



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA



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STATEMENT BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY MR. EDGAR CHAGWA LUNGU
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA**

AT THE

**PLENARY OF THE HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE
72ND SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

19TH SEPTEMBER, 2017

New York
September, 2017

- YOUR EXCELLENCY MR. MIROSLAV LAJCAK, PRESIDENT OF THE 72ND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY,
- THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL, MR. ANTONIO GUTERRES,
- EXCELLENCIES,
- DISTIGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

LET ME JOIN THE PREVIOUS SPEAKERS IN CONGRATULATING YOUR EXCELLENCY MR. MIROSLAV LAJCAK ON THE ASSUMPTION OF THE PRESIDENCY OF THE 72ND REGULAR SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND I ALSO CONVEY ZAMBIA'S SINCERE APPRECIATION TO HIS EXCELLENCY MR. PETER THOMSON, FOR HIS ABLE LEADERSHIP DURING THE 71ST SESSION.

LET ME ALSO SINCERELY CONGRATULATE H.E. MR. ANTONIO GUTERRES, FOR HIS ELECTION AS THE 9TH SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS. I AM CONFIDENT THAT HE WILL BUILD UPON THE STRONG FOUNDATION THAT WAS LAID BY HIS PREDECESSOR MR. BAN KI-MOON, TO WHOM I WISH TO PAY TRIBUTE FOR THE MANNER HE STEERED THIS ORGANISATION DURING HIS TENURE OF OFFICE.

MR. PRESIDENT,

THE THEME FOR THIS SESSION, 'FOCUSING ON PEOPLE: STRIVING FOR PEACE AND A DECENT LIFE FOR ALL ON A SUSTAINABLE PLANET' PRESENTS US AN OPPORTUNITY TO EVALUATE THE EXISTING MULTILATERAL APPROACHES TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES AFFECTING OUR PEOPLES. THESE INCLUDE THREATS TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY. THERE IS NEED TO DEVELOP INNOVATIVE APPROACHES AND RESPONSES TO THESE CHALLENGES WHICH INCLUDE TERRORISM, CLIMATE CHANGE, NUCLEAR WEAPONS, HIV/AIDS, AND MANY MORE.

IN THIS GLOBALISED AND INTER-DEPENDENT WORLD, NO COUNTRY, HOWEVER, WEALTHY OR POWERFUL, CAN RESOLVE ALL THESE CHALLENGES SINGLE HANDEDLY. COMMON SOLUTIONS ARE, THEREFORE, REQUIRED THROUGH A STRONG UNITED NATIONS.

MR. PRESIDENT,

THIS SESSION IS TAKING PLACE AGAINST A BACKDROP OF THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE, WHICH HAS SPARED NO ONE NATION, DEVELOPED OR UNDERDEVELOPED. OUR EFFORTS TO RAISE THE STANDARD OF LIVING FOR THE WORLD'S POOR PEOPLE IN ORDER TO MEET THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS ARE BEING FRUSTRATED BY THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE. WE HAVE SEEN WITH OUR EYES IN JUST ONE GENERATION, HOW MUCH EFFECT CLIMATE CHANGE HAS HAD ON OUR ENVIRONMENT. I REMEMBER A TIME WHEN FORESTS WERE WITHIN A CHILD'S WALKING, DISTANCE-TEEMING WITH A PROFUSION OF FLORA AND FAUNA. TODAY, OUR GRAND-CHILDREN WOULD BE LUCKY

TO NAME THE INDIGENOUS FRUITS OF OUR COUNTRY ON FIVE FINGERS. SO MANY SPECIES OF THESE HAVE UNFORTUNATELY; BECOME EXTINCT- FOREVER LOST TO THE WORLD IN SUCH A SHORT TIME. WE HAVE ALSO CONTINUED TO WITNESS DISASTERS IN THE FORM OF DROUGHTS, WILD FIRES, FLOODS AND LANDSLIDES. IF NOT EXTREME LEVELS OF RAIN, IT IS THE LACK OF IT!

AS THE 23RD CONFERENCE OF STATE PARTIES (COP 23) ON CLIMATE CHANGE DRAWS NEAR, ZAMBIA IS EXPECTANT THAT THE CONFERENCE WILL, *INTER ALIA*; ESTABLISH MECHANISMS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE. FURTHERMORE, WE CALL ON ALL STAKEHOLDERS TO ENSURE THAT THE GREEN CLIMATE FUND (GCF) IS ADEQUATELY FUNDED IN ORDER TO HELP DELIVER THE NECESSARY INTERVENTIONS GLOBALLY.

AS A DEVELOPING COUNTRY, ZAMBIA NEEDS ASSISTANCE TO ENHANCE HER CAPACITY IN KEY ADAPTIVE AREAS LIKE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, EARLY WARNING, AND RAPID RESPONSE TO ADDRESS THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE. ACCORDINGLY, ZAMBIA CALLS FOR THE TRANSFER OF APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGIES TO HELP COPE WITH THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

MR. PRESIDENT,

OVER THE PAST YEAR, ZAMBIA HAS REGISTERED IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTAL GAINS AND WE ARE DETERMINED TO FOSTER AN ALL-INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM BASED ON THE AFRICA UNION AGENDA 2063 AND THE UN AGENDA 2030 FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

ONLY A FEW MONTHS AGO ON 21ST JUNE, 2017, I HAD THE HONOUR TO LAUNCH THE SEVENTH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (7NDP), ZAMBIA'S DEVELOPMENTAL BLUEPRINT FOR THE FIVE YEAR PERIOD FROM 2017 UP TO 2021, UNDER THE THEME "*ACCELERATING DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS TOWARDS THE ATTAINMENT OF THE NATIONAL VISION 2030 WITHOUT LEAVING ANYONE BEHIND*".

THE PLAN SEEKS TO IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY IN AGRICULTURE, CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR UNSKILLED WAGE EMPLOYMENT IN OTHER SECTORS WITH GREATER POTENTIAL, LIKE MANUFACTURING. PARTICULAR ATTENTION WILL BE GIVEN TO THE UPLIFTING OF STANDARDS OF LIVING IN THE RURAL AREAS, WHERE A NEW FOCUS ON AGRO-VALUE ADDITION IS BEING IMPLEMENTED. THROUGH THIS PLAN ZAMBIA AIMS TO REDUCE POVERTY TO VERY MINIMAL LEVELS.

MY GOVERNMENT HAS INTEGRATED INTO THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING FRAMEWORK THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, THE AFRICAN UNION AGENDA 2063 AND ALL OTHER GLOBAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTAL INITIATIVES. WE ARE DETERMINED TO BUILD AN INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WITHOUT LEAVING ANYONE BEHIND

FURTHERMORE, IN KEEPING WITH THE ADDIS ABABA ACTION AGENDA (AAA) ON FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT, MY GOVERNMENT IS DETERMINED TO ENSURE THE EFFECTIVE MOBILIZATION AND USE OF ALL SOURCES OF FINANCE, WHETHER LOCALLY MOBILIZED OR THROUGH OUR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATING PARTNERS, FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE AVERAGE PERSON IN ZAMBIA.

MR. PRESIDENT,

PEACE, SECURITY AND THE RULE OF LAW CONTINUE TO BE THE BASIS FOR MEANINGFUL DEVELOPMENT OF ANY SOCIETY. IN KEEPING WITH THIS UNDERSTANDING, MY GOVERNMENT PLEDGES ITS SOLIDARITY TO THOSE NATIONS THAT ARE UNDERTAKING THE NECESSARY ACTIONS IN DEEPENING THEIR DEMOCRACIES.

SINCE OUR LAST MEETING HERE IN NEW YORK, A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES HAVE HELD THEIR NATIONAL ELECTIONS. THE PEOPLE IN THESE COUNTRIES HAVE SPOKEN AND IN AFRICA, CONGRATULATIONS ARE DUE TO THEM FOR EXERCISING THEIR DEMOCRATIC RIGHT OF CHOICE IN THEIR NATIONAL ELECTIONS. THIS IS THE AFRICA WE WANT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY AND, INDEED, THE FUTURE WE WANT.

ZAMBIA HAS ALSO CONTINUED TO RENDER ITS SUPPORT FOR THOSE STILL AFFLICTED BY CONFLICT THROUGH ITS MEMBERSHIP IN THE AFRICAN UNION PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL. FOLLOWING ITS RECENT ELECTION, MY GOVERNMENT LOOKS FORWARD TO A SUCCESSFUL TENURE IN THE SADC TROIKA OF THE ORGAN ON POLITICS DEFENCE AND SECURITY, FROM 2017 TO 2020. I ASSURE YOU THAT, WE WILL USE THIS MEMBERSHIP IN THESE TWO BODIES TO FOSTER PEACE, MORE PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA.

MR. PRESIDENT,

WE MUST ALSO LEAN ON THE VISION AND EXPERIENCE OF THE VARIOUS REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL BODIES THAT ARE COMPLIMENTARY TO THIS ORGANIZATION'S AGENDA. AS A MEMBER STATE, WE NOTE THE ROLE OF THE COMMONWEALTH IN VARIOUS SUBJECTS SUCH AS GENDER AND YOUTH MATTERS, CLIMATE CHANGE, THE PROMOTION OF DEMOCRACY, RULE OF LAW, HUMAN RIGHTS, GOOD GOVERNANCE, SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND SO ON. IN MY COUNTRY, THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT HAS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE DURING, AND AFTER THE PREVIOUSLY HELD ELECTIONS, THROUGH THE PROVISION OF TECHNICAL SUPPORT IN THE VARIOUS FACETS OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS.

MR. PRESIDENT

ZAMBIA HAS ALSO CONTINUED TO SERVE IN UN PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS WITH A SENSE OF DUTY TO THOSE PERSONS WHO HAVE FOUND THEIR SECURITY UNDER THREAT FOR VARIOUS REASONS. IN THIS

REGARD, THE UNITED NATIONS SHOULD NOT RELENT ON ITS DUTY TO THESE VULNERABLE PERSONS, BUT RATHER REDOUBLE ITS EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT A MORE PEACEFUL WORLD.

THE COMMITMENT SHOULD NOT BE LIMITED TO PREVENTING CONFLICT, BUT SHOULD GO FURTHER TO SEEK THE PROTECTION OF THE VICTIMS OF CONFLICT, INCLUDING THE DISPLACED PERSONS. WE ALL NEED TO COOPERATE IN PROVIDING FOR A CONDUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR THEM IN RESPECT OF THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS AND THEIR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELLBEING. IN THIS REGARD, I AM PLEASED TO INFORM THIS ASSEMBLY THAT IN JUNE THIS YEAR, I ASSENTED TO ZAMBIA'S REFUGEES ACT NO. 1, OF 2017 WHICH FURTHER SPEAKS TO THIS NOBLE DUTY AND, REPLACES THE 1970 LAW.

MR. PRESIDENT,

MY GOVERNMENT ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE NEEDS AND WELFARE OF ALL WITH A PARTICULAR FOCUS ON WOMEN, CHILDREN AND YOUTH. TO THIS END, ZAMBIA CONTINUES TO MAKE TREMENDOUS STRIDES IN THE CAMPAIGN TO END CHILD MARRIAGE, WITH THE PREVALENCE RATE CURRENTLY STANDING AT 31.2%, DEPICTING A 10.8 PERCENTAGE DROP FROM THE 42% AT INCEPTION OF THE CAMPAIGN.

WE HAVE ALSO CONTINUED TO ENGAGE TRADITIONAL LEADERS TO REFORM TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS THAT ALLOW CHILD MARRIAGE. CURRENTLY, WE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF HARMONIZING STATUTORY AND CUSTOMARY LAW ON MARRIAGE TO PROHIBIT CHILD MARRIAGE. WE ARE ALSO REPEALING A NUMBER OF DISCRIMINATORY AND OUTDATED STATUTES RELATED TO CHILDREN IN ORDER TO COME UP WITH A CHILDRENS' CODE TO DOMESTICATE THE PROVISIONS OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD.

AS THE DESIGNATED AFRICAN UNION CHAMPION ON ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE FOR 2017, I AM PLEASED TO INFORM YOU THAT THE CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN LAUNCHED IN 20 COUNTRIES OUT OF THE 30 COUNTRIES TARGETED WITH THE HIGHEST PREVALENCE RATES OF CHILD MARRIAGE IN AFRICA. THE LAUNCH PROGRAMMES ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE ENHANCEMENT OF ADVOCACY AGAINST CHILD MARRIAGE, AT NATIONAL LEVEL.

THE CAMPAIGN IS GROWING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH; HOWEVER, MUCH MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE. WE CALL ON ALL PARTNERS TO JOIN EFFORTS AND TOGETHER, LET US RAISE OUR VOICES TO PROTECT OUR CHILDREN AND THE YOUTH. THE CAMPAIGN WILL CONTINUE TO GAIN MOMENTUM AND REACH OUT TO MEMBER STATES IN ORDER TO SECURE AN END TO THIS HARMFUL PRACTICE.

MR. PRESIDENT,

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE UNITED NATIONS CONTINUES TO REMAIN THE ONLY MULTILATERAL INSTITUTION CAPABLE OF ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF OUR "ONE WORLD". THE WORLD LOOKS UP TO THIS BODY TO ENCOURAGE DIALOGUE AMONG CIVILIZATIONS ON ALL GLOBAL CHALLENGES IN AN INCLUSIVE MANNER OFFERING THE ONLY PRACTICAL WAY TO ENSURE MEANINGFUL AND EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION. TO BE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT THERE IS NEED TO REFORM THE UNITED NATIONS. ZAMBIA BELIEVES THAT THE UN REFORMS WILL NOT BE COMPLETE WITHOUT MEANINGFUL REFORM ON THE SECURITY COUNCIL.

REFORM OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL TO MAKE IT MORE REPRESENTATIVE, DEMOCRATIC AND ACCOUNTABLE TO ALL MEMBER STATES, IRRESPECTIVE OF STATUS, IS ESSENTIAL FOR ITS DECISIONS TO BE ACCEPTED BY THE WHOLE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. GIVEN THAT AFRICA CONSTITUTES THE SECOND LARGEST BLOC OF THE UN MEMBERSHIP, PROPOSALS TO REFORM THE SECURITY COUNCIL SHOULD HEED AFRICA'S LEGITIMATE CALL.

AFRICA IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY FRUSTRATED WITH THE LACK OF PROGRESS IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL NEGOTIATION PROCESS, AND IT IS TIME TO MOVE AWAY FROM THE DELIBERATE ATTEMPTS TO CREATE A MAZE OF AN OTHERWISE CLEAR QUESTION.

MR. PRESIDENT

ZAMBIA IS GRATIFIED BY THE SIGNING OF THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS BAN TREATY RECENTLY SIGNED IN JULY 2017. WE CONGRATULATE ALL THOSE WHO WORKED SO HARD TO ACHIEVE THIS RESULT, AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO WITNESSING ITS COMING INTO EFFECT.

IT IS HOWEVER SADDENING THAT WITHIN THE SAME TIMEFRAME, THE WORLD HAS WITNESSED AN ESCALATION IN THE THREAT OF NUCLEAR WAR. RECENT EVENTS IN THE KOREAN PENINSULA ARE THEREFORE A SOURCE OF CONCERN TO ZAMBIA. I ONCE AGAIN, CALL UPON ALL CONCERNED NATIONS TO DE-ESCALATE THE TENSIONS AND TO COMMIT TO A PATH OF PEACE. IT IS ZAMBIA'S LONGSTANDING POSITION THAT NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARE NOT A SOURCE OF SECURITY BUT RATHER, THE OPPOSITE IS TRUE.

MR. PRESIDENT

THE INCREASING ACTS OF TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD MUST BE CONDEMNED BY ALL PEACE LOVING NATIONS. MORE EFFORT MUST BE UNDERTAKEN TO RESTORE THE SENSE OF SECURITY WHICH IS UNDER CONSTANT THREAT. ZAMBIA THEREFORE STANDS IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE VICTIMS OF RECENT

TERROR ACTS IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES AND FURTHER STANDS READY FOR ENHANCED INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION TO FIGHT TERRORISM.

MR. PRESIDENT,

IN CONCLUSION, I WISH TO REAFFIRM, ZAMBIA'S COMMITMENT TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN ADDRESSING THE NUMEROUS PROBLEMS AFFECTING OUR WORLD. THESE TIMES DEMAND FOR BOLD LEADERSHIP FROM THE UNITED NATIONS AND ITS MEMBER STATES. LET US THEREFORE JOIN HANDS, AND ACT BOLDLY FOR THE SAKE OF OUR FUTURE.

I THANK YOU MR. PRESIDENT.