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PRESS STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND MEDIA ON THE DECISIONS MADE BY CABINET AT THE 9TH CABINET MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 23RD MAY, 2024.

The President of the Republic of Zambia, Mr. Hakainde Hichilema, on Thursday, 23rd May, 2024, called for the 9th Cabinet Meeting in the Year 2024, at State House, to deliberate on economic policy matters aimed at enhancing national development in the country for the good of the general citizenry as stipulated in the Economic Agenda for the Government.

1. Update on the Implementation of the Drought Response Plan.

His Excellency the President of the Republic of Zambia, Mr. Hakainde Hichilema, in view of the devastating effects of the drought in the country, declared the Drought as a National Disaster and Emergency on 29th February, 2024. Further, a Humanitarian Appeal was also issued on 16th April, 2024. Accordingly, the Food Security Drought Response Plan for the period April 2024 – May 2025, was developed and approved. Eighty-four (84) districts that are greatly affected by the drought were identified for urgent Government attention in terms of immediate food assistance.

Government and other stakeholders, through the cluster system have started responding both in cash and in-kind, support in all the 84 drought affected districts.

Cabinet appreciated the report from the Office of the Vice-President, through the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit that so far, 84.5 % of the 84 districts, have received maize for the targeted beneficiaries under the maize distribution programme. These include, Central Province, 11 districts; Copperbelt Province, 7 districts; Eastern Province, 15 districts; Lusaka Province 6 districts; Northwestern Province, 4 districts; Southern Province 14 districts; Western Province 13 districts; and Lavushimanda district in Muchinga Province. This gives a total of 71 districts out of the 84 districts in which citizens are already benefiting from the distribution

of maize. According to the programme, all the remaining districts are expected to receive their relief maize in the next seven days. Within the relief maize programme, Government has started implementing the Food for Work in these districts.

Under the community maize sales, there are 300 active selling points out of the targeted 600 depots and so far, 22,208 metric tons of maize has been sold, translating into 444,175 by 50kg bags, with over 300,000 households having benefited since Government started responding to the disaster.

In terms of support from partners, a total of K30,588,430 has been received in form of logistical support and donations of food items and other supplies. Further, Government has since continued with the mopping up of maize and so far, 1,132.30 metric tons has been purchased from Muchinga and Northern provinces. The FRA has also received a total of 14,826.63 metric tons of early maize to increase the maize stocks.

2. Second Millennium Challenge Compact

Cabinet approved the Joint Design Document (JDD), outlining the proposed projects for the second Millennium Challenge Compact for Zambia in order to pave way for the finalisation of the programme which is expected to be signed between Zambia and the Millennium Challenge Corporation in November, 2024.

This will facilitate the mobilisation of US\$450 million of grant resources for investments in road infrastructure and other areas to support the growth of the agriculture and agro-processing sector. The ultimate goal is to reduce poverty and stimulate economic growth.

The three Projects in the JDD include, the Roads and Access: This is aimed at decreasing transportation costs in prioritised agriculture corridors and will also involve improving internal road infrastructure, access, and road maintenance and management. The other project is the Asset Finance: This is aimed at increasing access to finance for investment in electricity, irrigation, logistics, and processing equipment and infrastructure for agriculture value chains for both men and women owned agri-small and medium enterprises and project developers. The third project is Agriculture Policy Reform and Institutional Strengthening: This is aimed at improving institutional capacity to facilitate private sector production and trade in grains. This will also involve institutional capacity building at the Ministry of Agriculture.

3. Development of Infrastructure at Kasumbalesa Border through the Public Private Partnership.

Cabinet approved the management and development of infrastructure at Kasumbalesa Boarder through the Public Private Partnership model.

Cabinet is of the view that, in order to facilitate business at the border, it is necessary to modernise Kasumbalesa into a world class inter-country trade centre (with facilities such as a dry port, weigh bridge, warehouses, modern market and other support infrastructure). The ultimate objective is to address the current informalities of trade, infrastructure deficiencies and unstructured developments, which have continued to pose challenges to users of the facilities.

4. Hosting of the 2024 Regional Annual Sports Awards (RASA) scheduled for 25th May, 2024 in Lusaka, Zambia.

In finalising debate for the day, Cabinet approved the hosting of the 2024 Regional Annual Sports Awards (RASA) scheduled for 25th May, 2024 in Lusaka, Zambia.

The African Union Sports Council (AUSC) Region 5, Regional Annual Sport Award (RASA) is part of the Regional Rewards Programme aimed at providing a unique opportunity for the region to motivate Member States, Sports Confederations, team's sports and individual athletes by recognising and celebrating outstanding achievements in sport. The awards are celebrated on 25th May each year.

The sports wards are held every year in order to reward deserving sportspersons within Zambia and the region, thereby leading to improved performance and promotion of the spirit of patriotism amongst them. The awards are a culmination of all member Countries awards.

The AUSC Region 5 comprises of 10-member countries namely, Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

This year's edition marks a historic milestone as Region 5 attains twenty-five years of existence. In view of this, the Region will also recognise and award 25 individuals from the 10 countries of the Region 5 who have significantly contributed to the development of sport in the Region.

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Hon. Cornelius Mweetwa, MP

**MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND MEDIA AND CHIEF
GOVERNMENT SPOKESPERSON**

27th May, 2024