

# STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY, DR. EDGAR CHAGWA LUNGU, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

STATE HOUSE LUSAKA 25<sup>th</sup> JUNE, 2020

1. IT IS EXACTLY 97 DAYS TODAY SINCE ZAMBIA RECORDED THE FIRST CASE OF COVID-19. LIFE AS WE KNEW IT, COMPLETELY CHANGED AND ALONG WITH IT, THE LIVELIHOODS OF MILLIONS OF ZAMBIANS WERE ADVERSELY AFFECTED. MY GOVERNMENT REMAINS ALIVE TO THE CHALLENGES FACING ZAMBIANS EVRYDAY AS THEY STRIVE TO MAKE A LIVING AMIDST THESE DIFFICULT TIMES. IN THE LAST 24 HOURS, EIGHT CASES WERE RECORDED TO BE POSITIVE OUT OF THE 569 TESTED. CUMULATIVELY, 1,497 PERSONS HAVE BEEN INFFECTED WITH COVID-19 AND SADLY, 18 HAVE LOST THEIR LIVES SINCE THE OUTBREAK OF CORONA VIRUS IN ZAMBIA.

2. OF NOTE, WE HAVE HAD **1,223 CUMMULATIVE RECOVERIES** FROM COVID-19, WHICH TRANSLATES TO **82%**,
OUT OF **52,195** TOTAL TESTS CONDUCTED SO FAR. IN
ADDITION, ALL PATIENTS UNDER TREATMENT ARE IN STABLE
CONDITION.

I WISH TO APPLAUD OUR DEDICATED GALLANT HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AND ALL THE FRONTLINE PERSONNEL FOR THE SPIRITED FIGHT THEY PUT UP AGAINST COVID-19.

# COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN,

3. IT IS NOW ONE MONTH SINCE I LAST ADDRESSED THE NATION ON THE STATE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN OUR COUNTRY.

- 4. IN MY LAST ADDRESS, AS WE WERE ADVANCING INTO THE COLD SEASON, I CAUTIONED THE NATION ON THE LIKELY INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF PERSONS SUFFERING FROM COMMON COLDS AND COUGHS. THE COLD WAS ALSO EXPECTED TO INCREASE THE PROBABILITY OF CITIZENS CATCHING COVID-19. I, ACCORDINGLY, ADVISED THAT WE KEEP WARM.
- 5. YES, THE COLD IS HERE AND IT HAS INDEED BEEN VERY COLD LATELY WITH TEMPERATURES OSCILLATING BETWEEN 4 AND 11 DEGREES CELSIUS. WE HAVE SEEN A CONTINUED INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF COVID-19 POSITIVE CASES, THOUGH NOT AS EXPERIENCED BY OTHER COUNTRIES.

6. MY GOVERNMENT HAS CONTINUED TO IMPLEMENT CUTTING EDGE AND SCIENCE-BASED INTERVENTIONS AT ALL LEVELS OF THE RESPONSE TO ENSURE NO LIFE IS LOST TO COVID-19.

- 7. WHEN I TAKE TIME TO READ WHAT SOME PEOPLE WRITE, ESPECIALLY ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND LISTEN TO WHAT THEY SAY ON PHONE-IN RADIO AND TELEVISION PROGRAMMES, I GET THE SENSE THAT FOR SOME PEOPLE, COVID-19 IS A HOAX AND THAT IT ONLY EXISTS IN THE DEVELOPED WORLD. I HAVE HEARD SOME PEOPLE, SAY "WHY HAVE WE NOT RE-OPENED EVERYTHING AND GONE BACK TO NORMAL, THIS DISEASE IS NOT KILLING AFRICANS."
- 8. MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT, COVID-19 IS REAL AND IT REMAINS A DEADLY DISEASE.

- 9. HOWEVER, THE MEASURES THAT I ANNOUNCED DURING MY FIRST ADDRESS ON 25TH MARCH, 2020 ARE YIELDING POSITIVE RESULTS IN STEMMING THE FURTHER SPREAD OF COVID-19. TO SAY IT COULD HAVE BEEN WORSE IS AN UNDERSTATEMENT.
- 10. WE DO NOT INTEND TO SHOWER OURSELVES WITH PRAISES OVER THE CONTAINMENT OF COVID-19, BUT WHEN WE SEE WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN MANY OTHER COUNTRIES, WE CAN ONLY THANK GOD AND PRAY THAT HE CONTINUES TO PROTECT US FROM THE DEADLY PANDEMIC.
- 11. IN THE SAME VEIN, WE PRAY TO GOD TO GRANT WORLD SCIENTISTS INTELLECT AND WISDOM TO FIND THE VACCINE AND THE CURE. FOR THOSE INFECTED, WITH THE VIRUS, WE PRAY FOR GOD'S HEALING MERCIES AND WISH THEM QUICK RECOVERY AND FOR THOSE, WHO HAVE LOST LOVED ONES, WE PRAY FOR THEIR STRENGTH AND COURAGE. MAY THE SOULS OF THE DEPARTED REST IN ETERNAL PEACE.

- 12. IT IS IMPORTANT NOT TO RELAX AND GO BACK TO OUR OLD WAYS OF DOING THINGS AS THAT WILL FUEL THE RAPID SPREAD OF THE VIRUS. SADLY THOUGH, IT HAS COME TO MY ATTENTION THAT SOME BAR AND NIGHT CLUB BUSINESS OWNERS HAVE RESUMED OPERATIONS DESPITE MY GOVERNMENT'S DIRECTIVE TO REMAIN CLOSED.
- 13. THIS CAVALIER ATTITUDE BY SOME OF THESE BUSINESS MEN AND WOMEN SHOULD NOT BE CONDONED. IT IS IMPORTANT TO ADHERE TO THE MEASURES THAT GOVERNMENT HAS PUT IN PLACE BECAUSE WE NEED TO PRESERVE THE PRECIOUS LIVES OF OUR PEOPLE AS WE ENDEAVOUR TO GRADUALLY RESTORE OUR ECONOMY.
- 14. MY APPEAL TO YOU MY FELLOW ZAMBIANS IS TO CALMLY AND PATIENTLY OBSERVE HOW WE GO THROUGH THE COLD SEASON.

15. ALL THE BUSINESSES INCLUDING BARS AND NIGHTCLUBS, SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES WILL EVENTUALLY REOPEN AND RESUME OPERATIONS ONCE WE GO THROUGH THIS PERIOD. THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION (WHO), AND THE CENTRE FOR DISEASE CONTROL (CDC), THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH, HAVE WARNED ABOUT A SPIKE DURING THIS COLD SEASON IF WE RELAX THE MEASURES THAT WE HAVE PUT IN PLACE.

- 16. COVID-19 HAS IMPACTED NEGATIVELY ON OUR DAY-TO-DAY LIVES. TO SOME PEOPLE, COVID-19 HAS RESULTED IN LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT, LOSS OF INCOME, AND IN SOME CASES, COMPLETE CLOSURE OF BUSINESS OPERATIONS.
- 17. IT HAS ALSO MEANT DRASTIC REDUCTION IN DEMAND FOR GOODS AND SERVICES AS WELL AS A MARKED DROP IN IMPORTS IN VIEW OF BORDER RESTRICTIONS AND REDUCED INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES GLOBALLY.

- 18. AT NATIONAL LEVEL, THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 IS BEGINNING TO MANIFEST FULLY AS FOLLOWS:
- (A) REVENUES WILL BE LOWER BY K20.8 BILLION ARISING FROM THE GENERAL REDUCTION IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY, LOSS OF EXPECTED REVENUE AND TAX RELIEF MEASURES ADMINISTERED AS A RESULT OF COVID-19;
- (B) GOVERNMENT SPENDING IN 2020 IS EXPECTED TO RISE BY APPROXIMATELY K20 BILLION DUE TO THE DEPRECIATION OF THE KWACHA WHICH HAS IN TURN RAISED EXTERNAL DEBT PAYMENTS AND OTHER FOREIGN BASED EXPENDITURES; AND
- (C) EXTERNAL DEBT SERVICE IS EXPECTED TO RISE BY K8.7
  BILLION. IN ADDITION, COVID-19 RELATED
  EXPENDITURES HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO AN INCREASE IN
  GOVERNMENT SPENDING.

- 19. THIS IS WHY MY GOVERNMENT HAS PUT IN PLACE THE K10 BILLION MEDIUM TERM REFINANCING FACILITY MEANT TO RESTRUCTURE, REFINANCE OR EXTEND CREDIT TO BUSINESSES AND HOUSEHOLDS IMPACTED BY COVID-19. I AM HAPPY THAT COMMERCIAL BANKS ARE NOW ACCESSING PART OF THE K10 BILLION TO BE LOANED TO OUR ENTREPRENEURS, ESPECIALLY, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES.
- 20. SO FAR, K533 MILLION OF K1.8 BILLION WORTH OF APPLICATIONS FROM THE BANKING SECTOR HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE BANK OF ZAMBIA. IN ADDITION, APPLICATIONS WORTH K753 MILLION FROM THE NON-BANKING FINANCIAL SECTOR, ARE CURRENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION BY THE BANK OF ZAMBIA.

- 21. WITH THE PROJECTED FALL IN REVENUES, AGAINST THE RISING EXPENDITURE, COUPLED WITH UNPREDICTABLE EXTERNAL FINANCING, IT HAS BECOME NECESSARY THAT DOMESTIC RESOURCES BE MOBILISED TO SUPPORT THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19 AND STIMULATING THE LOCAL ECONOMY.
- 22. THAT IS WHY MY GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO ISSUE THE COVID-19 BOND AMOUNTING TO K8 BILLION AS A STIMULAS PACKAGE TO ENHANCE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY. PART OF THE MONEY RAISED FROM THIS BOND WILL BE USED TO PAY OFF THE RETIREES AND THOSE ON THE SEPARATEES PAY ROLL WHO HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR THEIR RETIREMENT BENEFITS FOR A LONG TIME.

- 23. IN ADDITION, GOVERNMENT IS SO CONCERNED ABOUT DOMESTIC DEBT OWED TO SUPPLIERS OF GOODS AND SERVICES. THAT IS WHY PART OF THE MONEY FROM THIS BOND WILL BE USED TO PAY OFF SUPPLIERS OF GOODS AND SERVICES, INCLUDING THE LOCAL CONTRACTORS. THIS IS A DELIBERATE EFFORT BY MY GOVERNMENT AIMED AT PLOUGHING BACK MONEY IN OUR LOCAL ECONOMY AND ENHANCING ECONOMIC ACTIVITY THAN LETTING OUR MONEY GO OUT OF THE COUNTRY.
- 24. FURTHER, THE MONEY REALISED FROM THE BOND WILL BE UTILISED TO SUPPORT THE SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES THAT WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ACCESS THE K10 BILLION MEDIUM TERM REFINANCING FACILITY THROUGH COMMERCIAL BANKS WHICH IS MANAGED BY THE BANK OF ZAMBIA.

25. WITH THESE MEASURES, I EXPECT THE ECONOMY TO REIGNITE TO A POSITIVE GROWTH TRAJECTORY.

#### **COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN,**

26. AS GOVERNMENT, WE HAVE GOT THINGS TO DO AND WORK TO DO. AS WE DIRECT OUR EFFORTS TO RESUSCITATE OUR ECONOMY, AMIDST COVID-19, WE SHOULD EQUALLY APPLY OUR EFFORTS TO REVAMPING THE SOCIAL SECTORS THAT INCLUDE SKILLS TRAINING SCHOOLS AND TRADES CENTRES. I DIRECT THE MINISTER OF YOUTH, AND SPORT TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES AS ENSHRINED IN THE SEVENTH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE YOUTH TO VENTURE INTO SKILLS TRAINING AND OTHER ENTREPRENEURSHIP VENTURES.

27. THE YOUTH SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE AND THOSE THAT MY GOVERNMENT HAS FACILITATED. I EXPECT THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORT TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP IN A MULTISECTORAL MANNER AS THEY GUIDE THE YOUTH TO BECOME A POSITIVE DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND IN OUR ECONOMY AMIDST COVID-19.

#### **COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN,**

#### WE HAVE GOT WORK TO DO.

AS A WAY OF STARTING THIS WORK THAT WE MUST ALL BE ENGAGED INTO, I HAVE SINCE APPROVED A K30 MILLION YOUTH EMPOWERMENT SCHEME TARGETING ARTISTES COUNTRYWIDE TO BE LAUNCHED IN LUSAKA SOON. THE NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL UNDER THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND ARTS WILL IMPLEMENT THIS PROGRAMME.

I DIRECT THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORT, THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, TRADE AND INDUSTRY, AND THE CITIZEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT COMMISSION (CEEC) TO FACILITATE LINKAGE FOR THE YOUTH TO BENEFIT FROM THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIAL YARDS THROUGH THE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROJECT SUPPORTED BY THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB).

FURTHERMORE, GOVERNMENT IS FACILITATING YOUTH ACCESS TO OTHER EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES UNDER THE CEEC SUCH AS THE CASSAVA VALUE CHAIN PROGRAMME AND THE ACQUACULTURE VALUE CHAIN INITIATIVE.

#### WE HAVE GOT WORK TO DO AND THINGS TO DO,

MY GOVERNMENT HAS SET ASIDE US \$29 MILLION FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACQUACULTURE SEED FUND UNDER THE ZAMBIA ACQUACULTURE ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT. THE PROJECT IS AIMED AT ENHANCING FISH PRODUCTION AND IS EARMARKED TO BENEFIT MORE THAN 3,000 ENTERPRENEURS, INCLUDING YOUTH AND WOMEN.

THEREFORE, I IMPLORE THE ZAMBIAN YOUTH TO TAKE KEEN INTEREST IN PARTICIPATING AND PROFITING FROM DIFFERENT EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES MY GOVERNMENT IS PUTTING IN PLACE, INSTEAD OF PROTESTING IN THE BUSH AND TAKING PRIDE IN HOW MANY VIEWS OF THEIR PROTESTS WHERE SEEN ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

THE ZAMBIAN YOUTH I LONG TO SEE IS ONE THAT IS TAKING THE INITIATIVE LIKE THAT YOUNG MAN OF CHUNGA DUMPSITE WASTE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION WHO TRANSFORMED TRASH INTO CASH AND NOW HAS BUILT A HOUSE, EMPLOYS OTHER YOUTH, AND IS ORGANISING OTHER YOUTH INTO A COOPERATIVE. OR CHILEKWA MWAMBA WHO HAS FORMED A COOPERATIVE WITH HIS YOUNG FRIENDS AND TODAY THE ORGANISATION HAS SPREAD ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

28. AS GOVERNMENT, WE HAVE SEEN THAT THE REOPENING OF EXAMINATION CLASSES IS ALREADY GIVING US
VITAL INFORMATION WHICH WE SHOULD TAKE INTO
ACCOUNT AS WE ARE CONSIDERING RESUMPTION OF THE
REMAINING CLASSES AS WELL AS COLLEGES AND
UNIVERSITIES.

29. CONSULTATIONS WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS ARE CURRENTLY UNDERWAY ON THE REOPENING OF THE REMAINING CLASSES, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES BEARING IN MIND THE COLD SEASON AS GUIDED BY THE WHO, CDC THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH. THE NATION WILL BE INFORMED THE NEXT COURSE OF ACTION ONCE THE CONSULTATIONS ARE CONCLUDED.

#### LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

GUIDELINES FOR ALL SPORTS DISCIPLINES TO FOLLOW AS THEY CONSIDER RESUMING SPORTS ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED. THEY INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

- (A) GUIDING PRINCIPLES STIPULATED BY THE STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS 21 AND 22 OF 2020;
- (B) GUIDELINES FOR VARIOUS SPORTS DISCIPLINES WHICH HAVE BEEN CATEGORISED AS NON-CONTACT, SEMI-CONTACT AND FULL CONTACT SPORT; AND,

(C) SAFEGUARDS AS OUTLINED IN THE HEALTH GUIDELINES
FOR FOOTBALL AT PREMIER AND NATIONAL DIVISION
ONE LEAGUES. HENCE THESE LEAGUES WILL RESUME
ACTION IN JULY, 2020, WITH STRICT OBSERVANCE OF
HEALTH GUIDELINES.

## **COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN,**

THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH; THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH, SPORT AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT; AND THE MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT WOULD BE INSPECTING SPORTS ARENAS TO ENSURE THEY ARE READY FOR ACTION.

# COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN,

IN THE TOURISM SECTOR AS I STATED IN THE LAST ADDRESS, WE ALSO HAVE TO GET BACK TO WORK. I, THEREFORE, ANNOUNCE THE REOPENING OF ALL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS WHICH WERE CLOSED, IMMEDIATELY.

TRANSPORT, THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF TOURISM TO WORK TOGETHER IN ENSURING STRINGENT HEALTH GUIDELINES SUCH AS

- (A) SCREENING;
- (B) TESTING PASSENGERS WITH SYMPTOMS;
- (C) MASKING;
- (D) SOCIAL DISTANCING;
- (E) FREQUENT WASHING OF HANDS, AND
- (F) FOLLOW-UP ON PASSENGERS WHO TEST POSITIVE
  AND SENDING THEM INTO QUARANTINE UNTIL THEY
  TEST NEGATIVE.

THE REOPENING OF ALL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS WILL TRIGGER THE RECOVERY OF THE TOURISM SECTOR NOT ONLY IN LIVINGSTONE BUT THE COUNTRY AT LARGE. WE HAVE TO GET BACK TO WORK FULLY UNDER THE NEW NORMAL.

#### **COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN,**

30. WE HAVE BEEN ADVISED BY HEALTH EXPERTS THAT CORONAVIRUS THRIVES IN EXTREME COLD WEATHER CONDITIONS LIKE THE WEATHER WE ARE EXPERIENCING CURRENTLY. WE HAVE LEARNT THAT A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES IN ASIA WHERE COVID-19 WAS FIRST REPORTED HAVE EXPERIENCED RESURGENCE IN CASES AFTER RESTRICTIONS WERE EASED DESPITE AN INITIAL AGGRESSIVE APPROACH TO SLOWING THE PROGRESS OF COVID-19, HAVING BEEN SUCCESSFUL.

- 31. IN SOME INSTANCES, COUNTRIES HAVE HAD TO RE-INSTITUTE PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL MEASURES SUCH AS RESTRICTION ON MOVEMENT AND INTERACTIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE TO ONCE AGAIN FIGHT THE SPREAD OF THE VIRUS. AS SUCH, WE NEED TO BE CAUTIOUS WHEN IT COMES TO EASING UP ANY RESTRICTIONS LEST WE RISK THE SPIKE IN THE NUMBER OF POSITIVE COVID-19 CASES.
- 32. IN VIEW OF THIS, BARS AND NIGHT CLUBS WILL REMAIN CLOSED UNTIL THE WEATHER CONDITIONS ARE FAVORABLE AND SPECIAL AND SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR THIS SUBSECTOR ARE DEVISED AND PUT IN PLACE.
- 33. MY GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE WITH THE SCREENING, TESTING AND ISOLATING THOSE INFECTED WITH THE VIRUS AND ARE SYMPTOMATIC.

- 34. WE CANNOT AFFORD TO DROP OUR GUARD. COVID-19 IS REAL AND STILL HERE WITH US! WE SHOULD CONTINUE OBSERVING THE HEALTH GUIDELINES OF HAND WASHING AND SANITIZING, FACE MASKING AND SOCIAL DISTANCING EVEN MORE, WHAT WITH THESE EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS!
- 35. SO FAR, THE MAJORITY OF OUR PEOPLE HAVE IN THE LAST THREE MONTHS, WORKED WITH UNITY OF PURPOSE TO KEEP THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK UNDER CONTROL. THIS IS INDEED IN LINE WITH OUR SPIRIT OF UBUNTU, WHICH PLACES THE GREATER GOOD BEFORE INDIVIDUAL BENEFITS. HOWEVER, THE BIGGEST ENEMY WE FACE TODAY IS COMPLACENCY.
- 36. AS I CONCLUDE, I WISH TO ENCOURAGE YOU, FELLOW COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN, TO CONTINUE ADHERING TO THE SET GUIDELINES AND SOCIAL MEASURES AS FOLLOWS:

- (A) MANDATORY USE OF FACE MASKS BY EVERYONE IN PUBLIC;
- (B) AVOID UNNECESSARY CROWDING AND ENSURE SOCIAL DISTANCING;
- (C) PROVISION OF FACILITIES FOR HAND HYGIENE AND SANITATION;
- (D) REGULAR CLEANING AND DISINFECTION OF PUBLIC AMENITIES;
- (E) OBSERVANCE OF PERSONAL HYGIENE AND COUGH ETIQUETTE; AND
- (F) AVOIDING UNNECESSARY MOVEMENTS.

I IMPLORE ALL OF YOU, IN PARTICULAR, THE YOUTH TO JOIN ME ON THIS JOURNEY FOR WE HAVE GOT WORK TO DO, AND AN ECONOMY TO KEEP BOUYANT!

AS THE APOSTLE PAUL SAYS IN THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS CHAPTER THREE, VERSE 23 TO 24 – WHATEVER YOU DO, WORK AT IT WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AS WORKING FOR THE LORD, NOT FOR HUMAN MASTERS, KNOWING THAT FROM THE LORD, YOU WILL RECEIVE THE INHERITANCE AS YOUR REWARD.

37. MY GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE SITUATION AND ADVISE THE NATION ON THE NECESSARY ACTION TO BE UNDERTAKEN AS THE PANDEMIC EVOLVES.

GOD BLESS YOU ALL, GOD BLESS ZAMBIA
I THANK YOU