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ZAMBIA

A COUNTRY BRIEFING

BY

HON. DR. KALOMBO MWANSA;

HONORABLE MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS.

**THE CHAIRPERSON,
YOUR MAJESTY,
HONORABLE MINISTERS,
YOUR EXCELLENCIES,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.**

I WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN MY ADDRESS BY CONGRATULATING THE CHAIRPERSON AND YOUR BUREAU FOR THE ELECTION TO OFFICE.

ZAMBIA LIKE OTHER CONTRIES HAS CONTIUNED TO BE RAVAGED BY VICES OF DRUG TRAFFICKING, CULTIVATION AND ABUSE. AS A RESULT OF THIS, THE ZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHED THE DRUG ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION (D.E.C.) IN 1989, WHOSE CORE FUNCTIONS INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- **COMBATING DRUG TRAFFICKING AND ABUSE;**

- COMBATING OF MONEY LAUNDERING AND OTHER RELATED VICES AND;
- NATIONAL EDUCATION AWARENESS CAMPAIGN.

THE GEO-POLITICAL POSITION OF ZAMBIA IN SOUTHERN AFRICA PLACES IT AN AWKWARD SITUATION, WHERE ITS POROUS BORDERS HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT TO MANAGE. AS YOU MIGHT BE AWARE, ZAMBIA IS SURROUNDED BY EIGHT NEIGHBOURS AND THAT MAKES IT EASIER FOR DRUG TRAFFICKERS TO USE THE COUNTRY AS A CONSUMER AS WELL AS A TRANSIT POINT.

AT THE INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS, ZAMBIA ENJOYS FULL CORPORATION AND COLLABORATION WITH OTHER COUNTRIES THROUGH VARIOUS CHANNELS THAT HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED TO COMBAT DRUG TRAFFICKING, MONEY LAUNDERING AND OTHER VICES.

HOWEVER, AT A DOMESTIC LEVEL SENSITISATION PROGRAMMES HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT AND ARE UNDERWAY THROUGH THE NATIONAL EDUCATION CAMPAIGN DIVISION OF THE D.E.C., PEASANT FARMERS, INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING, WORK PLACES, GENERAL COMMUNITIES SUCH AS NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND TRADITIONAL RULERS (CHIEFS).

ZAMBIA WAS A TRANSIT NATION FOR ILLICIT DRUGS, BUT SINCE EARLY 80s', IT HAS ALSO BECOME A CONSUMER NATION. THE EFFECTS OF NARCOTICS AND PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES

HAVE BEEN DEVASTATING TO OUR DEVELOPMENT EFFORT. THIS IS SO, BECAUSE ILLICIT DRUGS HAVE BEEN, AMONG OTHER THINGS, RESPONSIBLE FOR SOCIAL DISORDERS AND MORAL DECAY IN SOME PARTS OF THE SOCIETY. FOR EXAMPLE, ILLICIT DRUGS HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR HIGH RISE IN THE LEVELS OF CRIME, CORRUPTION AND MONEY LAUNDERING.

CHAIRPERSON, THE CHALLENGES FACED BY MY GOVERNMENT IN COMBATING DRUG ABUSE AND ADDICTION INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS;
- REHABILITATION OF DRUG ADDICTS;
- ACCESS TO MODERN THERAPY IN TREATMENT OF THE EFFECTS OF DRUG ADDICTION;
- PREVALENCE OF HIV/AIDS VICTIMS ARISING FROM THE ABUSE OF SUCH DRUGS;
- COMBATING DRUG TRAFFICKING IN POVERTY STRIKEN AREAS THAT CULTIVATE DRUG RELATED CROPS PARTICULARLY CANNABIS;
- MONEY LAUNDERING ACTIVITIES THAT ARISE FROM DRUG TRAFFICKING.

THESE ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES THAT ZAMBIA FACES.

CHAIRPERSON, THE GATHERING MAY WISH TO KNOW THAT THE MOST PREVALENT DRUG GROWN IN MANY PARTS OF ZAMBIA IS CANNABIS. THIS IS SO BECAUSE THE ZAMBIAN

PEASANT FARMERS HAVE BEEN LURED INTO ITS CULTIVATION DUE TO THE HIGH RETURNS IT FETCHES AS COMPARED TO OTHER NON-ILLCIT CROPS.

FURTHERMORE, THERE IS A MYTH IN THE ZAMBIAN COMMUNITY THAT IF ONE CONSUMES CANNABIS, HE OR SHE WILL EITHER BE ABLE TO DO MORE WORK OR WILL HAVE THIER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE ENHANCED. BUT ALL THIS HAS BEEN PROVEN TO BE FALSE. ON THE CONTRAY, CANNABIS HAS BEEN HARMFUL TO ITS USERS.

IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE, MY GOVERNMENT IS AGAINST THE LEGALISATION OF ILLCIT DRUGS SUCH AS CANNABIS. FOR THIS REASON MY GOVERNMENT IS IN THE PROCESS OF AMENDING THE EXISTING LEGISLATION TO BE IN CONFORMITY WITH THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS THROUGH DOMESTICATION.

THE PREVALENCE OF CANNABIS AND OTHER HARD DRUGS SHOULD NOT BE A PREMISE FOR ARGUMENT IN SUPPORT OF LEGALISATION OF CONSUMPTION.

THE ARGUMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE LEGALISATION OF CONSUMPTION OF ILLCIT DRUGS WHICH STATES *INTER ALIA* THAT THE USAGE OF CANNABIS HAS BECOME TOO *PREVALENT* AND THAT ITS LAWFUL USE WOULD REQUIRE MERE REGULATION AS IS THE CASE WITH TOBACCO IS INCORRECT.

THE PREVALENCE MENTIONED ABOVE OF ILLEGAL CONDUCT SHOULD NOT AND CANNOT BE THE REASON FOR LEGALISING CONSUMPTION OF ILLICIT DRUGS. IF THIS ARGUMENT WERE TO BE ADOPTED IT WOULD TURN THE WHOLE CRIMINAL LAW ON ITS HEAD IN VIEW OF OTHER CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES WHICH ARE PREVALENT.

THERE IS A DECLATORY THEORY OF LAW, CHAIRPERSON, WHICH IN THIS CONTEXT SUPPORTS PROHIBITION OF CULTIVATION AND CONSUMPTION OF ILLICIT DRUGS, BECAUSE SUCH ACTIVITIES ARE HARMFUL TO CONSUMERS, FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES AND COUNTRIES. THEREFORE, PROHIBITION SHOULD STAY AS A DECLARATION OF WHAT LARGER SOCIETY FEELS IS HARMFUL CONDUCT. IF WE DO NOT PROHIBIT AND CONTROL ILLICIT DRUGS NOW, DRUGS WILL CONTROL AND RUIN US IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE.

LASTLY, CHAIRPERSON, ZAMBIA WELCOMES AND FULLY SUPPORTS THE *DRAFT POLITICAL DECLARATION AND PLAN OF ACTION IN INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED AND BALANCED STRATEGY TO COUNTER THE WORLD DRUG PROBLEM*, AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO ITS ADOPTION.

CHAIRPERSON, I THANK YOU.
