



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

**MINISTRY OF MINES AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT BY HON. WYLBUR SIMUUSA, MP,  
MINISTER OF MINES AND NATURAL RESOURCES ON THE  
INDUSTRIAL UNREST AND TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT  
FOR WORKERS AT CHAMBISHI COPPER MINES ON THE  
COPPERBELT**

**28<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2011**

**MR. SPEAKER,**

I THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME THIS OPPORTUNITY TO REPORT TO THIS AUGUST HOUSE ON THE INDUSTRIAL UNREST AND TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT FOR MINE WORKERS AT CHAMBISHI COPPER MINES. MY ADDRESS WILL HIGHLIGHT THE CAUSES OF THE STRIKE AND MEASURES GOVERNMENT UNDERTOOK TO PREVENT JOB LOSSES AT THE CHAMBISHI MINE

**MR. SPEAKER,**

APPROXIMATELY TWO THOUSAND (2000) WORKERS AT CHAMBISHI MINE OWNED BY NFC AFRICA MINING WENT ON STRIKE ON 4<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2011 TO PRESS FOR HIGHER WAGES. THE STRIKE WAS BRIEFLY CALLED OFF AFTER THE VISIT BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF LABOUR. DURING THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF LABOUR'S VISIT, AN AGREEMENT WAS REACHED BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND UNION TO AWARD EMPLOYEES TWO MILLION KWACHA ACROSS THE BOARD. THIS AGREEMENT WAS REACHED AFTER TAKING INTO ACCOUNT EXISTING SALARY DISPARITY OF ABOUT TWO MILLION KWACHA BETWEEN KCM AND NFCA EMPLOYEES. HOWEVER, THE MANAGEMENT DECIDED NOT TO HONOUR THE AGREED AMOUNT OF TWO MILLION AND INSTEAD WROTE TO EMPLOYEES AWARDING THEM TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND KWACHA ACROSS THE BOARD.

THIS ANGERED THE EMPLOYEES WHO LATER DECIDED TO DOWN TOOLS. THE WORK STOPPAGE LASTED FOR THREE WEEKS, A SITUATION WHICH IS REGRETTABLE. FOLLOWING THE CONTINUED STRIKE, MANAGEMENT AT CHAMBISHI MINE ISSUED DISMISSAL LETTERS AND GAVE WORKERS FORTY EIGHT HOURS WITHIN WHICH TO APPEAL.

**MR. SPEAKER,**

THE WORK STOPPAGES THAT WE ARE EXPERIENCING IN THE COUNTRY ARE AN INDICATION THAT CONDITIONS OF SERVICE FOR WORKERS IN THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT WERE NOT ADQUATELY ADRESSED. IT IS THE DUTY OF MY GOVERNMENT TO ENSURE THAT WORKERS' RIGHTS AND INTEREST ARE UPHELD. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT MY GOVERNMENT TOOK KEEN INTEREST IN RESOLVING THE UNREST AT CHAMBISHI MINE IN A MANNER THAT WOULD BENEFIT BOTH THE EMPLOYER AND THE WORKER. TO RESOLVE THE IMPASSE AND ENSURE THAT THERE WERE NO JOB LOSSES I TRAVELLED TO THE COPPERBELT TO MEET WITH MANAGEMENT AND THE MINE WORKERS UNIONS. FROM THE MEETINGS IT WAS NOTED THAT:

1. THERE WAS A LOT OF MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES DUE TO LACK OF COMMUNICATION AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES. THE

CHINESE MANAGEMENT WERE THEREFORE, URGED TO INTEGRATE MORE WITH ZAMBIAN PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER.

2. THE MINE MANAGEMENT ISSUED DISMISSAL LETTERS TO WORKERS. ACCORDING TO THE MINE MANAGEMENT, THE DISMISSAL LETTERS WERE NOT NECESSARILY MEANT TO TERMINATE WORKERS' EMPLOYMENT BUT WERE A WAY OF GETTING THEM BACK TO WORK.
3. THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT FOR THIS YEAR WAS VALID UNTIL END OF DECEMBER AND THEREFORE THERE WAS STILL TIME FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE UNION.

**MR. SPEAKER,**

THE UNREST WAS RESOLVED WITH THE TWO PARTIES WITH THE FOLLOWING WAS AGREED:

1. THAT MANAGEMENT REINSTATE ALL DISMISSED EMPLOYEES UNCONDITIONALLY;
2. THAT ALL WORKERS RESUME WORK IN THE MORNING AT 06:00 HRS ON 22<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER 2011 UNCONDITIONALLY AND

3. THAT SALARY NEGOTIATIONS RESUME SOON AFTER THE SITUATION NORMALIZES. THE NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE OVERSEEN BY THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND THE MINISTER OF MINES AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

**MR. SPEAKER,**

IN CONCLUSION, I WANT TO STATE THAT MY GOVERNMENT WILL WORK TO CREATE A WIN-WIN SITUATION FOR THE INVESTORS AND THE PEOPLE OF ZAMBIA. AS A GOVERNMENT WE HAVE ACCEPTED TO WORK WITH INVESTORS AS PARTNERS IN DEVELOPMENT THEREFORE, WE NEED TO WORK AND HELP EACH OTHER TO OVERCOME CULTURAL BARRIERS WHICH MOST OFTEN RESULT IN MISUNDERSTANDINGS. WE WANT TO SEE INVESTORS IN THIS COUNTRY ABIDE BY THE LAW AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND UPLIFTING OF ZAMBIANS' STANDARD OF LIVING. AS STATED IN OUR MANIFESTO, THE GOVERNMENT WILL ENSURE THAT THE WELFARE OF WORKERS IN THE COUNTRY IS ADQUATELY ADRESSED.

**MR. SPEAKER**

MAY I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO INFORM YOU THAT I ALSO VISITED MINE CONTRACTORS, MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEES IN CHILILABOMBWE WHERE THERE WAS ALSO INDUSTRIAL UNREST.

THE MINE CONTRACTORS' COMPANIES IN ATTENDANCE WERE:

1. GRINAKER LTA
2. WBHO
3. AAC MINING EXECUTORS
4. MURRAY AND ROBERTS
5. CLASSIC MINING
6. CARMINE MINING
7. PROVITECH AND
8. KONNOCCO ZAMBIA LIMITED (THOUGH A CLIENT COMPANY)

DURING THE MEETING, THE FOLLOWING WAS AGREED:

1. BOTH MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEES SHOULD ALLOW THE PROCESS OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING TO START IMMEDIATELY AND THAT THE PROCESS MUST BE RESPECTED.
2. MANAGEMENT SHOULD ALLOW WORKERS TO JOIN THE UNION OF THEIR CHOICE AND RECOGNIZE THESE UNIONS WHERE THERE ARE MORE THAN TWENTY FIVE EMPLOYEES AS THE LAW STIPULATES;
3. UNION LEADERS SHOULD TAKE CHARGE OF THEIR MEMBERS (EMPLOYEES) AND THE ISSUE OF WORK STOPPAGES SHOULD STOP;
4. MANAGEMENT SHOULD BE SENSITIVE TO WORKERS NEEDS. THEY SHOULD NOT WAIT FOR UPHEAVALS TO IMPROVE CONDITION OF SERVICE FOR THEIR EMPLOYEES;
5. ALL SUSPENDED WORKERS AT GRINAKER LTA SHOULD BE REINSTATED UNCONDITIONALLY. THE ISSUED OF THE DISMISSED WORKERS AT MECHANISED MECHANICAL SERVICES (MMS) WILL AWAIT A FULL INVESTIGATION BY LABOUR OFFICIALS AS THERE HAS BEEN SOME PASSAGE OF TIME;
6. GOVERNMENT WILL ENGAGE CLIENT COMPANIES TO LOOK AT THE ISSUE OF RATES;

7. GOVERNMENT WILL LOOK AT THE ISSUE OF LEGISLATION. FOR INSTANCE GRATUITY IS CURRENTLY NOT LEGISLATED FOR;
8. THERE SHOULD BE NO VICTIMIZATION OF WORKERS TO ALLOW WORKERS TO WORK FREELY AND THERE SHOULD BE AN INCREASE IN DIALOGUE BETWEEN EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS;
9. CONTRACTS SHOULD BE PROPERLY DRAFTED, AGREED ON AND ATTESTED BY A LABOUR OFFICER.

**MR. SPEAKER**

MAY I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO INFORM THIS AUGUST HOUSE THAT I HAVE SINCE APPEALED TO ALL WORKERS TO GO BACK TO WORK AND DIRECTED MANAGEMENT AND UNIONS TO COMMENCE NEGOTIATIONS AS SOON AS THE SITUATION NORMALISES.

THANK YOU