

FRIDAY, 16 JUNE, 2017

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
ON THE
PROGRESS MADE IN CURBING THE INDISCIPLINE CUTTING OF INDIGENOUS
TREES SUCH AS MUKULA
BY THE
HON. MINISTER OF LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCE, MS KAPATA

Mr Speaker, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to render a ministerial statement to this august House and the nation at large, on timber trade in Zambia and the progress made in curbing the indiscriminate cutting of indigenous trees, especially, Mukula tree.

Sir, as the august House and the nation may be aware, on 31st January, 2017, my ministry informed the nation on the measures that the Government, through my ministry took in addressing the illegal harvesting and trading of indigenous trees particularly, Mukula tree in according with the Forest Act No. 4 of 2015. Among the measures that my ministry took include:

- (a) suspension of export of round wood or logs of any timber tree species including Mukula tree;
- (b) ban of the transit of trucks carrying round wood or logs of various indigenous tree species from other countries through Zambia as contained in Statutory Instrument (SI) No. 31 of 2017. This measure is aimed at curbing the illegal harvesting of trees in Zambia which are being purported to have been harvested in the neighbouring countries on transit through Zambia;
- (c) prohibit the movement of round wood or logs for over 100 km from concession licence areas in accordance with SI No. 50 of 2016. This measure is aimed at promoting the value addition within the concession and surrounding areas, thereby, creating jobs;

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- (d) engage the Road Transport and Safety Agency (RTSA) and the Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA) to impound any trucks found transporting round wood or logs beyond 100 km radius of the forest concession area;
- (e) engage the defence and security winds to help curb illegal movement and trading of our natural resources; and
- (f) delegating some functions on the control of harvesting and trade to the Provincial Ministers to work with the Provincial Joint Operation Committees (PJOCs) in order to curb illegal timber activities.

Mr Speaker, I wish to inform this august House and the nation that these measures have yielded positive results. Between February and May, 2017, a total of 466 trucks carrying Mukula logs suspected to have been illegally harvested were interrupted and detained in various parts of the country.

Sir, further, between 24th April, 2017, and 23rd May, 2017, the Central Joint Operation Committee (CJOC) together with officers from my ministry, ZRA and the Drug Enforcement Commission (DEC) conducted a verification exercise aimed at ascertaining whether the impounded trucks had legal documentation to transport through Zambia. The verification exercise revealed that 272 trucks had the necessary documentation while 194 did not have any.

Mr Speaker, in order to build on the positive effect of the early actions to curb illegal timber activities, my ministry has now put in place the following measures:

- (a) all the 272 trucks carrying timber logs which have legal documentation to transit through Zambia are being released and allowed to proceed to their respective destinations;
- (b) the 194 trucks carrying timber logs that are not supported with documentation will be dealt with on a case by case basis in accordance with the Laws of Zambia;