

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### FORECAST FOR 2019/2020 RAINY SEASON

**The Minister of Communication and Transport (Mr Kafwaya):** Mr Speaker, I want to thank you sincerely for granting me this opportunity to render a ministerial statement on the 2019/2020 rainy season forecast. I thought it will be appropriate to update the nation through this august House on the current rainy season, which is likely going to give rises both to positive and negative impacts on the livelihoods of our people across the country. This statement is in addition to the press statement which I issued on 4<sup>th</sup> September, 2019.

Sir, the potential for weather information to contribute to social and economic development cannot be overemphasised. As such, this information must be shared so that it is integrated in our planning and decision management in all sectors of our human endeavour. In line with the Seventh National Development Plan (7<sup>th</sup>NDP), weather and climate information is critical in delivery of aspiration to enhance economic diversification, job creation, poverty and vulnerability reduction as well as reducing developmental inequalities, while at the same time preserving our environment. The use of weather climate information is also cardinal for adapting and building resilience of our economy and communities to climate variability and climate change.

Furthermore, weather and climate information is important in disaster risk reduction and preparedness in extreme weather and climate events such as floods and droughts, which have become more prevalent in recent years. Weather and climate information is equally vital for mitigating and fighting diseases against humans, animals and plants.

Mr Speaker, we are aware that small scale farmers and rural dwellers are the most vulnerable people in our society, who are negatively affected by the weather and lack of information on weather and climate. I, therefore, urge my hon. Colleagues in the House to take this message to our people in the constituencies in order for the people to benefit from it.

Sir, the country experienced, in the past two rainy seasons of 2017/2018 and 2018/2019, adverse impacts of weather variability and climate change. For example, in the 2017/2018 rainy season, we witnessed extreme weather conditions ranging from prolonged dry spells in January to flooding in February and March. Furthermore the immediate past 2018/2019 season had most areas in the southern half of the country receiving below average rainfall. Choma, Gwembe and surrounding areas received the record lowest rainfall. On the other hand, many areas in the northern half of the country recorded above average rainfall, with places such as Lunga District, in Luapula Province and Chama and Isoka Districts in Muchinga Province experiencing unprecedented floods.

Mr Speaker, in order for our people to be ready for the current rainy season, allow me to share with this august House the 2019/2020 rainy season forecast. The forecast, generally, indicates that much of Zambia is likely to receive normal to above normal rainfall during this rainy season. The season is likely to be established by mid-November over most parts of the country. Nevertheless, areas over the Northern Province, Luapula Province, North-Western Province, Copperbelt Province and Western Province are likely to experience rainfall activities by October, 2019, as we have begun to already witness in the northern part of the country.

However, this notwithstanding, there is a high likelihood of dry spells around February, especially over the southern part of the country. There is also a high chance that most of the rainfall will be received in the months of November and December, 2019 and January and March, 2020.

Mr Speaker, the forecast for the whole season has been segmented into four periods of three month totals, each to indicate monthly performance as the season progresses, as follows:

For the period October, November and December, there is high chance of receiving normal to above normal rainfall for most parts of the country. However, the areas around Isoka, Chama, Mpika, Mbala, Nakonde, Mpulungu, Chinsali, Mungwi and Lundazi districts will most likely receive normal to below normal rainfall. For the period November, December and January, the