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Republic of Zambia

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT
TO BE DELIVERED BY HON. HARRY KALABA, MP,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
ON THE PRESIDENT'S INTERNATIONAL TRIPS AND STATE VISITS TO
ZAMBIA BY FOREIGN HEADS OF STATE**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Lusaka

March, 2017

Mr. Speaker,

In the advent of globalization and interdependence of world economies, cross-cutting decisions are made at bilateral and multilateral meetings and it is imperative that Zambia is actively engaged in this global arena. It is, therefore, extremely important that such meetings which are in line ^{of} our National Interest are attended at the highest level in order to influence regional and global decision making in pursuing our Foreign Policy.

As the Number One Diplomat, the Head of State also strives to enhance strategic political and economic relations with Zambia's neighbours and the world over in order to advance the country's national interests and increase its influence on the international arena. It is for this reason that the President will from time to time undertake foreign visits. These foreign engagements are highly beneficial to the country as can be seen from the various projects, programmes and investments that have materialized following a Presidential visit. However, it must also be understood that the benefits of these visits can be immediate or long term and may bring tangible or intangible results.

Mr. Speaker,

Allow me, through this Ministerial Statement, to highlight the Presidents recent international engagements by way of reporting to this august House and informing the nation at large.

I have the honour to inform the house that His Excellency the President, Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, attended the 28th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU), which took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from **30th to 31st January, 2017** under the theme "***Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investment in Youths***".

Mr. Speaker,

One of the major highlights of the Summit was the election of the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and eight (8) Commissioners of the African Union Commission. The elections were highly competitive and involved vigorous campaigns at both regional and bilateral levels.

I am extremely delighted to inform the House that the Zambian candidate Amb. Albert Muchanga was overwhelmingly elected as the AU Commissioner for Trade and Industry with a decisive 49 votes out of 51 in the very first round of voting. This is a great and significant outcome for the country as it is the first time in our 53 years of independence that a Zambian has ever held a position in the top management of the African Union Commission. This is a very senior position in the Commission and in a strategic field which will see the country benefit directly.

I wish to state that this historic achievement did not come as a mere coincidence or by chance but as a deliberate policy by the Government of His Excellency President Edgar Chagwa Lungu, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This is a clear deliverable on the part of this Government in fulfilment of the Patriotic Front Manifesto and I can assure the Zambian people that it would not have been possible without the personal involvement of His Excellency the President.

Mr. Speaker,

The AU Summit also considered the Report of the Peace and Security Council on its activities. One of the important decisions made by the Heads of State was the adoption of the **Lusaka Roadmap** which defines practical steps for the attainment of Agenda 2020 of "Silencing the Guns".

This name did not come by accident, but through the proactive lobbying Diplomatic engagement which led to Zambia hosting the Retreat of the AU – PSC from 7th – 9th November, 2016, which formulated the **Lusaka Roadmap** document. This Retreat was officially opened by His Excellency President Lungu and his opening address provided the necessary direction that guided the retreat.

Mr Speaker,

As a member of the Peace and Security Council, for the next tree (3) years, Zambia will continue to use its influence to ensure peace and security prevails on the continent. His Excellency the President has already earned recognition amongst his peers, and the international community, as a Champion for peace and security not only in the Southern and the Great Lakes Region, but on the entire continent. I, therefore, urge all citizens to support the efforts being made by the Government in this important area.

Mr. Speaker,

Another significant activity at the Summit was a **High Level Meeting on the Implementation of the African Position on Ending Child Marriage in Africa** which was chaired by His Excellency President and co-chaired by the out-going Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Her Excellency Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma.

The African Union in recognition of Zambia's efforts to end child marriage in the country and beyond endorsed His Excellency the President as Africa's Champion on ending child marriage on the continent.

Mr. Speaker,

Yet another important milestone for Zambia was the opportunity granted by His Excellency the President to present the country's mid-term Progress Report to the Forum of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). You may wish to note that Zambia was last peer reviewed in 2013. The Progressive Report was therefore deemed as an incremental step in the governance record of the country as it highlighted areas that would require improvement as well as areas where Zambia was doing well.

Mr. Speaker,

In stressing the importance of the President participating in these foreign engagements especially at the multilateral level, the Head of State is able to full advantage of the opportunities to hold bilateral meetings with some of his counterparts, and Heads of international organisations which would have otherwise required that a separate visits be undertaken. In this regard, the President held meetings with the following dignitaries:

- i) H.E. Mr. Hailemariam Desalegn, the Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, where the two Heads of State agreed that their Foreign Ministers hold the inaugural session of the Zambia-Ethiopia JPC in March 2017, which would be immediately followed by an Official Visit to Zambia by the Ethiopian leader;
- ii) H.E. Mr. Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, during which the Egyptian Head of State renewed his invitation to President Edgar Chagwa Lungu to undertake a State Visit to that country in April 2017;
- iii) H.E. Prof. Peter Arthur Mutharika, President of Republic of Malawi, during which the two Heads of State directed that A Joint Permanent Commission (JPC) be held before the end of April, 2017;