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PRESS STATEMENT BY THE CHIEF GOVERNMENT SPOKESPERSON ON THE DECISIONS MADE BY CABINET AT THE 17TH CABINET MEETING HELD AT STATE HOUSE ON THURSDAY, 23RD JULY, 2020

His Excellency the President, Dr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, called for the 17th Cabinet Meeting, only for selected Cabinet ministers due to COVID-19. Cabinet agreed that the country would not be under lockdown but that all citizens must strictly follow the health guidelines.

Cabinet also agreed that sensitization on COVID-19 must be scaled. Cabinet observed that the numbers of positive cases have continued to rise because citizens have relaxed on wearing face masks, social distancing, washing hands and sanitizing. Cabinet called for all Zambians to be agents of change in the protection of lives.

Cabinet also agreed that the remaining school classes that have not re-opened, including colleges and universities, shall remain closed. Cabinet would assess how the pandemic evolves before a decision is made on re-opening schools.

Further, Cabinet made the following decisions:

1. The Banking and Financial Services (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

Cabinet approved “The Banking and Financial Services (Amendment) Bill, 2020” for publication and introduction in Parliament during the next sitting.

The Banking and Financial Services Act is being amended so as to, among others, revise the definition of insolvency in relation to a financial service provider. It highlights the actions to be taken by the Bank of Zambia when it takes possession of a financial service provider. It empowers a financial service provider or any interested person acting on behalf of the financial service provider to petition the Minister to establish a tribunal. The tribunal would

enquire into the decision of the Bank of Zambia to take possession of the financial service provider.

Further, the implementation of the Bill, when enacted, will provide for the repayment of funds collected by an unlicensed person. It revises the jurisdiction of the tribunal to include hearing petitions on the taking of possession of a financial service provider by the Bank of Zambia; and it revises the priority of payment of debts in any compulsory winding-up or dissolution of a financial service provider.

2. The Public Procurement Bill, 2020.

Cabinet also approved “The Public Procurement Bill, 2020” for publication and introduction in Parliament during the next sitting.

The repeal and replacement of the Public Procurement Act of 2008, was necessitated due to the need to enhance legislation on public procurement by including provisions that will strengthen enforcement mechanisms in the regulation of procurements, while also enhancing the participation of citizens in public procurement, through the use of electronic systems in the process.

The strengthening of the oversight and regulatory role of the Zambia Public Procurement Authority is also emphasised in the Bill and that this is cardinal in public procurement. The Bill also allows for Zambians’ participation in matters pertaining to procurement as part of ensuring Zambians fully contribute to the development of their country.

3. Appointment of members to the Zambia Qualifications Authority (ZAQA) Board.

Cabinet approved an eleven (11) member Board for the Zambia Qualifications Authority (ZAQA) in accordance with the provisions of the ZAQA Act No. 13 of 2011.

The Higher Education Authority was established and has operated under the Zambia Qualification Authority Act No. 13 of 2011. Currently the Authority does not have a Board. There is need, therefore, to appoint members of the Board in order to ensure that key delivery milestones in the qualification accreditation sector and effective implementation of the National Qualification Framework.

The appointment of the Board will result in improved performance of ZAQA and further enhance decision making in the provision of quality management in the institution.

4. Appointment of Members to the Governing Council of the Copperbelt University.

Cabinet also approved a twelve (12) member Board of the Copperbelt University Governing Council in accordance with the provisions of the Higher Education Act No. 4 of 2013.

Cabinet felt the need to have in place the Board as currently, the Copperbelt University is operating with an interim Governing Council which has resulted in delays in making timely policy decisions. The institution needs strategic decisions to be made that require the guidance of the Governing Council, thereby enhance decision making in the provision of quality education at the institution.

5. Appointment of Members to the Mulungushi University Governing Council.

Further, Cabinet approved a fourteen (14) member Council of the Mulungushi University Governing Council in accordance with the provisions of the Higher Education Act No. 4 of 2013.

Cabinet felt the necessity to approve the appointment of the Members as currently Mulungushi University is operating with an interim Governing Council which has resulted in delays in making timely decisions. The institution needs strategic decisions to be made that require the guidance of the Governing Council.

6. Revised Financing Strategy for the Three Public Universities (Copperbelt University, Mulungushi University and University of Zambia) for the period 2021 to 2025.

Cabinet also approved the revision and extension of the implementation of the New Financing Strategy for the three public universities for the period 2021 to 2025.

In 2016, Government reviewed the financial challenges affecting the three public universities in the provision of higher education and to make recommendations on the sustainable way of financing university education.

It is important for the Financing Strategy to be revised and extended from 2021 to 2025 in order to give Government and other stakeholders additional time to attain milestones which were not reached in the previous implementation period. To date, the implementation of the Strategy has recorded considerable progress.

7. Ratification of the Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States.

Cabinet approved the ratification of the Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States in order to promote academic freedom. This is meant to strengthen and promote inter-regional and international co-operation in recognising qualifications. It also puts in place effective quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms at the national, regional and continental levels and contributes to the harmonisation of qualifications, taking into account current global trends.

The Revised Convention builds on the 1981 Arusha Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States. Zambia is a signatory to the 1981 Convention.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
CABINET OFFICE
LUSAKA

23RD JULY, 2020