

**STATEMENT  
MADE BY  
HIS EXCELLENCY  
MR. LEVY P. MWANAWASA, SC  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
ZAMBIA  
AT THE  
PRESS CONFERENCE  
HELD AT STATE HOUSE  
ON 3<sup>RD</sup> AUGUST, 2005**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Ladies and gentlemen of the Press, I am delighted to welcome you to State House for this Press conference. Through you, I hope to speak to the nation about where we are and where I think we should be going.

Friends, it is just slightly over three and a half years since the New Deal Government of MMD came into office.

I must confess, ladies and gentlemen, that these last three and a half years have been, in many respects, very difficult for the country. They have also been very difficult for me personally.

As I said when I was opening the 5<sup>th</sup> MMD Convention, over these years, I have certainly grown a lot older and hopefully wiser.

Ladies and gentlemen, the years have been very difficult for our country for many reasons which include the following: there was a drought the year that we came into office; the mining industry, which has always been the backbone of our economy was collapsing; poverty and unemployment were of major concern to government and the nation; corruption was becoming a 'natural' way of life for many of our people in public office; our nation was,

until recently, still trapped in the disputes of whether the elections were free and fair; and just a few months ago, our country suffered a period of one fatal accident after another, losing many invaluable lives. There has also been industrial instability caused mainly by alleged inadequate pay but sometimes incited by politics. As if these were not enough there has been the issue of Constitutional review and process and this has caused a lot of acrimony in the nation.

Personally, I think the years have been very difficult for, among many others, the following reasons: I came into office with many people not expecting me to be my own person; I have lost a number of very close relations, including my mother, three brothers and a step mother since I came into office; and I have had to live with the fact of losing many friends and increasing the number of my enemies through the fundamental decision I made to initiate and stick to the fight against corruption. The number of enemies increased further because although we have improved our economy to a level which is humanly possible, this has not pleased my opponents who would have wished that we did not succeed. Further, not everybody in our nation has so far benefited from the achievements made so far and most of our people still wallow in poverty.

In spite of the difficult times we have had, there have also been many moments of joy and success: we have qualified for the HIPC initiative and total debt cancellation, bringing down our total international debt to less than US\$3 billion with a further reduction to be determined after the G8 decisions implementation modalities have been clarified. We have nurtured a new lease of life in our mining industry, making North Western Province our “New Copperbelt” and contributing 14% to our economy in 2004 as compared to 3.4% in 2003. Our agriculture sector is performing very well, assuring us of our capacity for food self-sufficiency; our tourism industry is doing better than before contributing 6.4% in 2004 as against 4.9% in 2002; and our bold decision to provide free Anti Retroviral drugs will soon be paying dividends with an increase in the number of people accessing the life saving drugs from 10,000 last year to current figure of over 30,000 with a target of reaching 100,000 by end this year. I understand that we may not reach this target due to a number of constraints but still my administration is working hard to advance to that target.

## **DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE**

Ladies and gentlemen of the press, I would like to share with the nation my perception and my worry, of how we are living our democracy and our dreams of a good government.

My perception is that we are interpreting good governance as throwing mud at each other for every little excuse we have. I am worried that we have over-politicised the process of development to such a level that there are more accusations of each other than actual work. All you need to do to get this impression is to read the pages of our newspapers and listen to our phone-in programmes on radio. You will learn about how we are attacking each other more than inspiring our nation to do good works that will take our country forward.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am worried that we are cultivating a culture where trading in insults is becoming a way of making our point. We describe each other in the most negative way possible. I am not excluding myself in this mistake. Unfortunately as a result of incessant unjustified and unfair attacks on me most of which have gone without anybody coming to my rescue, I have found myself slowly but effectively hitting back with similar venom! For the times I have used negative language to describe my fellow country-men and women, I offer my deepest apology.

The effect of us attacking each other with the most negative language we can possibly think of is working against us as a nation. All you need to do is to ask non-Zambian colleagues living

within the country and Zambians abroad who largely rely on learning about the country through the internet. The picture that people abroad have about Zambia is a country that is collapsing in a few days time. Such a picture of ourselves we keep painting is as good as telling our potential investors, partners and tourists, “keep away from Zambia because she is a very high risk country that is about to go into flames”. Some potential investors and tourists have personally told me that they have been avoiding Zambia because of the negative information they picked mostly from the internet.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am not trying to gloss over the fact that we have our own differences. I am not ignoring the fact that Zambia can be a lot better than she is at the moment. This reality notwithstanding, there must be ways in which we can challenge each other without painting our country as a basket case that nobody should positively think of. Surely, fellow country-men and women, there must be a difference between challenging each other to perform better and painting your own country in the most unattractive way possible. I know that we are not intentionally doing this to harm Zambia. The reality is that our constant painting of our country as a place where nothing is working is in fact causing harm to Zambia.

Even if we cannot, and understandably so, agree on everything, there are many things that we are doing well as a country which we need to highlight.

As I have said before, ladies and gentlemen, studies elsewhere have shown that the best form of teaching is not constant rebuke and ridicule of the person or the group you want to see change for the better. Change for the better, it has been proven, is more effectively brought about by encouraging the little good you may see in someone or some group of people. This is equally true in our own families. If all you do is to negatively criticize your own children and wife or husband, you either make the family stop listening to you or you erode their self-confidence.

We may have our own differences, but we are indeed a family; one family of Zambians.

## **EDUCATION AND HEALTH**

One of the goals of my presidency is to leave a Zambia where **all our children and all our people have access to quality education and healthcare.** My administration hopes to achieve this goal by providing the necessary infrastructure and retaining qualified educators and medical personnel in our schools and hospitals.

The New Deal Government is, indeed, rehabilitating schools and health institutions. We are making significant progress in ensuring that all our trained educators and health professionals are employed and retained.

This year alone, the Ministry of Education has recruited 8,500 teachers from an estimated 10,000 trained teachers. The deficit in the total number of teachers needed throughout the country is 5000.

In the health sector, our goal is to have 1,260 doctors, 16,000 nurses, 2,600 clinical officers and 3,000 paramedics. Our current status is 600 doctors, 8,000 nurses, 1,000 clinical officers and 1,500 paramedics. We cannot guarantee quality healthcare to



our people unless we get the numbers of inspired health professionals right.

With the continued prudent management of our resources and the gains we have made through HIPC initiative and debt cancellation, we should begin to improve the conditions of service for our education and health professionals so that we can retain many of them in our schools, colleges and universities, clinics and hospitals.

I, therefore, direct the Ministers of Education and Health to develop plans through which we can begin to seriously address the plight of our education and health institutions. These plans, which should be handed over to me in the next sixty days, must be developed in consultation with the leadership of all relevant trade unions in the two sectors. Such consultations must be held in utmost openness and goodwill. Government must genuinely listen and be open to new possibilities of thinking and solving problems. I also expect trade union leaders to appreciate the limitation in our country's resources. I have the faith that if honesty and openness are applied during consultations, reasonable solutions will be found.

## **EMPLOYMENT AND WEALTH CREATION**

It is my dream to leave a Zambia where **all our people have the opportunity to participate in employment and wealth creation.** My Administration hopes to achieve this by creating a fair economic environment that is supportive of both local and foreign entrepreneurship.

Our country has only 600,000 people in formal employment. Surely, this is not right for a country that is so well endowed with abundant natural resources and reasonably developed human talent. The founding Fathers and Mothers of our country invested heavily in our education. I am aware that we, as a nation and current leaders, do not often enough express our gratitude to Dr. Kaunda and his peers for making and implementing fundamental decisions in the areas of education. “Dr. Kaunda and your fellow founding Fathers and Mothers of our country, we cannot thank you enough for your leadership in this regard”.

While my Administration is creating jobs through the support we are giving to the agriculture sector and the progressive policies that are helping to revive the mining and related industries, this nation is in dire need of jobs for our people.

Unless our people have access to quality jobs and resources that they can invest, we will continue to pay lip service to the value of respecting all human beings. We have seen how unemployment takes away personal dignity, leading to the break up of families and the growth in crime.

Our nation has to increase the pace at which we use our natural endowments and human talent to create jobs and wealth. One of the major missing links in this quest is our people's continued lack of access to resources they can invest. We need to continue bringing down the rate of inflation so that lending and borrowing money can be affordable to everyone.

It is in this context that I will soon be calling for a meeting with institutional investors such as NAPSA, Zambia State Insurance Corporation, LASF and Public Service Pension Fund to meet with me to discuss how the resources they keep in custody on behalf of their customers can be used for national development to empower our people. The outcomes of this meeting will feed into the Cabinet policy on empowerment that is near completion.

## **CORRUPTION**

I dream of a Zambia where the **government bureaucracy has the trust of its people to deliver on their aspirations.** This will be achieved by having men and women in government who are not only capable, but also accountable.

It is in this context that I say to you, ladies and gentlemen, that my administration and my personal commitment to fighting corruption has never wavered. Fellow citizens, I ask you to trust me when I say I have never moved my attention from fighting corruption since you elected me into office. Your having allowed me to be in the privileged position of Head of State has given me the rare opportunity to see clearly the devastating effects that corruption has on our nation.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me implore you once again. Mwanawasa alone will not win the fight against corruption. Neither will Cabinet alone win the fight. The fight will be won through the concerted effort of our people and all our institutions. It is in this regard that I praise the watchful eye of our media, the Church, the trade unions and NGOs. We may have differences in the way we put our view across, and this should be expected, but

surely there is no doubt that we share the ideal of a corrupt free Zambia.

As a result of the successful recently held MMD Convention, I intend to build on the unity of purpose that emerged at Mulungushi, to build a united Zambia strong and free. The people of Zambia have given us a mandate to build a nation strong and united in its vision, free of corruption and other vices. As I stated at the Mulungushi Rock of Authority, the fight against corruption remains our rallying cry. Our Party, the MMD, endorsed this position.

I have never at any time imagined that it would be an easy task. To win a war is no easy task – warfare is a series of battles, you win some and lose others. However this is a war I intend to win, failure is not part of my vocabulary.

I know that the results of our fight against corruption are taking longer than all of us thought. I am pleased with the speedy progress which has been made of late in the prosecution of these cases but I want to see much more progress. I understand that the Task Force has completed investigations in more than 70 cases. I want to see these cases taken to court. I also understand that our co-operating partners are prepared to meet the fees of 3 more

private prosecutors. Mr. Attorney-General and Mr. Director of Public Prosecutions, can you ensure that these prosecutors are engaged as soon as possible.

My dear friends, the benefits of this fight are beginning to show. Monies and property that have so far been recovered will soon be announced. In fact my Cabinet is working on how to distribute these resources to key institutions in the country. This information will be made public in a few weeks to come.

## **AGRICULTURE**

By the time end of my Presidency, I would like to leave a Zambia where **food is abundant for all our people**. This will be achieved by facilitating an agriculture system that is working for everyone.

Our policy of agriculture subsidies is working. Agriculture production had declined to -1.7% in 2002; it rose to 5% in 2003 but has now grown by 4.3% in 2004. This has enabled the New Deal Administration to successfully maintain the price of mealie meal without huge fluctuations. Had it not been for the drought of the last planting season, we would have, once again, produced enough for our consumption and export.

Because of the inconsistencies in the rainfall pattern, I have directed the Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives to invest time in and mobilize resources to embark on irrigation schemes that will allow both small and large scale farmers produce to their maximum, rain or no rain. We have too much water underneath and around us to explain our hunger through droughts.

When I was campaigning for the seat which we lost in Mapatizya, I said that Southern Province should be helped to return to its traditional position of being the breadbasket of our country. Vote or no vote from Southern Province, I still believe that we need to capitalize on regions that have learnt the art and science of farming from time immemorial. My administration will continue with animal restocking, disease control and water point construction in Southern Province and all other parts of the country where we have committed and determined farmers. Our quest for food self-sufficiency and development has to go beyond politics.

## **ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING**

The New Deal Administration has proved in the last three and a half years in office, that it has the zeal to work and commitment to succeed. Our record in economic and social development is impressive, thanks to the support of our people.

Our policies in agriculture, mining, tourism, health, education, have brought relief to our people and hailed by the international community as offering a direction to be emulated by the rest of Africa. This is witnessed by the number of delegations from other countries and international organizations who have come to see what we are doing here.

Our fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic has received world wide acclaim, resulting in positive assistance to our programme of providing free anti-retroviral drugs to the sick and afflicted.

Our accession to the HIPC Completion Point is a reflection of our prudent finance management policies. Again I say thank you to all our citizens for the sacrifices experienced during this period.

As we start on the last leg of our first term in office, I intend to present to the people of Zambia new strategies for the post-HIPC



era. Let me hasten, however, to add that our reaching the completion point does not mean a sudden influx of money to spend. The debt relief so obtained shall be redirected to other economic and social projects to benefit our people.

## **CONSTITUTION REFORM**

The cry of our people for a fair constitution that will stand the test of time has been loud and clear. I wish to clarify what my position on the constitution is. Fellow country men and women, hear me clearly on this matter. My role as Head of State is to work towards facilitating an environment in which the people's WILL occurs. I have the faith in the people of Zambia to make right choices and good decisions for themselves and their children's children. Where the people's WILL is in conflict with my own or that of my government, my duty is to provide guidance by explaining. Where this guidance or explanation are not accepted my duty then becomes to implement that WILL if and when resources become available. Some of our compatriots argue that I must make the resources available immediately the people make their WILL. I regret that I find such a feat impossible to fulfill and the proponents of it are really making their demand with a forked tongue!

What I am doing is listening to the people's WILL and ensuring that this WILL gets enshrined in our national constitution. My duty as someone who has sworn to uphold the constitution is to firstly interpret WHO ARE THE PEOPLE and to then ensure that the people's WILL takes place, and takes place within the law and within the financial resources available.

Let me take this opportunity to, once again, sincerely thank our men and women serving on the Constitution Review Commission for producing their Report and draft Constitution. It is now for us, as the entire country, to seriously debate the contents of the draft constitution, and live it to the appropriate institutions we think are going to give us a set of laws that will be truly called the WILL of the people.

## **STRUCTURAL CHANGES**

There is need to restructure government to respond to the challenges of eliminating poverty in all its forms, provision of utilities such as clean water and sanitation, shelter and accommodation and develop the infrastructure for sustainable growth.

To achieve these and other national goals I intend to restructure Government as follows:

**(See Annexure herewith)**

At Mulungushi Rock of Authority, I announced that I intended to nominate, as I am now authorized to do, up to ten (10) members of the National Executive Committee (NEC) so that as much as possible I bring in members whose ethnic provinces were not adequately represented. I have tried to achieve this goal but because of the limited number of the nominated positions, it is still a fact unfortunately that some provinces have still fared better than others. I can say however that the differences are not excessive. I have also nominated a good number of women in my continued endeavour to promote gender balancing. The following are the persons I have therefore nominated and appointed:

## **EATERN PROVINCE**

Ms. Regina Phiri

Mr. Alfred Chioza

Ms. Helen Tembo (until now Deputy Provincial  
Chairperson has been  
nominated and elected by  
PEC as Provincial Chairperson)

Mr. Frank Moyo

## **SOUTHERN PROVINCE**

Mr. V.J Mwaanga

Mrs. Gladys Kristafor (I intend to recommend to  
NEC for her election to  
replace Mr. S. Kopulande who has  
become my Special Assistant)

## **LUSAKA PROVINCE**

Mrs. Christine Mwale Moonga

Mr. Japhen Mwakalombe

## **CENTRAL PROVINCE**

Mr. Henry Mbushi

**COPPERBELT PROVINCE**

Ms. Annie Musonda Munshya Chungu

**WESTERN PROVINCE**

Mr. Walusiku Lisulo

**NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCE**

Mr. Titus K. Kaponda

## **CONCLUSION: CALL FOR NATIONAL UNITY**

It is my goal to leave a Zambia where **National Unity and Security are rooted and assured**. We will achieve this by recognizing and acting in ways which testify to the reality that what unites us is greater than what divides us.

My plea to you my fellow Zambians is that we lift ourselves beyond our individual interests to champion the larger and greater interest of our country. It is only when we serve the larger and greater interest of our country that we will meaningfully and successfully pursue our individual and sectoral or group interests.

Let us use our differences to unite ourselves as a nation.

I ask you to focus your energies on what is working because that is what will inspire all our people.

Let us out-compete each other in finding solutions to overcoming poverty and suffering in our country.

I ask you to remember that our utterances have the power to build or destroy our nation.

Let us challenge each other on issues that will address the poverty and suffering of this country.

I ask you to offer criticism that invites those in leadership to learn from good practices rather than shrink into self-defence.

Let us explore the unlimited possibilities and potentials of this country by identifying the talents and giftedness that lie in each one of our people.

I ask you to see that what unites us is much greater than what divides us.

My dear Friends, Fellow Zambians, I reaffirm my commitment to serving this nation and its people.

May God Bless all our people.

May God Bless Zambia

I thank you.