



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

SPEECH
for the
OFFICIAL OPENING
of the
FOURTH SESSION
of the
TENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
by
HIS EXCELLENCY MR. RUPIAH B. BANDA,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
on
Friday 18th September, 2009

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY MR RUPIAH BWEZANI BANDA
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA ON THE
OCCASSION OF THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE
4TH SESSION OF THE TENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
18TH SEPTEMBER, 2009**

INTRODUCTION

MR. SPEAKER, IT IS ONLY EIGHT MONTHS, SINCE I ADDRESSED THIS AUGUST HOUSE WHEN OPENING THE THIRD SESSION OF THE TENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. THE HOUSE WILL NOTE THAT THIS PERIOD IS ONLY EIGHT MONTHS AS OPPOSED TO THE TRADITIONAL TWELVE MONTHS BETWEEN OPENINGS OF SESSIONS. THE HOUSE IS AWARE, THAT AMONG THE BILLS THE HOUSE PASSED IN THE LAST SESSION WAS THE CONSTITUTION OF ZAMBIA (AMENDMENT) BILL WHICH GAVE EFFECT TO THE REALIGNMENT OF THE BUDGET CYCLE.

MR. SPEAKER, THE CHANGE IN THE NATIONAL BUDGET CYCLE HAS BROUGHT THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT FORWARD FROM THE TRADITIONAL MONTH OF JANUARY TO SEPTEMBER. THIS GIVES HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMPLETE DEBATING THE BUDGET BEFORE THE ONSET OF THE GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL YEAR ON 1ST JANUARY.

THE YEAR 2010, THEREFORE, WILL GO DOWN OUR ANNALS OF HISTORY AS THE YEAR IN WHICH MY ADMINISTRATION IMPLEMENTED THE CHANGE IN THE BUDGET CYCLE. I AM CONVINCED THAT THIS CHANGE WILL IMPROVE THE MANAGEMENT OF THE BUDGET SINCE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMMES WILL NOW BEGIN IN JANUARY GIVING GOVERNMENT A FULL YEAR TO IMPLEMENT ITS BUDGET. IT IS MY EXPECTATION THAT THE NATION WILL RISE TO THE CHALLENGE OF ENSURING THAT THIS CHANGE IS USED TO OVERCOME THE FAILURE IN THE PAST TO UTILISE ALL THE FUNDS IN THE BUDGET.

DURING MY LAST ADDRESS TO THIS HOUSE, I REFLECTED ON 2008 AS A YEAR OF MIXED FORTUNES. I DESCRIBED IT AS A DIFFICULT YEAR NOT ONLY FOR THIS NATION BUT THE REST OF THE WORLD TOO. BECAUSE APART FROM THE ILLNESS AND SUBSEQUENT DEMISE OF OUR LATE PRESIDENT, DR LEVY PATRICK MWANAWASA, SC. THE YEAR 2008 WITNESSED THE ONSET OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS.

TODAY, ZAMBIA'S ECONOMY, IS SHOWING INDICATIONS THAT THE WORST MAY BE OVER. THE MINING SECTOR, THE MAINSTAY OF OUR ECONOMY, WHICH WAS UNDER SEVERE CONSTRAINTS, IS BEGINNING TO RECOVER. THIS IS LARGELY DUE TO THE MEASURES MY GOVERNMENT INTRODUCED IN THE 2009 BUDGET AND THE RISE IN THE COPPER PRICES.

MR. SPEAKER, ON THE POLITICAL FRONT, I AM DELIGHTED TO NOTE THAT OUR YOUNG DEMOCRACY IS BEING CONSOLIDATED. IN THIS REGARD, THE SEPARATION OF POWERS OF THE LEGISLATURE, JUDICIARY AND EXECUTIVE, TOGETHER WITH THE VIBRANT MEDIA AND CIVIL SOCIETY, HAVE PROVIDED THE NECESSARY CHECKS AND BALANCES FOR DEMOCRACY TO FLOURISH. AS A RESULT ZAMBIA CONTINUES TO BE A BEACON OF PEACE AND TRANQUILLITY.

OBITUARY

MR. SPEAKER, IT IS SAD THAT DEATH HAS AGAIN ROBBED THIS HOUSE OF TWO OF ITS MEMBERS AND THE NATION OF SELFLESS LEADERS. DURING THE LAST SESSION, HONOURABLE NASIM-UL-GANI HAMIR, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR CHITAMBO CONSTITUENCY, WHO WAS ALSO DEPUTY MINISTER OF LANDS, PASSED AWAY ON 8TH MAY, 2009 IN LUSAKA.

SINCE THE HOUSE ADJOURNED, HONOURABLE BENNY TETAMASHIMBA, WHO WAS MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR SOLWEZI CENTRAL CONSTITUENCY AND MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING, PASSED AWAY ON 5TH SEPTEMBER, 2009 IN LUSAKA.

MAY I NOW ASK THE HOUSE TO BE UPSTANDING TO OBSERVE
A MINUTE OF SILENCE IN THEIR HONOUR.

MAY THE GOOD LORD GRANT THEIR SOULS ETERNAL PEACE
AND REST.

BY-ELECTIONS

MR. SPEAKER, AS A RESULT OF THE DEMISE OF
HONOURABLE HAMIR, A BY-ELECTION WAS HELD IN
CHITAMBO PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY JUST BEFORE
THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE LAST SESSION. THIS ELECTION
WHICH WAS TIGHTLY CONTESTED WAS CONDUCTED IN A
FREE AND FAIR MANNER AND WAS IN ACCORDANCE WITH
OUR ELECTORAL REGULATIONS. I WISH TO CONGRATULATE
HONOURABLE DR SOLOMON MUSONDA, THE NEWLY-
ELECTED MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR CHITAMBO, FOR
THE VICTORY.

PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS

MR. SPEAKER, DURING THE LAST SESSION, THE HOUSE DEALT WITH MATTERS IMPORTANT FOR THE WELFARE OF OUR PEOPLE. MEMBERS OF THIS AUGUST HOUSE AGAIN DEBATED SERIOUS AND, AT TIMES, DELICATE ISSUES OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE, IN A WAY WHICH UPHELD TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND DEMOCRACY.

MR. SPEAKER, ALLOW ME THANK YOU FOR THE IMPARTIAL AND ABLE MANNER IN WHICH, YOU CONDUCTED THE BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE DURING THAT SESSION. LET ME ALSO CONGRATULATE THE HONOURABLE MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER, THE HONOURABLE CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES OF THE WHOLE HOUSE AND ALL CHAIRPERSONS OF PARLIAMENTARY SESSIONAL AND SELECT COMMITTEES, FOR THE EFFECTIVE WAY IN WHICH THEY DISCHARGED THEIR DUTIES IN THIS HOUSE.

IN THE SAME VEIN, ALLOW ME TO CONGRATULATE THE LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS IN THE HOUSE, HIS

HONOUR THE VICE PRESIDENT AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE,
HONOURABLE GEORGE KUNDA, SC FOR THE EXCELLENT
MANNER IN WHICH HE HANDLED GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.

MAY I, THROUGH YOU, MR. SPEAKER, COMMEND THE CLERK
OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND HER STAFF FOR THE
EXCELLENT SERVICE THEY RENDERED TO THE HOUSE
DURING THE THIRD SESSION OF THE TENTH NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY.

MR. SPEAKER, THE LAST SESSION, THOUGH SHORT, WAS
ABLE TO CONSIDER AND PASS A TOTAL OF TWENTY SEVEN
(27) BILLS IN ADDITION TO THE BILLS CONSIDERED, THE
HOUSE CONTINUED TO EXERCISE ITS ROLE AND OBLIGATION
TO HOLD THE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABLE TO THE NATION
BY DEBATING 365 PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS, THREE
PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS AND 23 MINISTERIAL
STATEMENTS.

I WISH TO COMMEND YOU HONOURABLE MEMBERS FOR FREELY ARTICULATING YOUR VIEWS WITH REGARD TO DELIBERATIONS IN THIS HOUSE. THE AMENDMENTS THAT WERE ADOPTED ON THE FLOOR OF THIS HOUSE DEMONSTRATED THE CONSTRUCTIVE AND POSITIVE MANNER IN WHICH THIS HOUSE SCRUTINISED GOVERNMENT INTENTIONS AND PROPOSALS CONTAINED IN THE BILLS. THIS IS AS IT SHOULD BE.

THIS IS WHAT FORMS THE VERY BASIS OF OUR DEMOCRATIC DISPENSATION, AND IT IS MY PRAYER THAT THIS SPIRIT CONTINUES TO FLOURISH.

MR. SPEAKER, I WISH TO COMMEND PARLIAMENT FOR CONTINUING TO ACTIVELY IMPLEMENT THE PARLIAMENTARY REFORMS PROGRAMME TO IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS AND MAKE IT MORE REPRESENTATIVE AND ACCESSIBLE.

SOME OF THE SUCCESSES SCORED UNDER THIS PROGRAMME INCLUDE:

- (I) EXPANSION OF PARLIAMENT RADIO COVERAGE TO KASAMA, MANSA, AND SOLWEZI; BY THE END OF 2009, PARLIAMENT RADIO COVERAGE WILL HAVE BEEN EXTENDED TO MONGU AND CHIPATA.

- (II) PURCHASE OF 50 MOTOR BIKES FOR CONSTITUENCY OFFICES; AND

- (III) CONSTRUCTION OF CONSTITUENCY OFFICES AT RUFUNSA, MWEMBESHI, AND CHASEFU. CONSTRUCTION OF OFFICES IS ON-GOING UNTIL ALL THE CONSTITUENCIES ARE COVERED.

ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT

MR. SPEAKER, 2009 WAS A TEST OF THE RESILIENCE OF OUR PEOPLE AND A MEASURE OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLICIES WHICH GOVERNMENT IS PURSUING. THE NATIONAL ECONOMY WAS UNDER PRESSURE AS A RESULT OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS. IT IS, HOWEVER, IMPORTANT TO TAKE COGNISANCE AND GIVE CREDIT TO THE EFFORTS GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN MAKING TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF THE CRISIS.

I WISH TO COMMEND THE ZAMBIAN PEOPLE FOR THEIR PATIENCE AND SUPPORT.

THE IMPACT OF THE CRISIS WAS MOST FELT IN THE MINING SECTOR, WITH THE CLOSURE OF SOME MINES, SCALING DOWN OF OPERATIONS AND INVESTMENTS, RESULTING IN JOB LOSSES IN SOME MINES. MANUFACTURING, AGRICULTURE AND TOURISM, WERE ALSO ADVERSELY AFFECTED RESULTING IN REDUCED DOMESTIC REVENUE.

THE ECONOMY ALSO EXPERIENCED VOLATILITY IN THE FOREIGN EXCHANGE MARKET, SLOWING IMPLEMENTATION OF CAPITAL PROJECTS, HIGH COST OF INTERNATIONAL FINANCING AND REDUCED FUNDING FROM CO-OPERATING PARTNERS.

MR. SPEAKER, TO MITIGATE THESE EFFECTS, GOVERNMENT INTERVENED BY IMPLEMENTING FISCAL AND MONETARY MEASURES INCLUDING STABILIZING THE PRICE OF FUEL AND FOOD THROUGH TAX MECHANISMS. THE REDUCTION IN REVENUE COLLECTION NECESSITATED GOVERNMENT TO REALIGN RESOURCE ALLOCATION TO INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT IN ENERGY, AGRICULTURE, TOURISM AS WELL AS IN SOCIAL SECTORS. FURTHER, EFFORTS TO ATTRACT FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC INVESTMENT WERE SCALED-UP THROUGH, AMONG OTHERS, THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW MINING FISCAL REGIME.

MR. SPEAKER, AS A RESULT OF THE MEASURES GOVERNMENT PUT IN PLACE, OUR ECONOMY IS STILL EXPECTED TO GROW THIS YEAR, THOUGH WITH A REDUCED PROJECTED GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT OF 4.3 PERCENT. THE INFLATION RATE IS ALSO EXPECTED TO DROP FROM 16.6 PERCENT IN 2008 TO 10 PERCENT THIS YEAR.

THE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE WORLD FINANCIAL MARKETS CONTINUE TO NEGATIVELY IMPACT OUR ECONOMY. THIS MEANS THAT GOVERNMENT MUST CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT MEASURES TO ENSURE THAT ZAMBIA POSITIONS ITSELF TO BENEFIT FROM THE RECOVERY.

MR. SPEAKER, IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT CONTRARY TO THE EXPERIENCE IN OTHER COUNTRIES, WHERE BANKS AND OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS COLLAPSED, THE OVERALL FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AND CONDITION OF OUR BANKING SECTOR REMAINED STABLE. THIS PERFORMANCE HAS BEEN ATTRIBUTED TO ENHANCED SUPERVISION BY THE BANK OF ZAMBIA.

MR. SPEAKER, FURTHER, GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE ENGAGING OUR COOPERATING PARTNERS FOR INCREASED RESOURCE ALLOCATION TO POVERTY REDUCTION PROGRAMMES AS CONTAINED IN THE MEDIUM TERM PLANS.

TO ENHANCE BUDGETARY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND FINANCIAL PLANNING MY GOVERNMENT WILL BRING TO PARLIAMENT THE BUDGET BILL, WHICH IS INTENDED TO PROVIDE A LEGAL FRAMEWORK TO THE BUDGETARY AND PLANNING PROCESS.

MR. SPEAKER, IN THE AREA OF DEBT MANAGEMENT, GOVERNMENT IS IMPLEMENTING A PUBLIC DEBT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AIMED AT MANAGING GOVERNMENT BORROWING TO MAINTAIN IT AT SUSTAINABLE LEVELS. A RECENT DEBT SUSTAINABILITY ANALYSIS INDICATES THAT THE ZAMBIA'S DEBT IS SUSTAINABLE IN THE MIDST OF THE WORLD ECONOMIC CRUNCH.

MR. SPEAKER, MY GOVERNMENT CONVENEED A NATIONAL INDABA IN APRIL THIS YEAR TO DISCUSS THE IMPACT OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS ON THE ZAMBIAN ECONOMY AND PROPOSE STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH THE CRISIS. GOVERNMENT VALUES THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INDABA AND IS BRINGING THOSE MATTERS REQUIRING GOVERNMENT APPROVAL BEFORE CABINET, WHILE IMPLEMENTING THOSE RECOMMENDATIONS THAT ARE STRAIGHT FORWARD.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ZAMBIA INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS ADVISORY COUNCIL (ZIBAC), HELD IN APRIL 2009 ARE ALSO BEING HANDLED IN THE SAME MANNER. I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE 2010 BUDGET WILL FURTHER CONSOLIDATE MEASURES TO CUSHION THE ZAMBIAN ECONOMY AGAINST THE EFFECTS OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS.

MR. SPEAKER, MY GOVERNMENT REMAINS RESOLUTE IN ADHERING TO MEDIUM AND LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT PLANNING INSTRUMENTS. IN THE MEDIUM TERM, THE FIFTH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2006 – 2010 WILL BE SUCCEEDED BY THE SIXTH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2011-2015, PREPARATION OF WHICH HAS COMMENCED AND IS EXPECTED TO BE LAUNCHED IN JUNE 2010. I URGE ALL STAKEHOLDERS TO FULLY PARTICIPATE IN THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PLAN.

IN THE LONG TERM, WE SHALL CONTINUE TO BE GUIDED BY THE NATIONAL VISION 2030 AS A FRAMEWORK FOR ACHIEVING NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS, IN PARTICULAR WEALTH CREATION.

COMMERCE, TRADE AND INDUSTRY

MR. SPEAKER, AS STATED IN MY LAST ADDRESS TO THIS HOUSE, GOVERNMENT REMAINS COMMITTED TO REDUCING THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS IN ZAMBIA IN ORDER TO PROVIDE A CONDUCIVE INVESTMENT CLIMATE. FACTORS SUCH AS CUMBERSOME LICENSING PROCEDURES AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK, POOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND HIGH TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION COSTS WHICH ACCOUNT FOR THE HIGH COST OF DOING BUSINESS, ARE BEING STREAMLINED.

TO THIS END, GOVERNMENT IS IMPLEMENTING THE PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT REFORM PROGRAMME. UNDER WHICH PRIORITY REFORM AREAS ARE LABOUR LAWS, BUSINESS LICENSING REFORM AND MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES DEVELOPMENT.

MR. SPEAKER, THE PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT REFORM PROGRAMME TO BE IMPLEMENTED, REQUIRES LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS TO BE EFFECTED TO THE VARIOUS ECONOMIC SECTOR LEGISLATION. THESE INCLUDE AGRICULTURE, TOURISM, COMMERCE, FINANCE, EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR AND ENERGY. MY GOVERNMENT WILL AS A START, PRESENT THE FOLLOWING BILLS TO IMPLEMENT THE BUSINESS LICENSING REFORMS:

1. THE INDEPENDENT BROADCASTING AUTHORITY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2009;
2. THE MINES AND MINERALS DEVELOPMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2009;
3. THE ZAMBIA DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2009;
4. THE GOLD TRADE (REPEAL) BILL, 2009; AND
5. THE CONTROL OF GOODS (REPEAL) BILL, 2009.

REGARDING MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES, WHICH ARE A VITAL COMPONENT OF THIS PROGRAMME, A NATIONAL POLICY WAS APPROVED BY GOVERNMENT WHICH AIMS TO UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL OF THE SAME SECTOR.

MR. SPEAKER, IN MY LAST ADDRESS TO THIS HOUSE, I ANNOUNCED THE CONSTRUCTION OF MULTI-FACILITY ECONOMIC ZONES (MFEZS) FOR BOTH EXPORT AND DOMESTIC ORIENTED INDUSTRIES.

I WISH TO INFORM THE HOUSE THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHAMBISHI MFEZ IS PROGRESSING WELL. TEN (10) ENTERPRISES HAVE BEEN HOUSED IN THE ZONE CREATING MORE NEW JOBS. THE NUMBER OF JOBS WILL INCREASE AS THE ENTERPRISES EXPAND.

BY THE YEAR 2011, THIS MFEZ ALONE, IS EXPECTED TO ACCOMMODATE UP TO SIXTY (60) ZONE ENTERPRISES WITH A PROJECTED OUTPUT VOLUME EXCEEDING 1.5 BILLION UNITED STATES DOLLARS, OF WHICH MORE THAN 600 MILLION UNITED STATES DOLLARS WILL BE EXPORTED.

THE MFEZ BEING DEVELOPED NEAR THE LUSAKA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IS A SUB-ZONE TO THE CHAMBISHI MFEZ. INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT HERE, IS EXPECTED TO START THIS YEAR WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF ACCESS ROADS.

IN ADDITION THE LUSAKA SOUTH MFEZ IS ALSO PROGRESSING WELL. IT WILL ALSO PROVIDE UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVESTMENTS

MR. SPEAKER, IN THIS REGARD, I ENCOURAGE ZAMBIANS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITIES TO BE CREATED UNDER THIS INITIATIVE.

MR. SPEAKER, ZAMBIA HOSTED THE SMART PARTNERSHIP INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE IN 2008, DURING WHICH A NUMBER OF JOINT PROJECTS WERE INITIATED WITH FOREIGN INVESTORS IN THE AREA OF TOURISM, EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGY.

AS A FOLLOW-UP TO THE CONFERENCE, ZAMBIA HAS COMMENCED THE PROCESS OF FORMING A SMART PARTNERSHIP NATIONAL HUB THAT WILL BE A BASE FOR NETWORKING WITH OTHER SMART PARTNERS THE WORLD OVER IN JOINT VENTURES AND TO FOSTER NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

MR. SPEAKER, ZAMBIA CONTINUED TO PURSUE HER TRADE AGENDA BY WORKING WITH PARTNERS WITHIN THE REGIONAL FRAMEWORK OF THE COMMON MARKET FOR EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA (COMESA) AND THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC).

AT THE LAST COMESA HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT SUMMIT IN JUNE 2009 IN ZIMBABWE, THE COMESA CUSTOMS UNION WAS LAUNCHED TO FACILITATE TRADE, THROUGH THE ELIMINATION OF TRADE BARRIERS, HARMONISING TRADE RELATED PROGRAMMES AND IMPROVING EFFICIENCY IN THE INSTITUTIONAL AND INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORK.

MR. SPEAKER, THE BENEFITS OF THIS WILL BE A LARGER MARKET FOR ZAMBIAN GOODS AND SERVICES AND THE EVENTUAL LOWERING OF PRODUCTION COSTS.

THE HOUSE MAY WISH TO KNOW THAT ZAMBIA IS NOW ELIGIBLE TO ACCESS THE ADJUSTMENT FACILITY AFTER RATIFYING THE COMESA FUND IN FEBRUARY, 2009. THE FACILITY WILL ADDRESS THE PROBLEMS OF COSTS THAT MAY ARISE FROM REGIONAL INTEGRATION.

THE FUND ALSO HAS A WINDOW INTENDED TO SUPPORT CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF INFRASTRUCTURE, AND FOR ADDRESSING SOME OF THE LIMITED PRODUCTION CAPACITY OF MEMBER STATES. IN THIS REGARD, I WISH TO CALL UPON ALL RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF THESE OPPORTUNITIES.

MR. SPEAKER, UNDER THE AFRICAN GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES ACT (AGOA), THE GOVERNMENTS OF ZAMBIA AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA HAVE AGREED TO ESTABLISH A TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP TO WORK OUT MEASURES THAT WILL HELP EXPAND AND DIVERSIFY TRADE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. THIS SHOULD BE TAKEN FULL ADVANTAGE OF TO BE BENEFICIAL.

MR. SPEAKER, I RECENTLY LAUNCHED THE MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE ACCOUNT-ZAMBIA, -A PROGRAMME BEING SUPPORTED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA THROUGH THE MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION (MCC) – TO COUNTRIES THAT CONSISTENTLY MEET THE STANDARDS IN THE AREA OF GOOD GOVERNANCE, INVESTING IN PEOPLE AND PROMOTING ECONOMIC FREEDOM. ZAMBIA WILL HAVE ACCESS TO SUBSTANTIAL GRANT RESOURCES TO BE APPLIED IN PROJECTS THAT WILL PROMOTE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND POVERTY REDUCTION ONCE IT SIGNS THE COMPACT.

MR. SPEAKER, COMPETITION AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ARE PARAMOUNT IN A DEVELOPING ECONOMY SUCH AS OURS. UNFORTUNATELY, THE CURRENT LEGAL FRAMEWORK GOVERNING THIS IS WEAK AND REQUIRES AN OVERHAUL.

TO THIS EFFECT, GOVERNMENT WILL BE INTRODUCING A CONSUMER AND COMPETITION BILL TO THIS AUGUST HOUSE TO STRENGTHEN THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

MR. SPEAKER, DURING MY JANUARY SPEECH TO THIS HOUSE, I EMPHASISED THE NEED FOR THE COUNTRY TO DEVELOP THE RIGHT SKILLS FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION. THESE ARE ESSENTIAL FOR THE GROWTH OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SMES) AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY. THEREFORE, GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO BUILD CAPACITY IN GENERAL AS WELL AS TECHNICAL EDUCATION WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING.

GOVERNMENT HAS THUS COMPLETED MAJOR WORKS AT CHIPATA, SOLWEZI AND MONGU TRAINING INSTITUTES, WHILE IT IS REHABILITATING WORKSHOPS, CLASSROOMS AND HOSTEL BLOCKS AT VARIOUS TRAINING INSTITUTIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. FURTHER, GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO INCREASE CAPACITY TO ABSORB SCHOOL LEAVERS BY EXPANDING EXISTING AND BUILDING NEW SKILLS TRAINING INSTITUTIONS.

AGRICULTURE

MR. SPEAKER, INSPITE OF THE HIGH PRICES OF FERTILISER AND PETROLEUM THAT WERE FACED LAST YEAR, I AM HAPPY TO NOTE THAT ZAMBIA MANAGED TO PRODUCE ENOUGH FOOD TO MEET ITS REQUIREMENTS AND SURPLUS TO EXPORT.

MR. SPEAKER, FOLLOWING MY DIRECTIVE TO THE FOOD RESERVE AGENCY TO INTENSIFY CROP MARKETING, I AM HAPPY TO INFORM THIS AUGUST HOUSE THAT THE AGENCY IS NOW PURCHASING MAIZE AND OTHER DESIGNATED FOOD CROPS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. THE HOUSE MAY WISH TO KNOW THAT THE NUMBER OF SATELLITE DEPOTS HAS TRIPLED PER DISTRICT COMPARED TO LAST SEASON.

THE INCREASE IN SATELLITE DEPOTS IS INTENDED TO GIVE GREATER ACCESS TO FARMERS ESPECIALLY IN REMOTE AREAS. FUNDS AMOUNTING TO K471 BILLION HAVE BEEN MADE AVAILABLE FOR THIS PURPOSE.

I WISH TO URGE OTHER PLAYERS IN THE MARKET TO PAY A FAIR PRICE TO THE FARMERS FOR THEIR PRODUCE

MR. SPEAKER, THE IMPORTANCE OF CASSAVA AS A FOOD CROP IS INCREASING IN ZAMBIA. FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS, THE COUNTRY HAS BEEN PRODUCING THE EQUIVALENT OF 1.1 MILLION METRIC TONNES OF CASSAVA FLOUR ANNUALLY.

GOVERNMENT WILL, THEREFORE, ENCOURAGE CASSAVA PRODUCTION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRO-INDUSTRIES TO ADD VALUE TO THIS CROP.

MR. SPEAKER, GOVERNMENT IS CONCERNED BY CROP LEVIES IMPOSED BY COUNCILS ON PRODUCE BEING TRANSPORTED ACROSS DISTRICT BOUNDARIES. SINCE FARMERS HAVE DIFFICULTIES IN FINDING MARKETS FOR THEIR PRODUCE, THESE LEVIES ONLY SERVE TO COMPLICATE THE MARKETING OF CROPS. I HAVE DIRECTED THE MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING TO ABOLISH THE LEVIES.

MR. SPEAKER, GOVERNMENT IS AWARE THAT A LOT OF FOOD GOES TO WASTE BECAUSE OF POOR STORAGE. THEREFORE GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE FRA IS REHABILITATING SILOS AND STORAGE SHEDS TO ENSURE THAT FOOD PRODUCED IS PROPERLY STORED.

LIVESTOCK AND FISHERIES

MR. SPEAKER, THE LIVESTOCK AND FISHERIES SECTORS ARE ALSO ESSENTIAL FOR FOOD SECURITY AND BUSINESS. PERFORMANCE IN THESE SECTORS HAS NOT BEEN SATISFACTORY.

TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE MY GOVERNMENT HAS CREATED A MINISTRY OF LIVESTOCK AND FISHERIES WHICH WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THIS HOUSE.

IN 2010, GOVERNMENT WILL FOCUS ON STRENGTHENING DISEASE CONTROL PROGRAMMES, THROUGH AMONG OTHERS THE CREATION OF DISEASE-CONTROL ZONES. GOVERNMENT WILL, ALSO FOCUS ON ESTABLISHING ANIMAL BREEDING CENTRES TO PRODUCE ANIMALS FOR THE RESTOCKING PROGRAMME WHICH IS AIMED AT IMPROVING LIVESTOCK POPULATION AND QUALITY.

RESEARCH AND EXTENSION SERVICES

MR. SPEAKER, GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EXTENSION SERVICES IN THE COUNTRY TO IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY, ESPECIALLY AMONG THE SMALL-SCALE FARMERS. TO ACHIEVE THIS, 476 MOTOR CYCLES WERE BOUGHT IN 2009 IN ORDER TO IMPROVE MOBILITY OF EXTENSION STAFF.

SUPPORT HAS ALSO BEEN GIVEN FOR THE REHABILITATION AND CONSTRUCTION OF AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE, SUCH AS CAMP HOUSES, FARMER TRAINING CENTRES AND FARM TRAINING INSTITUTES.

MR. SPEAKER, THE DEVELOPMENT OF FARM BLOCS IS ANOTHER PROGRAMME THAT GOVERNMENT IS USING TO FAST TRACK AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ZAMBIA. PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE TOWARDS MAKING THE NANSANGA FARM BLOC IN SERENJE OPERATIONAL.

MR. SPEAKER, PROVISION OF INPUTS, TO SMALL SCALE FARMERS THROUGH THE FARMER INPUT SUPPORT PROGRAMME, COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE FERTILIZER SUPPORT PROGRAMMES (FSP) IS CRITICAL TO ZAMBIA'S FOOD SECURITY. IN ITS CURRENT FORM, THE FSP IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES HAVE HAD WEAKNESSES WHICH HAVE PROMPTED A REVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME. SOME ADJUSTMENTS HAVE THUS BEEN MADE IN ITS IMPLEMENTATION.

MR. SPEAKER, THESE INCLUDE, INCREASING THE NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAMME BY REDUCING THE SIZE OF THE INPUT PACK FROM THE CURRENT EIGHT BAGS OF FERTILIZER AND 20 KILOGRAMS OF MAIZE SEED TO FOUR BAGS OF FERTILIZER AND 10 KILOGRAMS OF SEED.

THE PROGRAMME WILL COVER 500,000 SMALL SCALE FARMERS AS COMPARED TO 250,000 COVERED LAST SEASON; THIS WILL IMPROVE PRODUCTION EFFICIENCY AND REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF FERTILIZER BEING SOLD BY BENEFICIARIES.

IN ADDITION, THE DISTRIBUTION AND MONITORING MECHANISM OF THE PROGRAMME WILL BE STREAMLINED THROUGH CAMP AGRICULTURAL COMMITTEES IN ORDER TO IMPROVE TARGETING OF BENEFICIARIES.

FURTHER, FARMERS WHO RECEIVE INPUTS FROM FSP WILL ALSO BE TARGETED TO RECEIVE EXTENSION SERVICES IN ORDER TO IMPROVE YIELDS.

THE HOUSE MAY WISH TO KNOW THAT FERTILIZER FOR THE 2009/2010 SEASON IS ALREADY IN ALL DISTRICTS. THIS EARLY DISTRIBUTION WILL ENSURE THAT FARMERS GET TO PLANT ON TIME.

LAND

MR. SPEAKER, PROPER MANAGEMENT OF LAND IS ESSENTIAL TO ZAMBIA'S PROSPERITY. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT GOVERNMENT HAS CONTINUED TO ENCOURAGE OUR PEOPLE TO PUT LAND TO PRODUCTIVE USE. SINCE ABOUT 90 PERCENT OF LAND IS CUSTOMARY, GOVERNMENT IS WORKING WITH TRADITIONAL LEADERS TO PUT THE LAND TO GOOD USE FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR NATION.

MR. SPEAKER, TO FACILITATE THE OPENING UP OF MORE LAND FOR DEVELOPMENT BY COUNCILS; GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES THROUGH THE LAND DEVELOPMENT FUND.

MR. SPEAKER, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT COUNCILS WHICH HAVE CEASED TO PLAN DEVELOPMENT UNDER THEIR JURISDICTION, RESULTING IN THE MUSHROOMING OF UNPLANNED SETTLEMENTS, FULFILL THEIR OBLIGATION. I AM, THEREFORE, CALLING UPON ALL PLANNING AUTHORITIES TO FULFILL THEIR STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS.

MR. SPEAKER, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT AS THE COUNTRY DEVELOPS BOTH RURAL AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT IS CONDUCTED IN AN ORDERLY MANNER. MY GOVERNMENT WILL THEREFORE BRING TO THIS HOUSE THE URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING BILL WHOSE PURPOSE WILL BE TO STRENGTHEN THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING LEGISLATIVE REGIME.

MR. SPEAKER, GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE WORKING WITH NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES TO ENSURE THAT ALL OUR BORDERS ARE PHYSICALLY MARKED AND RE-AFFIRMED. THIS IS IMPORTANT AS IT PREVENTS UNNECESSARY BOUNDARY DISPUTES. AS START, A STRETCH OF 175 KILOMETRES ON THE ZAMBIA-MALAWI BORDER WAS PHYSICALLY MARKED THIS YEAR. SENSITIZATION PROGRAMMES FOR COMMUNITIES LIVING ALONG THE ZAMBIA-MOZAMBIQUE BORDER IN READINESS FOR RE-AFFIRMATION OF THIS BORDER HAVE ALSO BEEN CARRIED OUT.

TOURISM

MR. SPEAKER, THE TOURISM SECTOR CONTINUES TO RANK HIGH ON OUR DEVELOPMENT AGENDA AS IT HOLDS GREAT POTENTIAL IN THE DIVERSIFICATION OF OUR ECONOMY. IN MY LAST ADDRESS, I STATED THAT GOVERNMENT WOULD EMBARK ON TARGETED AND FOCUSED DEVELOPMENT OF PRIORITY TOURISM AREAS, WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE KASABA BAY AND LIVINGSTONE AREAS. I NOW WISH TO INFORM THIS HOUSE THAT THE PREPARATION OF THE

INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR KASABA BAY AND THE AREA ACTION PLAN FOR LIVINGSTONE ARE NEARING COMPLETION. GOVERNMENT WILL SOON EMBARK ON PROMOTIONS AIMED AT ATTRACTING CREDIBLE LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL INVESTORS TO THE AREAS.

MR SPEAKER, TO MAKE KASABA BAY MORE ATTRACTIVE FOR INVESTMENT, THE PROVISION OF BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE IS UNDERWAY. TO THIS EFFECT, CONSTRUCTION OF THE MBALA-KASABA BAY ROAD AND THE LUFUBU RIVER BRIDGE HAS ALREADY BEEN CONTRACTED OUT. GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO CONTRACTED OUT THE REHABILITATION AND EXTENSION OF THE KASABA BAY AIRPORT RUNWAY IN ORDER TO ENABLE IT HANDLE LARGER AIRCRAFT.

IN ADDITION, GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO EMBARKED ON THE UPGRADING OF THE HYDRO POWER STATION AT LUNZUA FROM 0.75 MEGAWATTS TO 10 MEGAWATTS AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE TRANSMISSION LINE TO CONNECT KASABA BAY TO THE POWER STATION.

MR. SPEAKER, THE SOUTH LUANGWA NATIONAL PARK IS ANOTHER PRIORITY AREA FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT. HOWEVER, POOR ACCESSIBILITY TO AND WITHIN THE AREA CONTINUES TO POSE A SERIOUS CONSTRAINT TO FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM. GOVERNMENT, THEREFORE, HAS THIS YEAR EMBARKED ON REHABILITATING THE CHIPATA-MFUWE ROAD LEADING TO THE NATIONAL PARK AT A COST OF K200 BILLION.

TOURISM CONFERENCING HAS PROVED TO BE MORE SUCCESSFUL IN THE FACE OF REDUCED NUMBERS OF TOURIST IN- FLOW. GOVERNMENT HAS, THEREFORE, FOCUSED ON PROMOTING THIS TYPE OF TOURISM. IN ADDITION, GOVERNMENT IS CONSOLIDATING ZAMBIA'S POSITION AS A TOURIST DESTINATION BY INTENSIFYING PROMOTIONS IN TRADITIONAL MARKETS. FURTHER, IN-ROADS ARE BEING MADE IN ATTRACTING TOURISTS FROM THE EMERGING MARKETS OF RUSSIA AND ASIA, PARTICULARLY CHINA, INDIA, MALAYSIA AND JAPAN.

GOVERNMENT IS WORKING WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO MAKE LOCAL TOURISM PACKAGES AFFORDABLE FOR ZAMBIANS.

MR SPEAKER, IN VIEW OF THE IMPORTANCE THAT GOVERNMENT ATTACHES TO THE TOURISM SECTOR MY GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO TABLE BEFORE THIS HOUSE THE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY BILL. THE BILL IS INTENDED TO STRENGTHEN THE CURRENT LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN WHICH THE TOURISM SECTOR OPERATES.

ONCE PASSED BY THIS HOUSE THE BILL IS EXPECTED TO STIMULATE DEVELOPMENT IN THE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY.

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

MR. SPEAKER, THE ACCELERATED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES WHICH THE GOVERNMENT IS IMPLEMENTING CAN HARM THE ENVIRONMENT IF NOT WELL MANAGED. COMBINED WITH, THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE, THERE IS INCREASED POTENTIAL OF HARMING THE ENVIRONMENT.

MR. SPEAKER, GOVERNMENT, THIS YEAR LAUNCHED THE NATIONAL POLICY ON ENVIRONMENT THAT WILL ENSURE THAT SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS ACHIEVED WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE QUALITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS POLICY WHICH IS A PRIORITY WILL CONTRIBUTE TO POVERTY REDUCTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

MR. SPEAKER, TO DEAL WITH THE CONCERN OF THE HIGH RATE OF DEFORESTATION, THAT I ACKNOWLEDGED IN MY LAST ADDRESS TO THIS HOUSE, GOVERNMENT HAS COMMENCED REVIEWING THE FOREST POLICY AND REVISING FOREST LEGISLATION. IN ADDITION GOVERNMENT IS LOOKING AT INNOVATIVE WAYS TO STOP DEFORESTATION.

TO THIS EFFECT, I WISH TO ANNOUNCE THAT I HAVE CONSTITUTED A TEAM OF EMINENT PERSONS TO SPEARHEAD A TREE PLANTING PROGRAMME WHICH WILL BE HEADED BY OUR FIRST REPUBLICAN PRESIDENT DR KENNETH DAVID KAUNDA.

MR. SPEAKER, IN ORDER TO CONSERVE WILDLIFE AS A RESOURCE FOR TOURISM, GOVERNMENT WILL BRING BEFORE THIS HOUSE THE NEW WILDLIFE BILL FOR CONSIDERATION.

WATER RESOURCES

MR. SPEAKER, IT IS REGRETTABLE THAT ALTHOUGH WATER IS ONE OF OUR COUNTRY'S KEY NATURAL RESOURCES, ITS POTENTIAL TO CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ESPECIALLY OUTSIDE THE ENERGY SECTOR, IS LARGELY UNEXPLOITED. IN AGRICULTURE FOR INSTANCE, THE CONTRIBUTION OF IRRIGATION TO ZAMBIA'S FOOD SECURITY IS STILL SMALL. IN ADDITION, THE MAJORITY OF OUR PEOPLE STILL HAVE NO ACCESS TO SAFE AND ADEQUATE WATER SUPPLY.

GOVERNMENT IS DETERMINED TO ADDRESS THIS PROBLEM AND WILL REVISE THE NATIONAL WATER POLICY.

GOVERNMENT HAS IN ADDITION STEPPED-UP CONSTRUCTION OF WATER STORAGE DAMS AND SINKING OF BOREHOLES AROUND THE COUNTRY IN ORDER TO INCREASE ACCESS TO SAFE WATER.

ENERGY

MR. SPEAKER, THE PERFORMANCE OF THE ECONOMY IS DEPENDENT ON STABLE AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY. THE FOCUS OF GOVERNMENT IS TO THUS ENSURE STABILITY OF SUPPLY OF ELECTRICITY, PETROLEUM PRODUCTS AND THE PROMOTION OF NEW AND RENEWABLE SOURCES OF ENERGY.

IN THE ELECTRICITY SUB-SECTOR, THE FOCUS OF GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO BE TO INCREASE GENERATION CAPACITY TO MEET THE EVER GROWING DEMAND. GOVERNMENT HAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE REHABILITATION AND UPRATING OF THE KAFUE GORGE

AND KARIBA NORTH BANK STATIONS WHICH HAS ADDED AN EXTRA 180 MEGAWATTS TO THE NATIONAL POWER OUTPUT. MR. SPEAKER, IN VIEW OF THE HIGH INVESTMENT REQUIRED IN THE GENERATION OF ELECTRICITY, GOVERNMENT IS ENCOURAGING PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF POWER GENERATING STATIONS. THIS IS BEING DONE THROUGH PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP AS IS THE CASE WITH THE KAFUE LOWER, ITEZHI-TEZHI, LUSIWASI, KALUNGWISHI, KABOMPO AND LUNZUA POWER STATIONS.

TO COMPLEMENT HYDROPOWER, GOVERNMENT IS EXPLORING OTHER FORMS OF ENERGY INCLUDING SOLAR, WIND AND BIOMASS, ESPECIALLY FOR USE IN RURAL AREAS.

MR. SPEAKER, THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PETROLEUM SUB-SECTOR HAS BEEN FAVOURABLE THIS YEAR. THE SUPPLY OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS HAS BEEN STEADY AND RELIABLE. AS I ALLUDED TO EARLIER GOVERNMENT INTRODUCED TAX MEASURES TO STABILISE PETROLEUM PRICES.

MR. SPEAKER, PROGRESS HAS ALSO BEEN MADE TOWARDS BUILDING STORAGE FACILITIES FOR THE STRATEGIC FUEL RESERVES WITH THE COMPLETION OF THE 40,000 METRIC TONNES TAZAMA DIESEL STORAGE TANK. THIS STORAGE SPACE WILL GIVE OUR COUNTRY THE ABILITY TO STORE UP TO 30 DAYS OF STRATEGIC STOCK. FURTHER, MY GOVERNMENT WILL REHABILITATE PROVINCIAL STORAGE FACILITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY. THIS WILL HELP STABILISE THE SUPPLY OF FUEL.

MINES AND MINERALS DEVELOPMENT

MR. SPEAKER, MINING HAS REMAINED A KEY SECTOR OF THE ECONOMY WITH EXPORTS OF MINERAL PRODUCTS CONTRIBUTING ABOUT 70 PERCENT OF TOTAL FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS. MINING, IN 2008, CONTRIBUTED 8.4 PERCENT TO THE GDP AND CURRENTLY CONTRIBUTES ABOUT 58,000 DIRECT JOBS TO THE FORMAL EMPLOYMENT SECTOR.

THIS EMPLOYMENT FIGURE IS LIKELY TO INCREASE AS EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES AND EXPANSION PLANS IN EXISTING MINES MATERIALISE.

MR. SPEAKER, THE MINING SECTOR RECORDED A SLOW DOWN IN THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2008-2009. RECENTLY HOWEVER, THE INDUSTRY HAS SHOWN SIGNS OF RECOVERY.

IN TERMS OF COPPER PRODUCTION, THERE WAS AN INCREASE FROM ABOUT 276,000 TONNES IN THE FIRST HALF OF 2008 TO 319,00 TONNES FOR THE SAME PERIOD IN 2009. IN ADDITION, MINE OPERATORS WHO INTENDED TO CLOSE DOWN HAVE NOW REVERSED THEIR POSITION. THE INCREASE IN THE PRICE OF COPPER ON THE WORLD MARKET HAS ALSO HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE SECTOR, WITH MINING COMPANIES PLANNING TO INCREASE PRODUCTION.

MR. SPEAKER, ANOTHER POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT IN THE SECTOR HAS BEEN THE RESUMPTION OF OPERATIONS AT LUANSHYA COPPER MINES PLC AND MAAMBA COLLIERIES LIMITED. THE RESUMPTION OF OPERATIONS AT LUANSHYA COPPER MINES FOLLOWED ITS ACQUISITION BY A STRATEGIC EQUITY PARTNER IN JUNE, 2009. IN ADDITION THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MULIASHI OXIDE DEPOSITS WILL INCREASE THE NUMBER OF JOBS AT THIS MINE.

MR. SPEAKER, INVESTORS HAVE ALSO SHOWN INTEREST IN THE MUNALI NICKEL MINE WHICH HAD BEEN PLACED UNDER CARE AND MAINTENANCE. I WISH TO INFORM THE HOUSE THAT THIS MINE WILL SOON BE RE-OPENED.

MR. SPEAKER, MAAMBA COLLIERIES LIMITED, WHICH WAS NON OPERATIONAL FOR SOME TIME HAS ALSO RESUMED OPERATIONS WHILE ZCCM-IH IS NEGOTIATING WITH A STRATEGIC EQUITY PARTNER TO BUY THE MINE.

NOTWITHSTANDING, THE MINE IS STILL FACING OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS WHICH NEED TO BE RESOLVED.

MR. SPEAKER, TO EXTEND THE LIVES OF NKANA AND NCHANGA MINES WORK HAS COMMENCED ON RESOURCE REPLACEMENT PROJECTS.

MR. SPEAKER, TURNING TO HYDRO-CARBON EXPLORATION, GOVERNMENT HAS ADVERTISED BLOCS IN WESTERN, NORTH-WESTERN AND EASTERN PROVINCES FOR OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION, WHICH IS EXPECTED TO START SOON. GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO EXTEND GAS AND OIL EXPLORATION TO THE OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY AS A WAY OF DIVERSIFYING THE ECONOMY.

MR. SPEAKER, MY GOVERNMENT WILL ENDEAVOUR TO PROMOTE INVESTMENTS IN THE SMALL-SCALE MINING SECTOR AND THE MARKETING OF GEMSTONES, TO BROADEN THE TAX BASE AND CREATE NEW JOBS. MY GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO ENDEAVOUR TO ENHANCE EXPLORATION OF OTHER MINERALS, PARTICULARLY OF THE INDUSTRIAL ONES. FOR EXAMPLE MANGANESE IN LUAPULA AND NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES, AND URANIUM IN SOUTHERN PROVINCE.

WINDFALL TAX

MR. SPEAKER, THE HOUSE WILL RECALL THAT IN 2008 GOVERNMENT REVOKED THE MINING DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS AND CONSEQUENTLY CHANGED THE MINING FISCAL REGIME BY WAY OF AMENDMENT TO THE MINES AND MINERALS ACT.

THESE CHANGES RAISED CONCERNS AMONG MINING COMPANIES. IN AN EFFORT TO ADDRESS THESE CONCERNS, MY GOVERNMENT HAS COMMENCED NEGOTIATIONS WITH MINING COMPANIES WITH A VIEW TO FINDING A SOLUTION.

MR. SPEAKER, I WISH TO INFORM THE HOUSE THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE PROCEEDING WELL. MAY I ALSO REITERATE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION, THAT THE REMOVAL OF THE WINDFALL TAX WILL NOT LEAD TO A LOSS OF GOVERNMENT REVENUE AS THE VARIABLE TAX STILL CAPTURES ANY WINDFALL GAIN THAT MAY ARISE IN THE MINING SECTOR.

INFRASTRUCTURE

MR. SPEAKER, MY GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZES THE HIGH COST OF INFRASTRUCTURE. TO THIS EFFECT, GOVERNMENT WISHES TO ENCOURAGE PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION IN INFRASTRUCTURE. TO FACILITATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS POLICY, PARLIAMENT ENACTED THE PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP ACT DURING ITS LAST SITTING.

I, THEREFORE, CALL UPON THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO JOIN GOVERNMENT IN DEVELOPING INFRASTRUCTURE.

MR. SPEAKER, IN THE ROAD SECTOR, GOVERNMENT HAS CONTINUED TO REHABILITATE AND MAINTAIN ROADS COUNTRYWIDE. AMONG THE ROADS UNDER REHABILITATION ARE ZIMBA-LIVINGSTONE, CHOMA-CHITONGO, KASEMPA TURN-OFF, KABOMPO-CHAVUMA, KASAMA-LUWINGU, LUANSOBE-MPONGWE, CHIPATA-LUNDAZI, KASAMA-MBALA AND CHIPATA MFUWE.

IN ADDITION, GOVERNMENT WILL THIS YEAR COMPLETE THE RE-DESIGNING OF THE BRIDGES ON THE MONGU-KALABO ROAD IN READINESS FOR COMMENCEMENT OF WORKS NEXT YEAR.

FURTHER, GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO INVITE THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO JOIN IN DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEDICLE, MBALANAKONDE, SENANGA-SESHEKE AND KASEMPA-MUMBWA ROADS.

MR. SPEAKER, THE DISTRIBUTION OF GOVERNMENT CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT TO ALL PROVINCES HAS FACILITATED THE GRADING OF EXISTING FEEDER ROADS AND OPENING UP OF NEW ONES, FOR EASY MOVEMENT OF GOODS AND SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS. AS A RESULT, FEEDER ROAD REHABILITATION AND OPENING OF NEW ROADS IS CURRENTLY GOING ON IN MOST PARTS OF THE COUNTRY. GOVERNMENT WILL PROVIDE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES NEXT YEAR TO ENSURE THAT THE FEEDER ROAD PROGRAMME IS CONSOLIDATED.

MR. SPEAKER, GOVERNMENT IS CONCERNED WITH THE DECLINE IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THE RAILWAY SECTOR. THE RAILWAY SYSTEMS OF ZAMBIA AND THE TANZANIA-ZAMBIA RAILWAY AUTHORITY HAVE CONTINUED TO EXPERIENCE CHALLENGES MAINLY DUE TO THE POOR STATE OF RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE. GOVERNMENT IS ENGAGING WITH THE RAILWAY SYSTEMS OF ZAMBIA ON MODALITIES FOR THE REHABILITATION OF THE RAILWAY LINE.

REGARDING TAZARA, THE GOVERNMENTS OF TANZANIA AND ZAMBIA HAVE AGREED THAT THE OPERATIONS OF TAZARA BE CONCESSIONED TO A PRIVATE OPERATOR.

MR. SPEAKER, GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO ENCOURAGE PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF FEEDER RAIL LINES INCLUDING CHIPATA-MPIKA, NSELUKA-MPULUNGU, SOLWEZI-CHINGOLA, SOLWEZI-LUMWANA-BENGUELA, MULOBEZI-NAMIBIA AND KAFUE-LION'S DEN.

MR. SPEAKER, IN ADDITION TO THE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS WHICH I MENTIONED EARLIER, OTHERS INCLUDE THE REHABILITATION OF SOLWEZI AIRPORT.

MR. SPEAKER, MY ADMINISTRATION IS ALSO ENCOURAGING PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION IN THE PROVISION OF TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES AND PRODUCTS. THE RECENT ENACTMENT OF THE INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) LEGISLATION WILL ENHANCE DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS SECTOR.

MY GOVERNMENT IN ITS EFFORTS TO EXPAND THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS BACKBONE, HAS LAID AN OPTIC FIBRE NETWORK ACROSS THE COUNTRY. ALL THE NINE PROVINCES HAVE BEEN CONNECTED AND THE SECOND PHASE TO LINK ALL DISTRICTS IS NOW UNDERWAY.

MR. SPEAKER, FOLLOWING THE VALUATION OF ASSETS OF ZAMBIA TELECOMMUNICATION COMPANY (ZAMTEL), GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO SELL SOME OF THE SHARES OF THE COMPANY. THIS MOVE WILL HELP ZAMTEL TO REALISE ITS FULL POTENTIAL AND BECOME COMPETITIVE.

MR. SPEAKER, ZAMBIA RECENTLY HOSTED A HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCE ON RESOURCE MOBILIZATION FOR THE NORTH-SOUTH CORRIDOR PROJECT UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE COMESA-SADC-EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY TRIPARTITE FRAMEWORK. A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF MONEY WAS PLEDGED FOR INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THE NORTH-SOUTH CORRIDOR, WHICH INCLUDES ZAMBIA. THIS REGIONAL INITIATIVE IS IMPORTANT TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO THE SEA FOR COUNTRIES LIKE ZAMBIA WHICH ARE LANDLOCKED.

SOCIAL SERVICES

MR. SPEAKER, GOVERNMENT IS AWARE OF THE MANY CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN THE HEALTH AND EDUCATION SECTORS. NOTWITHSTANDING THE CURRENT ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES, GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT THESE SECTORS ARE GIVEN PRIORITY IN THE ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES.

HEALTH

MR. SPEAKER, IN MY LAST ADDRESS, I STATED THAT EFFORTS WOULD BE MADE TO IMPROVE HEALTH DELIVERY. TO THIS EFFECT, GOVERNMENT INCREASED BUDGETARY ALLOCATION TO THIS SECTOR. IN ADDITION, WITH EFFECT FROM NEXT YEAR, FUNDS WILL BE DISBURSED DIRECTLY TO HOSPITALS AND DISTRICT HEALTH ADMINISTRATIONS IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THESE ARE AVAILABLE AT THE POINT OF HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY.

MR. SPEAKER, THE DISTRIBUTION OF HEALTH AND OTHER FACILITIES IN THIS COUNTRY IS STILL SKEWED TOWARDS URBAN AREAS. OVER 50 PERCENT OF ZAMBIAN FAMILIES BASED IN RURAL AREAS LIVE OUTSIDE A RADIUS OF FIVE KILOMETRES FROM THE NEAREST HEALTH FACILITY AS COMPARED TO ONE PERCENT OF FAMILIES LIVING IN URBAN AREAS.

TO ADDRESS THIS SITUATION, GOVERNMENT IS INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND PROVISION OF MEDICAL EQUIPMENT COUNTRYWIDE. THIS YEAR, CONSTRUCTION OF 15 HOSPITALS IN VARIOUS DISTRICTS IS IN PROGRESS.

MY GOVERNMENT IS ALSO CONSTRUCTING HEALTH POSTS WHICH ARE SMALLER THAN HEALTH CENTRES, IN AREAS WITH CATCHMENT POPULATIONS OF 500 HOUSEHOLDS OR 3,000 PEOPLE. GOVERNMENT HAS THIS YEAR, CONSTRUCTED TEN OUT OF THE 18 PLANNED HEALTH POSTS IN EIGHT DISTRICTS.

MR. SPEAKER, IN VIEW OF THE SHORTAGE OF STATIC HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE COUNTRY, DELIVERY OF HEALTH CARE THROUGH MOBILE HEALTH SERVICES IS NECESSARY. CURRENTLY MOBILE HEALTH SERVICES INCLUDE THE ZAMBIA FLYING DOCTORS, EYE AND DENTAL CLINICS, COUNSELLING AND TESTING CLINICS, AND ANTI-RETROVIRAL THERAPY CLINICS.

DRAWING ON THE SUCCESS OF THE ITEZHI TEZHI DISTRICT MOBILE SERVICES INITIATIVE, WHICH RECEIVED AN AWARD FROM THE UNITED NATIONS FOR ITS OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE, GOVERNMENT IS FURTHER EXPLORING THE FEASIBILITY OF DELIVERING MORE MOBILE HEALTH SERVICES.

MR. SPEAKER, HIV/AIDS CONTINUES TO IMPACT NEGATIVELY ON DEVELOPMENT. IN AN EFFORT TO ADDRESS THIS PROBLEM, GOVERNMENT SCALED UP PROVISION OF ANTI-RETROVIRALS (ARVS) TO 64 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN NEED OF SUCH DRUGS. THIS PROGRAMME CONTINUES TO BE ENCOURAGED.

MR. SPEAKER, ZAMBIA HAS MADE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN COMBATING MALARIA, A MAJOR KILLER DISEASE AMONG CHILDREN. THIS HAS BEEN ILLUSTRATED BY THE RECOGNITION THAT WAS GIVEN TO ZAMBIA BY THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION FOR REDUCING MALARIA IN HEALTH FACILITIES BY 66 PERCENT.

MR. SPEAKER, IN ORDER TO PROVIDE IMPROVED QUALITY AND AFFORDABLE CANCER TREATMENT, THE CONSTRUCTION OF PHASE TWO OF THE CANCER DISEASES HOSPITAL IN LUSAKA IS SCHEDULED TO COMMENCE BEFORE THE END OF THIS YEAR. THIS IS MEANT TO IMPROVE THE FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES AT THIS SPECIALISED HOSPITAL. IN ADDITION, MY GOVERNMENT IS ALSO CONSTRUCTING THE LUSAKA GENERAL HOSPITAL AT A COST OF US\$9.4 MILLION AT CHAINAMA HILLS.

MR. SPEAKER, THE SHORTAGE OF STAFF IN THE HEALTH SECTOR REMAINS ONE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S MAJOR CONCERNS. GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO IMPROVE THE CONDITIONS OF SERVICE FOR STAFF SO AS TO ADDRESS THIS CONCERN. TO THIS EXTENT THE RETENTION SCHEME OPERATING IN THE HEALTH SECTION HAS BEEN EXPANDED TO COVER ALL HEALTH WORKERS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

FOR THE HARD-TO-REACH AREAS, GOVERNMENT HAS CONSTRUCTED STAFF HOUSES, PROCURED SOLAR PANELS, RADIO COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT AND MOTOR BIKES FOR 560 HEALTH CENTRES.

MR. SPEAKER, FURTHER, TO ADDRESS THE SHORTAGE OF SKILLED HEALTH WORKERS, A RECRUITMENT PROGRAMME HAS BEEN INITIATED TO IMPROVE THE STAFFING LEVELS IN HEALTH INSTITUTIONS. THE EXPANSION OF CLASSROOMS AND HOSTELS AT HEALTH TRAINING CENTRES HAS ALSO RESULTED IN A 75 PERCENT INCREASE IN THE ENROLMENT OF STUDENTS.

EDUCATION

MR. SPEAKER, IN OUR EFFORTS TO ENSURE THE ATTAINMENT OF THE UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION GOAL, AND TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF AND ACCESS TO EDUCATION, GOVERNMENT HAS THIS YEAR, RECRUITED 5,000 MORE TEACHERS WHO HAVE SINCE BEEN DEPLOYED ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

IN ADDITION MY GOVERNMENT IS CONSTRUCTING NEW SCHOOLS TO INCREASE ENROLMENT AND REDUCE THE DISTANCES COVERED TO THE NEAREST SCHOOL. BY THE END OF THIS YEAR, GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE COMPLETED THE CONSTRUCTION OF 2,543 CLASSROOM BLOCKS AND DELIVERED 196,428 DESKS TO THE VARIOUS DISTRICTS IN THE COUNTRY.

TO ADDRESS THE SHORTAGE OF TEACHER ACCOMMODATION, 280 HOUSES ARE UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY AIMED AT IMPROVING THE CONDITIONS OF SERVICE FOR TEACHERS AND ATTRACTING THEM TO WORK IN RURAL AREAS.

MR. SPEAKER, AT THE TERTIARY LEVEL, UPGRADING OF INFRASTRUCTURE AT NKRUMAH AND COPPERBELT SECONDARY TEACHERS COLLEGES TO UNIVERSITY LEVEL HAS CONTINUED. THE FIRST UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CLASSES AT THESE INSTITUTIONS WILL COMMENCE IMMEDIATELY AFTER ALL FORMALITIES HAVE BEEN CONCLUDED.

MR. SPEAKER, WHILE THE OPENING UP OF THIS SECTOR HAS SEEN A NUMBER OF PLAYERS WHO ARE SUPPLEMENTING GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS, THERE IS CONCERN WITH THE MANY ILLEGAL AND SUB-STANDARD LEARNING INSTITUTIONS THAT HAVE SPRUNG UP.

MY GOVERNMENT, THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, IN ITS QUEST TO UPLIFT THE STANDARDS OF EDUCATION IN OUR LEARNING INSTITUTIONS, THEREFORE, IS FINALIZING THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATION AND ACCREDITATION FRAMEWORK.

THE PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED

MR. SPEAKER, IN OUR SOCIETY THERE ARE THOSE WHO ARE PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED WHO HAVE SPECIAL NEEDS.

THEREFORE, MY GOVERNMENT AIMS TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE ALL THESE CITIZENS CAN LIVE FULL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL LIVES.

I AM, THUS DIRECTING THE PLANNING AUTHORITIES TO ENSURE THAT PUBLIC BUILDINGS ACROSS THE COUNTRY HAVE PROVISIONS TO ACCOMMODATE SPECIAL NEEDS FOR THE PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED SUCH AS WHEEL CHAIR RUMPS, LIFTS, REST ROOMS ETC.

I AM ALSO DIRECTING THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL SERVICES TO CONSIDER DEVELOPING SPECIAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR THE PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED. TO EQUIP THEM WITH SKILLS TO ENABLE THEM PARTICIPATE FULLY IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING

THE LACK OF SAFE WATER SUPPLY AND ADEQUATE SANITATION FACILITIES IN THE COUNTRY REMAINS AN AREA OF MAJOR CONCERN. NONTHELESS, PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION PROGRAMME WHICH WAS LAUNCHED IN NOVEMBER, 2007.

SO FAR, DRILLING OF WATER POINTS AND REHABILITATION OF EXISTING ONES IN THE LUSAKA, NORTHERN, LUAPULA AND SOUTHERN PROVINCES HAVE BEEN COMPLETED. THIS PROGRAMME WILL HELP THE COUNTRY IN THE PROVISION OF SAFE AND ADEQUATE WATER AND SANITATION SERVICES ON A SUSTAINABLE BASIS.

MR. SPEAKER, ONE OF THE WORRYING TRENDS IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE, IS THE TREND OF INCREASED NUMBER OF SUCCESSION DISPUTES IN CHIEFDOMS. I WOULD LIKE TO APPEAL TO THE ROYAL ESTABLISHMENTS TO ESTABLISH ACCEPTABLE MODES OF SUCCESSION.