



**REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA**  
**THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY**

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE**

**MINISTER OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY**  
**HONOURABLE BRENDA MWIKA TAMBATAMBA, M.P.**

**ON THE OCCASION OF**  
**7<sup>TH</sup> UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA LECTURERS AND RESEARCHERS'**  
**UNION (UNZALARU) QUADRENNIAL CONGRESS**

**AT THE MULUNGUSHI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE IN**  
**LUSAKA**

**21<sup>ST</sup> -22<sup>ND</sup> NOVEMBER, 2024**

**THE LABOUR COMMISSIONER**

**LABOUR OFFICIALS HERE PRESENT**

**OUTGOING UNZALARU PRESIDENT, PROF. ANDREW PHIRI, AND YOUR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA PROFESSIONAL STAFF UNION (UNZAPROSU), PRESIDENT MR LIKEZO PUMULO AND YOUR TEAM**

**UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION (UNZAAWU), GENERAL SECRETARY MR MUPUNA MOONGA AND YOUR TEAM**

**COPPERBELT UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC UNION (COBUAU) PRESIDENT DR DERRICK NTALASHA AND YOUR TEAM**

**MULUNGUSHI UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF UNION (MUAPSU) PRESIDENT, MS. MUNSAKA SIANKUKU AND YOUR TEAM**

**KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC UNION PRESIDENT, DR. MILEJI PHIRI MEMBERS OF THE PRESS**

**ALL INVITED UNZALARU MEMBERS PRESENT**

**MAY I SIMPLY SAY, ALL INVITED DELEGATES PRESENT**

- 1. DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I WISH TO EXPRESS MY UTMOST AND SINCERE GRATITUDE TO THE OUTGOING UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA LECTURERS AND RESEARCHERS' UNION (UNZALARU) EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND ITS GENERAL MEMBERSHIP FOR INVITING ME TO COME AND OFFICIATE AT THIS IMPORTANT OCCASION IN THE LIFE OF THE UNION, THE 7<sup>TH</sup> QUADRENNIAL CONGRESS. IT IS A GREAT PLEASURE AND HONOUR TO BE PART OF THIS JOYOUS MOMENT, A MOMENT WHEN YOU**

CELEBRATE YOUR SUCCESSES AND SHARE YOUR CHALLENGES AS A UNION. IT IS ALSO AN OCCASION THAT GIVES YOU AN OPPORTUNITY AS MEMBERS TO FREELY CHOOSE YOUR LEADERSHIP WHO WILL STEER THE UNZALARU SHIP FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS.

2. **DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN**, WE STAND HERE TODAY TO WITNESS AN OCCASION AT WHICH THE TENETS OF TRADE UNION DEMOCRACY ARE EVIDENTLY SEEN.
  
3. I AM INFORMED THAT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN THE LIFE OF UNZALARU THAT YOU HAVE MORE THAN TWENTY (20) CANDIDATES VYING FOR VARIOUS POSITIONS IN THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND THE WOMEN'S COMMITTEE, RESPECTIVELY.
  
4. I AM EQUALLY INFORMED THAT ASPIRING CANDIDATES HAVE BEEN CONDUCTING DOOR TO DOOR CAMPAIGNS AND PARTICIPATING IN DEBATES TO SELL THEIR MANIFESTOS TO THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP. THIS IS IMPRESSIVE. THIS IS HOW IT SHOULD BE. SUCH PRACTICES REFLECT OUR NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CHARACTER WHICH ACCORDS CITIZENS THE RIGHT TO FREELY SHARE IDEAS, THE RIGHT TO ASPIRE TO LEADERSHIP POSITIONS AND RIGHT TO CHOOSE LEADERS BASED ON THEIR MESSAGES OR PAST LEADERSHIP RECORD. AS YOUR MINISTRY, OUR JOB IS TO ENSURE THAT THE TENETS OF DEMOCRACY ARE UPHELD AND THAT THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE YOUR LEADERS OF YOUR CHOICE IS GUARANTEED AND PROTECTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAW.

**5. LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,** I AM INFORMED THAT THE FOUR YEARS THAT YOUR OUTGOING EXECUTIVE HAS BEEN AT THE HELM OF THE LEADERSHIP OF UNZALARU HAVE BEEN THE MOST DIFFICULT YEARS. THIS IS BECAUSE DURING THIS PERIOD, THE UNION LOST TWENTY FIVE OF ITS MEMBERS DUE TO COVID-19 RELATED COMPLICATIONS. DURING THIS SAME PERIOD, THE UNION MANDATE TO ITS MEMBERS WAS AFFECTED NEGATIVELY BECAUSE OF RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED BY THE GOVERNMENT ON PUBLIC GATHERINGS IN THE INTEREST OF PUBLIC HEALTH. DURING THE SAME PERIOD, THE EMPLOYERS ACROSS ALL SECTORS, INCLUDING THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA STRUGGLED TO MEET THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE EMPLOYEES ARISING FROM THE CHALLENGES POSED BY COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

**6. LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,** I AM INFORMED THAT DESPITE THESE OVERWHELMING CHALLENGES, UNZALARU EMERGED STRONGER. FOR EXAMPLE, IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE SITUATION NORMALISED, UNZALARU EMBARKED ON AN AMBITIOUS CAPITAL PROJECT TO CONSTRUCT A MODERN OFFICE BUILDING WHICH HAS TRANSFORMED THE FACE OF THE UNION WITHIN AND BEYOND. I WAS PRIVILEGED TO COMMISSION THAT MODERN UNION OFFICE BLOCK BUILT BY UNZALARU. I ONCE AGAIN CONGRATULATE YOU, THE OUTGOING EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR THE PRUDENCE, RESILIENCE, AND COMMITMENT SHOWN TOWARD ACHIEVING THIS MILESTONE. I ALSO WISH TO CONGRATULATE THE MEMBERSHIP FOR THE SUPPORT YOU RENDERED TO YOUR LEADERSHIP IN EXECUTING THIS PROJECT. I AM AWARE THAT DURING SUCH CAPITAL PROJECTS SEVERAL MEMBER ACTIVITIES GET AFFECTED. THIS MUST HAVE BEEN A YEAR OR YEARS OF SACRIFICE BY YOURSELVES AND YOUR LEADERS.

**7. LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,** I AM ALSO INFORMED THAT DESPITE THE COVID-19 CHALLENGES WHICH HAD LASTING IMPACT ON EMPLOYERS COUPLED WITH THE DROUGHT SITUATION AND THE NATIONAL DEBT THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN GRAPPLING WITH, YOUR UNION WAS ABLE TO ACHIEVE AN AVERAGE OF A CUMULATIVE 24% SALARY INCREMENT OVERALL DURING THIS PERIOD. THIS IS COMMENDABLE GIVEN THAT FEW UNIONS WERE ABLE TO ACHIEVE THIS KIND OF MILESTONE AMIDST DIFFICULT TIMES FOR EMPLOYERS ACROSS THE NATION AND THE GLOBE, ALBEIT SMALL.

**8. LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,** IN 2022, I WAS PRIVILEGED TO PRESIDE OVER A MATTER INVOLVING A PROBLEMATIC UNZA DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE CODE WHICH UNZALARU LEADERSHIP BROUGHT TO MY ATTENTION. THIS IS A DOCUMENT WHICH AFFECTS YOUR TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT. YOUR LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND MY OFFICE SUCCESSFULLY AND COLLECTIVELY APPLIED THE TENETS OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE PROVIDED FOR IN YOUR RECOGNITION AGREEMENT AND AS ESPOUSED IN OUR LABOUR LAWS AND THE ILO PROTOCOLS. I AM NOW INFORMED THAT THE CODE HAS BEEN REVISED WITH THE FULL PARTICIPATION OF THE UNIONS AND WILL SOON BE ISSUED. THIS IS HOW IT OUGHT IT BE. UNIONS AND EMPLOYERS ARE SOCIAL PARTNERS. SOCIAL PARTNERS MAY DIFFER SOMETIMES BUT THEIR DIFFERENCES SHOULD BE RESOLVED WITHIN THE PRECINCTS OF THE LAW AND THE RECOGNITION AGREEMENT THAT LEGALLY BINDS THEM.

**9.** IN MODERN TRADE UNIONISM SOCIAL DIALOGUE IS CRITICAL AS IT PROMOTES A HARMONIOUS WORK ENVIRONMENT WHICH ALLOWS FOR

THE SMOOTH PROVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC IN A PEACEFUL AND FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT.

**10. LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,** I AM AWARE THAT THE UNION CONTINUES TO FIGHT HARD TO UNLOCK THE PAYMENTS OF DEBT OWED TO ITS MEMBERS INCLUDING NAPSA. I AM GLAD TO REPORT THAT THE GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND NATIONAL PLANNING WITH SOME REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNIONS ARE IN THE PROCESS OF DRAWING UP A SUSTAINABLE FINANCING STRATEGY THAT WOULD BE USED TO GUIDE THE DISMANTLING OF THE DEBT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THE GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO ENSURE THAT ALL PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN ZAMBIA SUCH AS UNZA ARE DEBT FREE TO ENABLE THESE INSTITUTIONS TO PROVIDE QUALITY SERVICES TO OUR PEOPLE. AS YOU MAY BE AWARE, EDUCATION IS TOP ON THE PRIORITY LIST OF MY GOVERNMENT.

**11. LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,** I AM GLAD THAT YOUR OUTGOING NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HAS LAID A STRONG FOUNDATION UPON WHICH THE NEW ONE SHOULD BUILD IN THE SERVICE OF YOU, THE MEMBERS. MY GOVERNMENT IS READY TO WORK WITH THE NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND THE WOMEN'S COMMITTEE TO HELP THEM THROUGH THE LADDER OF LEADERSHIP OF A TRADE UNION.

**12. LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,** I WISH TO COMMEND THE OUTGOING LEADERSHIP OF UNZALARU AND ITS GENERAL MEMBERSHIP ONCE AGAIN FOR THE UNITY OF PURPOSE DEMONSTRATED OVER THE YEARS. AS YOU GO INTO THE ELECTIONS TOMORROW, REMEMBER TO CHOOSE WISELY.

THE CREDIBILITY OF YOUR UNION DEPENDS ON THE QUALITY OF LEADERS YOU CHOOSE FOR YOURSELVES.

**13.**IT IS NOW MY SINGULAR HONOUR TO OFFICIALLY OPEN THE 7<sup>TH</sup> UNZALARU QUADRENNIAL CONGRESS, TODAY, THE 21<sup>ST</sup> OF NOVEMBER 2024.

**GOD BLESS YOU, GOD BLESS ZAMBIA**

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH**