



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

**FIFTH ADDRESS TO THE NATION ON COVID-19
BY HIS EXCELLENCY, DR EDGAR CHAGWA LUNGU,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA**

STATE HOUSE

LUSAKA

22ND MAY, 2020

COUNTRY MEN AND WOMEN,

1. IT IS NOW ALMOST FIVE MONTHS SINCE COVID-19 WAS FIRST REPORTED IN THE WORLD, LAST DECEMBER. AT THAT TIME THE DISEASE WAS CONSIDERED TO BE A PROBLEM THAT WOULD NOT SPREAD TO THE REST OF THE WORLD, AND LEAST OF ALL ZAMBIA. HOWEVER, BY MID-JANUARY, 2020, SEVERAL ASIAN AND EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, HAD CONFIRMED CASES OF THE DISEASE.
2. ON 30TH JANUARY, THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION DECLARED CORONAVIRUS A GLOBAL EMERGENCY. TODATE COVID-19 IS A GLOBAL PANDEMIC THAT HAS ALREADY CLAIMED OVER THREE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-THREE THOUSAND LIVES, WITH OVER FIVE MILLION PEOPLE INFECTED.
3. IN ANTICIPATION OF THE SPREAD AND IN LINE WITH THE GLOBAL RESPONSE, MY GOVERNMENT, ON 13TH MARCH, ANNOUNCED MEASURES THAT INCLUDED 14-DAY SELF-QUARANTINE FOR TRAVELERS WHO CAME DIRECTLY OR TRANSITED FROM COVID-19 INFECTED COUNTRIES.

4. TO PROTECT OUR POPULATION, ESPECIALLY YOUNG PEOPLE, ON 17TH MARCH, MY GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED THE CLOSURE OF ALL SCHOOLS, INCLUDING COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.
5. ON 25TH MARCH, I MADE MY FIRST ADDRESS ON COVID-19 AND ANNOUNCED THE CLOSURE OF THE HARRY MWAANGA NKUMBULA AIRPORT IN LIVINGSTONE, THE SIMON MWANSA KAPWEPWE AIRPORT IN NDOLA, AND THE MFUWE AIRPORT IN MFUWE.
6. I ALLOWED THE KENNETH KAUNDA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TO CONTINUE RUNNING BECAUSE OUR NEIGHBOURS HAD ANNOUNCED LOCKDOWNS THAT COULD HAVE CRIPPLED OUR ECONOMY HAD ALL MAJOR AIRPORTS CLOSED. OUR BORDERS REMAINED OPEN TO ALLOW CARGO TO COME THROUGH, BUT MY GOVERNMENT STIFFENED BORDER CONTROLS WITH QUARANTINE MEASURES.
7. THESE INITIAL MEASURES THAT WE TOOK AT THE TIME WERE AIMED AT STEMMING THE SPREAD OF THE DISEASE INTO OUR COUNTRY.

8. NOTWITHSTANDING THESE MEASURES ON 18TH MARCH, ZAMBIA RECORDED THE FIRST TWO CASES OF CORONAVIRUS. AS OF TODAY ZAMBIA HAS RECORDED **920** COVID-19 POSITIVE CASES AGAINST **20,011** PEOPLE SCREENED AND TESTED. OF THE **920** POSITIVE CASES, THE COUNTRY HAS RECORDED SEVEN DEATHS. A TOTAL OF **336** HAVE RECOVERED FROM THE DISEASE.

9. A BIG THANK YOU TO THE HEALTH FRONTLINE STAFF WHO HAVE MEASURED UP TO THE CHALLENGE DESPITE PUTTING THEIR LIVES AT RISK. THE MEASURES TAKEN OF MASS SCREENING, TESTING, ISOLATION, TREATING, RESTRICTED MOVEMENTS AND CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES AND SOME BUSINESSES HAVE HELPED TO MANAGE THE SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS.

10. WE ARE NOW ADVANCING INTO THE COLD SEASON AND ANTICIPATE AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF PERSONS SUFFERING FROM COMMON COLDS AND COUGHS. THIS IS LIKELY TO EXACERBATE BOTH THE VULNERABILITY AND OCCURRENCE OF COVID-19 CASES IN OUR COMMUNITIES. I ADVISE YOU ALL TO KEEP WARM AND AVOID UNNECESSARY MOVEMENTS AND CROWDING.

COUNTRY MEN AND WOMEN,

11. THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS IMPACTED THE WORLD ECONOMIES DIFFERENTLY DUE TO THE FACT THAT THE DISEASE APPEARS TO BE NEW AND UNUSUAL IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD.
12. SOME NATIONS HAVE HAD TO COMPLETELY LOCK DOWN ALL THEIR ACTIVITIES EXCEPT FOR EXTREMELY ESSENTIAL SERVICES.
13. AS YOU MAY BE AWARE, SOME OF THESE NATIONS ARE FIRST WORLD COUNTRIES WHOSE SHUT DOWN HAS SLOWED DOWN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY INCLUDING INTERNATIONAL TRADE.
14. ZAMBIA, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAS NOT COMPLETELY LOCKED DOWN. HOWEVER, THE MEASURES TAKEN TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF THE DISEASE COUPLED WITH RESTRICTION OF MOVEMENT OF GOODS, SERVICES AND PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD HAVE ADVERSELY AFFECTED OUR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES.

15. IN CONTINUING TO BATTLE COVID-19 AND LIVING WITH IT, ON TUESDAY, 12TH MAY, 2020, I TRAVELLED TO THE TOURIST TOWN OF LIVINGSTONE TO SEE FOR MYSELF THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON TOURISM IN ZAMBIA. THERE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN A BETTER TOWN TO VISIT THAN LIVINGSTONE TO UNDERSTAND THE GRAVITY OF COVID-19 ON TOURISM.

16. LAST YEAR IN JULY WHEN I VISITED LIVINGSTONE TOGETHER WITH MY COUNTERPART, THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA, I WAS DISAPPOINTED TO SEE THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE VICTORIA FALLS WHOSE WATER HAD DRIED UP. THIS TIME AROUND, I WAS EQUALLY DISAPPOINTED TO FIND NO TOURISTS DUE TO COVID-19, DESPITE THE FALLS HAVING PLENTY OF WATER.

17. LAST YEAR, THERE WAS NO WATERFALLS FOR TOURISTS TO VIEW; THIS TIME; THERE WERE NO TOURISTS TO VIEW THE WATERFALLS.

18. I ALSO VISITED HOTELS IN LIVINGSTONE MOST OF WHICH WERE CLOSED DUE TO THE PANDEMIC AND THE STORIES FROM PEOPLE MANAGING THESE FACILITIES WERE DEPRESSING. MOST OF THE WORKERS HAVE SINCE BEEN SENT HOME AND ONE CAN ONLY IMAGINE THE SITUATION IN THEIR HOMESTEADS. THIS SCENARIO HAS MADE ME REALISE HOW MUCH WE HAVE LOST IN TOURISM REVENUE AS WELL AS HOW DESPERATE OUR CITIZENS ARE DURING THIS PERIOD.

19. SIMILARLY, THE SITUATION FOR TRADERS IN LIVINGSTONE TOWN IS DESPERATE, WITH STALLS AND RESTAURANTS CLOSED AND THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT LARGELY DESERTED. I STOPPED BY IN THE TOWN CENTRE AND SAW A YOUNG MAN RUNNING AWAY FROM ME BECAUSE HE THOUGHT MY OFFICERS WOULD ARREST HIM FOR NOT WEARING A MASK. IRONICALLY, HE, AND HIS FRIENDS WERE SELLING MERCHANDISE, INCLUDING FACE MASKS. I CALLED HIM BACK, BOUGHT A MASK FROM HIM, AND HELPED HIM TO WEAR IT. THAT YOUNG MAN WAS WILLING TO SELL FACE MASKS AT THE EXPENSE OF PROTECTING HIMSELF BY WEARING A FACE MASK.

20. THIS REMINDED ME OF THE RISK THAT WE HAVE TO LIVE WITH AS WE TRY TO CHOOSE BETWEEN LIFE AND LIVELIHOOD.
21. TRADERS IN LIVINGSTONE TOWN, SURPRISED TO SEE ME AT THEIR STALLS AND IN DESERTED RESTAURANTS, WARMLY RECEIVED ME. I HEARD THEIR DISTRESS CALLS, WHICH REMINDED ME OF THE DEVASTATING EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON THE WELFARE OF OUR PEOPLE. HAVING APPRECIATED THE GRAVITY OF THE SITUATION WE FIND OURSELVES IN, I THOUGHT IT PRUDENT TO RE-OPEN THE VICTORIA FALLS, WHICH WILL ULTIMATELY ALLOW LODGES AND HOTELS TO EQUALLY RE-OPEN IN ORDER TO INCREASE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN THE TOURIST CAPITAL AND ALLOW OUR PEOPLE TO EKE OUT A LIVING FROM THE INDUSTRY THEY HAVE ALWAYS SURVIVED ON.

COUNTRY MEN AND WOMEN,

22. I WISH TO REITERATE MY CALL TO PROPRIETORS OF TOURIST SITES, LODGES AND HOTELS COUNTRY-WIDE TO EQUALLY CONSIDER RE-OPENING, UNDER FAVOURABLE RATES FOR OUR PEOPLE. I, FURTHER, ENCOURAGE LOCAL PEOPLE LIVING WITHIN THESE AREAS TO VISIT THE VARIOUS SITES. THIS WILL HELP IN ENHANCING REVENUE GENERATION LOCALLY, THEREBY, IMPACTING POSITIVELY ON THE LIVES OF OUR PEOPLE.

23. HOWEVER, LET ME REMIND THE PROPRIETORS AND THEIR EMPLOYEES, AS WELL AS ALL THOSE VISITING THESE PLACES, TO OBSERVE THE HEALTH GUIDELINES OF HAND WASHING AND SANITIZING, WEARING OF FACE MASKS AND MAINTAINING SOCIAL DISTANCING AS A WAY OF LIVING IN THE *NEW NORMAL*.
24. I HAVE OBSERVED IN THE LAST FEW DAYS SINCE THE REOPENING OF THE VICTORIA FALLS, THAT THE NUMBER OF LOCAL TOURISTS VISITING THE FALLS HAS BEEN IMPRESSIVE. LIFE IS SLOWLY COMING BACK TO NORMAL.

COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN,

25. TWO WEEKS AGO I EASED RESTRICTIONS ON CERTAIN OUTLETS, INCLUDING RESTAURANTS, CASINOS AND GYMNASIUMS. I AM PLEASED TO NOTE THAT THESE BUSINESSES ARE ALSO SLOWLY RETURNING TO FULL OPERATION AND ENSURING THEIR EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMERS ARE OBSERVING THE HEALTH GUIDELINES. THIS IS AS IT SHOULD BE IN THESE COVID-19 TIMES. LET ME HASTEN TO ASSURE YOU, OWNERS OF BARS AND NIGHTCLUBS, WHICH I CLOSED IN MY FIRST COVID-19 ADDRESS, THAT I HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN YOU. YOUR BUSINESSES ARE CRITICAL TO YOUR LIVELIHOODS AND OUR SOCIO-ECONOMIC FABRIC.

I WOULD LIKE TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR OUTLETS WILL BE OPENED ONCE CONSULTATIONS FINISH ABOUT HOW YOU SHOULD OPERATE IN THIS COVID-19 PERIOD. I, THEREFORE, DIRECT THE MINISTERS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT; HEALTH; AND COMMERCE TO QUICKEN THESE CONSULTATIONS.

COUNTRY MEN AND WOMEN,

26. LAST WEEK THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION STATED THAT IT IS UNLIKELY THAT COVID-19 WOULD GO AWAY AND THAT WE MIGHT HAVE TO LEARN TO LIVE WITH IT.

27. IN THE WORDS OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION'S HEALTH EMERGENCIES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DR MICHAEL RYAN, ON WEDNESDAY, 13TH MAY, AND I QUOTE:

IT IS IMPORTANT TO PUT IT ON THE TABLE: THIS VIRUS MAY JUST BE ANOTHER ENDEMIC VIRUS IN OUR COMMUNITIES; AND THIS VIRUS MAY NEVER GO AWAY. END OF QUOTE.

DR RYAN ADDED, AND I QUOTE, ***I DON'T THINK ANYONE CAN PREDICT WHEN OR IF THIS DISEASE WILL DISAPPEAR.*** END OF QUOTE.

COUNTRY MEN AND WOMEN,

28. COVID-19 MAY BECOME ENDEMIC, AS THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION SAYS. THIS MEANS, IT IS A DISEASE THAT MAY BE HERE FOR A LONG TIME AND WE WILL HAVE TO LEARN TO LIVE WITH IT. FOR EXAMPLE, MALARIA IS ENDEMIC IN MOST OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA.
29. THIS IS WHY I HAVE BEEN LOOSENING SOME RESTRICTIONS BECAUSE WE CANNOT JUST STANDBY AND LOOK WHILE AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE UNFOLDS BEFORE US. WE NEED TO SURVIVE IN THE MIDST OF ALL THIS.

COUNTRY MEN AND WOMEN,

30. DURING MY FIRST ADDRESS TO THE NATION, I SAID; "WE ARE AT WAR".
31. YES, WE ARE STILL AT WAR WITH A VICIOUS ENEMY BUT THIS TIME I AM SAYING WE SHALL FACE THE ENEMY HEAD ON AND WE SHALL CONQUER. THE ENEMY WANTS TO WIPE OUT OUR LIVES, AND OUR LIVELIHOODS BUT LET US SAY, "NO", AND FIGHT ON TO THE BITTER END. WE SHALL BATTLE ON AND SAVE OUR LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS.
32. LET US TAKE THE CASE OF NAKONDE. THIS IS ONE OF ZAMBIA'S MAJOR ECONOMIC HUBS THAT UNFORTUNATELY HAS RECORDED A LARGE NUMBER OF CASES OF COVID-19 INFECTIONS IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS.

33. I AM AWARE THAT BUSINESS IN NAKONDE HAS GREATLY BEEN HAMPERED BY THE RECENT RESTRICTIONS AS A RESULT OF COVID-19. I DIRECT THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH TO HANDLE THE NAKONDE SITUATION THE WAY THEY HANDLED KAFUE DISTRICT WHERE BUSINESS WAS ALLOWED TO FLOW AS THEY CONDUCTED SCREENING AND TESTING. NAKONDE IS AN INCOME GENERATING BORDER TOWN AND ITS REVENUE IS SIGNIFICANT TO THE ECONOMY OF OUR COUNTRY AND, THEREFORE, ALL THE WHEELS OF THE ECONOMY IN OUR BORDER TOWNS MUST BE KEPT RUNNING IN THE CONTEXT OF THE *NEW NORMAL*.
34. TO AVOID OTHER BORDER TOWNS EXPERIENCING A FLARE UP OF COVID-19 CASES, I DIRECT ALL PROVINCIAL MINISTERS TO BE PROACTIVE WITH STRICT SURVEILLANCE ON MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND CARGO, ESPECIALLY ACROSS BORDERS. ALL PROVINCIAL MINISTERS SHOULD ENSURE CITIZENS ADHERE TO HEALTH GUIDELINES.

COUNTRY MEN AND WOMEN,

35. I AM CONCERNED THAT WE HAVE CONTINUED TO KEEP IN QUARANTINE CITIZENS WHO HAVE TESTED POSITIVE BUT HAVE NO SYMPTOMS. THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS COULD JUST EXPOSE THESE PERSONS TO FURTHER INFECTION, AND AS WELL, IT IS LEADING TO UNPRODUCTIVITY AND WASTE OF SPACE FOR THOSE WHO ARE ILL.
36. I, THEREFORE, DIRECT THAT CITIZENS WHO HAVE TESTED POSITIVE BUT ARE NOT SHOWING ANY SYMPTOMS, BE ALLOWED TO GO IN SELF-ISOLATION AND STRICTLY OBSERVE HEALTH GUIDELINES. HEALTH OFFICIALS MUST CONDUCT SURVEILLANCE ON SUCH PERSONS AND I URGE THEIR FAMILIES TO BE THEIR BROTHER'S AND SISTER'S KEEPERS. ONLY PATIENTS SHOWING COVID-19 SYMPTOMS, AND THOSE COVID-19 POSITIVE WITH UNDERLYING ILLNESSES, SUCH AS TUBERCULOSIS, AND HIV/AIDS, MUST BE IN QUARANTINE.

COUNTRY MEN AND WOMEN,

37. WHILE COVID-19 HAS AWAKENED THE WHOLE WORLD TO THE IMPORTANCE OF HEALTHCARE, LET US NOT FORGET THAT THERE ARE OTHER DEADLY DISEASES THAT CONTINUE TO TAKE AWAY LIVES OF OUR PEOPLE.

38. FOR INSTANCE, MALARIA, ANAEMIA, PNEUMONIA, HEART DISEASES, TUBERCULOSIS, AND HIV/AIDS, STILL REMAIN MAJOR HEALTH PROBLEMS FOR THE COUNTRY. AS I HAVE SAID BEFORE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO ENSURE THESE CONTINUE TO RECEIVE ATTENTION EVEN UNDER THE COVID-19 ENVIRONMENT.

COUNTRY MEN AND WOMEN,

39. IN MY LAST ADDRESS I ANNOUNCED THE RE-OPENING OF EXAMINATION CLASSES IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

40. I, THEREFORE, EXPECT THE MINISTERS OF GENERAL EDUCATION, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, AND HEALTH TO ADEQUATELY PREPARE FOR THE REOPENING OF EXAMINATION CLASSES AND AT THE SAME TIME, ENSURE THAT THE HEALTH GUIDELINES ARE STRICTLY FOLLOWED.

41. AS FOR THE RE-OPENING OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, THIS AWAITS THE CONCLUSION OF THE ONGOING STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS.

COUNTRY MEN AND WOMEN,

42. TO EVERY DARK CLOUD THERE IS A SILVER LINING. THE COVID-19 ERA HAS TRANSFORMED OUR LIVES. FOR EXAMPLE, MANY PEOPLE IN THE FORMAL SECTOR HAVE DEvised WAYS OF WORKING FROM THEIR HOMESTEADS. A LOT OF US HAVE NOW BEEN FORCED TO EFFECTIVELY USE ELECTRONIC MEANS OF COMMUNICATING.

43. OUR CITIZENS ARE USING ELECTRONIC PLATFORMS TO ACCESS SERVICES SUCH AS BANKING AND SHOPPING. OUR EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSTITUTIONS HAVE DEvised E-LEARNING PLATFORMS WHICH SOME OF OUR CHILDREN ARE ACCESSING. WITH THIS SHIFT TOWARDS UTILISATION OF ELECTRONIC PLATFORMS, WE NOW SEE A REDUCTION IN TRAFFIC ON OUR ROADS. WE NOW SEE THE OPTIMAL USE OF OUR TIME.

44. THESE ARE BUT A FEW EXAMPLES THAT WE CAN IDENTIFY TO BRING HOPE TO OUR PEOPLE EVEN IN THE MIDST OF DESPAIR. THIS HAS GIVEN US THE OPPORTUNITY TO THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX WHILE HELPING TO LIVE LIFE IN THE *NEW NORMAL*. I ENCOURAGE ALL OF US, BOTH IN PRIVATE AND THE PUBLIC SECTORS TO COME UP WITH INNOVATIVE IDEAS TO MAKE OUR LIVES MORE CONVENIENT.

45. I URGE DIGITAL SERVICE PROVIDERS TO MAKE THEIR SERVICES MORE ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE AND EFFICIENT.

46. FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR, NON-ESSENTIAL WORKERS WILL BE SLOWLY RE-ABSORBED IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE WITH STRICT ADHERENCE TO THE LAID DOWN HEALTH GUIDELINES. I DIRECT THE SECRETARY TO THE CABINET TO ENSURE THAT THE PUBLIC SERVICE BEGINS TO OPERATE AT OPTIMUM CAPACITY AND EFFECTIVELY IN THE *NEW NORMAL*.

COUNTRY MEN AND WOMEN,

47. ANOTHER KEY OUTCOME OF THE COVID-19 IS THE UNDENIABLE FACT THAT RELYING HEAVILY ON IMPORTS AND EXTERNAL SUPPORT HAS FAR REACHING CONSEQUENCES WHEN THERE IS A DISRUPTION IN THE WORLD ECONOMIC ORDER. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, COUNTRIES THAT HAVE RESILIENT ECONOMIES STAND A BETTER CHANCE OF BRAVING THE STORM.

48. DURING THIS DIFFICULT PERIOD, I HAVE VISITED ECONOMIC FACILITIES AND FIRMS, SUCH AS, TRADE KINGS, THE FOOD RESERVE AGENCY, THE KARIBA DAM AND THE CONSTRUCTION SITE AT BUFFALO PARK. I DECIDED TO VISIT THESE FACILITIES BECAUSE THEY REPRESENT SOME OF THE KEY SECTORS OF OUR ECONOMY.

49. I LOOKED AT THE PERFORMANCE OF OUR LOCAL INDUSTRY UNDER THIS ENVIRONMENT WITH A VIEW TO PROMOTING LOCAL PRODUCTION OF GOODS AND AVOID IMPORTATION. I LOOKED AT FOOD STORAGE TO ASSESS OUR LOCAL FOOD SECURITY. I LOOKED AT HOW OUR INVESTMENT IN INCREASING POWER GENERATION CAPACITY CAN HELP TO REDUCE LOAD SHEDDING AND SUPPORT OUR INDUSTRIAL GROWTH. I ALSO LOOKED AT HOW THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IS ENHANCING OUR JOB CREATION AGENDA.

50. THE NEW WORLD ORDER, POST COVID-19, WILL NO LONGER BE BUSINESS AS USUAL. NATIONS THAT WE HAVE LONG DEPENDED ON MAY NOT BE ABLE TO SUPPORT OUR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE MANNER THEY DID BEFORE. WE, THEREFORE, NEED TO CREATE INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES FROM WITHIN TO KEEP OUR ECONOMY AFLOAT. THIS IS DOABLE AS WE HAVE ADEQUATE NATURAL RESOURCES TO ACHIEVE THIS.
51. WE NEED TO RE-ENGINEER THE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY TO PRODUCE LOCAL PRODUCTS. WE NEED TO BE FOOD SECURE TO AVERT HUNGER. WE NEED ELECTRICITY TO POWER OUR ECONOMY, AND WE NEED THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY TO CREATE JOBS.
52. FROM OUR YOUNG DAYS IN SCHOOLS, WE LEARNT ABOUT THE NEED FOR SELF-RELIANCE AND IMPORT SUBSTITUTION. WE HAVE NEVER ACHIEVED THAT IDEAL. NOW IS THE TIME TO REALISE THIS DREAM. I, THEREFORE, CALL UPON EVERYONE, YOUNG AND OLD, ALIKE TO BE FOCUSED IN THAT DIRECTION. LET US NOT LOOK ELSEWHERE; LET US LOOK WITHIN. LET US REMEMBER THAT ***DESPERATE TIMES CALL FOR DESPERATE MEASURES*** AND ***NECESSITY IS THE MOTHER OF INVENTION.***

COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN,

53. CONSIDERING THE NEED TO LOOK WITHIN FOR SOLUTIONS THAT WILL ADDRESS OUR ECONOMIC RECOVERY, I ANNOUNCED THE K10 BILLION LOAN FACILITY AND THE COVID-19 FUND AS STIMULUS PACKAGES. I ENCOURAGED THE INITIATION OF OTHER STIMULUS PACKAGES TO HELP EXISTING BUSINESSES, ESPECIALLY SMES, SO THAT THEY REMAIN STABLE DURING THE PANDEMIC AND BEYOND.
54. I HAVE ALSO BEEN INFORMED THAT THE PROCESS OF DISBURSEMENT OF LOANS TO BUSINESSES AND INDIVIDUALS HAS STARTED AND CITIZENS CAN ACCESS THE FACILITY THROUGH THEIR FINANCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS.

COUNTRY MEN AND WOMEN,

55. AS WE CAUTIOUSLY CONSIDER RESUMING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES OF OUR COUNTRY WHILE TRANSITIONING INTO THE *NEW NORMAL*, I DIRECT ALL GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES AND AGENCIES, TRADING PLACES, MARKETS, BUS STOPS, AND WORK PLACES TO ENSURE STRICT ADHERANCE TO HEALTH REGULATIONS, GUIDELINES AND CERTIFICATION.

56. LET ME ONCE AGAIN THANK YOU, THE FRONTLINE WORKERS FOR YOUR CONTINUED RESILIENCE AND PATRIOTISM, THE MEDIA FOR YOUR SENSITISATION CAMPAIGNS, THE ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS FOR YOUR CONTINUED DONATIONS AND ALL CITIZENS FOR OBSERVING THE HEALTH GUIDELINES. I PRAY THAT WE SHALL ALL LEARN HOW TO LIVE WITH THIS DISEASE.

57. I URGE YOU ALL NOT TO STIGMATISE THOSE INFECTED WITH COVID-19 BECAUSE THIS DISEASE DOES NOT CHOOSE. IT CAN INFECT ANYONE.

58. WE HAVE FACED ADVERSITIES BEFORE AND WE HAVE COME OUT UNITED AS A NATION. EVEN UNDER THE COVID-19 ENVIRONMENT, I URGE YOU ALL TO REMAIN UNITED, RESILIENT AND PATRIOTIC AT ALL TIMES.

59. I WILL BE ADDRESSING THE NATION ON COVID-19 AS AND WHEN NEED ARISES AND AS THE PANDEMIC EVOLVES. I REQUEST THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH TO HOLD THEIR BRIEFINGS ON MONDAYS AND FRIDAYS TO ALLOW AMPLE TIME FOR DATA ANALYSIS.

60. ALLOW ME NOW TO END MY ADDRESS WITH A QUOTE FROM THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH CHAPTER 29, VERSE 11 WHICH READS:

FOR I KNOW THE PLANS I HAVE FOR YOU, DECLARES THE LORD, PLANS TO PROSPER YOU AND NOT TO HARM YOU, PLANS TO GIVE YOU HOPE AND A FUTURE.

61. IT SHALL BE WELL.

I THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS OUR NATION.