



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

**STATEMENT BY
HIS EXCELLENCY MR RUPIAH BWEZANI BANDA,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY
OF THE 10TH AFRICAN GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY ACT
(AGOA) MINISTERIAL FORUM**

9TH JUNE 2011

AT MULUNGUSHI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE

AT 09.00 HOURS

EXCELLENCIES, HEADS OF DELEGATIONS AND GOVERNMENTS FROM AGOA ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES;

REPRESENTATIVES AND HEADS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS,

EXCELLENCIES AMBASSADORS AND HIGH COMMISSIONERS

DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA, AND INDEED ON MY OWN BEHALF, I RECEIVE ALL OF YOU – AS EACH OF OUR 73 ETHNIC GROUPS WOULD SAY – WITH BOTH HANDS!

I ALSO WISH TO WELCOME ALL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE AFRICAN WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMME (AWEP), EMINENT U.S. AND AFRICAN PERSONS, AS WELL AS U.S. AND AFRICAN MEMBERS OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND CIVIL SOCIETY. I SALUTE EVERY INTEREST GROUP HERE REPRESENTED AND TRUST THAT OUR WELL-KNOWN ZAMBIAN HOSPITALITY WILL SERVE YOU WELL.

YOUR EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,

DURING THIS PERIOD JUNE 9-10, 2011, ZAMBIA WILL HOST THE 10TH AFRICAN GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (AGOA) FORUM, WHICH IS THE CORNERSTONE OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT'S TRADE POLICY WITH SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA. THE ZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT LOOKS FORWARD TO A HARVEST OF NEW OPPORTUNITIES ARISING FROM THE 2011 FORUM'S THEME: *"ENHANCED TRADE THROUGH INCREASED COMPETITIVENESS, VALUE ADDITION AND DEEPER REGIONAL INTEGRATION."*

ENHANCED TRADE WITH VALUE ADDITION IN THE CONTEXT OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION IS THE PREFERRED DIRECTION FOR ZAMBIA AND THE REST OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENT, ENDORSED IN RECENT YEARS BY THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC), THE COMMON MARKET FOR EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA (COMESA) AND INDEED THE AFRICAN UNION (AU). THE

SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS IMPORTANT CONVOCATION WILL IN THE NEAR FUTURE PROVE TO BE FAR-REACHING, CROSS-CUTTING AND TREND-SETTING.

THE 2011 FORUM MARKS THE 10TH YEAR THAT GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, BUSINESS LEADERS, AND CIVIL SOCIETY FROM AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND THE UNITED STATES ARE CONVENING TO PROMOTE TRADE, BUSINESS, AND INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES TOWARDS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA.

YOUR EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES

THE 10TH AGOA FORUM IS TAKING PLACE AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF THE RECENT GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS THAT AFFECTED US ALL. IN TERMS OF DIRECT ADVERSE IMPACT ON FINANCIAL STRUCTURES, SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA SURVIVED RELATIVELY UNSCATHED.

HERE IN ZAMBIA WE SAW THE PRICE OF OUR MAIN EXPORT, COPPER, DROP TO UNDER US\$3000 A TONNE. THE RIPPLE EFFECTS OF THE FINANCIAL CRUNCH WERE FELT ACROSS AFRICA, REDUCING EXPORT REVENUES AND SLOWING DOWN THE FULFILMENT OF DEVELOPMENT AID PLEDGES, TO CITE A FEW.

WE IN SUB SAHARAN AFRICA APPLAUD THE EFFORTS OF THE UNITED STATES UNDER THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION IN PROVIDING LEADERSHIP TO STABILIZE THE GLOBAL ECONOMY.

WE TAKE NOTE THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT WAS AMONG THE G8 COUNTRIES THAT DURING THE GLOBAL CRUNCH OPPOSED PROTECTIONISM AND EMBRACED FREE TRADE. ZAMBIA IS THEREFORE, MOST APPRECIATIVE OF THIS RARE OPPORTUNITY TO HOST THE 10TH AGOA MINISTERIAL FORUM WHICH WILL SERVE TO BROADEN HORIZONS OF TRADE BETWEEN AFRICAN NATIONS AND THE UNITED STATES.

YOUR EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,

SINCE ITS INCEPTION, AGOA HAS RESULTED IN THE CREATION OF MANY JOBS IN SUB SAHARAN AFRICA. IT IS ON RECORD THAT MORE THAN 300,000 JOBS HAVE BEEN CREATED IN AFRICA WITH US\$300 BILLION IN EXPORT EARNINGS AND NEARLY US\$30 BILLION IN NON-OIL EXPORTS TO AFRICA AT MINIMAL COST TO THE UNITED STATES TAXPAYERS.

MY GOVERNMENT IS FULLY SUPPORTIVE OF A NEW PROPOSAL ENTITLED *ENTERPRISES FOR DEVELOPMENT: A NEW POLICY APPROACH TOWARD AFRICA* WHICH CALLS FOR THE EXTENSION OF AGOA'S EXCLUSIVE DUTY AND QUOTA-FREE ACCESS TO THE AMERICAN MARKET FOR AFRICAN GOODS, AND THE INTENTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES ADMINISTRATION TO EXTEND AGOA TILL 2025.

I WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS, ESPECIALLY PROCESSED GOODS, FIND THEIR WAY ONTO AMERICAN SUPERMARKET SHELVES. ZAMBIA HAS JUST COMPLETED HARVESTING HER SECOND RECORD BUMPER MAIZE CROP OF 3 MILLION TONNES. WE DESPERATELY NEED TO FIND EXPORT MARKETS FOR SOME OF THIS MAIZE.

I SHOULD LIKE TO SEE AGOA ENGAGE MORE IN THE TRANSFER OF SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE. WITH A BETTER SKILLED WORKFORCE AFRICA CAN THEN ATTRACT MORE INVESTMENT FROM THE UNITED STATES, IN AREAS SUCH AS AGRO-PROCESSING, LIVESTOCK, HORTICULTURE, MANUFACTURE OF AGRICULTURAL INPUTS, ENERGY GENERATION AND OTHERS.

YOUR EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,

THIS YEAR'S FORUM WILL ALSO RECOGNIZE THE SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS ACROSS THE CONTINENT, THROUGH THE AFRICAN WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMME (AWEP). I AM ALSO AWARE THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT IS PASSIONATE ABOUT THIS PROGRAMME AND MY GOVERNMENT APPLAUDS AMERICAN EFFORTS IN UPLIFTING THE WELLBEING OF THE WOMEN-FOLK ON THE CONTINENT OF AFRICA.

THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN, AND THE RISE OF WOMEN AS ENTREPRENEURS IS TOP OF THE AGENDA HERE IN ZAMBIA, AS YOU WILL NO DOUBT LEARN DURING THE FORUM. ALSO EQUALLY IMPORTANT TO MY GOVERNMENT IS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF YOUTH ENTREPRENEURS. IN ALL THESE CONSIDERATIONS, ZAMBIA'S EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES HAVE DELIBERATELY ACCOMMODATED PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED PERSONS.

YOUR EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,

I WOULD INDICATE HERE THAT SOME AFRICAN NATIONS ARE NOT REPRESENTED HERE TODAY BECAUSE OF ONGOING SOCIO-POLITICAL INSTABILITY. THIS

REALITY REMINDS US ALL THAT THE ECONOMIC DIVIDENDS WE SEEK FROM AGOA CAN BE BEST REALIZED WHEN ALL AFRICAN COUNTRIES STRENGTHEN AND ENTRENCH SOUND DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES AND UPHOLD GOOD GOVERNANCE. PEACE AND SECURITY WITHIN AND ACROSS BORDERS ARE TWIN IMPERATIVES THAT ALL OF US MUST NOT FAIL TO WORK FOR.

THE PEOPLE OF AFRICA AND THE UNITED STATES ARE EXPECTING GREAT THINGS FROM THIS CONFERENCE. I THEREFORE, WISH YOU EVERY SUCCESS AND NOW DECLARE THE 10th AGOA MINISTERIAL FORUM OFFICIALLY OPENED.

GOD BLESS AGOA, THANK YOU.