

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

ON THE

2020/2021 RAINY SEASON FORECAST

BY THE

HON. MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION (MR KAFWAYA), MP

Mr Speaker, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to make a ministerial statement on the 2020/2021 Rainy Season Forecast. I feel duty bound to give this statement as whether and climate conditions affect all sectors of the economy across the country.

Sir, over time, we have observed the climate change as a severe impact on many social-economic sectors of our country and the same could be said for the future. Therefore, the importance of weather information for decision making across relevant sectors is critical. More importantly, it is essential to make reasonably accurate whether and climate forecast in a timely manner. Accordingly, the Government under the able leadership of His Excellency Dr Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia, we have continued to equip the Zambia Metrological Department. This is being done through the procurement and installation of modern automatic data collection equipment to aid the process of whether forecasting. I would like to register my appreciation and that of the Government for the invaluable contribution from cooperating partners in providing equipment and funding for the success of this program.

Mr Speaker, I wish to remind this august House that when the Patriotic (PF) Government came into power in 2011, there were only thirty-nine manual weather stations across the country. I wish to remind this august House that when the PF came into power in 2011, there were only thirty-nine manual whether stations across the country. I am therefore, glad to state that we have added over 110 automatic weather stations. Further, we are in the process of procuring 140

additional automatic weather stations under the Transforming Landscapes for Resilience and Development (TRALARD) and Strengthening Climate Change Resilience (SCRALA) in agro-ecological regions I and II projects. In addition, we have enhanced capacity for weather and climate modeling through the modern technological infrastructure.

Mr Speaker, the Seventh National Development Plan (7th SNDP), outlines aspirations to enhance economic diversification, job creation, poverty and vulnerability reduction as well as reducing developmental inequalities. In this regard, whether and climate information is fundamental in ensuring that we as a people realize these aspirations by timely sharing the information on weather and climate. The use of whether and climate information is a basis for building resilience in sectors and communities, as well as adapting to climate variability and climate change. Moreover, whether and climate information is key for the mitigation and fight against agriculture pests and diseases as well as managing the water resources and environment.

Mr Speaker, before I proceed with the 2020/2021 Rainy Season Forecast, allow me to offer a brief reflective view of the actual results of weather during the 2019/2020 Rainy Season.

Sir, you will recall that the negative effect of climate variability and climate change, were clear across the country. Many areas experienced extreme weather conditions ranging from prolonged dry spells in December, 2019, and part of January, 2020, especially over the Southern and Western provinces. In contrast, floods were experienced in many areas of the country between January and March with recording breaking, “Seasonal Rainfall in Excess of 2,000 mm over Misamfu, Mpulungu and Samfya Districts in Northern and Luapula provinces.”

Sir, further, dry conditions were witnessed in some parts of the Southern half of the country during the 2019/2020, Rainy Season. This resulted to reduced agricultural production. Moreover, the floods which were experienced in the Northern and Eastern parts of the country led to loss of lives, livelihoods and disruption in service delivery due to damaged road infrastructure such as the Lumezi Bridge and the Samfya/Mansa Road, among many others.