



**REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA  
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE**

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY  
HONOURABLE REUBEN M. PHIRI, MP  
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE**

**AT THE GRADUATION CEREMONY FOR THE 2ND CERTIFICATE IN  
GENERAL AGRICULTURE HELD AT  
MPONGWE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE**

**16<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2023.**

- **YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESSES AND OTHER TRADITIONAL LEADERS PRESENT**
- **THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER- MPONGWE DISTRICT;**
- **THE PRINCIPAL OF THE ZAMBIA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE HERE IN MPONGWE**
- **THE AREA MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT;**
- **CIVIC LEADERS PRESENT;**
- **OTHER SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS PRESENT;**
- **SPONSORS OF VARIOUS AWARDS;**
- **MANAGEMENT AND MEMBERS OF STAFF OF THE ZAMBIA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE - MPONGWE;**
- **GRADUATING STUDENTS;**
- **DISTINGUISHED INVITED GUESTS;**
- **ALL PROTOCOLS OBSERVED.**

IT IS MY HONOR AND PRIVILEGE TO OFFICIATE AT THIS YEAR'S GRADUATION CEREMONY FOR THE STUDENTS WHO HAVE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THEIR TRAINING AND OBTAINED CERTIFICATES IN GENERAL AGRICULTURE.

LET ME START BY CONGRATULATING THE NEW GRADUATES FOR ACHIEVING THIS HUGE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL MILESTONE WHICH UNDOUBTEDLY WILL GIVE YOU A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN TODAY'S LABOUR MARKET.

I AM HAPPY TO BE INFORMED THAT A TOTAL OF NINETY (99) STUDENTS ARE GRADUATING TODAY, WITH CERTIFICATES IN GENERAL AGRICULTURE. I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE INDUSTRY WILL GAIN A LOT FROM THE NEW PROFESSIONALS WHO ARE JOINING THE SECTOR.

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

THE THEME FOR THIS YEAR'S GRADUATION CEREMONY IS "**AGRICULTURE POTENTIAL FOR INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH.**" THE THEME SPEAKS TO THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA TO DRIVE ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION THROUGH THE PROMOTION OF AGRICULTURE GROWTH BY INCREASING PRODUCTION AND PRODUCTIVITY.

IT IS GOVERNMENT'S DESIRE TO FACILITATE QUALITY EDUCATION AND AGRICULTURAL TRAINING, THAT MEETS THE DEMANDS OF THE INDUSTRY AND PREPARES GRADUATES FOR A FUTURE IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ON THE JOB MARKET.

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

GOVERNMENT APPRECIATES AND RECOGNISES THE SIGNIFICANT ROLE THAT THIS COLLEGE PLAYS IN THE FIELD OF AGRICULTURE BY PRODUCING HIGHLY TRAINED AND COMPETENT AGRICULTURE PERSONNEL. YOU MAY BE AWARE THAT HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IS A STRONG PILLAR IN OUR DEVELOPMENT AGENDA AS CONTAINED IN THE 8NDP. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IS ALSO ONE OF THE PILLARS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE AGRICULTURE TRANSFORMATION SUPPORT PROGRAMME (CATSP) THAT GOVERNMENT HAS DEVELOPED.

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

THROUGH THE SOON TO BE LAUNCHED (CATSP) GOVERNMENT HAS PRIORITISED AGRICULTURE BECAUSE OF ITS POTENTIAL FOR JOB AND WEALTH CREATION, HOUSEHOLD AND NATIONAL FOOD AND NUTRITION

SECURITY. GOVERNMENT HAS PRIORISED AGRICULTURE AS A SECTOR WHICH CAN CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO AGRICULTURE TRANSFORMATION AND THE IMPROVED LIVELIHOOD OF MANY FARMERS.

AMONG OTHER PRIORITIES, THE CATSP WILL ALSO IMPROVE AGRICULTURE TRAINING, THROUGH SUPPORTING BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE TRAINING INSTITUTIONS TO ENABLE THEM TO UPDATE THEIR CURRICULA THAT TAKE A TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH TO CROP, LIVESTOCK AND FISHERIES VALUE CHAINS.

**DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

THE IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURAL TRAINING IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT CANNOT BE OVER EMPHASIZED. FOR THIS REASON, THE MINISTRY WILL CONTINUE SUPPORTING AGRICULTURAL TRAINING INSTITUTIONS TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF QUALIFIED PROFESSIONALS, THAT ARE CAPABLE OF FINDING SOLUTIONS TO THE CHALLENGES THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR IS FACING.

**DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

AT THIS POINT, ALLOW ME TO ALSO COMMEND AND APPRECIATE MS TON KORSTEN FOR GIFTING THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE WITH WHAT WE

ARE TODAY CALLING ZCA- MPONGWE. I HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT IN 2019, A DUTCH FAMILY- MS TON KORSTEN AND HER BOARD IN THE NETHERLANDS WERE KIND ENOUGH TO HAND OVER THE THEN GEORGE KORSTEN VOCATIONAL TRAINING COLLEGE TO THE GOVERNMENT THROUGH MY MINISTRY.

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

FOLLOWING THE HANDOVER OF GKVTC, IN 2020 GOVERNMENT APPROVED ITS STAFF ESTABLISHMENT, AND 8 MEMBERS OF STAFF HAVE SINCE BEEN RECRUITED UNDER ZCA-MPONGWE ESTABLISHMENT. FURTHER GOVERNMENT HAS PLANNED FOR MORE STAFF TO BE DEPLOYED IN THE COMING YEARS TO RELIEVE THE COLLEGE FROM PAYING PART-TIME LECTURERS.

TO SUPPORT THE COLLEGE, THE MINISTRY HAS ALSO PROVIDED A VEHICLE IN THIS TO ENSURE UNINTERRUPTED TRAINING DELIVERY AT THE COLLEGE.

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

GOVERNMENT IS COGNIZANT OF THE MANY CHALLENGES FACED BY AGRICULTURAL TRAINING INSTITUTIONS AND THAT THE SHORTAGE OF ARABLE LAND IS ALSO ANOTHER CHALLENGE AMONG THE TRAINING

INSTITUTIONS. AS SUCH, GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO ENGAGING WITH THE ROYAL HIGHNESS TO ACQUIRE ADDITIONAL LAND FOR CONSTRUCTING STAFF HOUSES AND CREATING DEMONSTRATION SITES AND TO BE USED TRAINING.

FURTHERMORE, GOVERNMENT IS ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF THE SHORTAGE OF CLASSROOMS, HOSTELS AND FARM EQUIPMENT THROUGH THE INCREASED BUDGETARY ALLOCATIONS.

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

I AM CONFIDENT THAT ALL THE NINETY-NINE (99) GRADUANDS WILL MAKE SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR AND OVERALL NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT. TO THE GRADUANDS I WISH TO SAY THAT YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR LIES BEYOND FORMAL EMPLOYMENT IN GOVERNMENT. AS AGRICULTURE IS A BUSINESS AND THERE IS ROOM FOR EACH OF YOU TO VENTURE INTO BUSINESS AND BECOME POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS IN YOUR OWN RIGHT THEREFORE, WITH THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE YOU HAVE ACQUIRED, I IMPLORE YOU TO GO OUT THERE AND BE BUSINESS DEVELOPERS IN AREAS OF YOUR SPECIALISATION.

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

AS I CONCLUDE, ALLOW ME TO CONGRATULATE THE GRADUANDS ONCE AGAIN FOR THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS. TO THE COLLEGE MANAGEMENT, I SAY A JOB WELL DONE IN ENSURING THAT THESE GRADUANDS ARE EQUIPPED WITH THE NECESSARY SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE.

ALLOW ME TO THANK THE VARIOUS COOPERATING PARTNERS AND AWARD SPONSORS FOR THE WARM RELATIONSHIP YOU HAVE HAD WITH THE COLLEGE. I ENCOURAGE YOU TO CONTINUE SUPPORTING THE COLLEGE AS YOU ARE KEY PARTNERS IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

WITH THESE FEW REMARKS. IT IS NOW MY SINGULAR HONOUR AND PRIVILEGE TO OFFICIALLY OPEN THIS GRADUATION CEREMONY.

**I THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR ATTENTION.**