



Address

By

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The president of the Republic of Zambia

On the

Progress made in the application of the national values and principles

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Introduction

Madam speaker,

Good morning.

Article 9 (2) of our constitution requires the president to report, to this august house, the progress made in the application of our national values and principles.

We are, therefore, pleased to join you today, on this important occasion, to address the house and the nation at large, on the progress made in the application of our national values and principles.

Madam speaker,

The national values and principles are important in moulding the character of our nation. They influence our conduct as individuals and society. They also guide the development and implementation of state policy.

Our constitution, under article 8, prescribes the national values and principles as morality and ethics; patriotism and national unity; democracy and constitutionalism; human dignity, equity, social justice, equality and non-discrimination; good governance and integrity; and sustainable development.

Morality and ethics

Madam speaker,

Morality and ethics are cherished virtues in our society. Government is, however, concerned with incidences of social vices, such as early child marriage, teenage pregnancy, alcohol and substance abuse, and gender-based violence, in our country.

Madam speaker,

To address early child marriage and teenage pregnancy, working with the church, traditional leaders and other partners, government in 2023, conducted sensitisation programmes countrywide. To this end, 192 chiefdoms and over 2.5 million people were sensitised on the dangers of child marriage and teenage pregnancy.

Further, government trained 106,277 community leaders and 1,441 community welfare assistance committees across the country. We want to continuously strengthen community action towards ending early child marriage and teenage pregnancy.

Madam speaker,

Alcohol and substance abuse continues to be a major concern in the country. It negatively impacts families and national productivity. The abuse of alcohol and substances among our young people has contributed to an increase in juvenile criminal gangs, commonly referred to as junkies. This is worrisome and a security concern. It must be curbed forthwith.

To stem alcohol and substance abuse, government sensitised 211 chiefs and 700 religious leaders on the dangers of alcohol and substance abuse. We desire to strengthen the role of our traditional and religious leaders, as change agents in their communities.

Further, government continued to conduct public awareness programmes in schools, workplaces and communities, nationwide. These interventions are important in our efforts to combat alcohol and substance abuse.

In addition, government launched the national policy on drug and substance control, last month. The policy provides a comprehensive framework for reducing the supply of, and demand for illicit drugs and substances.

Madam speaker,

Gender-based violence undermines the health, dignity and self-esteem of victims. It is disheartening to note that the number of reported cases of gender-based violence increased to 42,965 in 2023 from 33,536 in 2022. These acts of violence have, in some cases, resulted in loss of life.

Madam speaker,

In our quest to stop gender-based violence, we have continued to conduct countrywide public awareness and sensitisation campaigns. Further, government provided counselling and legal support to 7,819 victims of gender-based violence, comprising 5,056 females and 2,763 males.

We call on victims to keep reporting cases of gender-based violence to relevant authorities.

We commend all stakeholders who have joined hands with government in the fight against gender-based violence.

Madam speaker,

Government is concerned with the high number of divorce cases in our country particularly among young couples. It is unacceptable that divorce cases have continued to rise, with 36,000 cases recorded in our courts of law in 2023 and 31,000 in 2022.

We need to build strong marriages where couples and families are capable of resolving differences amicably. Marriages where couples are capable of raising children into responsible citizens, anchored on strong family and religious values.

We, therefore, urge the families, the church, traditional leaders, civil society and community organisations, to enhance marriage counselling and teachings. We also urge couples to abide by the strong commitment of marriage and live in love, peace and harmony. A few differences among couples should not lead to separation but rather reconciliation through civilised dialogue.

Madam speaker,

Social media and the internet have become an integral part of our lives today. While acknowledging the positive impact of social media and the internet on our communication, business, education and social interactions, we are alive to the increasing trends of abuse of these platforms.

To reduce the abuse of these platforms and ensure a safe and secure environment, government is implementing the revised national information and communication technology policy. The policy, among others, enhances data privacy and protection as well as information security awareness.

Government has also strengthened the enforcement of various laws to protect citizens against cyber-crimes.

We, therefore, encourage all citizens to conduct their personal and public affairs with high levels of morality and ethics in order to build confidence in our families and communities.

Patriotism and national unity

Madam speaker,

Our country is founded on the virtues of patriotism and national unity. These play a significant role in promoting our national identity, and ensuring political stability, in order to contribute to economic and social development.

To enhance patriotism among our citizens, we have continued to promote local ownership of property and business ventures, while encouraging equitable partnerships with foreign investors.

In the mining sector, for example, we have given and sensitised artisanal and small-scale mining licence holders against selling their licences. We are encouraging them to develop their mines as cooperatives or enter into win-win partnerships with foreign investors.

This is what we expect in energy generation, processing, trade and all sectors of our economy, plus a heightened sense of patriotism which will filter through our transactions with each other and foreign partners.

Madam speaker,

As government, we are duty bound to promote the production and consumption of local products and services. It is gratifying to note that our citizens are increasingly consuming these, which evidently, the quality has continued to improve.

In addition, we have witnessed an increase in local products on shelves of various chain stores. We have equally recorded an increase in the number of companies using the “proudly zambian” campaign logo to 106 in 2023 from 69 in 2022.

In line with the proudly zambian campaign, public schools are now procuring locally manufactured desks. Further, the ministries of health, defence and home affairs and internal security are now equally expected to procure locally manufactured uniforms and other materials.

Madam speaker,

The increased production and consumption of local products is not only a key factor to economic development, but demonstrates growing levels of patriotism among our citizens. It means more jobs and business opportunities for our people. It means economic growth and resilience for our economy.

We reiterate our call to our local companies to trade among themselves in order to grow our national balance sheet. To reinforce this behavior, we are enhancing the practice of positive discrimination in the procurement space.

We continue appealing to our citizens to think local in their consumption choices, now and in the future.

Madam speaker,

As patriotic citizens and businesses, we are duty bound to honour all our tax obligations. To this effect, government has made progress in increasing awareness among citizens on the importance of paying tax, governments will continue regularly reporting to citizens on how their tax revenues are utilised.

The introduction of online and mobile platforms by service providers has made it convenient for our people and businesses to meet their tax obligations.

We, therefore, urge our citizens to continue paying tax and alert authorities of individuals and companies that attempt to, or indeed, evade tax. We urge our citizens to always demand receipts for every purchase, as part of their patriotic duty to promote tax compliance.

Madam speaker,

Another area where we need to exercise a deep sense of patriotism is in safeguarding public and private property in our country. These assets are built at a huge cost and are a significant component of our collective wealth.

Sadly, the country has continued to witness the loss of public property through vandalism and theft. It is regrettable that ZESCO installations, water supply and sanitation infrastructure, and school property, in some of our communities, have increasingly become targets of vandalism and theft.

These acts of vandalism and including reckless burning of bushes and theft, are retrogressive to our development efforts. They must be stopped, and punished, within our legal provisions.

Safeguarding our public assets should also extend to how we utilise them. It is disheartening to note that some people still view water drainages and road traffic islands as dumping grounds for garbage.

This is not only irresponsible, but also takes away from our right to live and operate in a clean and dignified environment. The recent cholera outbreak is a clear example of our citizens operating in an unsanitary environment.

We cannot, and we will not continue losing valued lives with this kind of reckless living. It is the duty of everyone, the local authorities, businesses and citizens alike, to keep our country clean and a place we should take more pride in.

Local authorities should apply the available pieces of legislation to address the unsanitary conditions in our communities.

Madam speaker,

To enhance national unity, the United Party for National Development (UPND) new dawn administration has ensured that the recruitment of public service workers, such as teachers, health, defence and security personnel, is based on merit. Further, the recruitments have been transparently undertaken at all districts, across the country, to ensure equal opportunity for all our citizens.

To promote an all-inclusive society, our administration has continued to distribute national resources equally. This is evident in the implementation of the enhanced constituency development fund (CDF). Further, social protection, farmer input support, and other such programmes are being implemented transparently and equitably across the country.

We will continue on this positive trajectory and take development to each and every part of our country in order to promote national unity for the benefit of all Zambians.

Democracy and constitutionalism

Madam speaker,

We are committed to deepening our democracy and constitutionalism as the surest way through which our people can be assured of their freedoms and right to participate in decision making.

In this regard, we are delighted and honoured that Zambia has been named among the top three most democratising countries in the world, by v-dem. This recognition underscores our government's continuous efforts to promote the virtues of democracy, good governance, and the rule of law.

Madam speaker,

In order to broaden the ever-expanding democratic space which this government has created, and also increase the access to information, we have made it possible for 44 new radio stations and 18 new television stations to be licensed countrywide.

These facilities can operate freely and without any interference whatsoever from government. More significantly, political parties and civil society organisations are now able to make full use of these facilities, to advance their agenda.

Further, to provide access to the ZNBC signal for radio 1 and 2, 15 new FM transmitters have been installed in some rural districts of eastern, northern, western, southern, Luapula and Muchinga provinces.

Madam speaker,

To enhance the participation of eligible voters in elections, we have undertaken a continuous roll-out of the voter registration programme in line with the electoral process act. The programme now covers all the 10 provincial centres of the country.

Madam speaker,

To strengthen the legal and institutional frameworks for upholding the rule of law, government has enacted the judicial training institute of Zambia act no. 14 of 2023 which establishes the judicial training institute.

The institute will facilitate continuous professional development for our judges, judicial officers and judicial staff.

Human dignity, equity, social justice, equality and non-discrimination

Madam speaker,

Government has the responsibility to uphold the dignity of our citizens as well as their right to social justice and equal treatment. Our development efforts are, therefore, centred on uplifting the livelihood of all our people.

In this regard, provision of clean water and adequate sanitation, quality education and healthcare, access to electricity, social protection and youth empowerment, as well as provision of maternal health services, are key priority areas for this government.

Madam speaker,

Through our flagship intervention, under the enhanced constituency development fund (CDF), we now see equity, equality and social justice being restored. Many more of our children now have an opportunity to learn in a dignified environment with several classroom blocks being constructed and locally produced desks being procured.

Further, some of our youth, who were condemned to poverty, have had access to skills development in order to improve their livelihoods. More young people have benefited from skills development bursaries, while vulnerable secondary school learners are being supported with bursaries for their education, with decisions made and resources availed at the constituency level. This is novel and great indeed.

Madam speaker,

Going forward, we will continue to use the cdf to promote community-driven local development. We will continue to provide bursaries to our youth. We will continue to provide empowerment grants and loans to our people.

In order to spread benefits to others, all those citizens who get grants should not be wasteful but effectively use these facilities, and loans should be repaid when due without fail.

Madam speaker,

Government has continued with the provision of water supply and sanitation services to ensure that outbreaks of water borne diseases, such as cholera and typhoid, in our communities are a thing of the past.

Madam speaker,

We have made progress in ensuring that our people have access to electricity through the rural electrification programme and more will continue being brought on board.

Madam speaker,

This government is determined to improve the quality of education and we are focused on addressing the teacher-pupil ratio as well as learning infrastructure.

In this regard, 7,221 teachers were recruited in the 2023 teacher recruitment exercise and more classroom blocks are being built. We therefore urge all the newly recruited teachers to serve the communities to which they have been deployed with utmost commitment and dedication. Similarly, we call on our communities to assist the newly recruited teachers and other public service workers to settle quickly.

Madam speaker,

Government has continued to implement the school feeding programme, now called the “home-grown” school meals programme. The rebranding of the programme is meant to promote its sustainability, through the use of nutritious local foods, while supporting local farmers.

To this effect, over 2.2 million vulnerable learners from 82 selected districts, are being supported under the home-grown school meals programme.

We call upon local businesses, churches and ngos to join government by adopting schools for home grown school meals.

Madam speaker,

In our continued efforts to promote inclusive development, 3,300 vulnerable youth, across the country, have been provided with grants under the national youth scheme. Our youth are also being empowered with motorbikes on loan basis. These are all initiatives aimed at enabling them to venture into income generating activities.

We are also offering our youth skills training in various fields. Graduates from these youth resource centres are being assisted with start-up kits such sewing machines, tool boxes and catering equipment.

Madam speaker,

In our continued efforts to enhance timely access to justice, five local courts were constructed and eight rehabilitated across the country, while legal aid offices were established in five additional districts across the country.

Government has also established legal aid desks in police stations and correctional facilities to allow accused persons access legal services at the point of need. Additionally, legal services units have been established in various districts of the country to provide community outreach services.

The number of citizens who received legal aid services in 2023 was 31,556 countrywide.

Madam speaker,

To further promote equity and human dignity, the UPND new dawn administration has continued to implement various social protection programmes. These include the social cash transfer, shock responsive social protection, emergency cash transfer and the food security pack.

The shock responsive social protection programme aims to cushion the beneficiaries of the social cash transfer from the negative effects of climate change especially the current drought.

In addition, we continue to provide vulnerable but viable households with farming inputs under the food security pack programme.

Madam speaker,

Overcrowding in correctional facilities remains a source of concern to government. The current inmate population in the country is over 25,000 against the holding capacity of 10,650. To address overcrowding in correctional facilities, government is expanding open-air correctional centres across the country.

The open-air correctional facilities in Nansanga, Mwembeshi and Mwomboshi have been expanded, creating an additional holding capacity to accommodate over 3,000 inmates.

Government is also promoting the imposition of non-custodial sentences for minor offences and the continued granting of police bond to decongest police cells, and bail on flexible conditions, for bailable offences.

Good governance and integrity

Madam speaker,

We are committed to and will continue maintaining law and order in our country as this is important for social order and economic development. We therefore, thank our citizens across the country for maintaining peace this far. We particularly thank our citizens in areas where we have had by-elections for the peaceful atmosphere that existed.

It was gratifying to see members of opposing political parties freely mingling during their campaigns including in Shiwang'andu of Muchinga province, which was a volatile area just a few years ago.

Madam speaker,

May we also take this opportunity to thank our women and youth across the country for turning out in huge numbers to commemorate their days. Both events were conducted in a peaceful manner with various political parties participating and other groups without violence. These are the kind of moral values and principles we should all keep promoting and embracing.

Madam speaker,

We remain firmly committed to upholding the tenets of good governance and integrity. Our resolve is underscored by the measures we have instituted in the fight against corruption and maladministration.

Madam speaker,

We are making progress in our fight against corruption. To strengthen collaboration and efficiency among law enforcement agencies, government established the asset recovery inter-agency coordination framework in 2023. Through this framework, millions of Kwacha in movable and non-movable assets, have been recovered.

Government has also strengthened the legal framework on the management of forfeited assets through the issuance of statutory instrument no. 13 of 2023.

Madam speaker,

We share the concerns and frustrations by our people over the delayed disposal of cases related to corruption and financial and economic crimes. To address these concerns, government has issued statutory instrument no. 10 of 2024 to provide for the speedy disposal of cases.

In this fight against corruption, we are encouraged by the fact that our people and other stakeholders are beginning to acknowledge the impact of our efforts. This is evident in the improved score and ranking on the recent transparency international corruption perception index. We will surely continue with our efforts for more tangible and lasting results.

Madam speaker,

To improve access to public services for our people, government has continued implementing the digital transformation initiative.

The digital transformation initiative has minimised face-to-face interaction with service providers. This has reduced the risk of corruption in the delivery of public services.

So far, 300 public services are being accessed on the Zamportal, also referred to as the government service bus. Using the Zamportal, for instance, the ministry of lands has issued 39,691 certificates of title.

Madam speaker,

We have also accelerated digital transformation to enhance service delivery. Decentralisation, which for a long time remained mere rhetoric, is now a reality.

We are pleased to report that through the decentralisation process, some public services, with matching resources, have been taken closer to the citizens. These include district health services, veterinary services, as well as maritime and pontoon services. Our people are now able to participate in decisions that affect their welfare from within their communities.

We are all aware that this government has increased the constituency development fund to k30.6 million per constituency in the 2024 national budget. To improve the rate of utilisation of these funds, we have decentralised the approval of projects from the ministry of local government and rural development to the provincial administration.

We urge all members of parliament to work closely with local authorities to ensure timely implementation of projects for the benefit of our people.

Madam speaker,

To promote transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs, we enacted the access to information act no. 24 of 2023.

The UPND new dawn administration has walked the talk. We are delivering on our promises. Access to information in our country is now law.

Sustainable development

Madam speaker,

We have a duty to utilise our resources and manage the environment in a sustainable manner. We all have an obligation to work towards addressing challenges of pollution, climate change and over-exploitation of natural resources.

Madam speaker,

As government, we are committed to collaborating with all stakeholders (including political parties) in our quest to combat the effects of climate change. The current drought is one such clear example which we must fight together and win, through irrigation farming, and other measures necessary to ensure food security for all our people.

Our efforts to plant 2 million trees by 2028 have gained momentum. Thus far, 645,000 trees have been planted on 538 hectares of land.

We need to double our efforts to plant more trees to save the earth for ourselves and future generations. With the adverse climatic conditions being faced, we call on our citizens to desist from the habit of burning bushes on which our livestock and wildlife depend.

We call on you members of parliament, traditional leaders, churches and other stakeholders to join government in sensitising communities on this vice.

We wish to commend the private sector for supplementing government efforts by already putting in place similar initiatives aimed at combatting the effects of climate change.

Madam speaker,

Carbon trading is cardinal in addressing the effects of climate change as it promotes conservation of forests and forest resources across the globe. Forests and trees are vital in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Government will work with all stakeholders in the sensitisation on the issue of carbon markets, so that our citizens, including members of this august house and traditional leaders, appreciate how carbon markets operate, especially with regard to the correct definition of the carbon market, pricing and economic benefits sharing (communities most affected should benefit more).

Madam speaker,

Good agricultural practices play a pivotal role in achieving sustainable development. To this effect, government, in collaboration with our development partners, has been promoting climate smart agriculture.

We are pleased that so far, 147,412 small-scale farmers, countrywide, are using climate smart agriculture technologies. We need to accelerate the adoption of these technologies to mitigate the impact of climate change.

Madam speaker,

As already mentioned, to reduce dependence on rain-fed agriculture, we are promoting the development of irrigation schemes for farmers, in order for them to produce throughout the year with higher levels of productivity. We have continued to construct dams and irrigation infrastructure across the country.

This is in line with our declaration of the current drought due to el niño as a national disaster and national emergency. Following this declaration, the 2024 national budget is being reviewed to move resources away from consumption expenditure to food security, investment and revenue generating areas. We ask parliament to support this important measure.

Conclusion

Madam speaker,

In the past one year, we continued to make notable progress in the application of our national values and principles. We have been steadfast in the fight against corruption, in the fight against alcohol and substance abuse, in the fight against early child marriage, and in the fight against gender-based violence. We will continue to institute crime mitigation measures including gun control.

Our efforts to promote morality and human dignity, to provide adequate sanitation, to uphold good governance as well as to ensure sustainable social economic development anchored on hard work and not laziness, are yielding dividends. Admittedly, much more still needs to be done.

Madam speaker,

Our national values and principles are critical to national development. As citizens, we have an urgent and compelling duty to fulfil our national values and principles, which should never be sacrificed for anyone and for any reason.

Every stand we take for morality and ethics, every act of patriotism, and every step towards unity, strengthens the fabric of our nation in line with our motto of "one Zambia one Nation." Every opportunity to promote human dignity and social justice, every stand for good governance and integrity, every effort to uphold democracy and constitutionalism assures our nation of the future we aspire to. A nation in which we as the Zambian family, can raise capable, responsible, decent and successful children and citizens.

Madam speaker,

As our country turns 60 on 24th October this year, let us all strive to be the best we can be, now and into the future. Let us commit to always do good for this great nation. To always be good to each other within our democratic dispensation. Let us always stand for, and live by, our national values and principles. Indeed, let us elect to walk this path as a one Zambia one Nation, one people, under one God.

May the almighty god bless us all and our motherland, zambia.

Madam speaker, I thank you for your kind attention.