

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT  
ON  
PROGRESS ON THE SMART ZAMBIA VISION

Mr Speaker, allow me to sincerely thank you, for according me this opportunity to issue a statement on “progress towards the attainment of the smart Zambia vision” which aims at embracing a transformational digital culture for a smart Zambia now.

Mr Speaker, His Excellency, the President of Republic of Zambia, Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu, shared the smart Zambia vision in his Address to the official opening of the Fifth Session of the Eleventh National Assembly on the 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2015.

Sir, and sanctioned the Government’s resolve to transition the country into a digital economy. The declaration of the smart Zambia vision by His Excellency, the President, Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu, sets the adoption of the transformational culture. The culture that demands each and every Zambian to be innovative, get involved and embrace positive attitude in the endeavours.

Mr Speaker, in order to speed the attainment of the smart Zambia vision, His Excellency, created the electronic Government division, the Smart Zambia Institute and placed it under his office to coordinate and harmonise the implementation of the smart Zambia programme. The goal of the e-Government division is to develop information and communications technology (ICT) human capital and advanced solutions for a better Government.

Mr Speaker, a Smart Zambia Institute has formulated the smart Zambia e-Government master plan which was recently approved by Cabinet. The Institute has put in place a coordinated e-Government development framework that will support the transitioning to a digital economy in line with Zambia’s vision 2030 and realigned to the seventh National Development Plan.

The success of attaining the President’s vision for a smart Zambia now depends on the cooperation and involvement of different individuals. These include the Politician, banker, Marketeer, Civil Servant, Shop Keeper, Medical Doctor, Teacher, Councillor, Miner, Student,

Judge, Bus Driver, Unemployed Youth, Lawyer, Mechanic, Villager, Economist, Trader, Journalist, Farmer, Fisherman, Pastor, Businessman, Nurse and many more.

Mr Speaker, Zambia is part of the globe community where the use of ICTs is growing and impacting on the commercial and social fabric of communities across the globe, including the African continent. Zambia is now a member of the Smart Africa Board which is the driver for innovative commitment from African Heads of state and Government to accelerate sustainable socioeconomic development on the continent ushering Africa into a knowledge economy through affordable access to broadband and usage of information and communications technologies.

We, the law makers elected to represent various communities are responsible for the future wellbeing of our country. The laws we make during this legislative session will have a direct bearing on the future of this nation.

Mr Speaker, in recognising the value of mainstreaming ICTs in the administration and operations of the public service, the Patriotic Front (PF) led Government embarked on an ambitious reform programme, dubbed the smart Zambia Programme to make lime ministries, public service institutions and local authorities more efficient and responsive to the needs of all Zambians without leaving anyone behind.

Mr Speaker, since the declaration of the smart Zambia vision was made by His Excellency the President and has continues to permeate all sectors of the Governance and providing opportunities. It is worth mentioning that access to services for the majority citizenry from public service institutions has been increasing and widening in all provinces and districts.

Hon. Members of this august House and the nation at large, your Government is working towards upgrading our country's national ICT systems across the country to provide affordable services by using modern technologies. In pursuant of the smart Zambia vision, the Government has accomplished the following to date. Under ICT infrastructure Management, the Government through Smart Zambia Institute has:

We have also established the Government Wide Area Network (WAN) currently connecting a total of eighty seven Government departments and institutions resulting in a reduction of costs for provision of unified internet from K62 million per annum to K28 million saving K34 million. In 2019, Smart Zambia Institute has planned to connect another 50 departments to the Government WAN.

The Government has established and commissioned a Tier 3 Zambia National Data Centre (ZNDC) for the attainment of the Government's pillar on building smart infrastructure in which all Government and private sector ICT hosting infrastructure has been consolidated and housed. This data centre is active and connected to two other sites that run as a backup site and a disaster recovery site for the Government systems. The Data centre has been commercialised and opened up to the private sector so that at a fee, they are able to locate their data needs. So far, banks and mobile providers have started utilising the facilities at a fee.

Mr Speaker, the Smart Zambia Institute has implemented the share services which is a common platform for enhanced communications and collaboration in all the line ministries and the ten provincial headquarters. The provision of shared services infrastructure has facilitated access to services such as the Government official email addresses, e-Cabinet, Skype for business, electronic payslips and unified internet. With commencement of the project by the Ministry of Transport and Communication to construct 1,009 mobile communication towers across the country, Smart Zambia Institute will ride on this to deploy more shared services across the country to the public service.

The Government has laid out fibre optic lines to connect the remaining thirty districts centres. The country currently has 12,700 km of fibre optic cables with point of presence providing high speed broadband internet to the districts centres where fibre has already been commissioned, but does not exist in other districts, and Smart Zambia institute is working on filling up the gaps so that those districts are also covered.

Mr Speaker, with regard to the provision of Electronic Services, the Government has embraced technology to simplify and quicken service delivery. In this regard, a total of sixteen applications have been developed providing an estimated thirty-eight public services online. These include;

Implementation of Electronic Cabinet (eCabinet) that has reduced costs of manual operations and processing of Cabinet Business. The implementation of eCabinet has improved decision making thus empowering citizens through timely interventions by the Executive. This measure has resulted in a reduction of the carbon footprint by reducing the volumes of paper and toner incidental to holding of Cabinet meetings and further resulted in reduction of costs of running Cabinet meetings from K68 million to about K10.2 million, a reduction of 85 per cent in cost.

In support of the policy directive on the Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP), the Zambia Integrated Agricultural Management Information Systems has been enhanced to improve efficiency and effectiveness of managing the FISP and National Farmer Data Base. During the 2018/2019 Farming Season a total of 998,791 farmers representing 99.9 per cent of the targeted one million beneficiary farmers successfully deposited their contribution.

The Electronic Payslip System (ePayslips) for public service employees was enhanced with a self service portal facility developed that is accessible to over 207,000 Government employees who are receiving ePayslips out of 209,000 Government workers. While newly recruited officers in the police, agriculture, health and education sectors are having their ePayslip credentials captured at the creation of the payroll inputs. The system has reduced the cost of printing and production of Government pay slips from K72 million to zero.

Fifty-two new Standardised Government Informational Websites were developed in-house and deployed to the Zambia National Data Centre. The websites are for Constitutional Offices, Government ministries and provincial administration offices. The development of Government websites in-house and the hosting of the sites on Government ICT infrastructure has resulted into significant cost savings from previously K26 million to now, K1.66 million.

Through collaboration of Smart Zambia and the Office of the Accountant General at the Ministry of Finance, the Government has implemented the Treasury Single Account (TSA) to facilitate direct online payment to Government employees and businesses where payments are paid through TSA to their respective bank accounts. The introduction of the TSA has allowed the Government not to borrow its own funds kept by commercial banks. This has not only improved efficiency in the payment systems but has also seen the improvement in overall liquidity and prudent use of Government funds as the system audit trails can easily be followed in case of malpractices by certain officers, as approvals for such payments go through officers with known credentials.

Enhance the electronic visa system under the online consolidated immigration system in the Department of Immigration resulting in improved revenue collection. Smart Zambia supervised the development of the eVisa system at a cost of US\$15,000 and upon launch of the system Zambia managed to collect over US\$800,000 within a pilot period of three months. This system is now fully operational. The system has reduced the cost and time of doing business.

Smart Zambia is now quality assuring the newly developed Electronic Government Procurement System which will reduce cost to bidders, promote greater transparency through the automation of tenders and contract awards as well as make it easier for the Government to monitor procurement compliance.

Developed the Zambia Social Protection Information System to provide oversight, transparency and accountability in the management of services and funds meant for vulnerable households. The system development is at 90 per cent as regards to the Social Cash Transfer Programme with the biometric module being finalised by the end of March, 2019 and then start validation of the beneficiaries electronically.

Mr Speaker, this progressive growth towards attainment of the Smart Zambia vision is evidenced by the creation of a common platform to enable the Government address common issues faced by the most vulnerable groups of our country. The Government is taking further steps to breach

the digital divide by introducing initiatives aimed at supporting and empowering the citizenry to embrace the use of ICT.

Mr Speaker, as the majority of consumers continue to enjoy the benefits brought about by ICTs, we have taken note that some consumers within the Zambian ICT ecosystem lack the accepted digital etiquette as they use advancements in ICT technology to harm others. The Government would like to see that the use of electronic platforms remains consistent with our national values. The Government will endeavour to put in place measures that cut across the breadth and depth of the sector to address behavioural and technical matters that negatively impact the Zambian digital culture, threaten the interest of our stakeholders and pose a threat to national security. Therefore, the Government will introduce four Bills to safeguard Zambia's cyberspace and promote the responsible use of electronic platforms and improve economic performance of our country. These Bills include:

- (i) The Electronic Government Bill, 2019;
- (ii) The Cyber Security and Cyber Crime Bill, 2019;
- (iii) The Data Protection Bill, 2019; and
- (iv) The Electronic Transactions and Commerce Bill, 2019.

Mr Speaker, once enacted, these laws will promote the growth of electronic Government, secure our national ICT assets and reduce online risks such as exposure to obscene materials; cyber bullying which has becoming rampant in Zambia. I urge you the progressive Parliamentarians and the nation at large to support the enactment of these Bills.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, as we build on the past successes and achievements of the Smart Zambia vision, the Government has reached a no retreat no surrender mode as regards to embracing technology. Zambia shall ensure that the Smart Africa Alliance Pillars which are reflected in the Five Principles of Smart Africa Manifesto through good polices, universal

access, e-Government promotion, private sector entrepreneurship promotion and sustainable development are actualised. These will enable Zambia to be a cross cutting enabler of doing business for its public service and citizens. Zambia is on the move to serve resources and seal resource leakages in the public service.

Mr Speaker, I thank you.