



**REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE**

**PRESS BRIEFING
ON**

**THE CROP FORECASTING SURVEY FOR THE 2018/2019
AGRICULTURAL SEASON AND THE FOOD SECURITY STATUS
FOR THE 2019/2020 MARKETING SEASON
BY**

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8TH MAY, 2019

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

I AM DELIGHTED TO ANNOUNCE TO THE NATION, THE COUNTRY'S ESTIMATED CROP PRODUCTION FOR THE 2018/2019 AGRICULTURAL SEASON AND THE NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY STATUS FOR THE MARKETING SEASON COVERING THE PERIOD 1ST MAY 2019 TO 30TH APRIL 2020.

THE CROP PRODUCTION ESTIMATES THAT I AM ANNOUNCING TODAY ARE BASED ON A UNIVERSALLY APPLIED SCIENTIFIC SURVEY METHOD THAT IS USED EVERY YEAR. THE CROP FORECAST SURVEY IS JOINTLY CONDUCTED BY THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND THE CENTRAL STATISTICAL OFFICE (CSO) AND COVERS ALL THE DISTRICTS OF THE COUNTRY.

I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK THE STAKEHOLDERS IN THE SECTOR AND THE TECHNICAL STAFF IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE FOR HAVING KEPT AN EYE ON THE FOOD STOCKS IN THE COUNTRY TO ENSURE THAT WE ARE FOOD SECURE UP TO THE NEW HARVEST.

ALTHOUGH WE ALLOWED THE EXPORT OF 120,000 METRIC TONNES OF MEALIE MEAL, LESS THAN 10,000 METRIC TONNES WAS EXPORTED PRIOR TO THE CURRENT EXPORT RESTRICTIONS. THE GREATEST THREAT TO FOOD SECURITY HAS BEEN THE ILLEGAL

EXPORT OF MEALIE MEAL, COMMONLY CALLED SMUGGLING, ESPECIALLY ON THE COPPERBELT PROVINCE.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

IN THE 2018/2019 AGRICULTURAL SEASON, THE COUNTRY EXPERIENCED PROLONGED DRY SPELLS BETWEEN JANUARY, 2019 AND MARCH, 2019. THE PROLONGED DRY SPELLS AFFECTED THE SOUTHERN, WESTERN AND PARTS OF LUSAKA AND CENTRAL PROVINCES. THE PROLONGED DRY SPELLS HAVE HAD A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE PRODUCTION OF MOST CROPS.

IN ADDITION, WE HAD REPORTS OF ARMY WORMS ATTACKING MAIZE FIELDS COUNTRYWIDE. THE SEVERITY OF THE ARMY WORM ATTACKS THIS SEASON HAVE REDUCED COMPARED TO PREVIOUS SEASONS DUE TO IMPROVED MANAGEMENT BY FARMERS. IN THE 2018/2019 SEASON, A TOTAL OF 215,735 HECTARES OF MAIZE FIELDS WERE AFFECTED BY THE ARMY WORMS.

DESPITE THE PROLONGED DRY SPELLS EXPERIENCED IN THIS AGRICULTURAL SEASON AND THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF DRY SPELLS ON CROP PRODUCTION, I AM DELIGHTED TO INFORM THE NATION THAT WE ARE FOOD SECURE TILL THE NEXT HARVEST IN 2020.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

LET ME NOW HIGHLIGHT THE CROP PRODUCTION PERFORMANCE. THE PRODUCTION OF IRISH POTATOES IS FORECAST TO INCREASE TO **38,786 METRIC TONNES** IN THE 2018/2019 SEASON FROM **13,546 METRIC TONNES** RECORDED IN THE 2017/2018 SEASON. THIS REPRESENTS AN EXPECTED INCREASE IN PRODUCTION OF 186 PERCENT.

THE PRODUCTION OF MIXED BEANS HAS ALSO BEEN FORECAST TO INCREASE FROM **52,351 METRIC TONNES** RECORDED IN THE LAST SEASON TO **58,705 METRIC TONNES** IN THE 2018/2019 SEASON REPRESENTING A 12 PERCENT INCREASE. THE PRODUCTION OF BARLEY HAS BEEN FORECAST TO INCREASE FROM **5,102 METRIC TONNES** IN THE 2017/2018 SEASON TO **8,417 METRIC TONNES** IN THE 2018/2019 SEASON.

THE PRODUCTION OF GROUNDNUTS IS FORECAST TO DECREASE BY 28 PERCENT FROM **181,772 METRIC TONNES** IN THE LAST SEASON TO **130,825 METRIC TONNES**. PRODUCTION OF RICE IS ALSO FORECAST TO DECREASE BY 31.3 PERCENT TO **29,584 METRIC TONNES** FROM **43,063 METRIC TONNES** LAST SEASON.

THE PRODUCTION OF BURLEY TOBACCO IS FORECAST TO DECREASE BY 20 PERCENT TO **9,176 METRIC TONNES** FROM **11,512 METRIC TONNES**. THE PRODUCTION OF VIRGINIA TOBACCO HAS

ALSO BEEN FORECAST TO DECLINE BY 4 PERCENT TO **12,839 METRIC TONNES** FROM **13,382 METRIC TONNES** LAST SEASON.

THE NATIONAL CASSAVA FLOUR EQUIVALENT PRODUCTION FOR THE 2018/2019 SEASON HAS BEEN FORECAST TO DECREASE BY 2 PERCENT TO **1,009,146 METRIC TONNES** FROM **1,025,575 METRIC TONNES** OF CASSAVA FLOUR EQUIVALENT PRODUCED DURING THE LAST SEASON.

PRODUCTION OF SORGHUM IS FORECAST TO DECLINE BY **49 PERCENT** TO **6,684 METRIC TONNES** FROM **13,130 METRIC TONNES** LAST SEASON. THE PRODUCTION OF MILLET IS ALSO EXPECTED TO REDUCE BY **23 PERCENT** TO **24,843 METRIC TONNES** FROM **32,278 METRIC TONNES** LAST SEASON.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

PRODUCTION OF SOYA BEANS IS EXPECTED TO DECREASE BY SEVEN PERCENT TO **281,389 METRIC TONNES** FROM **302,720 METRIC TONNES** LAST SEASON. THE OVERALL REDUCTION IN THE PRODUCTION OF SOYA BEANS HAS BEEN DUE TO A 19.6 PERCENT REDUCTION IN THE AVERAGE NATIONAL YIELD FROM 1.46 METRIC TONNES PER HECTARE IN THE 2017/2018 SEASON TO 1.18 METRIC TONNES PER HECTARE THIS SEASON, AND THE REDUCED RAINFALL IN SOME PARTS OF THE COUNTRY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

THE PREPARATIONS FOR PLANTING OF WHEAT ARE CURRENTLY ON-GOING AND THE PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES INDICATE THAT AN AREA OF **22,754 HECTARES** OF LAND WILL BE PUT UNDER WHEAT THIS YEAR FROM **21,709 HECTARES** IN THE 2017/2018 SEASON. THIS REPRESENTS A **FIVE PERCENT** INCREASE IN AREA UNDER WHEAT COMPARED TO LAST YEAR. WE HAVE FORECAST A PRODUCTION OF **151,850 METRIC TONNES** OF WHEAT, AN INCREASE OF **33 PERCENT** FROM **114,463 METRIC TONNES** PRODUCED LAST YEAR. THESE ESTIMATES ARE PRELIMINARY AND WILL BE UPDATED AS THE WHEAT GROWING SEASON PROGRESSES.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

PRODUCTION OF SEED COTTON IS FORECAST TO REDUCE BY 17.8 PERCENT TO **72,508 METRIC TONNES** FROM **88,219 METRIC TONNES** LAST SEASON. THE PRODUCTION OF SWEET POTATOES IS FORECAST TO DECREASE TO **109,336 METRIC TONNES** FROM **183,280 METRIC TONNES** IN THE LAST SEASON. THIS REPRESENTS A REDUCTION OF 40 PERCENT IN PRODUCTION.

THE PRODUCTION OF COWPEAS HAS BEEN PROJECTED TO REDUCE BY 47.8 PERCENT, FROM **6,824 METRIC TONNES** LAST SEASON TO **3,566 METRIC TONNES** THIS SEASON. SUNFLOWER PRODUCTION IS ALSO EXPECTED TO DECLINE THIS SEASON FROM

47,594 METRIC TONNES LAST SEASON TO **34,208 METRIC TONNES** THIS YEAR, A REDUCTION OF 28 PERCENT.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

LET ME NOW TURN TO MAIZE. THIS YEAR, MAIZE PRODUCTION IS FORECAST TO DECREASE TO **2,004,389** METRIC TONNES FROM **2,394,907 METRIC TONNES** PRODUCED LAST SEASON. THIS REPRESENTS A DECLINE IN PRODUCTION OF 16 PERCENT. SMALL AND MEDIUM SCALE FARMERS ARE EXPECTED TO CONTRIBUTE UP TO 94.5 PERCENT OR **1,893,845 METRIC TONNES** TO THE TOTAL MAIZE PRODUCTION, WHILE THE LARGE SCALE FARMERS ARE EXPECTED TO PRODUCE **110,544 METRIC TONNES** OF MAIZE.

THE NATIONAL AVERAGE YIELD RATE FOR MAIZE HAS DECLINED TO 1.29 METRIC TONNES PER HECTARE FROM 1.72 METRIC TONNES PER HECTARE LAST SEASON. SMALL AND MEDIUM SCALE FARMERS HAVE RECORDED AN AVERAGE MAIZE YIELD RATE OF 1.24 METRIC TONNES PER HECTARE, A REDUCTION FROM 1.68 METRIC TONNES PER HECTARE. THE LARGE SCALE FARMERS HAVE RECORDED AN AVERAGE MAIZE YIELD RATE OF 3.74 METRIC TONNES PER HECTARE.

THE REDUCTION IN THE TOTAL MAIZE PRODUCTION AND YIELDS FOR THE 2018/2019 SEASON IS LARGELY DUE TO THE PROLONGED DRY SPELLS THAT WERE EXPERIENCED IN THE GROWING SEASON.

IN ADDITION, AREA EXPECTED TO BE HARVESTED ALSO REDUCED BY 22.4 PERCENT TO 841,693 HECTARES FROM 1,086,006 HECTARES IN THE 2017/2018 SEASON. THUS, OF A TOTAL AREA OF 1,557,314 HECTARES UNDER MAIZE THIS SEASON, ONLY 841,693 HECTARES OR 54 PERCENT OF THE AREA PLANTED IS EXPECTED TO BE HARVESTED.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

AS I HAVE INDICATED EARLIER, THE NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY STATUS INDICATES THAT AS A COUNTRY WE HAVE ENOUGH MAIZE STOCKS TO MEET THE HUMAN AND INDUSTRIAL REQUIREMENTS TILL THE NEXT HARVEST IN 2020. THE FOOD RESERVE AGENCY (FRA) IS EXPECTED TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE AND MAKE EARLY ENTRY INTO THE MARKET TO ENSURE THAT THE NATIONAL STRATEGIC FOOD RESERVE REQUIREMENTS ARE MET.

I, THEREFORE, URGE THE MILLERS TO ENSURE THAT THEY PROCURE ENOUGH STOCKS FOR THEIR OPERATIONS AND NOT RELY ON THE FOOD RESERVE AGENCY FOR OPERATIONAL STOCK.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

AS ALREADY STATED, TOTAL MAIZE PRODUCTION THIS SEASON HAS BEEN ESTIMATED TO BE **2,004,389 METRIC TONNES**. THE COUNTRY ALSO HAS A MAIZE CARRY-OVER STOCK AMOUNTING TO **474,515 METRIC TONNES** AS AT 1ST MAY, 2019. OF THIS

AMOUNT, THE FOOD RESERVE AGENCY (FRA) IS HOLDING **303,475 METRIC TONNES**, THE GRAIN TRADERS ASSOCIATION IS HOLDING **51,474 METRIC TONNES**, MILLERS ASSOCIATION OF ZAMBIA **21,204 METRIC TONNES**, LARGE SCALE FARMERS ARE HOLDING **36,362 METRIC TONNES** AND SMALL AND MEDIUM SCALE FARMERS ARE HOLDING **62,000 METRIC TONNES**. THE TOTAL SUPPLY OF MAIZE AVAILABLE FOR THE 2019/2020 MARKETING SEASON IS THEREFORE **2,478,389 METRIC TONNES**.

FOR THE CURRENT PROJECTED POPULATION OF 17.6 MILLION THE TOTAL MAIZE REQUIRED **1,961,357 METRIC TONNES**. THE TOTAL REQUIREMENTS ARE BROKEN DOWN AS **1,558,339 METRIC TONNES** FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION AND **409,018 METRIC TONNES** FOR INDUSTRIAL REQUIREMENTS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS FOOD SECURITY IN THE COUNTRY, WE SHALL ENSURE THAT ILLEGAL EXPORTS OF MAIZE AND MEALIE MEAL ARE CURTAILED BY STRENGTHENING THE EXISTING MEASURES. I WISH TO REMIND THE NATION THAT GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY INSTITUTED MEASURES TO RESTRICT THE EXPORT OF MAIZE GRAIN AND MEALIE MEAL TO NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES. LET ME RE-EMPHASIZE THAT ALL MAIZE AND MEALIE MEAL EXPORTS REMAIN SUSPENDED.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

FOR THE COUNTRY TO PRODUCE MORE FOOD AND CONTINUE TO BE FOOD SECURE, GOVERNMENT WILL FURTHER INSTITUTE THE FOLLOWING MEASURES;

- (i) GOVERNMENT WILL ENGAGE LARGE SCALE FARMERS TO PRODUCE EARLY MAIZE THAT IS PLANTED IN SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER AND IS EXPECTED TO BE READY BY MARCH/APRIL 2020;
- (ii) GOVERNMENT WILL ENSURE THAT THE FRA ENTERS THE MARKET EARLY TO ENSURE THAT THE AGENCY PURCHASES THE STRATEGIC RESERVE REQUIREMENTS IN A TIMELY MANNER; AND
- (iii) IN VIEW OF THE EXPECTED REDUCED MAIZE AND MEALIE MEAL SUPPLY IN THE SOUTHERN PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, THE FRA WILL PLAY A ROLE OF REDISTRIBUTING THE MAIZE STOCKS AROUND THE COUNTRY FROM THE HIGH PRODUCTION AREAS TO LOW PRODUCTION AREAS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

DESPITE THE WEATHER CHALLENGES THAT THE COUNTRY EXPERIENCED LAST SEASON, OUR FARMERS HAVE DONE A COMMENDABLE JOB IN INCREASING THE AREA PLANTED AND I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS MY SINCERE GRATITUDE TO OUR HARDWORKING FARMERS. I ALSO WANT TO ASSURE THE NATION

THAT GOVERNMENT WILL ENSURE THAT THE COUNTRY HAS SUFFICIENT STOCKS OF FOOD UNTIL THE NEXT HARVEST IN 2020.

LET ME TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO URGE THE FARMERS, ESPECIALLY THE SMALLHOLDER FARMERS NOT TO SELL ALL THEIR MAIZE BUT TO RESERVE ENOUGH MAIZE TO SEE THEM THROUGH TO THE NEXT HARVEST.

MOVING FORWARD, AND AS DIRECTED BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT, MR. EDGAR CHAGWA LUNGU, THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE HAS EMBARKED ON A TRANSFORMATION AGENDA FOR THE SECTOR. THIS WILL ENSURE THAT OUR PRODUCTION IS DOUBLED, PARTICULARLY THAT OF MAIZE. WE BELIEVE THAT ZAMBIA TAKING ADVANTAGE OF ITS GOOD CLIMATE AND SOILS SHOULD BE THE LEAD PRODUCER OF AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES IN THE REGION. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD BE A NET EXPORTER, PARTICULARLY TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO.

IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THIS, MY MINISTRY WILL WITHIN THE NEXT TWO WEEKS CONVENE INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS AIMED AT DEVELOPING ACTION PLANS FOR EACH SUB-SECTOR. WE SHALL BEGIN WITH MAIZE, FOLLOWED BY OTHER COMMODITY INDUSTRIES SUCH AS WHEAT, SOYA BEANS, TOBACCO, COTTON ETC.

THE QUESTIONS WE SHALL BE ASKING OURSELVES IS WHAT SHOULD WE DO TO DOUBLE PRODUCTION AND WHAT POLICIES SHOULD BE PUT IN PLACE. I WOULD LIKE TO URGE ALL STAKEHOLDERS TO SUPPORT THIS PROCESS.

I THANK YOU.