

THURSDAY, 29 MARCH, 2018

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

**THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW AND ZAMBIA'S STRIDES TO IMPROVE AND
UPHOLD HUMAN RIGHTS**

The Minister of Justice (Mr Lubinda)

Madam Speaker, I am grateful to you for giving me this opportunity to address this august House on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and Zambia's strides to improve and uphold human rights.

The Universal Periodic Review is a process adopted by the Human Rights Council of the United Nations to provide an opportunity for all member states to declare the actions they have taken to improve the human rights situation in their respective countries and to overcome challenges to the enjoyment of human rights.

Madam, Zambia submitted her First Cycle Universal Periodic Review Report in 2008. The report provided the benchmark on which subsequent reports would be anchored. In 2012, the Second Cycle Universal Periodic Review Report was submitted. The second report focused on the recommendations that were made to the 2008 report.

I wish to inform you, this House and the nation at large that in November, 2017, I led a delegation to the 28th Session of the Universal Period Review Working Group which was held in Geneva, Switzerland from 6th to 17th November, 2017, where I presented the Third Cycle UPR report which centred on recommendations made in the 2012 report.

Madam Speaker, after the presentation and adoption of the National Report of Zambia, member states made 203 recommendations to Zambia.

Accordingly, examined the recommendations and supported a total of ninety, it deferred two and referred a total of 111 for further consultation with stakeholders at national level.

THURSDAY, 29 MARCH, 2018

Madam, being a Government that upholds democratic principles, on the 7th of March, 2018, the Ministry of Justice organised a consultative workshop with national stakeholders to give feedback on the proceedings of Zambia's review and to discuss the deferred recommendations. The stakeholders included Government institutions, the permanent Human Rights Commission and various Civil Society organisations.

I wish at this point to commend the commitment demonstrated by the Human Rights Commission and Civil Society organisations during the consultation process. They came in large numbers and contributed positively on how we can, together, uphold human rights in Zambia.

Madam Speaker, following the consultative meeting between Government and stakeholders, Zambia presented a progress report to the 37th Ordinary Session of the Human Rights Council of 19th March, 2018 in Geneva, Switzerland.

I am pleased to inform the House from a total of 203 recommendations received Zambia has now supported a total 183 and have noted a total of nineteen recommendations. Additionally, the recommendation relating to the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, which had been noted, has now been fully supported. Similarly, the three Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child were totally supported. The recommendation relating to the ratification of the second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, was noted.

In light of the aforementioned changes, as I said earlier, 183 recommendations now enjoy the support of Zambia. One recommendation was partly supported and nineteen are now noted.

Madam Speaker, the recommendations which were noted and could not be supported by Zambia, were those that relate to issues such as lesbianism, gayism, bisexuality, transgender and intersex rights, as well as the issue on the ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, this was so,