



**REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE**

**PRESS BRIEFING
ON**

**THE CROP FORECAST SURVEY FOR THE 2019/2020
AGRICULTURAL SEASON AND THE FOOD SECURITY STATUS
FOR THE 2020/2021 MARKETING SEASON
BY**

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27TH MAY, 2020

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

I AM VERY DELIGHTED TO BE HERE WITH YOU TODAY, ESPECIALLY ON THIS SPECIAL OCCASION, WHERE I WILL BE ANNOUNCING THE MUCH ANTICIPATED AND FINAL CROP FORECAST SURVEY RESULTS FOR THE 2019/2020 AGRICULTURAL SEASON AND THE NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY STATUS, COVERING THE PERIOD, 1ST MAY 2020 TO 30TH APRIL 2021.

BEFORE I GO ANY FURTHER, LET ME TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK THE ZAMBIA STATISTICS AGENCY, WHICH FALLS UNDER THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING, FOR THEIR VALUABLE INPUT IN CONDUCTING THE CROP FORECAST SURVEY. AS YOU MAY BE AWARE, THE CROP FORECAST SURVEY IS DONE BY MY MINISTRY IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ZAMBIA STATISTICS AGENCY. LET ME ALSO THANK ALL OF YOU, FOR YOUR VALUABLE INPUT AND FOR FINDING TIME TO PARTICIPATE IN TODAY'S PROCEEDINGS.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

WITHOUT WASTING MUCH OF YOUR TIME, I WILL NOW GO STRAIGHT INTO THE CROP PRODUCTION ESTIMATES FOR THE 2019/2020 AGRICULTURAL SEASON, STARTING WITH **IRISH AND SWEET POTATOES.**

I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE PRODUCTION OF IRISH POTATOES IS FORECAST TO INCREASE TO **79,980 METRIC TONNES** IN THE 2019/2020 SEASON FROM **38,786 METRIC TONNES** RECORDED IN THE 2018/2019 SEASON. THIS REPRESENTS AN EXPECTED INCREASE IN PRODUCTION OF OVER **100 PERCENT.**

SIMILARLY, THE PRODUCTION OF SWEET POTATOES IS ALSO FORECAST TO INCREASE TO **143,717 METRIC TONNES** FROM **109,336 METRIC TONNES** RECORDED IN THE LAST SEASON. THIS REPRESENTS AN INCREASE OF **31 PERCENT.**

AT THIS JUNCTURE, ALLOW ME TO STATE, THAT THE INCREASE IN THE PRODUCTION OF IRISH POTATOES IS VERY ENCOURAGING, AS IT CLEARLY INDICATES THAT ZAMBIA IS FAST MOVING TOWARDS

BECOMING SELF-SUFFICIENT IN THE PRODUCTION OF IRISH POTATOES.

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I WILL NOW TOUCH ON OIL SEEDS PRODUCTION, WHICH INCLUDES SOYA BEANS, SUNFLOWER, COTTON AND GROUNDNUTS. SOYA BEAN PRODUCTION FOR THE 2019/2020 AGRICULTURAL SEASON IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE TO **296,866 METRIC TONNES** FROM **281,389 METRIC TONNES**, AN INCREASE OF 6 PERCENT.

IN THE 2019/2020 AGRICULTURAL SEASON, SUNFLOWER PRODUCTION IS ALSO EXPECTED TO INCREASE TO **50,450 METRIC TONNES** FROM **34,208 METRIC TONNES** LAST SEASON, REPRESENTING AN INCREASE OF **47 PERCENT**.

IN THE 2019/2020 SEASON, THE PRODUCTION OF SEED COTTON IS FORECAST TO REDUCE BY 43 PERCENT TO **41,441 METRIC TONNES** FROM **72,508 METRIC TONNES**. THE PRODUCTION OF

GROUNDNUTS IS FORECAST TO DECREASE BY **3 PERCENT** FROM **130,825 METRIC TONNES** IN THE LAST SEASON TO **127,172 METRIC TONNES**.

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SORGHUM PRODUCTION HAS INCREASED BY **200 PERCENT** TO **20,011 METRIC TONNES** IN THE 2019/2020 AGRICULTURAL SEASON FROM **6,684 METRIC TONNES** IN THE PREVIOUS SEASON. THE PRODUCTION OF MILLET IS ALSO EXPECTED TO INCREASE BY **81 PERCENT** TO **45,000 METRIC TONNES** FROM **24,843 METRIC TONNES** IN THE OTHER SEASON.

FURTHER, THE PRODUCTION OF RICE IS ALSO FORECAST TO INCREASE BY 17 PERCENT TO **34,630 METRIC TONNES** FROM **29,584 METRIC TONNES** LAST SEASON. DESPITE THE GROWTH IN RICE PRODUCTION OVER TIME, LOCAL PRODUCTION IS STILL UNABLE TO MEET OUR LOCAL DEMAND. CURRENTLY, THE DEFICIT IN RICE PRODUCTION STANDS AT APPROXIMATELY **45,000 METRIC TONNES** WHICH IS MET THROUGH IMPORTS. TAKING COGNIZANCE OF THIS FACT, THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE HAS DEVELOPED THE **RICE**

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY TO PROMOTE PRODUCTION OF RICE AMONGST FARMERS.

ON CASSAVA PRODUCTION, WHICH IS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO GOVERNMENT, THE PRODUCTION OF CASSAVA FLOUR EQUIVALENT IN THE 2019/2020 SEASON HAS BEEN FORECAST TO INCREASE TO **1,028,719 METRIC TONNES** FROM **1,009,146 METRIC TONNES**. THE INCREASE IN CASSAVA PRODUCTION IS A CLEAR INDICATION THAT GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TO INDUSTRIALIZE THE CASSAVA CROP IS GAINING GROUND.

COMING TO WHEAT AND BARLEY PRODUCTION, THE PREPARATIONS FOR PLANTING OF WHEAT ARE CURRENTLY ONGOING AND THE PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES INDICATE THAT WHEAT PRODUCTION WILL STAND AT **191,620 METRIC TONNES**, WHICH IS AN INCREASE OF **26 PERCENT** FROM **151,850 METRIC TONNES** FROM THE PREVIOUS HARVEST. IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT THESE ESTIMATES ARE PRELIMINARY AND WILL BE UPDATED AS THE WHEAT GROWING SEASON PROGRESSES. BARLEY PRODUCTION

HAS BEEN FORECASTED TO INCREASE TO **10,784 METRIC TONNES** FROM **8,417 METRIC TONNES** IN THE PREVIOUS SEASON, AND THIS REPRESENTS AN INCREASE OF **28 PERCENT**.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

THE PRODUCTION OF BURLEY TOBACCO IS FORECAST TO DECLINE BY **58 PERCENT** TO **3,861 METRIC TONNES** FROM **9,176 METRIC TONNES**. THE PRODUCTION OF VIRGINIA TOBACCO HAS ALSO BEEN FORECAST TO DECLINE BY **7 PERCENT** TO **11, 955 METRIC TONNES** FROM **12,839 METRIC TONNES** LAST SEASON.

OVER THE PAST YEARS, WE HAVE NOTED A SERIOUS DECLINE IN THE PRODUCTION OF TOBACCO IN THE COUNTRY. THE REDUCED PRODUCTION OF TOBACCO IS UNFORTUNATE, AS IT TRANSLATES IN A LOSS IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS. ONE OF THE REASONS WHICH HAS BEEN SITED FOR THE POOR PERFORMANCE OF THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY IS OUTDATED LEGISLATION. IN ORDER TO REVAMP THE PRODUCTION OF THIS KEY EXPORT COMMODITY, CABINET HAS GIVEN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AUTHORITY

TO BEGIN THE PROCESS OF REVIEWING TOBACCO LEGISLATION IN COLLABORATION WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS. HERE, I WISH TO POINT OUT THAT IT IS GOVERNMENT'S DESIRE TO CREATE A LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK THAT WILL STIMULATE THE GROWTH OF THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY.

FOR MIXED BEANS, PRODUCTION HAS ALSO BEEN FORECAST TO DECLINE FROM **58, 705 METRIC TONNES** RECORDED IN THE LAST SEASON TO **49, 163 METRIC TONNES** IN THE 2019/2020 SEASON, REPRESENTING A 16 PERCENT REDUCTION.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I AM VERY MUCH AWARE THAT YOU HAVE ALL BEEN EAGERLY AWAITING TO HEAR MY REMARKS ON MAIZE, WHICH IS OUR STAPLE CROP. I DELIBERATELY DECIDED TO TALK ABOUT MAIZE AT THE END BECAUSE IT IS A CROP THAT ALMOST EVERYONE IS INTERESTED IN. ALLOW ME NOW TO TALK ABOUT MAIZE PRODUCTION. I AM VERY PLEASED AS MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, THAT THIS YEAR, MAIZE PRODUCTION IS FORECAST TO INCREASE

TO **3,387,469 METRIC TONNES** FROM **2,004,389 METRIC TONNES** PRODUCED LAST SEASON. THIS REPRESENTS AN INCREASE OF 69 PERCENT. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE COUNTRY HAS A MAIZE CARRY-OVER STOCK AMOUNTING TO **179,247 METRIC TONNES** AS AT 1ST MAY, 2020. THEREFORE, THE TOTAL SUPPLY OF MAIZE AVAILABLE FOR THE 2020/2021 MARKETING SEASON IS **3,566,716 METRIC TONNES**.

IF YOU TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THAT TRADITIONALLY, THE FOOD RESERVE AGENCY'S BUYING TARGET HAS BEEN **500,000 METRIC TONNES**, THE SURPLUS THIS YEAR WOULD BE MORE THAN **710,000 METRIC TONNES**. HOWEVER AS A MINISTRY, THIS YEAR, WE HAVE FACTORED IN A PURCHASE TARGET OF **1,000,000 METRIC TONNES** FOR THE AGENCY IN OUR CEREALS BALANCE SHEET. DESPITE FACTORING IN THE HIGHER FRA MAIZE PURCHASE TARGET OF **1,000,000 METRIC TONNES**, THE COUNTRY HAS STILL MANAGED TO RECORD A MAIZE SURPLUS OF OVER **210,000 METRIC TONNES** IN 2020. WHAT THIS NOW IMPLIES, IS THAT THE COUNTRY IS FOOD

SECURE AND WILL REMAIN AS SUCH FOR THE NEXT YEAR TO COME, PROVIDED SMUGGLING IS CONTROLLED.

WITH A PROJECTED POPULATION OF OVER 17 MILLION PEOPLE, THE TOTAL MAIZE REQUIRED IS **3,356,617 METRIC TONNES**. THE TOTAL REQUIREMENTS ARE BROKEN DOWN AS **1,603,383 METRIC TONNES** FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION, **ONE MILLION METRIC TONNES** FOR STRATEGIC FOOD RESERVES AND **409,018 METRIC TONNES** FOR INDUSTRIAL REQUIREMENTS. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT ALL THE REQUIREMENTS AND POST HARVEST LOSSES, THE COUNTRY IS EXPECTED TO HAVE A SURPLUS OF **210, 099 METRIC TONNES**.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

I MUST MENTION THAT OUR SMALL AND MEDIUM SCALE FARMERS ARE EXPECTED TO CONTRIBUTE UP TO **93 PERCENT** OR **3,160,185 METRIC TONNES** OF THE TOTAL MAIZE PRODUCTION, WHILE THE LARGE SCALE FARMERS ARE EXPECTED TO PRODUCE **227,284 METRIC TONNES** OF MAIZE OR **7 PERCENT** OF THE TOTAL MAIZE

PRODUCTION. ALLOW ME AT THIS JUNCTURE, TO REALLY THANK OUR SMALL SCALE FARMERS FOR RISING TO THE OCCASION AND PRODUCING SUCH A SIGNIFICANT QUANTITY OF MAIZE. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK OUR LARGE SCALE FARMERS FOR ALSO INCREASING THEIR PRODUCTION FROM THE PREVIOUS SEASON. THIS SHOWS US THAT THERE IS RENEWED CONFIDENCE AMONG FARMERS IN THE GROWING OF MAIZE.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

YOU WILL ALL AGREE WITH ME THAT THE INCREASE IN MAIZE PRODUCTION CAN BE LARGELY ATTRIBUTED TO FAVORABLE WEATHER, THE EARLY DELIVERY OF INPUTS UNDER THE FARMER INPUT SUPPORT PROGRAMME, AND THE RENEWED CONFIDENCE IN GROWING MAIZE.

ALTHOUGH THE NATIONAL AVERAGE YIELD RATE FOR MAIZE HAS INCREASED TO **2.07 METRIC TONNES PER HECTARE** FROM **1.29 METRIC TONNES PER HECTARE** LAST SEASON, THE YIELD PER HECTARE IS STILL VERY LOW, AND WE CAN DO BETTER AS A

COUNTRY. AS A MINISTRY, OUR MAJOR FOCUS WILL THEREFORE CONTINUE TO BE THE ENHANCEMENT OF PRODUCTIVITY, PARTICULARLY FOR SMALL SCALE FARMERS. OUR MAJOR THRUST AS A MINISTRY IS TO ENSURE THAT WE INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY TO A MINIMUM OF **4 TONNES PER HECTARE**. THIS WILL BE DONE THROUGH PROMOTION OF GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES, WHICH INCLUDES CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE, USE OF APPROPRIATE QUALITY AND CERTIFIED SEED, IRRIGATION AND MECHANIZATION. IT IS OUR BELIEF AS A MINISTRY THAT WITH INCREASED YIELD PER HECTARE, SMALL SCALE FARMERS WILL AUTOMATICALLY MAKE MAIZE PRODUCTION PROFITABLE.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

IT IS THE INTENTION OF THIS GOVERNMENT TO ENSURE THAT MAIZE BECOMES AN EXPORT CROP. HOWEVER, THIS WILL ONLY BE POSSIBLE AFTER MEETING THE NATIONAL REQUIREMENTS.

AS YOU ARE ALREADY AWARE, THE MINISTRY IS CURRENTLY FACILITATING THE EXPORT OF **83,000 MT** OF EARLY MAIZE WHICH

IS BOTH EXPENSIVE AND IS NOT REQUIRED ON THE LOCAL MARKET. THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE WILL ALSO ALLOW HUMANITARIAN RELATED EXPORTS UNDER THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME. WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE IS THAT THE EARLY MAIZE AND HUMANITARIAN RELATED EXPORTS WILL HAVE NO BEARING ON NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY, NOW THAT WE HAVE ESTABLISHED THE ACTUAL FOOD SITUATION THROUGH THE CROP FORECAST SURVEY.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I MUST HASTEN TO MENTION THAT THE SMUGGLING OF MAIZE AND MEALIE-MEAL REMAINS A THREAT TO OUR FOOD SECURITY. AS WE CONTINUE MONITORING THE FOOD SUPPLY SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY TO ENSURE THAT WE ARE FOOD SECURE, WE SHALL ALSO CONTINUE WORKING WITH THE DEFENCE AND SECURITY FORCES; AND THE PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT AUTHORITIES TO ENSURE SMUGGLING IS CONTROLLED.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I WOULD LIKE TO ONCE AGAIN EXPRESS MY SINCERE GRATITUDE TO OUR HARDWORKING FARMERS FOR INCREASING THE PRODUCTION OF MOST CROPS IN THE 2019/2020 SEASON. I ALSO WANT TO ASSURE THE NATION THAT GOVERNMENT WILL ENSURE THAT THE COUNTRY HAS SUFFICIENT STOCKS OF FOOD UNTIL THE NEXT HARVEST IN 2021.

LET ME ALSO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO URGE ALL FARMERS, ESPECIALLY THE SMALL SCALE FARMERS, NOT TO SELL ALL THEIR MAIZE BUT TO RESERVE ENOUGH MAIZE TO SEE THEM THROUGH TO THE NEXT HARVEST. WE SHOULD ALL REMEMBER THAT NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY BEGINS WITH HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY.

I THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU.