

FRIDAY, 2 NOVEMBER, 2018

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

2018/2019 RAINY SEASON FORECAST

THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION, MR MUSHIMBA

Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity you have granted me to give this ministerial statement on the 2018/2019 rainfall forecast. I felt it judicious to update the nation through this august House on the upcoming rainy season that may give rise to positive and negative impacts on the livelihoods of many across the country.

Mr Speaker, weather and climate information supports informed decision making and planning across all socio-economic spheres and contributes to national development. Climate information is cardinal to support our aspirations to enhance economic diversification and job creation, poverty and vulnerability reduction. It is also important for creating resilience and adapting to climate variability and climate change that we are experiencing as a global.

The adverse impact of climate variability and climate change are obvious as manifested in the 2017/2018 rainy season where many parts of the country experienced extreme weather conditions ranging from prolonged dry spells in December and January to flooding in February and March. The dry conditions damaged crops and reduced crop production while the floods caused damage to infrastructure such as roads and bridges.

In addition, Mr Speaker, during the 2017/2018 rainy season, crop production was also threatened by outbreaks of army worms which ravished maize fields countrywide. These pest outbreaks, including their development and movement, are directly controlled by weather and climate conditions. Therefore, weather and climate information is vital for the mitigation and fight against agricultural pest pandemics.

Mr Speaker, the 2018/2019 rainfall forecast generally indicates that much of Zambia is likely to receive normal to below normal rainfall during the 2018/2019 rainy season. The rainy season