



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DATE: 16<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2020**

**PRESS STATEMENT**

**FRA CLARIFIES MEDIA REPORTS THAT IT OWES TRANSPORTERS PAYMENTS FOR FIVE YEARS**

The Food Reserve Agency (FRA) wishes to clarify sentiments that were published in the Times of Zambia Newspaper dated 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020 headlined "*C/belt transporters want their money from FRA,*" in which it was reported that transporters are demanding their money after transporting maize for the Agency five years ago.

The Agency wishes to state that it does not owe any transporters for that long period of time. In as much as the Agency acknowledges owing some transporters, the amounts owed are balance payments between 2017 and 2019 which will be fully cleared once funds are available.

Therefore, sentiments published in the article indicating that the Agency was owing transporters for five years were not factual as Agency records further reveal that transporters owed are those that provided services between 2017 and 2019. The Agency further wishes to state that the accumulated debt is being dismantled gradually.

Transporters are further encouraged to be submitting their invoices in good time to enable the Agency plan on the settlement of bills as it has been observed that some transporters take long to submit them. However, it must be noted that when funds are available and part payments made, the oldest invoices are paid out first.

It should be noted that the Agency is always incurring costs for transportation as the movement of maize is on-going as the Agency moves maize from surplus to deficit areas. In this regard, as transport bills are being cleared, other invoices are received and this therefore means that the transport bill is never likely to be at a zero balance.

The Agency further wishes to take this opportunity to thank all transporters who have become the Agency's all weather partners for their patience and wishes to assure them that the Agency is making frantic efforts in engaging Ministry of Finance for funding so that they can all be cleared as soon as possible.



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