARIOUS GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS AS PRONOUNCED BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT, MR. EDGAR CHAGWA LUNGU ON THE NEED FOR A ONE GOVERNMENT APPROACH TO NATIONAL ISSUES.

MR SPEAKER,

I WISH TO REPORT THAT THE FALL ARMY WORM PEST HAS BEEN CONTAINED BUT NOT COMPLETELY ERADICATED. THEREFORE, GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE WITH SURVEILLANCE PROGRAMMES UP TO THE HARVEST TIME. FARMERS ARE URGED TO CONTINUE SCOUTING THEIR FIELDS FOR THE PEST AND SPRAYING UNTIL AFTER HARVEST TIME AS THE WORM MAY EVEN ATTACK MAIZE COBS.

MR SPEAKER,

IN TERMS OF THE RED LOCUSTS, THE INTERNATIONAL RED LOCUST CONTROL ORGANIZATION FOR EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA (IRLCO) IS CURRENTLY UNDERTAKING SURVEYS OF THE RED LOCUST AND THE AFRICAN MIGRATORY LOCUST IN THE FOLLOWING BREEDING AREAS: KAFUE FLATS, SIMAHALA PLAINS AND LUKANGA SWAMPS.

MR SPEAKER,

THE SURVEY HAS REVEALED THAT A TOTAL OF 82,000 HECTARES HAS BEEN AFFECTED BY THE RED LOCUSTS. OUT OF THIS AREA, 3,000 HECTARES HAS A POPULATION DENSITY OF 50 LOCUSTS PER SQUARE METRE WHILE 79,000 HECTARES HAS BETWEEN 1 – 5 LOCUSTS PER SQUARE METRE. TO DATE, ONLY 2,000 HECTARES OF FARMERS' FIELDS ESPECIALLY MAIZE HAS BEEN AFFECTED BY THE AFRICAN MIGRATORY LOCUSTS. THE AFFECTED AREAS INCLUDE TWO VILLAGES IN NAMWALA AND FIVE AREAS IN ITEZHI TEZHI INCLUDING THE RIVERRINE AREAS.

MR SPEAKER,

ON 11TH FEBRUARY, 2017, THE INTERNATIONAL RED LOCUST CONTROL ORGANIZATION BEGAN GROUND SPRAYING OPERATIONS FOR THE LOCUSTS.

THE ORGANISATION IS ALSO UNDERTAKING AERIAL SPRAYING USING A HELICOPTER. I MUST MENTION THAT THERE ARE ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS WITH THIS KIND OF APPROACH.

OUR MITIGATION STEPS INCLUDE AVOIDING SPRAYING SENSITIVE ECOSYSTEMS AND USING INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTED PESTICIDES.

MR SPEAKER,

GOVERNMENT HAS RELEASED K4.7 MILLION OUT OF THE REQUIRED K 10 MILLION FOR THE WHOLE OPERATION. THE THE INTERNATIONAL RED LOCUST CONTROL ORGANIZATION IS EXPECTED TO COMPLETE THE SPRAYING EXERCISE BY APRIL, 2017.

MR SPEAKER,

I WANT TO POINT OUT THAT THE INTERNATIONAL RED LOCUST CONTROL ORGANIZATION IS WORKING CLOSELY WITH MY MINISTRY AND THE DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND MITIGATION UNIT (DMMU) IN THE CONTROL OF THE LOCUSTS. HOWEVER, THIS EXERCISE HAS BEEN HAMPERED BY SEVERAL CHALLENGES, WHICH INCLUDE:

1. WEATHER (INTERMITTENT RAIN), WHICH IS AFFECTING AERIAL SURVEYS AND SPRAYING; AND
2. FLOODED ROAD NETWORK, WHICH HAMPERS GROUND SPRAYING.

MR SPEAKER,

I WISH TO INFORM THE HOUSE THAT FOR THE 2017/2018 AGRICULTURAL SEASON AND IN FUTURE, GOVERNMENT WILL STRENGTHEN EARLY WARNING AND SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS TO ENHANCE PREPAREDNESS AGAINST PESTS SUCH AS ARMY WORMS, THE RED AND AFRICAN MIGRATORY LOCUSTS.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO URGE OUR FARMERS TO INVEST IN PEST CONTROL AS PART OF THEIR FARMING PRACTICE. THIS WILL LESSEN THE DEPENDENCE ON GOVERNMENT IN TIMES OF PESTS' OUTBREAKS.

MR SPEAKER,

DESPITE THESE CHALLENGES, THE COUNTRY ANTICIPATES A GOOD HARVEST THIS YEAR. THIS IS IN VIEW OF THE CONTINUED GOOD RAINS AND OVERWHELMING RESPONSE BY OUR HARD WORKING FARMERS TO EMBRACE AGRICULTURE AS A BUSINESS AND NOT A WAY OF LIFE.

MR SPEAKER, I THANK YOU.