

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
ON
PROGRESS ON THE SMART ZAMBIA VISION

Mr Speaker, allow me to sincerely thank you, for according me this opportunity to issue a statement on “progress towards the attainment of the smart Zambia vision” which aims at embracing a transformational digital culture for a smart Zambia now.

Mr Speaker, His Excellency, the President of Republic of Zambia, Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu, shared the smart Zambia vision in his Address to the official opening of the Fifth Session of the Eleventh National Assembly on the 18th September, 2015.

Sir, and sanctioned the Government’s resolve to transition the country into a digital economy. The declaration of the smart Zambia vision by His Excellency, the President, Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu, sets the adoption of the transformational culture. The culture that demands each and every Zambian to be innovative, get involved and embrace positive attitude in the endeavours.

Mr Speaker, in order to speed the attainment of the smart Zambia vision, His Excellency, created the electronic Government division, the Smart Zambia Institute and placed it under his office to coordinate and harmonise the implementation of the smart Zambia programme. The goal of the e-Government division is to develop information and communications technology (ICT) human capital and advanced solutions for a better Government.

Mr Speaker, a Smart Zambia Institute has formulated the smart Zambia e-Government master plan which was recently approved by Cabinet. The Institute has put in place a coordinated e-Government development framework that will support the transitioning to a digital economy in line with Zambia’s vision 2030 and realigned to the seventh National Development Plan.

The success of attaining the President’s vision for a smart Zambia now depends on the cooperation and involvement of different individuals. These include the Politician, banker, Marketeer, Civil Servant, Shop Keeper, Medical Doctor, Teacher, Councillor, Miner, Student,

Judge, Bus Driver, Unemployed Youth, Lawyer, Mechanic, Villager, Economist, Trader, Journalist, Farmer, Fisherman, Pastor, Businessman, Nurse and many more.

Mr Speaker, Zambia is part of the globe community where the use of ICTs is growing and impacting on the commercial and social fabric of communities across the globe, including the African continent. Zambia is now a member of the Smart Africa Board which is the driver for innovative commitment from African Heads of state and Government to accelerate sustainable socioeconomic development on the continent ushering Africa into a knowledge economy through affordable access to broadband and usage of information and communications technologies.

We, the law makers elected to represent various communities are responsible for the future wellbeing of our country. The laws we make during this legislative session will have a direct bearing on the future of this nation.

Mr Speaker, in recognising the value of mainstreaming ICTs in the administration and operations of the public service, the Patriotic Front (PF) led Government embarked on an ambitious reform programme, dubbed the smart Zambia Programme to make lime ministries, public service institutions and local authorities more efficient and responsive to the needs of all Zambians without leaving anyone behind.

Mr Speaker, since the declaration of the smart Zambia vision was made by His Excellency the President and has continues to permeate all sectors of the Governance and providing opportunities. It is worth mentioning that access to services for the majority citizenry from public service institutions has been increasing and widening in all provinces and districts.

Hon. Members of this august House and the nation at large, your Government is working towards upgrading our country's national ICT systems across the country to provide affordable services by using modern technologies. In pursuant of the smart Zambia vision, the Government has accomplished the following to date. Under ICT infrastructure Management, the Government through Smart Zambia Institute has:

We have also established the Government Wide Area Network (WAN) currently connecting a total of eighty seven Government departments and institutions resulting in a reduction of costs for provision of unified internet from K62 million per annum to K28 million saving K34 million. In 2019, Smart Zambia Institute has planned to connect another 50 departments to the Government WAN.

The Government has established and commissioned a Tier 3 Zambia National Data Centre (ZNDC) for the attainment of the Government's pillar on building smart infrastructure in which all Government and private sector ICT hosting infrastructure has been consolidated and housed. This data centre is active and connected to two other sites that run as a backup site and a disaster recovery site for the Government systems. The Data centre has been commercialised and opened up to the private sector so that at a fee, they are able to locate their data needs. So far, banks and mobile providers have started utilising the facilities at a fee.

Mr Speaker, the Smart Zambia Institute has implemented the share services which is a common platform for enhanced communications and collaboration in all the line ministries and the ten provincial headquarters. The provision of shared services infrastructure has facilitated access to services such as the Government official email addresses, e-Cabinet, Skype for business, electronic payslips and unified internet. With commencement of the project by the Ministry of Transport and Communication to construct 1,009 mobile communication towers across the country, Smart Zambia Institute will ride on this to deploy more shared services across the country to the public service.

The Government has laid out fibre optic lines to connect the remaining thirty districts centres. The country currently has 12,700 km of fibre optic cables with point of presence providing high speed broadband internet to the districts centres where fibre has already been commissioned, but does not exist in other districts, and Smart Zambia institute is working on filling up the gaps so that those districts are also covered.