

REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA



**SPEECH BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL
WELFARE**

**HONORABLE EMERINE KABANSI. MP
FOR THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE NATIONAL
CHILD CARE CONSULTATIVE FORUM**

WEDNESDAY 4TH MAY 2016

AT RADISSON BLU HOTEL – LUSAKA

THE PERMANENT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL
WELFARE,
REPRESENTATIVES FROM GHR FOUNDATION,
THE COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE- USAID,
THE UNICEF COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE,
THE COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE SAVE THE
CHILDREN,
THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BETTER CARE
NETWORK,
REPRESENTATIVES FOR GLOBAL SOCIAL
SERVICE WORKFORCE ALLIANCE,
REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE DISPLACED
CHILDREN AND ORPHANS FUND (DCOF),
THE COUNTRY DIRECTOR CMMB,
THE COUNTRY DIRECTOR BETHANY CHRISTIAN
GLOBAL SERVICES,
THE CHIEF OF PARTY – ZAMBIA RISING,
COOPERATING PARTNERS,

SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS PRESENT,
REPRESENTATIVES OF CHILDCARE
INSTITUTIONS,
INVITED GUESTS,
MEMBERS OF THE PRESS,
MAY I SIMPLY SAY LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

GOOD MORNING!

IT IS WITH GREAT PLEASURE THAT I STAND HERE TODAY TO ADDRESS THIS VERY IMPORTANT FORUM WHICH SEEKS TO ADDRESS THE CHILD CARE SYSTEM IN ZAMBIA UNDER THE THEME, “***ACCELERATING THE NATIONAL CARE REFORM PROCESS***”

ZAMBIA, AS YOU MAY BE AWARE, HAS A TRACK RECORD OF BEING ONE OF THE AFRICAN COUNTRIES THAT ARE TREND SETTERS AND I AM RELIABLY INFORMED THAT THIS IS THE THIRD NATIONAL FORUM TO BE HELD IN AFRICA AFTER RWANDA AND UGANDA. IT IS MY SINCERE HOPE THAT LESSONS FROM THOSE PREVIOUS FORUMS WILL FEED INTO THIS ONE AND LESSONS FROM THIS ONE WILL ALSO SUPPORT OTHER COUNTRIES TO COME.

I AM AWARE THAT THIS FORUM HAS ATTRACTED THE PARTICIPATION OF VARIOUS PEOPLE INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES FROM AS FAR AS THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, UGANDA AND SOUTH AFRICA. TO YOU I SAY “YOU ARE MOST WELCOME. PLEASE FEEL AT HOME”

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

FROM THE OUTSET, LET ME STATE THAT MY GOVERNMENT AND INDEED MY MINISTRY IS VERY COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT THE LIVES OF CHILDREN IN THIS COUNTRY ARE SECURED THROUGH VARIOUS POLICY DOCUMENTS AND IN PARTICULAR OUR NATIONAL CHILD POLICY FOR WHICH WE ARE CURRENTLY DEVELOPING A NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH, SPORT AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT. THE GOVERNMENT ALSO HAS IN PLACE THE NATIONAL SOCIAL

PROTECTION POLICY WHICH AIMS AT SECURING THE LIVES OF ALL VULNERABLE GROUPS INCLUDING CHILDREN. THIS DEMONSTRATES POLITICAL COMMITMENT OF GOVERNMENT LED BY **HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT EDGAR CHAGWA LUNGU**, IN ENSURING THAT ALL FAMILIES ARE PROTECTED AND ABLE TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN. MY GOVERNMENT REMAINS COMMITTED TO ENSURING THE FINALIZATION OF A CARE REFORM THAT BEGUN IN THE COUNTRY IN 2001 WITH THE LAUNCH OF THE CHILDCARE UPGRADING PROGRAMME (C-CUP).

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

WE AS GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING CHILDREN IN FAMILY CARE AND WOULD LIKE TO REVIVE OUR EXTENDED FAMILY APPROACH OF LOOKING

AFTER OUR CHILDREN. THIS IS WHAT OUR CULTURE AS ZAMBIANS HAS ALWAYS DEMANDED. A CHILD NEVER BELONGED TO THEIR BIOLOGICAL FAMILY ONLY BUT TO THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY IN WHICH THE CHILD IS BROUGHT UP. MY BROTHER OR SISTERS CHILD IS MY CHILD NOT AN ORPHAN.

IN ORDER TO GIVE IMPETUS TO THE PROCESS OF ENSURING THAT CHILDREN STAY IN FAMILIES, I AM RELIABLY INFORMED THAT UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF MY MINISTRY, THE TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP (TWG) ON ALTERNATIVE CARE WITH SUPPORT FROM GHR MEETS REGULARLY TO COORDINATE EFFORTS AMONG KEY ACTORS WITH SUPPORT FROM INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS, INCLUDING USAID, SAVE THE CHILDREN AND UNICEF, AS WELL AS NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY-BASED

ORGANIZATIONS WORKING TO ACCELERATE
CARE REFORM IN ZAMBIA.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

AS A COUNTRY, WE FULLY SUPPORT THE UN
GUIDELINES ON ALTERNATIVE CARE AND
THEREFORE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY AS A
COUNTRY TO RECLAIM OUR HERITAGE AND
IDENTITY AND ENSURE THAT ALL CHILDREN
HAVE A FAMILY WHERE THEY CAN FEEL SECURE
AND CAN CONTRIBUTE TO NATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT THROUGH GOOD HEALTH AND
EDUCATION. WE NEED TO ENSURE THAT ALL
CHILDREN, INCLUDING CHILDREN THAT ARE
CHRONICALLY ILL OR CHILDREN WITH
DISABILITIES ARE ALSO SAFE. CHILDREN WITH
DISABILITIES NEED TO BE INCLUDED IN ALL
SERVICE PROVISION AND NOT SHUNNED OR

HIDDEN BY THEIR FAMILIES BUT INSTEAD MADE TO FEEL THAT THEY ARE LOVED.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

WE ALSO HAVE A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO COME UP WITH A CONCERTED AND COORDINATED STRATEGY TO REFORM THE ALTERNATIVE CARE SYSTEM IN ZAMBIA. WE NEED TO PREVENT SEPARATION OF CHILDREN SO THAT WE REDUCE THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN THAT ARE FOUND ON THE STREET AND UNNECESSARILY IN INSTITUTIONAL CARE. I WOULD LIKE TO STATE THAT THERE IS A PLACE FOR ALL TYPES OF CARE INCLUDING INSTITUTIONAL CARE BUT INSTITUTIONAL CARE MUST BE A MEASURE OF LAST RESORT WHEN THERE ARE NO OTHER ALTERNATIVES. WE NEED TO DETERMINE WHAT ALTERNATIVES ARE AVAILABLE. CHILD CARE INSTITUTIONS HAVE PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN

THE LIVES OF MANY CHILDREN WHERE THIS WAS THE ONLY OR BEST OPTION FOR THEM AND THIS WILL SOMETIMES CONTINUE TO BE THE CASE BUT WE NEED TO HAVE MORE OPTIONS BEFORE INSTITUTIONALISATION IS CONSIDERED. WE NEED TO BE CREATIVE, WE NEED TO HAVE MORE BUY IN BY MANY OTHER STAKEHOLDERS ESPECIALLY AT COMMUNITY LEVEL, TO SUPPORT WHAT IS PLACE AT NATIONAL LEVEL THROUGH POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE REFORM.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

IT IS GOOD TO NOTE THAT A DAY HAS BEEN SET ASIDE TO DEAL WITH ISSUES PARTICULARLY PERTAINING TO THE SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE WITHOUT WHICH A LOT OF WORK IN CHILD CARE REFORM WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE. COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS ARE A MAJOR CONTRIBUTOR TO THE WORKFORCE

ALONGSIDE PROFESSIONALS. ZAMBIA HAS INITIATED THE COALITION FOR SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE BUT HAVE A LOT OF LEARNING TO DO FROM COUNTRIES THAT ARE IMPLEMENTING THIS PROGRAM.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

TO CONCLUDE, LET ME SINCERELY THANK OUR COOPERATING PARTNERS WHO HAVE SUPPORTED THIS FORUM. SPECIAL GRATITUDE GOES TO THE GHR FOUNDATION THROUGH THE BETTER CARE NETWORK AS WELL AS SAVE THE CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL WHO PROVIDED SECRETARIAT SUPPORT TOGETHER WITH MY MINISTRY THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE. SPECIAL GRATITUDE ALSO GOES TO THE GLOBAL SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE ALLIANCE (GSSWA) AND THE DISPLACED CHILDREN AND ORPHANS FUND

(DCOF) WHO HAVE REPRESENTATIVES ATTENDING THIS FORUM AS WELL AS ALL OUR IN-COUNTRY PARTNERS FOR THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT.

I AM CONFIDENT THAT BY THE END OF THE THREE DAYS THAT HAVE BEEN SET ASIDE FOR THIS MEETING THE MAIN PRIORITY ISSUES AND ACTIONS THAT NEED TO BE ACCELERATED TOWARDS CARE REFORM FOR CHILDREN WILL BE IDENTIFIED AND DOCUMENTED SO THAT THEY CAN BE DISSEMINATED TO ALL PARTNERS INCLUDING THOSE THAT COULD NOT BE IN ATTENDANCE. IT IS MY HOPE THAT ALL STAKEHOLDERS WILL DO THEIR PART AND ENSURE THAT ACTIONS ARE IMPLEMENTED IN A COORDINATED FASHION THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE SO THAT THE

ANTICIPATED SUCCESS WILL BE ACHIEVED AND
WITNESSED BY ALL.

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

LET US USE THIS DAY TO RENEW OUR
COMMITMENT OF NURTURING AND SUPPORTING
THE CHILDREN.

IT IS NOW MY HONOUR AND PRIVILEGE TO
OFFICIALLY LAUNCH **“THE NATIONAL CHILD
CARE REFORM CONSULTATIVE FORUM”**.

MAY THE ALMIGHTY GOD BLESS YOU ALL.