

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**  
**ON THE**  
**FOREST SECTOR**  
**BY THE**  
**THE MINISTER OF GREEN ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT (MR NZOVU), MP**

Madam Speaker, I wish to thank you sincerely for according me this opportunity to deliver a ministerial statement to this House and through this House the nation at large. This is regarding one issue of great importance and interest to the ‘New Dawn’ Government and Zambians at large; the forest sector.

Madam Speaker, forests are one of the most important natural resources from which citizens enhance their livelihoods through the provision of various products such as wood fuel and timber within the legal bounds of the law. Forests provide several ecological benefits that are cardinal to our attainment of sustainable socio-economic development, which include the following:

- (a) watershed protection, which is key in the provision of safe and clean water supply;
- (b) nurturing of the soil and protecting it from soil erosion, which is an important aspect for a highly agricultural country such as Zambia; and
- (c) forests help to sequester and store carbon dioxide, which is one of the main greenhouse gases responsible for climate change.

Madam Speaker, it is for such reasons as stated earlier that hon. Members of this House will appreciate the provisions of the Forests Act No. 4 of 2015, which provides for:

- (a) the security of forest resources for the benefit of the current and future generations;
- (b) conservation and protection of ecosystems, particularly land, wildlife and water supplies of strategic importance;
- (c) improved forest resource management and sustainable utilisation of forest resources at both national and local levels;
- (d) the management of major water catchments and headwaters; and
- (e) meeting the social, cultural and economic needs of local communities.

Madam Speaker, notwithstanding the above, the Government has observed with great concern high levels of illegalities in relation to the country's forestry resources, including the following:

- (a) the mushrooming of settlements in protected forest areas, including watershed areas, resulting in the loss of 33 per cent of forest cover across the country;
- (b) the uncontrolled harvesting, trade and export of indigenous valuable timber species such as mukula;
- (c) the increased and illegal cutting down of trees for charcoal production; and
- (d) quarrying, sand mining and mining of manganese and other minerals.