

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**  
**ON THE**  
**CROP FORECASTING SURVEY RESULTS FOR THE 2016/2017 AGRICULTURAL**  
**SEASON AND THE FOOD BALANCE STATUS FOR THE 2017/2018 MARKETING**  
**SEASON**  
**BY THE**  
**HON. MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, MS SILIYA**

Mr Speaker, it is my pleasure to brief the House on the country's estimated crop production for the 2016/17 agricultural season as well as the country's national food balance for the marketing season covering the period 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2017 to 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2018. The crop production estimates generated by my ministry in collaboration with the Central Statistical Office (CSO) are based on a universally applied scientific survey method that is used every year.

Sir, as most of us may be aware, the SADC Region in general and Zambia in particular experienced the *La Nina* weather phenomenon. This is generally associated with high rainfall for countries in Southern Africa. The Region did indeed experience very good rainfall from November, 2016 to May, 2017. Most parts of the country experienced normal rainfall including in the southern half of the country, which previously had experienced poor rainfall in the prior two seasons. The timely commencement of the rains led to a good start to the planting season. As a result, yields and production of several crops such as maize, sorghum, rice, soya beans, Irish potatoes and cow peas have been forecast to increase.

Sir, production of millet is forecast to increase by 8.65 per cent to 32,566 metric tonnes from 29,974 metric tonnes from last season. Production of rice is forecast to increase by 44.04 per cent to 38,423 metric tonnes from 26,677 metric tonnes last season. Production of groundnuts is also forecast to increase by 28.23 per cent to 168,699 metric tonnes from 131,562 metric tonnes last season. Additionally, production of mixed beans is forecast to increase slightly by 1.29 per cent to 45,938 metric tonnes from 45,351 metric tonnes last season. The production of Barley tobacco is forecast to increase by 29.95 per cent while production of Virginia is forecast to reduce by 3.68

per cent. Production of sorghum is forecasted to increase by 22.9 per cent to 17,337 metric tonnes from 14,107 metric tonnes from last season.

Mr Speaker, production of soya beans of forecast to increase by 31.38 per cent to 351,460 metric tonnes from 267,490 metric tonnes last season. The national yield rate for soya beans has reduced by 17.3 per cent from 1.84 metric tonnes per hectare last season to 1.52 metric tonnes per hectare. The area planted to soya beans increased by 58.9 per cent from 145,763 hectares to 231,630 hectares.

Of this production of soya beans, our small and medium scale farmers account for 150,994 metric tonnes. This is a 131 per cent increase in soya beans production by small and medium scale farmers from 65,304 metric tonnes last season. The number of small and medium scale farmers producing soya beans has increased by 82 per cent. This significant increase in the number of small and medium scale farmers taking up soya beans production is evidence of the Government's diversification strategy bearing fruit.

Mr Speaker, according to the crop focus survey results, national cassava flour equivalent production for the 2016/17 season has been forecast to increase by 8.12 per cent to 923,795 metric tonnes compared to 854,393 metric tonnes of cassava flour equivalent produced last season. The increase in production of cassava flour equivalent is attributed to increased market prospects that have come up in the cassava value chain such as brewing and cassava blends.

Sir, the wheat crop for the 2016/17 season is currently being planted. However, preliminary estimates indicate that the country will produce 193,713 metric tonnes from an estimated planted area of 26,773 hectares. The country has 54,522 metric tonnes of carryover stocks of wheat as at 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2017. Wheat requirements have been estimated at 395,000 metric tonnes for the 2017/18 season. A detailed estimate for the anticipated wheat production for the 2017/18 season will be provided later in the season.

Mr Speaker, production of seed cotton is forecast to decrease by 20.2 per cent to 89,293 metric tonnes from 111,902 metric tonnes last season. The area planted to seed cotton decreased by