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**Republic of Zambia**

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT  
TO BE DELIVERED BY HON. HARRY KALABA, MP,  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
ON THE PRESIDENT'S INTERNATIONAL TRIPS AND STATE VISITS TO  
ZAMBIA BY FOREIGN HEADS OF STATE**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs,  
Lusaka

March, 2017

**Mr. Speaker,**

In the advent of globalization and interdependence of world economies, cross-cutting decisions are made at bilateral and multilateral meetings and it is imperative that Zambia is actively engaged in this global arena. It is, therefore, extremely important that such meetings which are in line <sup>of</sup> our National Interest are attended at the highest level in order to influence regional and global decision making in pursuing our Foreign Policy.

As the Number One Diplomat, the Head of State also strives to enhance strategic political and economic relations with Zambia's neighbours and the world over in order to advance the country's national interests and increase its influence on the international arena. It is for this reason that the President will from time to time undertake foreign visits. These foreign engagements are highly beneficial to the country as can be seen from the various projects, programmes and investments that have materialized following a Presidential visit. However, it must also be understood that the benefits of these visits can be immediate or long term and may bring tangible or intangible results.

**Mr. Speaker,**

Allow me, through this Ministerial Statement, to highlight the Presidents recent international engagements by way of reporting to this august House and informing the nation at large.

I have the honour to inform the house that His Excellency the President, Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, attended the 28<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU), which took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from **30th to 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2017** under the theme "***Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investment in Youths***".

**Mr. Speaker,**

One of the major highlights of the Summit was the election of the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and eight (8) Commissioners of the African Union Commission. The elections were highly competitive and involved vigorous campaigns at both regional and bilateral levels.

I am extremely delighted to inform the House that the Zambian candidate Amb. Albert Muchanga was overwhelmingly elected as the AU Commissioner for Trade and Industry with a decisive 49 votes out of 51 in the very first round of voting. This is a great and significant outcome for the country as it is the first time in our 53 years of independence that a Zambian has ever held a position in the top management of the African Union Commission. This is a very senior position in the Commission and in a strategic field which will see the country benefit directly.

I wish to state that this historic achievement did not come as a mere coincidence or by chance but as a deliberate policy by the Government of His Excellency President Edgar Chagwa Lungu, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This is a clear deliverable on the part of this Government in fulfilment of the Patriotic Front Manifesto and I can assure the Zambian people that it would not have been possible without the personal involvement of His Excellency the President.

**Mr. Speaker,**

The AU Summit also considered the Report of the Peace and Security Council on its activities. One of the important decisions made by the Heads of State was the adoption of the **Lusaka Roadmap** which defines practical steps for the attainment of Agenda 2020 of "Silencing the Guns".

This name did not come by accident, but through the proactive lobbying Diplomatic engagement which led to Zambia hosting the Retreat of the AU – PSC from 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2016, which formulated the **Lusaka Roadmap** document. This Retreat was officially opened by His Excellency President Lungu and his opening address provided the necessary direction that guided the retreat.

**Mr Speaker,**

As a member of the Peace and Security Council, for the next tree (3) years, Zambia will continue to use its influence to ensure peace and security prevails on the continent. His Excellency the President has already earned recognition amongst his peers, and the international community, as a Champion for peace and security not only in the Southern and the Great Lakes Region, but on the entire continent. I, therefore, urge all citizens to support the efforts being made by the Government in this important area.

**Mr. Speaker,**

Another significant activity at the Summit was a **High Level Meeting on the Implementation of the African Position on Ending Child Marriage in Africa** which was chaired by His Excellency President and co-chaired by the out-going Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Her Excellency Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma.

The African Union in recognition of Zambia's efforts to end child marriage in the country and beyond endorsed His Excellency the President as Africa's Champion on ending child marriage on the continent.

**Mr. Speaker,**

Yet another important milestone for Zambia was the opportunity granted by His Excellency the President to present the country's mid-term Progress Report to the Forum of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). You may wish to note that Zambia was last peer reviewed in 2013. The Progressive Report was therefore deemed as an incremental step in the governance record of the country as it highlighted areas that would require improvement as well as areas where Zambia was doing well.

**Mr. Speaker,**

In stressing the importance of the President participating in these foreign engagements especially at the multilateral level, the Head of State is able to full advantage of the opportunities to hold bilateral meetings with some of his counterparts, and Heads of international organisations which would have otherwise required that a separate visits be undertaken. In this regard, the President held meetings with the following dignitaries:

- i) H.E. Mr. Hailemariam Desalegn, the Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, where the two Heads of State agreed that their Foreign Ministers hold the inaugural session of the Zambia-Ethiopia JPC in March 2017, which would be immediately followed by an Official Visit to Zambia by the Ethiopian leader;
- ii) H.E. Mr. Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, during which the Egyptian Head of State renewed his invitation to President Edgar Chagwa Lungu to undertake a State Visit to that country in April 2017;
- iii) H.E. Prof. Peter Arthur Mutharika, President of Republic of Malawi, during which the two Heads of State directed that A Joint Permanent Commission (JPC) be held before the end of April, 2017;

- iv) The Heads of State of the Republics of Namibia and Togo, during which his Excellency the President and his counterparts discussed the need to strengthen bilateral ties and cooperation.
  
- v) Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director of UNFPA, who expressed his organisation's satisfaction with the role Zambia was playing in ending child marriage and recognised His Excellency President Lungu as a Champion on Ending Child Marriage; and

**Mr. Speaker,**

I wish to further inform this House that Zambia won a highly competitive bid to host the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) for Southern Africa which will be one of the Five Regional Collaborating Centres on the continent. This is a grand achievement as state-of-the-art laboratories will be built and provide first-hand information and solutions in disease control while creating employment for our nationals. In addition, Zambia is also privileged to on the ten (10) Member State Governing Board of the CDC, which is in recognition of our influence within the region.

**Mr. Speaker,**

At the Bilateral level, I wish to report to the House that His Excellency President Edgar Chagwa Lungu undertook an Official Visit to that country from 27<sup>th</sup> February to 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2017, at the invitation of His Excellency Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of the State of Israel.

Again, the visit marked a significant milestone as the last time a Zambian President undertook an Official Visit to this strategically important country was over twenty years ago. The visit was critical, as it provided an opportunity for Zambia to enhance its diplomatic ties with Israel.

His Excellency the President delivered a key note address at the first ever Zambia- Israel Business Forum which attracted high level business leaders from both countries. The Forum was a platform for business leaders to create linkages and networks and meaningful dialogue on possible joint ventures that are essential to the sustainable development of Zambia.

In the **health sector** four (4) Israeli medical missions will travel to Zambia between May and June 2017, in order to assist Zambia in specialised medical fields such as comprehensive emergency response service. The medical missions will also provide cardiac services, perform cardiac surgeries on children with heart disease and compliment Governments efforts in setting up a cardiac surgical service centre.

**Mr. Speaker,**

Zambia and Israel agreed to partner in **Agriculture**, specifically in capacity building, research and developing a curricular that embraces modern technology of farming. Two Israel agricultural institutions namely; Neftafim and Organi Green expressed interest to invest in Zambia, with the Zambian Government inviting the former to partner with Zambia National Service (ZNS).

In view of the importance that both Israel and Zambia attach to peace and security issues, the Prime Minister of Israel extended an invitation to a team from the Ministry of **Defence** to travel to Israel to discuss possible areas of cooperation and sign an MoU. In addition private security firms expressed interest in investing in Zambia.

At the regional level, His Excellency the President recently visited Kasane, Botswana from **6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2017** for bilateral discussions on the on-going construction of the Kazungula Bridge. The benefits of the bridge once completed include easing of congestion at the Kazungula Border post, improvement of the turnaround times for clearance of goods and services, enhancement of cross border trade and overall development of Kazungula district on the Zambian and Botswana side.

The project will not just benefit Zambia and Botswana but the region as a whole as it will enable a seamless flow, as well as expansion of trade and investments along the North-South Corridor under SADC. The tourism sector is also set to experience rapid growth once the bridge is completed.

**Mr. Speaker Sir,**

During the State Visit to Tanzania from **27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2016**, His Excellency the President held fruitful discussions, with his Tanzanian counterpart on issues of mutual interest that included the Tanzania-Zambia Rail Authority (TAZARA) the Tanzania-Zambia Mafuta (TAZAMA) Oil pipeline and Trade and Investment matters.

The benefits that accrued to Zambia from the visit include the agreement by Tanzania to extend the gas pipeline from its southern region to Northern Zambia. Zambia would use the gas for domestic and Industrial consumption as well as set up a gas power plant.

The Heads of State also agreed to expedite the completion of the One Stop Border Post (OSBP) at Nakonde to facilitate the flow of trade between the two countries and improve service delivery at the port of Dar-Es-Salaam.



**Mr. Speaker,**

His Excellency the President visited South Africa from **7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2016**. South Africa pledged to expand its business portfolio in Zambia in many areas including food processing, mineral beneficiation and exploration, communication, energy, and agriculture, among others.

Zambia and South Africa agreed to enhance cooperation in mining, tourism, infrastructure development, defense and security, trade and industry and the energy sectors. ESCOM, which is Africa's largest power utility company, expressed interest in collaborating with Zambia, Botswana, Zimbabwe and the DRC in construction of a power interconnector and a new transmission grid. The construction of the new grid and interconnector will mitigate power deficits in the region.

**Mr. Speaker,**

It is important to highlight that our international engagement as a country does not only involve the President travelling but also involves receiving dignitaries.

In this regard, His Excellency, Mr. Brahim Ghali, President of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic undertook a working visit to Zambia from **8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2017**. During the visit, the two Heads of State discussed issues pertaining to bilateral and multilateral cooperation between the two countries.

**Mr. Speaker,**

The House will further recall that, His Majesty King Mohammed VI of the Kingdom of Morocco undertook a State Visit to Zambia at the invitation of His Excellency the President, from **19<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2017**.

During the visit, His Excellency President Lungu and His Majesty King Mohammed VI conferred on various issues of mutual interest. His Excellency the President and His Majesty both expressed satisfaction with the decision to readmit Morocco in the African Union, and reaffirmed their commitment to tackle the continued challenges of the continental body.

**Mr. Speaker,**

In terms of tangible benefits for the country, the visit of His Majesty King Mohammed VI led to the signing of nineteen (19) bilateral Agreements and MoU's in the fields of agriculture, tourism, renewable energy, education, training, industry and investment among others. In addition to the Agreements signed between the two Governments, various Agreements were signed with the private sector, which will provide essential investment links that are critical to the diversification of the Zambian economy and ultimately the development of our country.

**Mr. Speaker,**

As stated earlier, international engagements both outward, by our Head of State, and inward, by Heads of State from other countries create a platform for dialogue and exchange of views on issues of mutual interest between countries. Among other benefits, the visits are a vehicle for strengthening relations at both bilateral and multilateral levels and fostering strong bonds of cooperation in various spheres. They are a critical catalyst for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), mobilization of resources, trade, technical cooperation and generally projecting the country's national interest.

**Mr. Speaker,**

I wish to inform this House that the 10 Provincial Ministers and the Minister of National Development Planning attended a 10 day Ministerial Workshop from **15th to 24th November, 2016**, in China following authority granted by His Excellency Mr. Edgar Chagwa

Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia. The main objective of the workshop was to share experiences and learn best practices that can boost development in Zambia, as well as to market investment opportunities to a number of Chinese companies that expressed interest to invest in Zambia.

The workshop was highly educative, informative, interactive and beneficial to the Honourable Ministers who got first-hand information on China's experience on economic development; regional economic development; development of economic special zones and China's experience in agricultural development.

These lectures imparted a lot of knowledge that will help improve and initiate developmental projects in various sectors in the Provinces thereby bringing economic development and enhancing the living standards of our people. The quest to deliver development to all the Provinces is in line with Zambia's National Decentralization Policy and is major priority of the Patriotic Front Government as it seeks to devolve some administrative functions from the Central Government to the local authorities.

**Mr. Speaker,**

In conclusion, members of this august house will agree with me that from international assignments undertaken by His Excellency the President and visits of foreign Heads of State to Zambia, the country has secured huge investments in trade and development cooperation opportunities. This will culminate into job creation which will improve the quality of life for the Zambian people.

Zambia will, therefore, continue to reach out to the international community in order to realize maximum benefit for the country towards sustainable development. As such, the active participation of the Head of State in regional, continental and global affairs, as well as his increased interactions and engagements at bilateral and multilateral levels, serves to effectively promote Zambia's Foreign Policy and advance the country's interests.

I thank you