

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
ON HIS
EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT MR HAKAINDE HICHILEMA’S VISIT TO THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA FOR THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE 76TH
SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
BY THE
HON. MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION
(MR KAKUBO), MP

Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present to this august House a report on the visit to the United States of America (USA) by the seventh President of the Republic of Zambia, Mr Hakainde Hichilema, who attended the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in the USA. The Republican President was amongst seventy-eight Heads of State and Government who travelled to the USA for the UNGA and high-level segment meetings from 20th to 28th September 2021.

Madam, the President was accompanied in a lean delegation by the hon. Minister of Finance and National Planning, Dr Situmbeko Musokotwane, and the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs and National Cooperation. The session of the UNGA was held under the following theme:

“Building resilience through hope to recover from COVID-19, rebuild sustainability, respond to the needs of the planet, respect the rights of people and revitalise UN relations”

The UNGA high-level segment was presided over by His Excellency Mr Abdulla Shahid of the Maldives, President of the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Madam Speaker, the President’s visit to the USA comprised of two segments covering both multilateral and bilateral engagements in both New York and Washington DC. The highlight of

this visit to the USA was the meeting with the Vice-President of the USA and, of course, the Secretary-General of the UN in New York.

Madam, the UNGA is the main policy making body of the global family of nations. It provides a unique platform for multilateral discussions of a broad spectrum of international issues, including peace, security and developmental issues across the globe.

Madam, President Hakainde Hichilema also delivered his maiden speech to the UN assembly on 21st September 2021, which was the first day of the general assembly. In the President's historic speech, which as this House is aware, received overwhelming national and global accolades, he eloquently projected the economic transformation agenda of our country, which resonated well on the global stage.

Madam Speaker, I would like to strongly encourage any hon. Member of this august House that may have neither read nor watched the video of the President's Speech to do so. My ministry is ready to avail hard copies as well as links to this important and well celebrated speech. In addition to delivering his maiden speech, the President, Mr Hakainde Hichilema, also participated in four critical virtual summits that covered key topics that are critical to our national development agenda. These included:

- (a) Sustainable Development Goals;
- (b) the 2021 Food System Summit;
- (c) the high-level dialogue on energy; and
- (d) the global COVID-19 Summit.

Madam Speaker, in response to the overwhelming global goodwill that the President continues to receive since his landmark victory in the last election, a series of bilateral meetings were held with world leaders. These included the following:

- (a) a meeting with the Secretary-General of the UN, an appointment that is not easy to obtain, especially during UNGA;
- (b) a meeting with the President of the European Council, at their request;
- (c) a meeting with the President of Austria, at their request; and
- (d) a meeting with the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), at their request, among others.

Madam Speaker, I am aware that some hon. Members of this House may have expressed reservations about the President's trip to New York to attend the UNGA. Considering the gravity of the challenges we face as a nation, I wish to categorically and respectfully state that it was necessary for the Republican President to attend these meetings.

Madam, hon. Members will agree that there is merit in having face to face meetings with leaders of influence across the globe, especially when you have challenges at home. It is for this reason that the President of the Republic of Zambia, Mr Hakainde Hichilema, had to proceed to Washington DC, where a broad range of meticulously selected high-level meetings were held in line with the economic transformation agenda of the 'New Dawn' Government.

Madam, the President had a rare opportunity to meet with Ms Kamala Harris, the Vice-President of the USA at the White House. This visit to the White House was historic. This marks the first time in more than two decades that a sitting Zambian President met with the top leadership of US Government. Only two other sitting Zambian Presidents have met with the top leadership of the USA at the White House since our independence more than half a century ago.

Madam Speaker, allow me at this point to highlight the visits of sitting Zambian Heads of State at the White House that have been officially documented by both the US and the Zambia Government: