

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT  
ON THE  
UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FARMER INPUT SUPPORT PROGRAMME  
(FISP) 2017/2018 AGRICULTURE SEASON

Madam Speaker, with your indulgence, I will go ahead and read the second part of the statement on the Implementation of the Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP) 2017/2018 agriculture season also arising from a point of order raised by Hon. Charles Zulu, Member of Parliament for Luangeni Constituency.

Madam Speaker, FISP e-Voucher system has been operating for the past two agricultural seasons. A total of 39 districts have so far implemented it.

Madam Speaker, the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture as well as the parliamentary Committee on Estimates on the Performance of the first quarter of the 2017 Budget for Selected Ministries, Provinces and Spending Agencies laid reports on the Table of this House on 27<sup>th</sup> June and 5<sup>th</sup> July, respectively recommending that the implementation of the e-Voucher system be rolled-out to all districts in the country.

Madam Speaker, I also wish to inform this august House that on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June, 2017, at its meeting, Cabinet made a decision to implement FISP through the e-Voucher system at 100 per cent of the targeted farmers in all the 109 districts in the country.

Madam Speaker, in the approved Budget for 2017, FISP was allocated a total of K2.8 billion. Out of this amount, an estimated K1.7 billion will be spent on the e-Voucher system. The balance of K1.1 billion will be committed towards the clearing of outstanding debt to input suppliers and service providers, mainly from 2016/2017 season.

Madam Speaker, FISP will continue to be run on cost sharing basis between the beneficiary farmers and the Government. The targeted small scale commercially orientated farmers will

contribute K400 to the total value of the e-Voucher which is K2,100 with the Government contributing K1,700.

In making the subsidy programme climate-smart, Cabinet also made a decision to introduce the Weather Index Insurance for all FISP beneficiaries and to work towards this end, K100 from the K400 farmer contribution will go towards paying for the Crop Insurance Premium.

Madam Speaker, Weather Index Insurance is a form of Crop Micro Insurance designed in such a manner that farmers receive automatic payouts in case of bad weather conditions that affect their crops. It makes use of satellite technology with the satellite data used to monitor rainfall on a daily basis throughout the season. The insurance payment to farmers is based on the satellite rainfall data captured during the season and is a viable type of crop insurance product for small holder farmers in Zambia.

Madam Speaker, in the forthcoming 2017/2018 agriculture season, a total of one million beneficiaries will be targeted countrywide. This is a reduction from the 1.6 million targeted by both conventional FISP and e-Voucher system during the 2016/2017 season. This reduction is an attempt to be more targeted on the intended beneficiaries, that is, the commercially viable small farmer and the FISP e-Voucher programme.

It is worth noting that over the past two seasons that the e-Voucher has been implemented, an estimated 25,000 famers have been removed from the FISP beneficiaries list due to death, ghost farmers or cards that were not collected by the owners. With the expansion to all districts, it is expected that more names will fall off.

Madam Speaker, some of the farmers who will be left out on the e-Voucher programme will benefit under the Food Security Pack during the 2017/2018 season while others will be screened out because they are salaried employees either in the public service or the private sector or do not meet the criteria for selection. The screening will be done in collaboration with Smart-Zambia Institute.

Madam Speaker, the e-Voucher beneficiaries' allocation for the initial 39 e-Voucher districts has remained unchanged at 602,521 farmers, but for the rest of the districts, allocations have been revised downwards to 2015/2016 season levels. The provincial allocations for e-voucher in the 2017/2018 seasons are as follows:

<i>Province</i>	<i>Number of beneficiary farmers</i>
Central	172,149
Copperbelt	102,452
Eastern	187,398
Luapula	61,804
Lusaka	80,431
Muchinga	72,298
Northern	92,315
North-Western	62,276
Southern	160,103
Western	27,208
<i>Total</i>	1,024,434

Madam Speaker, in order to implement the rollout of the e-Voucher programme to all the districts, the following activities will be and are being undertaken: