

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**  
ON THE  
STUDENTS LOANS AWARDED TO FIRST YEAR STUDENTS AT THE COPPERBELT  
UNIVERSITY FOR 2018/2019 ACADEMIC YEAR  
BY THE  
THE HON. MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, PROF. LUO, MP

Mr Speaker, I wish to thank you most sincerely for according me this privilege and opportunity to respond to a Point of Order raised by the hon. Member of Parliament for Monze Central and Leader of the Opposition, Mr Jack Mwiimbu, MP, regarding the award of students loans to first year students at the Copperbelt University (CBU).

Sir, it is important that before I give this ministerial statement, I emphasise the fact that the Patriotic Front (PF) Government attaches a lot of importance to education, and in particular, high education, skills development and entrepreneurship. This is because education is not only a precursor to economic development for any country but it is also a social and economic equaliser which enables the have-nots to have a fighting chance of living an economically independent and prospective life.

Mr Speaker, it is because of this realisation that my Government places a high premium on education and this is evidenced by the increasing investments in education over the last few years, both in terms of infrastructure development as well as support to the learning environment and support students. In this regard, despite the austerity measures which the Government has embarked on, and the prudent fiscal discipline exhibited in the 2019 Budget which has resulted in budget cuts across the Board, the Government decided to retain student support as at the 2018 provisions.

Mr Speaker, it is important to note that although the Government retained the same budget for student support in 2018, the main recipient of student support, namely, the University of Zambia (Unza) and the CBU increased tuition and other fees, thereby increased the cost of training a student and subsequently, the cost to the Government of supporting students. The two