



**STATEMENT BY**

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**HIS EXCELLENCY, DR EDGAR CHAGWA LUNGU,  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA  
ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

**THURSDAY, 9<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2020**

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**STATE HOUSE  
LUSAKA**

**COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN;**

TWO WEEKS AGO, ON WEDNESDAY, 25<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2020, I ADDRESSED THE NATION AND ANNOUNCED A COUPLE OF MEASURES TO ENSURE WE CONTAIN COVID-19 ALSO KNOWN AS THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE.

IN MY ADDRESS, I ANNOUNCED THE FOLLOWING MEASURES:

1. THAT THE ZAMBIAN MISSIONS ABROAD AND THE DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION MUST BE ALERT TO REVIEWING THE ISSUANCE OF VISAS FOR PEOPLE WANTING TO TRAVEL TO ZAMBIA, AS WELL AS AT ALL PORTS OF ENTRY;

2. THAT TRAVELLERS WILL BE ALLOWED ENTRY INTO ZAMBIA, BUT THOSE WHO EXHIBIT SYMPTOMS WILL BE QUARANTINED IN A MEDICAL FACILITY FOR TREATMENT, WHILE ALL OTHER TRAVELLERS WITHOUT SYMPTOMS WILL BE QUARANTINED FOR AT LEAST 14 DAYS AT THEIR OWN COST;

3. THAT GOVERNMENT HAS SUSPENDED NON-ESSENTIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, PARTICULARLY, TO COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASES;

4. THAT PUBLIC GATHERINGS SUCH AS CONFERENCES, WEDDINGS, FUNERALS, AND FESTIVALS ARE TO BE RESTRICTED TO NOT MORE THAN 50 PEOPLE, SUBJECT TO THEM COMPLYING WITH PUBLIC HEALTH AUTHORITY GUIDELINES;

5. THAT RESTAURANTS MUST OPERATE ONLY ON A TAKE-AWAY, AND DELIVERY BASIS;

6. THAT ALL BARS, NIGHT CLUBS, CINEMAS, GYMS AND CASINOS MUST CLOSE;

7. AND THAT ALL INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS TO AND FROM HARRY MWAANGA NKUMBULA, SIMON MWANSA KAPWEPWE AND MFUWE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS ARE SUSPENDED. INSTEAD, ALL INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS SHOULD LAND AND DEPART FROM KENNETH KAUNDA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ONLY, TO ENSURE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE SCREENING OF TRAVELLERS, AS WELL AS FOLLOWING THEM UP BY OUR HEALTH AUTHORITIES.

## **COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN;**

WHILE THESE MEASURES HAVE HAD POSITIVE IMPACT IN ADDRESSING COVID-19, I AM ALSO ALIVE TO THE FACT THAT THE MEASURES HAVE HAD SERIOUS NEGATIVE IMPACT ON OUR PEOPLE'S LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS.

DURING THIS PERIOD AND ON EACH PASSING DAY, I HAVE BEEN SPENDING SLEEPLESS NIGHTS AS I THINK ABOUT THAT WOMAN IN CHILENJE WHO SELLS CHIKANDA AND GROUNDNUTS BY THE STREET, THAT BARBER IN CHIWEMPALA, AND THAT YOUNG LADY WHO PLAITES HAIR IN MAZABUKA. WITH THE COMING INTO EFFECT OF THE MEASURES I ANNOUNCED IN MY LAST ADDRESS ON COVID-19, OUR PEOPLE'S LIVELIHOODS AND INDEED THOSE OF MANY OTHERS HAVE BEEN ADVERSELY AFFECTED.

I AM FULLY AWARE THAT MANY ZAMBIANS ARE NOT EARNING THEIR USUAL INCOME BECAUSE BUSINESSES HAVE BEEN DISRUPTED WHILE OTHERS ARE NOT WORKING BECAUSE THEIR WORKPLACES HAVE CLOSED DOWN DUE TO COVID-19. I AM AWARE THAT SOME OF YOU HAVE BEEN SAYING, *“WE WOULD RATHER DIE FROM COVID-19 THAN FROM HUNGER.”* BUT I ADVISE YOU TO CHOOSE LIFE. PLEASE CHOOSE LIFE.

I AM ALSO ALIVE TO THE FACT THAT DURING THIS PERIOD THE ECONOMY HAS NOT PERFORMED WELL. FOR INSTANCE, THE KWACHA RAPIDLY DEPRECIATED FROM AROUND K13.5 BEFORE COVID-19 TO NOW AROUND K 19.0 TO A US DOLLAR.

THIS MEANS THAT THE NATIONAL BUDGET HAS EQUALLY DEPRECIATED BY A SIMILAR MARGIN AND AS A CONSEQUENCE ALLOCATIONS TO MINISTRIES PROVINCES AND OTHER SPENDING AGENCIES HAVE BEEN THROWN INTO DISARRAY.

### **COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN;**

WHILE THE MEASURES I ANNOUNCED COULD HAVE HAD NEGATIVE EFFECTS, THEY ALSO HAVE YIELDED POSITIVE RESULTS IN MITIGATING THE EFFECTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

IN THIS REGARD, WE MUST ALL PAY TRIBUTE TO THE MULTI-SECTORAL FRONTLINE WORKERS BECAUSE WITHOUT THEIR COURAGE, VALOR, AND PATRIOTISM, THE CARNAGE WOULD HAVE BEEN BEYOND OUR CONTROL.

DESPITE MANY OF US TENDING TO EXPRESS OURSELVES TOO MUCH, AND PUBLICISING OURSELVES TOO MUCH, AND TRYING TO BE THE HEROES OF OUR NATION, COVID-19 HAS SHOWN AND TAUGHT US THAT AN INTEGRATED COORDINATED MULTI-SECTORAL RESPONSE WHICH CUTS ACROSS ALL BOUNDARIES OF ANY FORM, ACROSS POLITICAL DIVIDE, CREED, RACE OR COLOUR CAN YIELD DESIRED RESULTS.

AS WE PAY TRIBUTE TO ALL OUR FRONTLINE WORKERS OF DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES SUCH AS DOCTORS NURSES, POLICE OFFICERS, BORDER CONTROL PERSONNEL AND CLEANERS AMONG OTHERS, WE MUST ALSO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE PROTECTED AND AVAILED PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPEs) SO THAT WE DO NOT ENDANGER THEIR LIVES WHILE THEY ARE SAVING OUR LIVES.



CLEARLY, THE VICTORIES WE HAVE SCORED IN THE RECENT PAST AS A NATION ARE ANCHORED ON UNITY OF PURPOSE AMONG ALL PLAYERS TOWARDS THE WAR AGAINST COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

YES, WE LOST A YOUNG MAN WHO WAS FULL OF LIFE, AN ENTERPRISING BUSINESSMAN, TO COVID-19. MY HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES GO OUT TO HIS FAMILY. OUR HEALTH WORKERS DID WHAT THEY COULD BUT, UNFORTUNATELY, HE COULD NOT MAKE IT. MAY HIS SOUL REST IN PEACE.

**COUNTRY MEN AND WOMEN;**

LET ME DRAW YOUR ATTENTION TO TODAY'S STATISTICS ABOUT COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN ZAMBIA.

TODAY, SEVENTEEN (17) PATIENTS HAVE BEEN DISCHARGED AND OUT OF 82 TESTS CONDUCTED IN THE LAST 24 HOURS, NO NEW POSITIVE CASES HAVE BEEN REPORTED IN THE LAST TWENTY-FOUR (24) HOURS. THIS MARKS THE SEVENTH CONSECUTIVE DAY WITH NO NEW POSITIVE CASE RECORDED IN ZAMBIA.

THEREFORE, OUR CUMULATIVE NUMBERS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

TOTAL NUMBER OF COVID-19 CASES RECORDED IN ZAMBIA REMAIN AT 39, WITH ONE DEATH, 24 DISCHARGES. CURRENTLY 14 PATIENTS ARE ADMITTED, AMONG THEM TWO ON THE COPPERBELT.

ALL PATIENTS UNDER QUARANTINE OR ISOLATION ARE STABLE EXCEPT FOR A SEVENTY-FOUR (74) YEAR OLD MAN WHOSE CONDITION HAS BEEN UNSTABLE.

THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH IS CURRENTLY INVESTIGATING A SUSPICIOUS DEATH THAT OCCURRED IN THE UNIVERSITY TEACHING HOSPITAL ON THURSDAY, 8<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2020, AND GOVERNMENT WILL REVERT WITH FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS CASE.

**COUNTRY MEN AND WOMEN;**

THE MAJOR THREAT TO OUR RESPONSE IS COMPLACENCY. THERE IS CLEAR EVIDENCE FROM OTHER COUNTRIES THAT AFTER A PERIOD OF ZERO RECORDINGS OF COVID-19, THERE IS ALWAYS A POSSIBILITY OF RESURGENCE OF CASES, PARTICULARLY WHEN CONTROL MEASURES ARE RELAXED.

THERE IS STILL AN OPPORTUNITY TO SUSTAIN THESE GAINS THAT WE HAVE ATTAINED TODATE AND PRESERVE THE COUNTRY'S HEALTH SECURITY BY SCALING UP INTERVENTIONS THAT HAVE PROVEN TO BE EFFECTIVE SUCH AS THE ONES WE HAVE INSTITUTED IN OUR COUNTRY.

**COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN;**

*ARISING FROM THE SUCCESSES SCORED IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS, I NOW EXTEND THE PERIOD OF THE CURRENT MEASURES TO ANOTHER TWO WEEKS, DEPENDING ON HOW THE PANDEMIC EVOLVES.*

**COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN**

THE FOLLOWING PERSONAL AND SOCIAL BEHAVIOURAL CONDUCTS MUST BE ADHERED TO BY ALL CITIZENS IN ADDITION TO THOSE I ANNOUNCED A FORTNIGHT AGO:

- (1) ALL CITIZENS ARE ADVISED TO ENSURE THAT THEY WEAR FACE MASKS AT ALL TIMES, PARTICULARLY, IN PUBLIC PLACES SUCH AS MARKETS, BUSES, BUS-STOPS AND SHOPPING MALLS;
- (2) ALL CITIZENS ARE REMINDED TO PRACTICE HIGH LEVELS OF PERSONAL HYGIENE LIKE WASHING OR SANITISING HANDS FREQUENTLY;
- (3) ALL CITIZENS ARE REMINDED TO COVER THEIR MOUTHS WITH A FLEXED ELBOW WHEN COUGHING;
- (4) ALL CITIZENS ARE REMINDED TO USE TISSUE WHEN SNEEZING AND CAREFULLY DISPOSE IT OFF IN A BIN;
- (5) ALL CITIZENS ARE REMINDED TO AVOID TOUCHING THEIR FACES AND NOT TO SHAKE HANDS;

(6) ALL CITIZENS ARE REMINDED TO OBSERVE SOCIAL DISTANCING EVERYTIME AND EVERYWHERE WHILE LIMITING MOVEMENTS – PLEASE STAY HOME IN ORDER TO STAY SAFE.

**COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN;**

LET US CLEAN AND DISINFECT FREQUENTLY TOUCHED OBJECTS AND SURFACES; LET US, IF POSSIBLE, STAY AT HOME; AND MOST OF ALL, LET US PRACTISE SOCIAL DISTANCING. I KNOW THAT WE HAVE POORLY ADHERED TO SOCIAL DISTANCING BASED ON MANY REASONS, INCLUDING SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS. SO IF WE CANNOT STAY APART FROM EACH OTHER AS PRESCRIBED BY THE HEALTH EXPERTS, FOR EXAMPLE IN MINI-BUSES AND MARKETS, PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU USE FACE MASKS AS A MINIMUM STANDARD.

## **COUNTRY MEN AND WOMEN;**

BESIDES HUMAN-TO-HUMAN TRANSMISSION AS RECENTLY OBSERVED IN OUR COUNTRY, IT HAS BEEN NOTED AFTER MEDICAL ANALYSIS THAT THE NEXT THREAT OF THE SPREAD OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, IS DEPENDENT ON HOW WE MANAGE BUSINESSES ALONG OUR BORDERS WITH REGARD TO CROSS BORDER TRADERS, TRUCK DRIVERS AND TRAVELLERS IN GENERAL. EFFORTS MUST BE PUT IN PLACE TO ENSURE THAT WE STRICTLY MONITOR ALL OUR BORDERS AND SYSTEMATICALLY SCREEN, TEST AND QUARANTINE ALL INCOMING TRAVELLERS IN A COORDINATED OR MULTI-SECTORAL MANNER.

**COUNTRY MEN AND WOMEN;**

CABINET HAS APPROVED A CONTINGENT BUDGET FOR COVID-19 AND I WOULD LIKE TO APPEAL TO ALL MINISTRIES, PROVINCES AND SPENDING AGENCIES TO STRICTLY ADHERE TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE PUBLIC FINANCE ACT IN THE APPLICATION OF THE RESOURCES BEING APPROPRIATED. IN THIS REGARD, I HEREBY DIRECT ALL CONTROLLING OFFICERS TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE CONTROLLER OF INTERNAL AUDIT AND THE AUDITOR GENERAL'S OFFICE TO PROPERLY ACCOUNT FOR THESE RESOURCES.

I WOULD LIKE TO CAUTION ALL MINISTRIES AND PROVINCES AND INDEED OTHER SPENDING AGENCIES TO ENSURE THAT THESE RESOURCES ARE PUT TO GOOD USE.



CABINET OFFICE SHOULD STREAMLINE COST CENTRES AND PROVIDE DIRECTION BY WAY OF ALIGNING RESOURCES TO THE COVID-19 CONTINGENCY PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET. ALL COVID-19 RESOURCES, WHETHER IN KIND OR IN MONETARY FORM, FROM COOPERATING PARTNERS, AS WELL AS, WELL WISHERS MUST BE INTEGRATED AND COORDINATED INTO THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH'S COVID-19 PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET, AS THE MINISTRY IMPLEMENTS THE PROVISIONS OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH ACT AND STATUTORY INSTRUMENT 21 AND 22.

I EXPECT ALL MINISTRIES WHICH ARE MAJOR COST CENTERS TO PRIORITISE BENEFICIARIES OF THESE RESOURCES ABOVE EVERYTHING ELSE AND THESE INCLUDE, THE WELFARE OF FRONTLINE PERSONNEL, PURCHASE OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND PUBLIC PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT, LOGISTICAL SUPPORT TO ASSIST IN THE ENFORCEMENT OF MEASURES AND OTHER MATTERS THAT WILL ENABLE US ACHIEVE OUR OBJECTIVE OF WINNING THIS BATTLE.

### **COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN;**

IN VIEW OF THE CURRENT IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE ECONOMY, MY GOVERNMENT IS IMPLEMENTING THE FOLLOWING MEASURES AS AN INITIAL INTERVENTION.

1. GOVERNMENT HAS RELEASED K2.5 BILLION TO REDUCE DOMESTIC ARREARS OWED TO DOMESTIC SUPPLIERS OF GOODS AND SERVICES. THE MONEY ALSO INCLUDES THE REDUCTION ON OUTSTANDING ARREARS TO PENSIONERS UNDER PUBLIC SERVICE PENSION FUND AND RETIREES WHO ARE CLAIMANTS UNDER THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE. IT WILL ALSO REDUCE OUTSTANDING THIRD-PARTY ARREARS AND OTHER EMPLOYEE-RELATED COMMITMENTS.

MY HEART BLEEDS TO SEE PENSIONERS IN MISERY AT VARIOUS MINISTRIES WAITING IN VAIN TO GET THEIR DUES. I HOPE THIS DISBURSEMENT WILL CUSHION THEIR PAIN.

I AM ALSO AWARE THAT SOME CHANCERS AND DISHONEST PEOPLE HAVE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION AND ALSO LINE-UP TO BE PAID. I AM AFRAID YOU WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED BECAUSE THIS MONEY IS FOR GENUINE RETIREES. INSISTING ON GETTING MONEY YOU ARE NOT ENTITLED TO WILL END YOU UP IN JAIL.

2. GOVERNMENT HAS RELEASED K140 MILLION TO PAY LOCAL CONTRACTORS IN THE ROAD SECTOR. THESE RESOURCES WILL ENSURE THAT ZAMBIAN CONTRACTORS AND SUPPLIERS ARE NOT THROWN OUT OF BUSINESS

3. GOVERNMENT HAS REMOVED PROVISIONS OF STATUTORY INSTRUMENT NO. 90 RELATING TO THE CLAIM OF VAT ON IMPORTED SPARE PARTS, LUBRICANTS AND STATIONERY;
4. FURTHER THE BANK OF ZAMBIA HAS TAKEN MEASURES TO ENCOURAGE USE OF DIGITAL FINANCIAL SERVICES AND MOBILE TRANSACTION SERVICES.
5. MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE BANK OF ZAMBIA HAS PROVIDED A K10 BILLION LINE OF CREDIT TO BANKS THAT MAY FACE LIQUIDITY CHALLENGES AND REVOKED STATUTORY INSTRUMENT FOR CLASSIFICATION AND PROVISIONING OF LOANS.

I DIRECT THE MINISTER OF FINANCE TO ENSURE PRIORITY IS GIVEN TO SMALL AND MEDIUM SCALE ENTERPRISES (SMES) THAT ARE ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19. THE BENEFITS OF THIS MOVE SHOULD GO TO BUSINESSES SUCH AS SCHOOLS, GYMNASIUMS, RESTAURANTS, BARS, AND NIGHTCLUB OWNERS WHOSE BUSINESSES HAVE BEEN HALTED AND HAVE SENT THEIR WORKERS HOME.

COMMERCIAL BANKS ARE OBLIGED TO GIVE THEM LOANS AT AN AFFORDABLE RATE TO ENABLE THEIR BUSINESSES TO SURVIVE.

## **COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN;**

IN CONCLUSION, PLEASE LET US NOT BREAK THE RULES AT THE EXPENSE OF OUR LIVES; LET US NOT ENDANGER OUR FAMILIES; THOSE WHOSE EMPLOYERS HAVE SAID STAY HOME, DO NOT REPORT FOR WORK; STAY HOME. MEANWHILE, WE SHALL KEEP ON REVIEWING THE SITUATION DAY BY DAY AS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC EVOLVES.

LET ME TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK FAITH-BASED ORGANISATIONS SUCH AS CHURCHES AND MOSQUES WHO HAVE TOLD THEIR CONGREGANTS TO PRAY FROM HOME; I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK MY CABINET FOR WORKING IN A COORDINATED AND ORGANISED MANNER.

FINALLY, I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK COOPERATING PARTNERS, THE PRIVATE SECTOR, PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS AND OTHERS WHO HAVE IMMENSELY DONATED FINANCES AND LOGISTICS TO ZAMBIA.

LASTLY BUT NOT THE LEAST, LET ME ALSO THANK THE MEDIA FOR SENSITISING THE PUBLIC ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, AND YOU THE ZAMBIAN PEOPLE FOR YOUR SUPPORT, COOPERATION AND UNITY AS WE TOGETHER FIGHT THIS WAR.

MAY I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO ALSO WISH YOU ALL A BLESSED EASTER WEEKEND.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL, AND I THANK YOU.



