

**Statement by Given Lubinda**

**Minister for Agriculture and Livestock of Zambia**

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May I take the opportunity to congratulate the dynamic leader and Director General of FAO – His Excellency José Graziano da Silva for his re-election, and I wish him all the best.

**Chairperson,**

Zambia recorded impressive economic growth rates over the last ten years. This growth is a result of mainly the mining sector. The mining industry contributes almost 90% of the country's exports. Over the next 5 years, the country has also been a net exporter of cereal grains in the region and beyond. For example, this year Zambia is exporting 1 million metric tons of maize.

Chairperson,

Despite the positive statistics on the economic growth, this has not impacted positively on the rural poverty and the food security status. The Government is extremely concerned that the country has not achieved the target on Millenium Development Goal 1 (MDG 1). The 2014 Report on State of Food Insecurity in the world does not show a reduction in the number of undernourished people in Zambia.

The Government acknowledges that the agriculture sector plays a critical role in the country's economy and that broader growth in agriculture could stimulate job creation and enhance rural resilience and break the chain of rural poverty and hunger.XXXX.

Given Zambia's vast resource endowment in terms of land, labour and water, the Government has put in place the following interventions to address poverty, food and nutrition insecurity:

**1. Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP)**

This programme is targeting 1.2 million smallholder farmers and is designed to improve farmer's access to inputs such as fertilizer and seed. This is to increase agricultural production and productivity. The inputs under this programme are subsidized by government.

**2. Food Security Pack (FSP)**

This is a social security programme targeting over 300,000 vulnerable households in the communities. It provides seeds and fertilizers to beneficiary households.

**3. Social cash transfer**

This programme, Chairperson, is targeting 45,000 households.

**4. School Feeding Programme**

This programme covers 860,000 school children in 2,200 schools in the country. It covers cereals, pulses, oils and fats.

**5. Irrigation development**

The country has irrigable land of 2.75 million hectares. Currently, only 425,000 hectares are under irrigation. We are targeting to double the land under irrigation in the next five years.

Irrigation gives farmers an opportunity to cultivate and produce different crops all year round without depending so much on rain-fed agriculture.

**6. Farm block development**

This programme is aimed at bringing 1 million hectares of land under cultivation in the next 10 years. 10% will be allocated to a co-venture and the remaining 90% will be allocated to the small, medium and large scale farmers. On average, the ten farming blocks to be developed would employ close to 4 million people.

**7. Farm Mechanization**

The programme's major thrust is to promote utilization of motorized and or improved farm equipment, such as job planters, motorized prairies, small cultivators and tractors, targeting small and medium-scale farmers.

**8.**

**Livestock development**

The livestock subsector contributes 35% to agricultural gross domestic product. The government has embarked on programmes aimed at expanding the sub-sector's

contribution to economic growth. Although the livestock's sub-sector is relatively unexploited, it is recognized as an increasingly dynamic part of the agricultural economy. The programmes being implemented include the establishment of livestock breeding centres, livestock services centres and the scaling up of animal health interventions.

#### **9. Fisheries development**

Government is promoting conservation of fish stocks in natural water bodies and promoting fish farming (aquaculture). This is aimed at increasing fish stocks and promoting the sustainable utilization of the fisheries resources to improve its availability.

#### **10. Crop Diversification**

Under this programme, farmers are being encouraged to grow other food crops besides maize. These include sorghum, millet, cassava, sweet potatoes, tree crops, vegetables and horticultural crops. Diversified crop production is aimed at enhancing dietary diversification for improved nutrition.

#### **Chairperson,**

Through the above interventions, Zambia is expected to break the cycle of rural poverty, food and nutrition insecurity.

The Government wishes to make Zambia:

- I. A perpetual food surplus country in the region
- II. A major contributor to the trade system in the region
- III. A solution to the problem region

We are therefore grateful for the staff here in Rome and also in your Zambia office for your collaborative efforts to end hunger in Zambia.

**I thank you.**