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**STATEMENT BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE MS NELLY B K MUTTI, SC, MP,
FAPRA, SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF ZAMBIA, DURING THE
GENERAL DEBATE ON THE TOPIC:**

PARLIAMENTARY ACTION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE

**PREPARED FOR:
THE GENERAL DEBATE AT THE 150th INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU)
ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS TO BE HELD IN TASHKENT,
UZBEKISTAN, APRIL, 2025**

APRIL, 2025

Madam President

On behalf of the Parliament of Zambia, I' am honoured to join you at this important Assembly, to share and echo our experiences on the topic for general debate on Parliamentary Action for Social Development and Justice.

Madam President,

Legislators are the 'power houses', as we play a crucial role in fostering social development and promoting justice through the crafting of laws, ensuring government accountability, and championing policies that promote social welfare and equity that address poverty, education, healthcare, employment, gender equality, and social inclusion, ensuring that no segment of society is left behind.

Madam President,

Poverty remains a critical global challenge, despite notable progress under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The pace of poverty reduction has slowed significantly, with the period from 2020 to 2030 at risk of becoming a lost decade in the fight against poverty. It is saddening to note that nearly 700 million people live on less than \$2.15 per day with three-quarters of those experiencing extreme poverty residing in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Madam President,

Zambia, like many developing nations, faces persistent poverty, with approximately 54% of its population living below the poverty line.¹ Zambia has reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to the principles enshrined in the Copenhagen Declaration and the programme of action, to guide its social development efforts such as the Social Cash Transfer (SCT) programme that has been implemented in Zambia that provides financial support to vulnerable groups. Further, the Zambian Government has expanded social safety nets aimed at supporting vulnerable populations, and investments in agricultural modernisation to enhance food and nutrition security for all.

Madam President,

The Zambian Government has established a number of Social Insurance Schemes which are primarily focused on protecting formal sector workers against retirement, disability and survivorship risks. Two such schemes are the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIMA) and the Workers Compensation Control Board. The other contributory schemes include pension schemes under the National Pension Scheme Authority, Public Service Pension Fund, Local Authority Superannuation Fund and other occupational schemes offered by the private sector.²

¹<https://www.unicef.org/zambia/social-policy>

²https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_mas/@program/documents/genericdocument/wcms_801342.pdf

Madam President,

Further, in an effort to promote social inclusion and building societies, you may wish to note that the Zambian Government has enacted the Constituency Development (Amendment) Act, No. 1 of 2024. This Act provides for the decentralisation of the management, disbursement, utilisation and accountability of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF). The CDF which was introduced in Zambia in 1995 as a tool to facilitate the delivery of public developmental goods and services directly to local communities, was in the 2025, National Budget increased significantly from Zambian Kwacha (ZMW) 30.6 Million in 2024 (US\$ 1.06 Million) to Zambian Kwacha (ZMW) 36.1 (US\$ 1.24 Million) in 2025, in all the 156 Constituencies in the country. This massive increase in the CDF has led to unprecedented development in community-selected projects such as school facilities, health clinics, water supply systems, youth, women and community empowerment, secondary boarding schools and skills development bursaries. *Ladies and Gentlemen*, the CDF in Zambia has been touted as the "**game changer.**"

Madam President,

In addition, in an effort to promote social inclusion in Zambia, the Government has also introduced free education from early childhood education (ECE) to Grade 12, as well as Skills Bursaries for those who dropped out of school. The Government launched the Fertiliser Support Programme (FSP) which was later renamed the Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP) and the Sustainable Agriculture Financing Facility

(SAFF) meant to improve access to agricultural inputs and providing small-scale farmers access to financial resources.

Madam President,

The Assembly may wish to learn that Zambia has also put in place various laws that specifically addresses discrimination and promote equality in the workplace. For example, the Constitution of Zambia prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, gender, religion, ethnicity, or disability. Furthermore, the Employment Act and other labour-related legislation contain provisions that prohibit discrimination in employment practices. These laws aim to create a fair and inclusive work environment where individuals are judged based on their skills and abilities rather than their personal characteristics.³ Other pieces of legislation include but not limited to the following:

- i) ***the Employment Code Act No. 3 of 2019***, an Act to regulate the employment of persons and prohibit discrimination at an undertaking;
- ii) ***the National Health Insurance Act No. 2 of 2018***, an Act to provide for sound financing for the national health system;
- iii) ***the Gender and Equity Act No. 22 of 2015***, An Act to establish the Gender Equity and Equality Commission; and
- iv) ***the Persons with Disabilities Act No. 6 of 2012***, an Act to promote the participation of persons with disabilities with equal

³<https://www.studocu.com/row/messages/question/6758590/how-do-the-laws-in-zambia-protect-employees-rights-and-still-promote-equality-and-diversity>

opportunities in the civil service, political, economy, social and cultural spheres.

Madam President,

As I conclude allow me to state here that as Parliaments, we play a critical role in advancing social welfare; ensuring economic opportunities; and protecting human rights.

As societies continue to evolve, it is imperative for us to remain proactive in addressing emerging social challenges. By enacting progressive laws, promoting inclusive policies, and holding Governments accountable. The establishment and strengthening of pre legislative and post legislative mechanisms are the panacea in enhancing parliamentary action for social development and justice.

I THANK YOU
