

**STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT ON THE SITUATION IN
THE WESTERN PROVINCE BY HIS HONOUR THE
VICE PRESIDENT, DR. G. L. SCOTT, MADE ON 28TH
MARCH, 2012.**

MR. SPEAKER, I RISE TO ADDRESS THE NATION THROUGH THIS AUGUST HOUSE ON THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE 2012 BAROTSE NATIONAL COUNCIL HELD AT LIMULUNGA ON 26 – 27TH MARCH, 2012 THAT WERE ANNOUNCED IN MONGU ON MATTERS WHICH HAVE A PROFOUND BEARING ON THE INTEGRITY AND HARMONY OF OUR PEACEFUL COUNTRY. THOSE RESOLUTIONS HAVE SEVERE CONSEQUENCES AND RAMIFICATIONS.

SIR, AS A COUNTRY MADE OF SEVERAL ETHNIC GROUPS, WE ARE FUSED AND HAVE ESTABLISHED STRONG BONDS OF FRATERNITY AND A UNIQUE FELLOWSHIP BUILT ON A FOUNDATION OF ONE ZAMBIA ONE NATION SINCE THE ATTAINMENT OF INDEPENDENCE. THIS HAS SUSTAINED US MAKING OUR COUNTRY AN OASIS OF PEACE, STABILITY AND HARMONY. IN DIVERSITY WE HAVE HELD TOGETHER WITHOUT PRE-OCCUPATION AND OBSESSION WITH REGARD TO COLOUR,

CREED OR LANGUAGE BARRIERS. PEOPLE WHO VISIT OUR COUNTRY ARE TOUCHED AND IMPRESSED TO SEE A COUNTRY WHERE PEOPLE HAVE ENDLESS SMILES AND EXTEND A HAND OF FRIENDSHIP TO FOREIGNERS. THIS IS A COUNTRY WHERE THERE IS NO XENOPHOBIA OR INGRAINED ILL FEELING TOWARDS THOSE WHO ARE NOT OUR CLAN, OUR COLOUR OR RELIGIOUS PERSUASION.

MR. SPEAKER, WE HAVE VARIOUS CHALLENGES AS A COUNTRY, PRINCIPALLY A LARGE NUMBER OF OUR PEOPLE LIVING IN POVERTY. THIS IS MORALLY UNACCEPTABLE AND INDEED UNDESIRABLE. OUR AGENDA AND THRUST IN UNISON SHOULD BE TO ADDRESS THIS CHALLENGE. SIR, OUR POLICY AS THE PATRIOTIC FRONT GOVERNMENT FOR DEVOLUTION AS AN APPROACH TO DECENTRALISATION IS DRIVEN BY POVERTY REDUCTION AND ELIMINATION AND IS ANCHORED ON THE ISSUE OF GETTING DEVELOPMENT TO THE GRASSROOTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY AS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY OF TACKLING POVERTY, AS STRESSED BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT IN HIS OFFICIAL OPENING SPEECH TO THIS AUGUST HOUSE.

MR. SPEAKER, IN THE 2013 BUDGET GOVERNMENT WILL START THE PROCESS OF REVENUE SHARING WITH THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ORDER TO ENHANCE DEVELOPMENT IN ALL THE PARTS OF THE COUNTRY. IN ADDITION, GOVERNMENT HAS MANY PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS, SOME OF WHICH WILL TAKE OFF IN THE NEXT TWO TO THREE MONTHS WHICH WILL HAVE A BIG IMPACT ESPECIALLY IN TERMS OF REDUCING UNEMPLOYMENT. THE ROUTE WE WILL TAKE FOR INSTANCE TO CONSTRUCT ROADS IN ALL OUR TOWNS IN BOTH URBAN AND RURAL AREAS WILL BE LABOUR INTENSIVE WHILE MAINTAINING QUALITY, SUSTAINABILITY AND DURABILITY.

SIR, LET ME NOW ADDRESS THE GRAVE ISSUE OF SECESSION OF THE WESTERN PROVINCE FROM ZAMBIA. THIS RESOLUTION WAS TAKEN BY A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO ARROGATED TO THEMSELVES AN EXCLUSIVE PRESERVE TO SPEAK FOR ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE WESTERN PROVINCE. THE RESOLUTIONS FROM THE DISTRICTS WERE A STAGE MANAGED AND ORCHESTRATED AFFAIR, WITH NO PROOF OF ADEQUATE CONSULTATION. WE INSIST AS GOVERNMENT THAT THE RESOLUTIONS BY THE BAROTSE NATIONAL COUNCIL TO BREAK AWAY FROM THE REST OF ZAMBIA WOULD HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED BY ALL

THE PEOPLE OF ZAMBIA THROUGH A PROCESS THAT INVOLVES ELABORATE AND CREDIBLE CONSULTATION.

THE RESOLUTIONS ANNOUNCED IN MONGU YESTERDAY ARE IRRESPONSIBLE AND UNACCEPTABLE. GOVERNMENT WILL NOT ABDICATE ITS RESPONSIBILITY AS CUSTODIANS OF THE INTERESTS OF ALL OUR PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THE TERRITORIAL SPACE CALLED ZAMBIA. UP TO NOW GOVERNMENT SECURITY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT WINGS HAVE MAINTAINED A LOW PROFILE AND VISIBILITY. LEVEL HEADEDNESS AND CIRCUMSPECTION WILL CONTINUE TO BE OUR GUIDELINE.

MR. SPEAKER, AS GOVERNMENT WE WILL RISE TO THE CHALLENGE OF PROTECTING THE LIVES OF PEOPLE AND PROPERTY. IT IS OUR INESCAPABLE DUTY, OBLIGATION AND RESPONSIBILITY TO DO SO. I WANT TO COUNSEL OUR PEOPLE TO DESIST FROM POINTING FINGERS AT EACH OTHER. WE MUST ALL GUARD AGAINST EXPLOSIVE STATEMENTS WHICH CAN ONLY COMPOUND THE SITUATION.

SIR, VARIOUS EDIFICES AND STRUCTURES RANGING FROM SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS, AND RELATED FACILITIES TO OFFICES IN THE PROVINCE

HAVE BEEN PROVIDED COURTESY OF ZAMBIAN TAX PAYERS OF ALL PERSUASIONS. GOVERNMENT WILL PROTECT ALL THE PROPERTIES.

THE WESTERN PROVINCE IS INHABITED BY A NUMBER OF ETHNIC GROUPINGS WHO MAY BE AS NUMEROUS AS THE LOZIS AND WHO ARE AVERSE TO BREAKING AWAY FROM ZAMBIA. MOST LIKELY MORE LOZIS LIVE IN THE REST OF ZAMBIA THAN THOSE WHO LIVE IN THE WESTERN PROVINCE. THEY HAVE FAMILIES AND A CHAIN OF PROPERTIES. THEY HAVE FUSED WITH FELLOW ZAMBIANS THROUGH MARRIAGES AND OTHER FORMS OF SOCIAL INTERACTION. GENERALLY ALL OF US ZAMBIANS WHEREVER WE MAY LIVE IN OUR LARGE COUNTRY HAVE AN ULTIMATE ATTACHMENT TO EACH OTHER AND OUR COUNTRY. ANY SEPARATION ENTAILS ANGUISH AND RUPTURE IN OUR SENTIMENTAL CONNECTIONS. IT WOULD BE A BIG EMOTIONAL UPHEAVAL.

MY ADVICE TO THE COUNTRY MR. SPEAKER IS THAT WE STAY CALM AND TAKE NOTE OF THE PRONOUNCEMENTS IN MONGU AND CONTINUE TO DIALOGUE WITH THE BAROTSE ROYAL ESTABLISHMENT. ZAMBIA'S HARMONY WILL CONTINUE TO BE PREMISED ON

DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND VALUES AND BENCHMARKS OF TOLERANCE, ACCOMMODATION AND FELLOWSHIP. FINALLY, IT IS MY HOPE THAT THE HOUSE WILL UNITE IN SAFEGUARDING OUR PEACE, UNITY AND THE INTEGRITY OF OUR COUNTRY THROUGH OUR PURPOSEFUL TOGETHERNESS AND RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT.

I THANK YOU.