

Tuesday, 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2020

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

ON

FLOOD SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY

BY

THE MINISTER IN THE OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, HON. MWANSA, MP

Mr Speaker, I am going to present a Ministerial Statement on the Flood Situation in the country.

Sir, climate change and climate vulnerability has continued to impact vulnerable communities at the scale and magnitude never experienced before in the history of Zambia. These impacts are felt across a wide range of communities and society. Extreme weather events such as floods and drought have impacted negatively on agriculture and food security, health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, infrastructure, education and energy.

Mr Speaker, not only has the frequency and occurrence of extreme weather events increased over space and time but the number of affected people has more than tripled in the last five years.

Sir, the 2019/2020 season forecast by the Southern African Region Climate Outlook Forum and downscaled by the Zambia Meteorological Department projected that most parts of the country would receive normal to above normal rainfall. Based on the forecast, the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU) and its partners prepared the 2019/2020 Contingency Plan which identified floods as the main hazard which would characterise the season.

Mr Speaker, the Contingency Plan is prepared every year by the Office of the Vice-President in collaboration with other stakeholders in order to put in place robust disaster preparedness measures to ensure that in times of disasters, impacts and loss is generally minimised by the involvement of authorities, individuals and communities in hazard prone areas. According to the Contingency Plan, sixty-three districts were projected to be affected by floods and dry spells in

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all the ten provinces in the country. The House may wish to note that from the onset of the rains, the 2019/2020 rainy season, the country has experienced hailstorms affecting over 100 schools, and fifteen health facilities and dwelling houses throughout the country.

Sir, the rapid assessment conducted so far by the office review that fourteen bridges and culverts have been damaged in the Eastern Province, two in the Southern Province, six in Muchinga Province and two in Central Province. In response to floods, the Government has distributed 20,834 x12.5kg bags of mealie meal, 2,420 blankets, 165x20 kg bags of *kapenta*, 527 digging kits and 1,800 iron sheets, 29 banana boats and 200x50 kg bags of beans to affected districts. The House may wish to note that assessments are ongoing in all affected districts and relief items are being dispatched.

Mr Speaker, Mambwe, Lumezi and Chama districts are the most affected districts in the country. These areas have experienced floods three to four times just this season. Most areas are inaccessible and about 6,000 households have been affected by floods in the Eastern, Muchinga Northern, North-Western and Lusaka provinces.

Sir, the House may wish to know that the country has also experienced flooding in urban areas such as Kanyama and other peri-urban settlements are still flooded. The cause of flooding in most urban settlements is poor seepage of water due to underlying bedrock which prevents water to penetrate. Others include, blockage of outflow drains flow by illegal construction of structures such as wall fences. In order to mitigate the impact of floods, Lusaka City Council working in collaboration with DMMU is pumping out water in most affected areas and working on outflow drainages. The later started before the onset of the current season as a long term situation.

DMMU with other stakeholders are also conducting a rapid assessment in Kanyama to establish the number of Houses which are still flooded. As a long term measure, there is need for urban renewal of flood-prone areas. I wish to inform the House that the Ministry of Local Government, Infrastructure and Defence as well as other stakeholders are already working on that.

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Mr Speaker, the House may wish to note that some of the affected areas will need relief food as maize fields and other crops have been washed away by flash floods. The House will be informed in due course the full extent of the damage caused by floods countrywide once my office is done with the comprehensive assessment.

Sir, the Office of the Vice President, through DMMU has continued responding to emergencies in all the affected areas in the country through the provision of food and non food relief items as already mentioned. The Government through Road Development Agency (RDA) has also released K5, 000, 000 for emergency works on critical crossing points of national importance especially along major trunk roads such as the one on Great East Road. DMMU and RDA have since worked on the Kacholola crossing point on the Great East Road by installation of an Acrow bridge.

Mr Speaker, the House may wish to note that the number of critical infrastructure such as bridge and schools affected by disasters is massive. Government, therefore, will focus on critical ones to restore normal state of affairs in affected areas and communities.

I thank you, Mr Speaker.

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