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**PRESS STATEMENT BY THE CHIEF GOVERNMENT SPOKESPERSON ON THE DECISIONS MADE BY CABINET AT THE 15TH (SPECIAL) CABINET MEETING HELD AT MULUNGUSHI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE ON WEDNESDAY, 10TH JUNE, 2020**

His Excellency the President Dr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu called for the 15th Special Meeting to deliberate on important policy matters aimed at providing policy guidance. The following were the decisions made:

**1. Revised National Intellectual Property Policy.**

Cabinet approved the Revised National Intellectual Property Policy for implementation by various stakeholders in both Government and outside Government.

Cabinet is convinced that with the Policy in place, this will ensure effective and efficient use of intellectual property as an instrument for stimulating socio-economic, industrial, technological and cultural development. The focus of the Revised Policy is to strengthen capacities for innovation, creativity, research and development, essential for knowledge generation, product and process development. The Policy will protect innovators and researchers through patents, copyright and trademarks, which enable people to earn recognition or financial benefit from what they invent or create.

**2. Ratification of the African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection.**

Cabinet also approved the ratification of the African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection. The African Union Convention represents commitments by Member States to take measures on a range of issues, including cybercrime, cyber security, electronic transactions, and protection of personal data.

The Convention will facilitate Member States to formulate appropriate legal frameworks that will empower their digital citizens, and ensure that their respective online environment is trusted, safe, beneficial and empowering to all individuals.

There has been a rise in the use of Information Communication Technologies in the country which calls for protection of personal data of the citizens not only within but across the continent. Cybersecurity is important because it encompasses everything that pertains to protecting our sensitive data, personally identifiable information (PII), protected health information (PHI), personal information, intellectual property, data, and governmental and industry information systems.

### **3. Railways (Repeal) Bill, 2020.**

Cabinet approved in principle, the introduction of a Bill in Parliament to repeal and replace the Railways Act, Cap. 453 of 1984 in order to reform the rail transport subsector.

Cabinet agreed that it is important to enhance private sector participation through the open access regime in order to develop and sustain the rail subsector. The creation of open access rules and regulations will allow private sector players to access the railway system as long as they meet the conditions prescribed and do not exceed design capacity of the particular railway. This decision of Cabinet might even allow companies such as those in the mining sector to run railway companies of their own operations.

The current structure of the sub-sector and the railway legislation is that the sub-sector entirely depends on the Treasury as the main financier. Therefore, Government is required to finance the railway infrastructure, rolling stock and workshop equipment.

With increased investment in the road infrastructure in the country, especially, since 2013, road transport has been depended upon for transportation of goods and services and this has increased the cost of maintaining the roads. There is need, therefore, for a renewed policy and planning to facilitate infrastructure development for rail transport and also encourage private sector investment in the rail subsector.

#### **4. Appointment of Members of the Board of National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council.**

Cabinet approved an eleven (11) member Board of the National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council in accordance with the provisions of section five of the National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council Act, No. 10 of 2002 of the Laws of Zambia.

The National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council is currently operating without a Board following the expiration of the term for the previous Board. This has resulted in underperformance of the National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council as certain key policy matters that require the decision of the Board cannot be made in the absence of the Board members. The Board is required to provide strategic direction to the National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council in order to ensure corporate governance and attainment of its functions as stipulated in the Act.

#### **5. Closure of the Zambia National Provident Fund Member Accounts.**

Cabinet approved the closure of the Zambia National Provident Fund (ZNPF) member accounts, which are being administered by the National Pension Scheme Authority (NAPSA) on a custodial basis.

It is necessary to close the Zambia National Provident Fund member accounts and pay out all the beneficiaries because the assets of the Fund were depleted by July, 2015. Since then, benefits have continued to be paid out from the National Pension Scheme funds. Any further delay may have a negative financial impact on the National Pension Scheme.

The major concern has been that the ZNPF liabilities grow by an effective interest rate of 27.3 percent per annum, which is higher than the investment return on the National Pension Scheme which, on average, is at 16 percent per annum. Currently, the benefit pay out under ZNPF consists of 99 percent interest, and 1 percent as principal.

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CABINET OFFICE  
**LUSAKA**

10TH JUNE, 2020