

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

RECENT WEATHER PATTERNS

The Minister of Transport and Communication (Mr Mushimba)

Mr Speaker, I wish to express my sincere gratitude for the opportunity that has been accorded to me to give this ministerial statement on the weather patterns that have caused prolonged dry conditions and floods in some parts of the country. I felt duty bound to update the nation on the weather patterns for the 2017/18 Season and provide the current and future expected patterns since they affect the livelihoods of many of our people across the country.

Sir, you may recall that on 5th October, 2017, I officially issued the 2017/18 Rainfall Season Forecast. Generally, the forecast indicated that Zambia was going to experience normal to above normal rainfall. The advisory information issued with the seasonal forecast included the possible occurrence of flash floods and floods, infrastructure damage, occurrence of water borne and diarrhea diseases such as cholera as well as the occurrence of army worms.

Mr Speaker, whereas the rest of the country received rainfall on time in the early weeks of November, 2017, the 2017/2018 rainfall season commenced late over the Western, Southern and Lusaka Provinces, which only received rainfall in the first week of December, 2017. The beginning of December was characterised by good rainfall across the country until 24th December, 2017, when the southern half of the country started experiencing dry conditions.

Sir, the 2017/2018 season has seen poor rainfall distribution, particularly over the southern half of the country. The most affected provinces have been the Western, Southern, Lusaka and Central Provinces, including the southern districts of the Eastern Province. The weather patterns in these areas were characterised by dry spells and heat stress for the most part of January, 2018. This was followed by heavy rainfall and flash floods in February, 2018.