

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### PROLONGED DRY SPELL AND FLOODING DURING THE 2021/2022 RAINY SEASON

Madam Speaker, I thank you sincerely for granting me this opportunity to deliver a statement to this august House, and through this House, the nation at large. This is regarding two issues of great importance to the New Dawn Government and Zambians at large. These are: the prolonged dry spell at the beginning of the 2021/2022 Rainy Season and the flood situation in the country during the 2021/2022 Rainy Season.

Madam Speaker, let me begin by defining a disaster. According to the Disaster Management Act No. 13 of 2010, a disaster is:

“An event that is associated with the impact of human-induced or natural hazard, which causes a serious disruption in the functioning of a community or society, causing widespread human, material or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope with the hazard using its own resources.”

Madam Speaker, it is important to emphasise that this event disrupts the functioning of a community or society and the affected community or society has no capacity to cope using its own resources. Having defined a disaster, I believe that the hon. Members of this august House do understand and will, therefore, in future, interpret the same correctly.

Madam Speaker, to continue with the rest of my statement, I will state the impact of the dry spells experienced before the onset of the rains in some parts of the country. As forecasted by the Zambia Meteorological Department, the country was expected to receive normal to above normal rainfall in the 2021/2022 Rainy Season. However, the North-Eastern part of the country was projected to have a delayed onset. Although the rainy season was projected to be established by the end of November, 2021 in most parts of the country, it was only towards the end of December, 2021 that continuous rainfall started. The delayed onset was experienced in the North-Eastern, Central, Lusaka, the Southern and the Western parts of the country.

Madam Speaker, due to the delayed onset of rainfall, it was only in December, 2021 that the country's staple crop, maize, was being planted across most parts of the country, which is about a month late compared to the normal situation. The negative impact also included the following:

- (a) for farmers who planted in early November, 2021, there was generally poor germination due to insufficient soil moisture resulting in many farmers acquiring extra seed for replanting, subsequently leading to increased production costs;
- (b) there is a likelihood of reduction in areas planted for most crops; and
- (c) the dry spells also created a conducive environment for the outbreak of fall armyworms. A total of 158,010 ha belonging to 269,273 farmers were adversely affected by fall armyworms. However, in response to the outbreak of fall armyworms, the Government, through the Ministry of Agriculture, distributed 110,000 litres of pesticide to all the ninety-four affected districts in the country. Most of the affected farmers have been able to access these chemicals through their respective agricultural extension officers.

Madam Speaker, the House may wish to note that prolonged dry spells pose a threat to the national food security situation, particularly if the rainy season does not run its full course as would be required to nurture maturity of crops.

Madam Speaker, the Government has been proactive rather than reactive. Among other preparedness measures, the Government procured drought sovereign insurance with the African Risk Capacity (ARC) to cover farmers' yields against the impact of drought and dry spells for a total premium amount of US\$1 million. The Government of the Republic of Zambia contributed US\$200,000, while the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the African Union (AU) through the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) covered the rest. The country is expecting a pay-out of at least US\$2,500,000, which will invariably cushion the impact of dry spells.

Madam Speaker, the Government has also been providing early warning information such as agricultural advisories to farmers, to prepare and respond to changing weather conditions. These advisories have included advising farmers to plant vegetables and alternative crops such as cowpeas, a departure from dependence on maize and a focus on holistic nutrition, in the quest for food security. The Government, through the Ministry of Agriculture, has also been monitoring stock levels to ascertain the food security situation in the country.

*Impact of Floods on the Affected Communities Countrywide*

Madam Speaker, allow me now to proceed to discuss the impact of floods on the affected communities across the country. The House may wish to note that following the episode of dry spell, the start of rains came with flooding incidences of varying degrees in all provinces adversely affecting 7,020 households across the country as at 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2022. The flooding situation has been characterised by loss of human lives. Six lives were lost due to flash floods; four in the Southern Province, one in the Eastern Province and one life was lost in the Western Province.

Madam Speaker, further 1,066 households have been displaced from their habitual residents, though some displaced households have reportedly re-intergrated into nearby communities. Currently, 433 households are in temporary camps which have been established in Namwala, Monze and Mwandu districts, as well as an additional ten households in Chipulukusu, Mapalo Ward in Ndola which had their homes affected by floods and heavy rains.

Madam, given the nature and intensity of the flooding, transport and communication links in terms of associated infrastructure such as roads, crossing points and bridges have been damaged or washed away hindering economic activities and disturbing normal functioning of some communities.

Madam Speaker, based on reports reaching our regional offices at least a total of 107 bridges and crossing points have been damaged or washed away. While 130 schools and forty-six health posts have had roofs blown off during the 2021/2022 Rainy Season.

Madam Speaker, 17,923 farmers had their crop fields covering 16,540 ha destroyed in the Southern Province. Preliminary assessments done by the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock indicate that a total of forty-nine heads of cattle were lost out of which 43 are reported to have drowned in Mazabuka.

Madam Speaker, a total of 269,558 cattle, 46,259 goats and 2,509 pigs are currently at risk due to floods experienced from around mid January, 2022 to date. The house may also wish to note that the Government has provided humanitarian assistance in terms of food and non food relief items to the flood victims. Nevertheless, as the situation is highly dynamic, assessments and interventions are on-going. The DMMU has so far spent about K29,805,800 to procure food and non food relief items to support the victims of rain, storms and floods.

Madam Speaker, I wish to acknowledge the support extended to the Government by different local and international stakeholders. Combined, these stakeholders have provided food and non food items to victims of floods through the DMMU. Utmost gratitude is extended to Western Seed Company, Afri-Seed Company, Seed-Co, Sunshine Millers, First National Bank (FNB) and Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA). We appeal to different stakeholders; local and international, to hold the Government's hand and provide humanitarian assistance. We believe that disaster management is a responsibility of everyone.

Madam Speaker, if the scale and scope of devastation remains on the current trajectory, a total of 751,764,786. 40 will be required to implement disaster preparedness and response activities during the 2021/2022 Rainy Season. The intensity of flood and rainstorm incidents are projected to increase due extreme weather events as forecasted by the Zambia Meteorological Department. Provision of humanitarian assistance will require resources for procurement, logistics and distribution of both food and non food relief items. In addition, the resources will be required for

communication and dissemination of early warning information, assessment, monitoring, as well as camp management and camp coordination.

Madam Speaker, the Government through the DMMU, working with the stakeholders such as the United Nations (UN) system, local and international Non Governmental Organisation (NGOs) will undertake an in-depth vulnerability and needs assessment around mid to early April 2022 to gauge the full impact of flood and dry spells on food security and nutrition for the 2022/2023 consumption period. The information obtained will determine the relief and recovery intervention in water and sanitation, health, infrastructure, education, human settlement and shelter as well as energy.

Madam Speaker, as I conclude, let me remind this august House that some disasters are human induced and therefore, can be avoided altogether if proper and correct behavioral attitudes are encouraged and practiced. Some of the perennial human induced disasters are associated with the following:

- (a) careless dumping of litter in drainages;
- (b) establishment of settlement in flood-prone areas;
- (c) lack of proper urban planning; and
- (d) poor workmanship on critical infrastructure such as bridges, crossing points, schools and health centers.

Madam Speaker, indeed, with concerted efforts, we can avoid these human induced disasters.

Madam Speaker, I thank you.