

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
ON
UPDATE ON ZAMBIA'S LEVEL OF PREPAREDNESS FOR THE CORANAVIRUS
BY
THE HON. MINISTER OF HEALTH, DR CHILUFYA, MP

Mr Speaker, I thank you profusely for allowing me this opportunity to update this august House, and through this House the nation, on the novel coronavirus known as the COVID-19 outbreak.

Sir, the outbreak of the COVID-19 disease started in December 2019 and was epic-centred in China in Wuhan City of Hubei Province. Today, the disease has spread geographically to affect eighty countries and territories. This has affected 93,186 individuals and claimed 3,219 deaths by six o'clock this morning.

Mr Speaker, Zambia has not recorded a case of the coronavirus, however, because of the ease of spread of the virus, Zambia has escalated its level of alertness to maximum. To this effect, His Excellency, Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia, summoned an emergency Cabinet meeting yesterday at which an emergency contingency fund of K50 million was set up to enhance preparedness for the coronavirus.

Sir, Zambia has enhanced surveillance at all its ports of entry. With the setup of the contingency emergency fund, we will now enhance the Zambia National Public Health Institute and its partners and other line ministries to strengthen the response, strengthen preparedness and ensure that public health security is enhanced.

Mr Speaker, the call to action in the response plan that will be enhanced through this emergency fund will enhance the level of personal hygiene. We make a call to all individuals to enhance infection prevention at a personal level by enhancing personal levels of hygiene. We further urge all local authorities to ensure their jurisdictions are cleaned up thoroughly. We further urge individuals who may be having flu to ensure they cover the nose and the mouth as they sneeze.