



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  
18<sup>TH</sup> 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 1<sup>ST</sup> 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 8<sup>TH</sup> 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 5<sup>TH</sup> 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 COOPERATING 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 CONVENED 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 CONDUCTIVE 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 NET-WORKING 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,

INSPIRE 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- MPPONGWE, 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, MBALA-NAKONDE, 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.

MY GOVERNMENT WISHES TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT IT WILL ONLY RECOGNISE THE CURRENT REGISTERED 286 CHIEFDOMS. MAY I EMPHASIZE THAT MY GOVERNMENT WILL NOT RECOGNISE NEW CHIEFS. IN THE SAME VEIN GOVERNMENT WILL NOT ALLOW ILLEGAL PARALLEL STRUCTURES TO BE SET UP.

REGARDING CHIEFDOM BOUNDARY DISPUTES, GOVERNMENT'S POLICY STILL REMAINS THAT THESE SHALL BE RESOLVED USING THE 1958 CHIEFDOM BOUNDARY MAPS.

## DISASTER MANAGEMENT

MR SPEAKER,

THE MANAGEMENT OF DISASTERS IN THE COUNTRY HAS BEEN A BIG CHALLENGE IN THE ABSENCE OF A LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN WHICH TO OPERATE.

MR SPEAKER,

MY GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO TABLE BEFORE THIS HOUSE THE DISASTER MANAGEMENT BILL. THE BILL WILL SEEK TO PROVIDE A LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE MARSHALLING OF THE RESOURCES IN TIMES OF DISASTERS

## *LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT*

MR. SPEAKER,

THE LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT SECTOR IS FACED WITH A NUMBER OF CHALLENGES WHICH INCLUDE POOR OBSERVANCE OF WORKERS' RIGHTS BY SOME EMPLOYERS. THE HOUSE WILL AGREE THAT THE NEED TO CREATE MORE JOBS ON ONE HAND NEEDS TO BE BALANCED WITH PRODUCTIVITY ON THE OTHER.

MR. SPEAKER,

GOVERNMENT IS CONCERNED WITH THE SPATE OF WILD-CAT STRIKES THAT THE NATION HAS EXPERIENCED IN THE RECENT PAST. I, THEREFORE, URGE ALL PARTIES, THE EMPLOYERS, LABOUR LEADERS AND GOVERNMENT TO FULLY AND EFFECTIVELY UTILIZE THE TRIPARTITE MECHANISM PROVIDED FOR UNDER THE INDUSTRIAL AND LABOUR RELATIONS ACT TO AMICABLY RESOLVE DISPUTES.

MR. SPEAKER,

THIS YEAR THE NATION EXPERIENCED STRIKES BY OUR PUBLIC WORKERS WHO WERE DEMANDING SALARY INCREMENTS FAR ABOVE WHAT GOVERNMENT COULD REALISTICALLY AFFORD.

THE CURRENT PUBLIC WAGE BILL IS MORE THAN 50 PERCENT OF DOMESTIC REVENUE. THIS MEANS THAT ONE PERCENT OF THE POPULATION OR 170,000 PEOPLE CONSUME MORE THAN HALF OF OUR BUDGET. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR MEMBERS OF THIS HOUSE TO REFLECT ON THE SUSTAINABILITY OF PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS FOR PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS.

I MUST CAUTION THAT WE CANNOT AS A NATION CONTINUE DEPENDING ON OUR COOPERATING PARTNERS FOR OUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. OUR COOPERATING PARTNERS ARE ALSO FACING DIFFICULT CHALLENGES IN THEIR COUNTRIES. AS ZAMBIANS WE MUST RELY ON OUR OWN RESOURCES TO ACHIEVE OUR VISION. I THEREFORE, CALL UPON ALL OF US, MINISTERS, MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, OUR CIVIL SERVANTS TO SACRIFICE BY NOT DEMANDING UNREALISTIC SALARIES.

#### *DIASPORA*

MR. SPEAKER, FOLLOWING THE PRESENTATION BY OUR CITIZENS IN THE DIASPORA AT THE NATIONAL INDABA HELD EARLIER IN THE YEAR, I HAVE DECIDED TO SET UP A LIAISON OFFICE AT STATE HOUSE TO DEAL WITH ISSUES RELATED TO THE DIASPORA. IN ADDITION, I HAVE DIRECTED THE MINISTER OF FINANCE TO WORK WITH THE DIASPORA TO FACILITATE THEIR PARTICIPATION IN GROWING THE ECONOMY, THROUGH INVESTMENT IN PROJECTS OF THEIR CHOICE.

FROM THE MANY MEETINGS I HAVE HAD WITH ZAMBIANS ABROAD, I AM CONVINCED OUR PEOPLE WHEREVER THEY MAY BE ARE PROUD ZAMBIANS AND WE SHOULD EMBRACE THEM AS THEY WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THE BUILDING OF OUR ECONOMY.

*PUBLIC SERVICE MANAGEMENT*

MR. SPEAKER,

GOVERNMENT HAS CONTINUED TO IMPLEMENT THE PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM PROGRAMME AIMED AT STRENGTHENING THE OPERATIONS, MANAGEMENT CAPABILITIES, EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE. A RECENTLY INTRODUCED COMPONENT OF THE REFORM PROGRAMME IS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SERVICE DELIVERY CHARTERS.

ALL MINISTRIES AND OTHER PUBLIC SERVICE INSTITUTIONS ARE EXPECTED TO ESTABLISH CHARTERS WHICH CONSTITUTE SOCIAL CONTRACTS BETWEEN PUBLIC SERVICE INSTITUTIONS AND THE PUBLIC.

MR. SPEAKER,

I AM, DELIGHTED TO NOTE THAT A NUMBER OF MINISTRIES AND OTHER PUBLIC SERVICE INSTITUTIONS INCLUDING SOME MINISTRIES AND DEPARTMENTS HAVE DEVELOPED THEIR CHARTERS.

MR. SPEAKER,

DURING MY LAST ADDRESS TO THIS HOUSE, I NOTED THAT THE PUBLIC SERVICE WAS FACED WITH, AMONG OTHERS, THE CHALLENGE OF INADEQUATE REMUNERATION IN THE FACE OF LIMITED RESOURCES. TO DEAL WITH THIS, A PUBLIC SERVICE PAY POLICY HAS BEEN DRAFTED AND WILL BE TABLED IN CABINET SOON.

THIS POLICY IS AN ESSENTIAL INPUT INTO THE RECENTLY ANNOUNCED SALARIES AND WAGES COMMISSION'S WORK OF DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE FRAMEWORK OF THE SALARIES STRUCTURE IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE.

*GENDER*

MR. SPEAKER,

MY GOVERNMENT, AND ALL OF US IN THIS HOUSE, REMAIN DETERMINED TO ATTAIN GENDER EQUITY AND EQUALITY IN OUR

COUNTRY AS CONTAINED IN THE VISION 2030 AND THE NATIONAL GENDER POLICY.

YOU WILL RECALL THAT DURING THE LAST SESSION, I STATED THAT I WOULD APPOINT WOMEN ON MERIT. I HAVE SINCE APPOINTED A NUMBER OF WOMEN TO SENIOR GOVERNMENT POSITIONS AS TESTIMONY TO THE CONFIDENCE I HAVE IN OUR WOMEN-FOLK TO TAKE UP POSITIONS OF LEADERSHIP. I WILL THEREFORE, CONTINUE APPOINTING MORE WOMEN TO POSITIONS OF LEADERSHIP.

MR. SPEAKER,

YOU WILL ALSO RECALL THAT DURING THE SAME SESSION, I INDICATED THAT CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE IN DEVELOPING LEGISLATION ON GENDER BASED VIOLENCE. TO THIS EFFECT, GOVERNMENT HAS SINCE AVOIDED A DRAFT BILL ON THIS TO KEY STAKEHOLDERS FOR THEIR INPUT.

MR. SPEAKER,

GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZES THAT THERE HAS BEEN PROGRESS IN GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT THOUGH MORE WORK IS NEEDED TO ENSURE THAT GENDER IS SYSTEMATICALLY MAINSTREAMED IN POLICY AND PROGRAMMES. CONSEQUENTLY, MY GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO GIVE THE MINISTRY OF GENDER ITS OWN BUDGET ALLOCATION IN NEXT YEAR'S BUDGET.

*SPORT, YOUTH AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT*

MR. SPEAKER,

THE MAJORITY OF OUR POPULATION CONSISTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE. THE CHALLENGE GOVERNMENT FACES, THEREFORE, IS PROVIDING SOCIAL AMENITIES AND EMPLOYMENT TO THE YOUTHS.

IN THIS REGARD, GOVERNMENT WILL ENHANCE THE PROVISION OF DEMAND-DRIVEN SKILLS TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF EMPLOYMENT.

CURRENTLY, EIGHT YOUTH RESOURCE CENTRES ARE UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN SIX PROVINCES FOR THIS PURPOSE. THIS IS IN ADDITION TO THE SIXTEEN EXISTING ONES. UNDER THIS PROGRAMME

PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN TO PROMOTION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS AND PROVISION OF START-UP CAPITAL.

MR. SPEAKER,

THE HOUSE WILL RECALL THAT IN MY LAST ADDRESS, I HAD REPORTED THAT THE DEFENCE FORCES HAD SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED TRAINING SOME OF OUR YOUTHS AT THE ZAMBIA NATIONAL SERVICE TRAINING CENTRES. THIS PROGRAMME IS CONTINUING AND MORE YOUNG PEOPLE STAND TO BENEFIT FROM IT.

MR. SPEAKER,

IN THE FIELD OF SPORT, I AM GLAD TO INFORM THIS HOUSE THAT GOVERNMENT LAUNCHED THE NATIONAL SPORTS POLICY IN MAY 2009, WHOSE AIM IS TO INCREASE PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION AND MAKE SPORT MORE INCLUSIVE.

FOLLOWING MY GOVERNMENT'S UNDERTAKING TO CONSTRUCT SPORTS FACILITIES, I WISH TO INFORM THE HOUSE THAT, APART FROM THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NDOLA STADIUM WHICH HAS COMMENCED, GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO CONSTRUCT A NEW STADIUM IN LUSAKA AS SOON AS FUNDS ARE SECURED.

MR. SPEAKER,

IN CONSIDERING THE RESOURCES BEING MADE AVAILABLE TO THE YOUTHS WE SHOULD INCLUDE THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO YOUTHS ACROSS THE VARIOUS SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY SUCH AS THOSE UNDER EDUCATION, HEALTH, ETC. ALL THESE EXPENDITURES PUT TOGETHER BENEFIT THE YOUTHS AND SHOULD BE RECOGNISED AS SUCH.

*GOVERNANCE*

MR. SPEAKER,

I RECENTLY LAUNCHED THE ANTI CORRUPTION POLICY AS A CLEAR COMMITMENT TO FIGHTING CORRUPTION.

MR. SPEAKER,

CORRUPTION CONTINUES TO BE A MAJOR CONCERN TO MY GOVERNMENT AND INDEED TO ALL DEVELOPMENT-MINDED PERSONS AND INSTITUTIONS.

THIS IS MORE SO, GIVEN THE RECENT REVELATIONS OF MISMANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC RESOURCES IN SOME MINISTRIES. FIGHTING CORRUPTION, THEREFORE, REMAINS A TOP PRIORITY OF GOVERNMENT.

BUT LET ME REITERATE MY POSITION THAT THIS FIGHT IS NOT FOR GOVERNMENT ALONE. ALL OF US SHOULD JOIN IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION.

THE RECENTLY LAUNCHED NATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION POLICY IS AIMED AT ADDRESSING SEVERAL CHALLENGES AT INSTITUTIONAL, SOCIAL AND LEGAL LEVELS. THE POLICY WILL AMONG OTHER THINGS, RE-AFFIRM THE ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION'S ROLE AS THE LEAD INSTITUTION IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION. THE POLICY WILL LAY EMPHASIS ON PROACTIVE MEASURES TO PREVENT CORRUPTION FROM OCCURRING.

IN THIS RESPECT, I RECENTLY ANNOUNCED A NUMBER OF MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION. THESE INCLUDE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SERIOUS FRAUDS UNIT UNDER THE STRENGTHENED ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION, TO SPECIFICALLY INVESTIGATE COMPLEX CORRUPTION CASES AND AN INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE UNIT TO MONITOR SUSPICIOUS FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS. IN ADDITION, FORENSIC SYSTEMS SHALL BE DEVELOPED AND PROCUREMENT AUDITS SHALL BE UNDERTAKEN IN ALL MAJOR SPENDING MINISTRIES, PROVINCES AND AGENCIES.

MR. SPEAKER,

I WISH TO REITERATE MY EARLIER WARNING TO ALL PUBLIC OFFICERS, INCLUDING MEMBERS OF MY GOVERNMENT THAT I WILL NOT HESITATE TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST THOSE FOUND WANTING.

MR. SPEAKER,

WHEN I ADDRESSED THE HOUSE IN JANUARY THIS YEAR, I INFORMED THE NATION THAT GOVERNMENT HAD INAUGURATED THE NATIONAL GOVERNING COUNCIL (NGC) OF THE AFRICAN PEER REVIEW MECHANISM (APRM). THE APRM PROCESS IS WORKING EFFECTIVELY AND IS ALREADY ASSISTING GOVERNMENT TO ENHANCE DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE.

THIS FACT WAS ATTESTED TO BY THE FINDINGS OF THE COUNTRY SUPPORT MISSION FOR THE APRM, WHICH REVIEWED ZAMBIA'S PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE APRM THIS YEAR. GOVERNMENT HAS REORGANIZED THE NGC AND REDUCED MEMBERSHIP FROM 47 TO 30 IN ORDER TO REDUCE ON EXPENDITURE AND IMPROVE EFFICIENCY.

MR. SPEAKER,

GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO THE PROVISION OF ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL. THIS HOUSE MAY ALREADY BE AWARE THAT THE LEGAL AID BOARD IS IN THE PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING OFFICES IN ALL THE PROVINCIAL CENTRES IN THE COUNTRY. EVENTUALLY, OFFICES WILL BE ESTABLISHED IN DISTRICTS AS WELL.

#### *CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW PROCESS*

MR. SPEAKER,

THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE (NCC) HAS MADE PROGRESS. GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT THE CONSTITUTION MAKING PROCESS IS CONCLUDED SOON. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT EXERCISE WHICH REQUIRES THE SUPPORT OF EVERY ZAMBIAN.

HOWEVER, I AM CONCERNED WITH THE SLOW PACE AT WHICH THE NCC DELIBERATIONS ARE GOING. I WISH TO INFORM THE HOUSE THAT THE TWELVE MONTHS MANDATE WHICH WAS GIVEN TO NCC EXPIRED. I HAVE SINCE GIVEN THE NCC A FOUR MONTHS EXTENSION IN WHICH TO COMPLETE ITS DELIBERATIONS. IT IS MY HOPE THAT THE MEN AND WOMEN SITTING ON THE NCC WILL SACRIFICE THEIR TIME TO ENABLE THEM COMPLETE THE EXERCISE WITHIN THIS EXTENSION.

## *ELECTORAL REFORMS*

MR. SPEAKER,

IN MY LAST ADDRESS TO THE HOUSE, I INDICATED GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO CONTINUOUS VOTER REGISTRATION. GOVERNMENT HAS SINCE DISBURSED FUNDS TO THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION OF ZAMBIA TOWARDS THIS EXERCISE.

MY GOVERNMENT IS WORKING TO ENSURE THAT THE VOTERS REGISTER IS UPDATED IN READINESS FOR THE 2011 ELECTIONS. I DIRECT THAT A PERMANENT MECHANISM BE ESTABLISHED FOR THIS EXERCISE AS PROVIDED FOR UNDER THE LAW.

## *MEDIA*

MR. SPEAKER,

MY ADMINISTRATION RECOGNISES THE IMPORTANT ROLE THE MEDIA PLAYS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY. GOVERNMENT WILL, THEREFORE, CONTINUE TO PROVIDE A CONDUCIVE ENVIRONMENT UNDER WHICH THE MEDIA FUNCTIONS.

I WISH TO COMMEND THOSE RADIO AND TELEVISION STATIONS THAT HAVE CONDUCTED THEMSELVES IN A RESPONSIBLE AND ETHICAL MANNER IN PERFORMING THEIR DUTIES. IT IS PLEASING TO NOTE THAT WHILE OTHER MEDIA ORGANISATIONS HAVE EXHIBITED UNETHICAL JOURNALISM, THE MAJORITY HAVE REMAINED PROFESSIONAL. I CONGRATULATE THEM.

MR SPEAKER,

IT IS WITH THIS IN MIND THAT GOVERNMENT HAS ENGAGED THE MEDIA ON THE NEED FOR SELF REGULATION, AS I STATED IN MY LAST ADDRESS TO THIS HOUSE. IN ORDER TO EXPEDITE THIS PROCESS, GOVERNMENT HAS INVITED THE MEDIA TO DISCUSS WAYS OF ENHANCING SELF REGULATION.

MR. SPEAKER,

CONSULTATIONS ON THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION BILL HAVE REACHED AN ADVANCED STAGE. I AM CALLING UPON MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO TAKE KEEN INTEREST IN THE DEVELOPMENT SO THAT THE PROPOSED LAW MEETS THEIR ASPIRATIONS.

MR. SPEAKER,

IN ORDER TO INCREASE OUTREACH AND DIVERSITY OF INFORMATION, GOVERNMENT HAS COMMENCED THE DECENTRALIZATION OF THE PRINT MEDIA TO ALL PROVINCIAL HEADQUARTERS BY PROCURING PRINTING PRESSES FOR THE PROVINCES. THESE MACHINES WILL ALSO BE ACCESSIBLE TO THE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

MR.SPEAKER,

I WISH TO INFORM THIS HOUSE THAT MY GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING A POLICY SHIFT WITH REGARD TO MEDIA OWNERSHIP. MY GOVERNMENT IS ASSESSING THE POSSIBILITY OF CONSIDERING PRIVATISING SOME OF THE STATE OWNED MEDIA ORGANISATIONS. THIS DECISION WILL HELP IN ENHANCING COMPETITION IN THE MEDIA INDUSTRY.

*FOREIGN POLICY*

MR. SPEAKER,

IN LINE WITH OUR FOREIGN POLICY, ZAMBIA REMAINS COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING EFFORTS THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO LASTING INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY.

FOR THIS REASON, ZAMBIA CONTINUES TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS INCLUDING THE UNITED NATIONS, THE AFRICAN UNION, THE SOUTHERN AFRICA DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC), THE COMMON MARKET FOR EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA (COMESA), AND THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE GREAT LAKES REGION.

THE HOUSE WILL RECALL THAT ZAMBIA ASSUMED THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE GREAT LAKES REGION AT ITS THIRD SUMMIT WHICH WAS HELD HERE IN LUSAKA ON 10<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2009. DURING THE EVENT, I WAS PRIVILEGED TO LAUNCH THE REGIONAL CENTRE FOR DEMOCRACY, GOOD GOVERNANCE, HUMAN RIGHTS AND CIVIC EDUCATION, TO BE LOCATED IN LUSAKA. THE CENTRE HAS BEEN NAMED IN HONOUR OF OUR LATE PRESIDENT, DR LEVY PATRICK MWANAWASA, SC.

MR. SPEAKER,

I WISH TO INFORM THE HOUSE THAT ZAMBIA WAS ALSO ELECTED AS DEPUTY CHAIR OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICA DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC) ORGAN ON POLITICS, DEFENCE AND SECURITY AT THE LAST ORDINARY SUMMIT HELD IN KINSHASA THIS MONTH. THIS ELECTION IS AN HONOUR FOR ZAMBIA.

MR. SPEAKER,

IN VIEW OF ZAMBIA'S FOCUS ON ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY, GOVERNMENT HAS CONTINUED TO BE AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN SOUTH-SOUTH AND NORTH-SOUTH PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES.

AS A RESULT OF ZAMBIA'S PARTICIPATION AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF THESE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC FORA, ZAMBIA HAS ATTRACTED INCREASED INTEREST FROM EUROPEAN AND ASIAN FIRMS WISHING TO TRADE WITH AND INVEST IN ZAMBIA.

MR. SPEAKER,

THE ISSUE OF EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR (MINES AND MUNITIONS) HAS BEEN HIGH ON THE INTERNATIONAL AGENDA. DESPITE ZAMBIA'S INTERNAL PEACE, SHE HAS SUFFERED CONTAMINATION OF EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS AS A RESULT OF THE WARS IN SOME NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES. GOVERNMENT IS CONCERNED THAT SOME PARTS OF THE COUNTRY ARE STILL CONTAMINATED.

HOWEVER, I AM PLEASED TO INFORM THIS HOUSE THAT GOVERNMENT HAS COMPLETED THE NATION-WIDE SURVEY TO IDENTIFY CONTAMINATED AREAS. THIS WILL ENHANCE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS IN SENSITISATION OF OUR PEOPLE AND CLEARANCE OF EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR. THE CLEARANCE OF AFFECTED AREAS

IS IMPORTANT AS THIS WILL ENHANCE THE SAFETY OF OUR PEOPLE AND OPEN UP AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT.

*PEACE AND SECURITY*

MR. SPEAKER,

THE PEACE WE CONTINUE TO ENJOY IS PARTLY DUE TO THE COMMENDABLE ROLE THAT OUR SECURITY INSTITUTIONS PLAY IN OUR NATION. NOT ONLY HAVE THEY SERVED WITH DILIGENCE HERE AT HOME, BUT THEY HAVE ALSO DONE US PROUD IN INTERNATIONAL PEACE KEEPING MISSIONS. I, THEREFORE, SALUTE OUR MEN AND WOMEN IN THE SECURITY WINGS FOR THE ROLE THEY CONTINUE TO PLAY IN PROTECTING OUR NATION'S SOVEREIGNTY.

THEIR WORK HAS NOT ONLY BEEN FOCUSED ON SECURITY, BUT ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO MAINTENANCE OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROVISION OF FOOD, ESPECIALLY IN TIMES WHEN THE NATION HAS BEEN FACED WITH DISASTER SITUATIONS.

MR. SPEAKER,

GOVERNMENT IS AWARE OF THE URGENT NEED TO LOOK INTO THE WELFARE OF MEN AND WOMEN IN THE SECURITY SERVICES. I REITERATE MY ASSURANCES THAT WE ARE WORKING TO ADDRESS THEIR CONCERNS. IN THIS REGARD, GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE BUILDING HOUSES FOR THE SECURITY WINGS. TO EASE THEIR ACCOMMODATION SHORTFALLS, A NUMBER OF THESE HOUSES WILL BE READY FOR OCCUPATION BY THE END OF THIS YEAR.

*CONCLUSION*

MR. SPEAKER,

TO CONCLUDE, I WISH TO REMIND THE NATION, THROUGH THIS HOUSE, THAT THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC SITUATION CONTINUES TO PLACE CHALLENGES ON OUR ECONOMY. HOWEVER, WE SHOULD ALL BEAR IN MIND THAT THERE IS NO PROBLEM INSURMOUNTABLE TO A RESOLUTE AND UNITED PEOPLE.

I, THEREFORE, WISH TO REITERATE MY CALL FOR ALL ZAMBIANS, REGARDLESS OF THEIR POLITICAL AFFILIATION, TRIBE, RACE OR RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND, TO REMAIN UNITED IN OUR FIGHT AGAINST THE COMMON ENEMIES OF POVERTY, DISEASE, HUNGER AND ILLITERACY.

MR. SPEAKER,

THE NATION EXPECTS US, AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLE, TO WORK ACROSS PARTY LINES FOR THE GOOD OF THE NATION.

NEXT MONTH, THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND NATIONAL PLANNING WILL PRESENT THE 2010 BUDGET TO THIS HOUSE. INDEED, GOVERNMENT WILL MAKE PROPOSALS TO THIS HOUSE INTENDED TO IMPROVE THE MANAGEMENT OF OUR RESOURCES FOR THE WELL BEING OF OUR PEOPLE. HOWEVER, THESE PROPOSALS WILL COME TO NOTHING IF THEY ARE NOT SUPPORTED BY THIS AUGUST HOUSE. MORE THAN EVER BEFORE, WE NEED TO WORK TOGETHER FOR OUR COMMON PURPOSE. AS GOVERNMENT, WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO WORKING WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS.

ONCE MORE, I WISH TO PAY TRIBUTE TO ALL ZAMBIANS FOR UPHOLDING PEACE AND STABILITY IN OUR NATION. I URGE ALL OF US TO INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY COMMIT OURSELVES TO WORKING TOWARDS A PROSPEROUS FUTURE.

LASTLY, MR. SPEAKER, LET ME PAY TRIBUTE TO OUR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATING AND OTHER PARTNERS, FOR THE SUPPORT THEY HAVE RENDERED. SOME OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS AS A COUNTRY WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE IF IT WERE NOT FOR THE SUPPORT AND THE WARM AND FRATERNAL RELATIONS WHICH WE ENJOY AT BOTH BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL LEVELS.

I CAN ONLY URGE OUR PARTNERS TO CONTINUE WITH THIS SPIRIT.

FINALLY, MAY I ALSO EXPRESS MY PROFOUND APPRECIATION TO MY CABINET AND DEPUTY MINISTERS, SECRETARY TO THE CABINET AND HIS TEAM AND MY STAFF AT STATE HOUSE FOR THE LOYALTY AND SUPPORT THEY HAVE RENDERED TO ME FROM THE TIME I ASSUMED

THE OFFICE OF PRESIDENT. I SAY THANK YOU. MAY YOU CONTINUE WITH THE GOOD WORK.

MR. SPEAKER, MAY GOD BLESS ZAMBIA.

MAY GOD BLESS OUR PEOPLE.

MR. SPEAKER, I THANK YOU.