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Republic of Zambia

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT ON MEASURES TO REDUCE
ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS IN ZAMBIA**

Delivered by Honourable Eng. Brian Mushimba, MP
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Mr. Speaker

The country has in the recent past, experienced tragic road traffic accidents involving public service vehicles in which many lives have been lost. It is therefore, with a heavy heart, that I take the floor to address this August House on this subject matter. Fresh in our minds, is the road traffic accident on the Great North Road involving a Mazhandu Family bus and a semi-truck that killed ten people. Heartfelt condolences go out to the families that lost their loved ones and a speedy recovery for those who were injured. This is a situation that could have been avoided especially that a mechanical fault was the underlying cause of the accident.

Traffic accidents have become one of the most common causes of death and injury ⁱⁿ on the ^{today} ~~the~~ ~~Zambian~~ roads. In the year ended 31st December 2016, a total of 32,350 road traffic accidents were recorded compared to 33,672 in 2015 representing a 4% reduction in road traffic accidents. Even with this slight reduction, these figures are ^{still too high} high and pose a challenge to attaining our vision of reducing road traffic accidents by 50% by 2020 as contained in the United Nations Decade of Action. Although the number of road traffic accidents reduced in 2016, the number of fatalities increased from 2,113 in 2015 to 2,206 in 2016 representing an increase of 4%.

Mr. Speaker,

Over the last 5 years, the significant causes of road accidents are attributed to the following:

- Poor road conditions,
- Inadequate road safety features,

- Inadequate road carrying capacity due to the increased motor vehicle population;
- Poor vehicle condition resulting from inadequate motor vehicle testing equipment,
- Unregulated systems regarding the repair of motor vehicles, as well as lack of necessary skills for those repairing motor vehicles.
- Further, a large number of drivers lack the necessary driving skills needed to avoid accidents, as it is not mandatory for drivers to undergo formal training in Zambia.

I wish to inform this August House that I will in due course lay the 2016 Road Traffic Accidents Report containing statistics on the number of accidents, fatalities and injuries.

Mr. Speaker

Considering that research shows that there are many contributory factors to the road traffic accidents in Zambia, my Ministry in conjunction with RTSA will be implementing interventions aimed at addressing the causal factors. In this instance, the measures being undertaken are as follows:

1. Issuance of road safety **Statutory Instruments** (SIs) as well as preparing the required amendments to the Road Traffic Act of 2002;
2. Regulating driving schools with the primary aim of building capacity and realigning driver training programs by reviewing the curriculum to make it more responsive to current times;
3. Prosecution of all road traffic offenders and charging them with a fine, especially through the fast track court;
4. Formulation of the **National Road Safety Policy, Strategy and Action Plan** and re-aligning our focus from policing to ensuring

drivers and vehicles being licensed are adequately trained and road worthy;

5. Adoption of a greater use of technology and ICT platforms in road safety such as the Accident Information System, mechanized vehicle testing equipment, driver simulators for all weather conditions, and use of other traffic tools.
6. Designing, engineering, and construction of better road infrastructures with all safety provisions considered.

Mr. Speaker,

Further, the following will be embarked on:

1. RTSA will certify and accredit, on an annual basis, any institution in the business of training drivers in an effort to regulate, standardize and enhance driving training.
2. RTSA will ensure that all transporters with one or more vehicles ~~to~~ have a regimented road safety program that will put road safety as a priority in their organization, thus incentivizing safe road practices over profits.
3. RTSA will enhance and address gaps in the reissuance of driver's license of PSV and place more emphasis on the retraining and retesting of the drivers before the license is reissued. In this process, the frequency of the renewal will also be enhanced.
4. Introduction and integration of applicable smart modules which will be used ^{jointly} by RTSA, Zambia Police, Insurers, Zambia Bureau of Standards, and the Engineering Institute of Zambia that creates a common portal for monitoring, tracking, and supervising the road subsector to highlight bad aspects and inefficiencies that have been contributory to the dismay on the roads.

Mr. Speaker

I also wish to take advantage of this opportunity to state that Government will soon introduce a Drivers' Data Base where all incidents and events pertaining to individual drivers will be recorded and when appropriate, sanctions will be meted on bad drivers. From now onwards, the use of breathalyzers on motorists randomly will be intensified on all roads, check-points, and toll gate locations.

Mr. Speaker

Lastly, I wish to state that the measures put in place by Government *so far* have yielded some positive results as can be seen in the slight decline in road traffic accidents overall in 2016. I urge members of the general public who use public service vehicles to continue to assist the Government in its road safety agenda by calling RTSA and Zambia Police on the toll free lines to report any bad driver behavior as well as those in personal vehicles to abide by these ~~new~~ laws *on the roads.*

Mr, Speaker

I thank you.