

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

ON

HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS VACCINE

BY

THE HON. MINISTER OF HEALTH, DR CHILUFYA, MP

Mr Speaker, thank you for granting me this opportunity to present a statement on the nationwide introduction of the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine into the national and routine immunization programme.

Sir, I wish to inform the House that the Government of the Republic of Zambia in its relentless pursuit of universal health coverage has introduced the HPV vaccine to the routine immunization programme. The vaccine provides immunity against HPV, which is a sexually transmitted virus and a leading cause of cervical cancer worldwide. The HPV is responsible for causing 90 per cent of all cervical cancers. It is a common virus that can infect both men and women. Fortunately, there are vaccines that can prevent the transmission of HPV.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends the introduction of the HPV vaccine in all countries where cervical cancer and other HPV related disorders constitute a public health challenge and Zambia is such a country. Zambia has one of the highest incidences of cervical cancers in the world and according the latest WHO Cancer Report, Globocan, 2018, about 3,000 new cases of cervical cancer are seen every year in Zambia.

Mr Speaker, over 1,800 women die from cervical cancer every year and according to the Zambia National Cancer Registry, cervical cancer accounts for 24.8 per cent of all new cancer cases in the adult population registered annually in the country. Cervical cancer is one of the most preventable and treatable forms of cancer. It, however, requires a comprehensive national strategy, which includes HPV vaccination, screening and treatment of precancerous lesions, as well as effective management of invasive cancer that are spread to other parts of the body such as beyond the cervix.