

A Message from the President



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My Fellow Zambians,

The socio-economic problems we are currently experiencing are unprecedented in our country's history. These problems include poverty, hunger, ignorance, illiteracy, disease, widespread unemployment, disadvantaged children, crime, corruption, and moral decay. Besides, civil servants are not adequately remunerated and the payments of their meagre incomes or retirement benefits are sometimes delayed, education and training are not adequately catered for, the health care system cannot adequately meet the basic needs of the majority of Zambians, public infrastructure and services are deficient, taxes and interest rates are extremely high, and, among many other socio-economic problems, the national debt is still unsustainable.

While there are no quick fixes to any of the problems facing us as a nation, I believe there is a lot we can do to make each and every citizen to start experiencing some degree of improvement in their socio-economic well-being within 1 year. In other words, the problems we are confronted with are not insurmountable; they can be addressed easily through simple, practical and commonsense initiatives.

In November 2005, fellow Zambians, the Agenda for Change party sought to enter into a political alliance with Heritage Party headed by Brigadier-General Godfrey Miyanda in order to enhance our ability to design a practical, comprehensive and people-centered strategy for meeting your demands on the national government. In August the following year, the two parties agreed to work together in preparations for the 2006 general elections, and to support Brigadier-General Miyanda in his bid for the Republican presidency.

And we are still keen on working hand in hand with the Heritage Party and any other willing parties in seeking the mandate to form the national government in order to spearhead the creation of a more democratic, more peaceful, more prosperous, and more egalitarian society.

My fellow citizens, the Agenda for Change is a mass party founded on June 24, 1995 to pursue people-centered development projects and programs. As such, membership in the party is open to all Zambian citizens irrespective of their age, gender, skin color, current political alignments, ethnic identities, religious convictions, and/or professional affiliations.

At this juncture, please allow me to share my views with you concerning a few development-related issues which have been pressing hard upon my heart over the last 15 or so years. If I may, let me present these views in the form of national priorities.

Priority 1:

Existing Projects and Programs

The Agenda for Change party will adopt and faithfully implement all the national projects and programs that were initially started or planned by previous governments in Central Province, the Copperbelt Province, Eastern Province, Luapula Province, Lusaka Province, Northern Province, North-Western Province, Southern Province, and Western Province.

And we shall honour all existing bilateral and multilateral agreements, conventions and protocols formally consented to by previous Zambian governments with countries and institutions within the African Union and beyond.

Priority 2:

A Smaller National Government

Fellow Zambians, we shall: perform existing and planned government functions with only 10 Cabinet Ministers; abolish the positions of Deputy Minister, Provincial Minister, Provincial Permanent Secretary, and District Commissioner; initiate restrictions on leaders' trips to foreign countries; and, among many other cost-cutting measures, reduce the number of Zambia's foreign embassies and missions by half, as well as enhance their operations through advanced Internet portals.

The savings to be realized in this regard shall be invested in improving education and training, healthcare services, agricultural production and food secu-

rity, and so forth. We also want to apply the savings to be realized from getting rid of meaningless top-level positions in the national government on employing more civil servants, and on improving their conditions of service.

We shall also ensure that retirees and retrenchees from the civil service and privatized state companies are promptly paid their terminal benefits. It is high time we made it possible for them to enjoy the fruits of their labor! Besides, the envisaged cost-cutting measures will enable us to maintain VAT exemptions on raw food, agricultural inputs, water and sewerage, domestic transportation, books, magazines, newspapers, mosquito nets, and so forth.

Fellow citizens, we want to create a smaller and more efficient government that will not overburden tax payers or resort to heavy borrowing of funds to finance the provision of public services. In other words, we want to rescue our country from its current addiction to loans. It is high time we seriously embarked on the process of creating a government that will live within its means!

Priority 3:

Decentralization of Power

We shall devolve economic and decision-making power to provinces by creating semi-autonomous provinces to be administered by elected provincial governors and district mayors in order to make it possible for citizens nationwide to assume and exercise greater authority over the socio-economic affairs of their communities. Fellow Zambians, there is a need for you to elect leaders in your respective districts and provinces rather than have leaders like District Commissioners, Provincial Ministers and Provincial Permanent Secretaries imposed on you by the central government!

Priority 4:

Free Life-Saving Health Care

We shall provide free life-saving medical care to all Zambians that shall be respectful, that shall recognize personal dignity, and that shall adequately provide for personal privacy. Besides, we shall allocate some of the 37 video-mounted Nissan vans bought by the current government for use by Zambia News and Information Services (ZANIS) to the country's 9 provinces to be used by centrally located general hospitals. In due course, we shall acquire ground and air ambulances for use nationwide as funds become available.

And health care facilities and personnel will soon have a government that will address their needs and expectations with respect to medical supplies and equipment, housing, transportation, salaries and allowances, and retirement benefits.

In all, fellow Zambians, we are going to wage a vicious and relentless war against HIV/AIDS, malaria, cholera, diarrhea, cancer, tuberculosis, whooping cough, and other deadly diseases.

**Priority 5:
Free Formal Education**

Compatriots, we are going to abolish examination fees on inauguration day. Besides, we are going to abolish Grades 7 and 9 elimination examinations within 1 year of assuming office, and provide for free education through Grade 12. In March 2007, the National Assembly recognized what we have been preaching since 1995 by supporting the need to phase out Grades 7 and 9 final examinations.

But given the current bloated national government, free education from Grade 1 to Grade 12 will remain a pipe dream until the people elect leaders who are committed to the creation of a smaller and more efficient government that will perform existing and planned functions with fewer Cabinet Ministers, fewer Zambian embassies, no Deputy Ministers, no Provincial Ministers, no Provincial Permanent Secretaries, and no District Commissioners.

To promote scholarship and academic excellence in education and training, high-school graduates who shall obtain a Division 1 shall be automatically awarded scholarships upon being accepted at any Zambian college or university, but shall be required to maintain a "B" average in order to retain their scholarships.

Fellow citizens, all other high-school graduates and working Zambian men and women wishing to pursue further studies shall be granted with low-interest loans upon being accepted into classroom-based or correspondence-based study programs offered within Zambia. Loan recipients who shall graduate with "Distinction" shall be absolved of 75% of their debt obligations, while those who shall graduate with "Merit" shall be absolved of 50% of their debt obligations.

And all citizens who shall graduate from Zambian colleges or universities with "Distinction" shall be automatically awarded scholarships to pursue educational or training programs in foreign countries upon advising the government that they are accepted by accredited educational or training institutions in such countries.

Besides, we shall establish a teachers' council and an accreditation board to monitor, regulate and boost the standard and quality of formal education nationwide.

Compatriots, we will make a sustained effort to cater for the basic needs of the educational system. Some of the basic needs we have identified are the following: (a) schools and classrooms that are adequately equipped for both teaching and learning; (b) qualified, self-motivated and well-paid teachers or lecturers in every classroom; and (c) competent school administrators on competitive conditions of service, and adequate office supplies and fixtures.

The youth, fellow citizens, are our beloved country's most valuable treasures—they are the jewels of our Motherland! It is, therefore, surprising that

we have continued to pay lip-service to the educational and other basic needs of our country's youth.

The issue of Grade 12 students in private schools not being able to sit for examinations due to the lack of examination centers will also be tended to with the urgency it deserves. In this regard, we shall work closely with the Private Schools and Colleges Association (PSCA) to have all private schools registered as schools and equipped with examination centers at public expense. We need to be seriously concerned about the education of all Zambia's children, irrespective of whether they are in government-funded or privately operated schools.

**Priority 6:
Agriculture and Food Security**

We shall boost agricultural production through government-financed irrigation dams and canals, cattle re-stocking and disease control, a fertilizer subsidy at 50%, and zero value-added tax on agricultural inputs and raw food. Besides, we shall promote food canning, efficient marketing of agricultural produce, agribusiness, and agricultural schemes by municipalities as well as educational and training institutions in order to enhance Zambia's food security and self-sufficiency.

We shall also revitalize Farmer Field Schools nationwide to teach integrated plant nutrition in order to enhance soil productivity through the application of both mineral fertilizers and organic sources of plant nutrients.

Provisionally, we wish to designate our contemplated agricultural projects and programs as "Operation Food Security." We will strive to make food readily available and affordable in order to make "good milile" or "kulya bulotwe" the norm in each and every Zambian household within the shortest possible time!

**Priority 7:
Sustainable Rural Development**

We shall foster development in rural areas through attractive incentives for investors in such areas. And we shall provide adequate public services and facilities in such areas—including police protection, an inter-modal road network, postal services, fire protection, low-cost housing, rural electrification, and access to clean water, as well as educational, vocational, recreational, telecommunications, and health care facilities.

Priority in providing for these essential public services and facilities shall be given to resettlement schemes nationwide, such as: the Katikulula, Lukanda and Maimwene schemes in Central Province; the Kakolo, Kambilombilo, Lufwanyama, Lukanga North, and Kafubu West Dam schemes in the Copperbelt Province; the Chipangali-Madziatuba, Chipangali-Rukuzye, and Petauke schemes in Eastern Province; the Mansa, Mwense, Mukanga, and Kapako schemes in Luapula Province; the Kanakantapa, Kasenga, Rufunsa, and Yapite schemes in Lusaka Province; the Kanchibiya, Lufubu, Mufubushi and

Lukulu schemes, and the new scheme based in Chief Katyetye’s area in Northern Province; the Kazhiba, Litoya and Luwe schemes in North-Western Province; the Masasabi, Kasiya, Harmony, and Siamambo schemes in Southern Province; and the Kalumwange scheme in Western Province.

Fellow citizens, we shall also streamline the process of issuing title deeds and make it possible for the deeds to be issued in the shortest possible time.

**Priority 8:
Economic Growth and Job Creation**

Fellow citizens, we shall bolster job creation through heightened promotion of both private-sector investments and small business ownership through an ambitious “Operation Self-Employment” plan. Moreover, we shall reduce interest rates by 3 percentage points per year over a period of 4 years. And we shall reduce Pay As You Earn (PAYE), corporate taxes and value-added tax on January 1st of our second year in government as follows:

Personal Income Range	Current Rate	Proposed Rate
K500,000 or less per month	0%	0%
K500,001 to K1,200,000	25%	20%
K1,200,001 to K5,200,000	30%	25%
K5,200,001 or more per month	35%	30%
Corporate Tax (maximum):		30%
Value-Added Tax:		12.5%

Besides,

- (a) We want to achieve at least 5% annual growth in our national economy’s output the first year, and at least 7% annual growth thereafter;
- (b) We want to attain at least 2 percentage points annual reduction in unemployment in the first year, and at least 3 percentage points annually thereafter;
- (c) We want to attain at least 2% annual growth in per capita income;
- (d) We expect to attain a relatively high annual rate of inflation of around 20% owing to contemplated reductions in taxes and interest rates intended to stimulate both the supply of goods and the demand for goods in order to bol-

ster job creation and economic growth because we want to reverse the current emphasis on stabilizing inflation at the expense of job creation and economic growth; and

(e) We want to attain a 3% growth in exports the first year, and 5% annual growth thereafter, through an ambitious promotion of non-traditional exports (NTEs) and attractive incentives to local suppliers of products currently being imported.

Fellow Zambians, the 1-year delay in the implementation of some of our contemplated changes is intended to be a safeguard against careless and/or unnecessary changes that can culminate in undesirable negative effects on our beloved country's socio-economic system.

In matters relating to the economy and job creation, we shall earnestly seek the active involvement of the Zambian Association of Manufacturers (ZAM), the Zambia Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ZACCI), the Economic Association of Zambia (EAZ), the Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR), the Zambia Federation of Employers (ZFE), and the labor movement in the provision of decision inputs. The Minister for Commerce and Industry shall be expected to liaise with representatives of these organizations at the beginning of his/her tenure of office to outline the modalities for their involvement in this endeavor.

Fellow citizens, a comment regarding the rampant **casualization of labor** in Zambia today is perhaps in order at this juncture.

It has become common practice for companies to hire employees on part-time and temporary conditions of employment in order to circumvent the costs associated with catering for employees' housing, medical, vacation, terminal, and other benefits that are normally accorded to permanent or full-time employees. Besides, the high level of unemployment in the country has made desperate job seekers to willingly accept casual employment.

Moreover, the low incomes earned by individuals who are employed on permanent conditions of service have contributed to the casualization of labor by prompting such individuals to actively seek part-time jobs in order to supplement their low incomes.

As a result, a lot of Zambians today are subjected to a high level of job insecurity, unstable incomes and lack of housing, medical and other employment-related benefits. To redress the rampant casualization of labor, we shall:

(a) Create more jobs through lower taxes and interest rates designed to induce investments, savings and consumption in order to make job seekers less vulnerable to employers of casual workers.

(b) Provide for low-interest loans to small business prospectors through the nascent Zambia Development Agency (ZDA) to lessen the over-reliance by Zambians on employment in corporations.

(c) Reduce the costs borne by companies in providing for fringe benefits to their full-time employees through free life-saving healthcare for all Zambians, government-financed low-cost housing schemes, and improvements in social security and unemployment benefits. And

(d) Ensure that labor-related laws and regulations are not flouted by employers.

Priority 9:

Affordable Water and Electricity

My fellow Zambians, we are going to provide for strict and direct governmental superintendence over the supply of water and electricity to facilitate the charging of lower re-connection fees and lower rates and tariffs by utility companies, as well as provide for rural electrification and accessibility to clean drinking water nationwide. In this endeavor, we shall initiate cost-cutting measures to be adopted by suppliers of water and electricity as follows:

(a) We shall work with executives of water supply and sewerage companies in devising a standard and lean organization structure to be adopted by the companies, except private providers that exclusively serve their employees;

(b) We shall provide for a forum at which utility companies shall be afforded an opportunity to suggest viable ways and means by which the government could facilitate the process of making public utilities less costly to consumers; and

(c) We shall require all public utility companies to find ways and means of reducing marketing, public relations and administrative costs, and to seek low-cost suppliers of machinery, equipment, office fixtures and supplies, sub-contracted services, and so forth.

Both water and electricity provide a good case for special government incentives designed to make them affordable and accessible to the vast majority of citizens. Besides, a government needs to make a provision for losses by suppliers of water and electricity resulting from charging of affordable tariffs to be financed through the public treasury.

Fellow citizens, we cannot talk about electricity without considering other important sources of energy. Among other things, we shall provide for attractive incentives to the private sector to engage in the exploration and/or supply of other forms of renewable and environmentally friendly sources of energy—including natural gas, solar energy, wind-generated electricity, methanol, ethanol, and propane.

Moreover, we shall re-structure the Energy Regulation Board (ERB) in order to enhance its efficiency and effectiveness. And we shall work with the Zambia Association of Manufacturers (ZAM), Zambia Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ZACCI) and oil marketing companies in designing a

mechanism for pricing diesel, petrol, jet fuel, kerosene, bitumen, and related products that will take into account the needs of the transportation, manufacturing and agricultural sectors, among others.

And we shall also seriously consider the prospect of either reducing or completely phasing out the Strategic Reserve Fee (SRF) and value-added tax (VAT) on sources of energy.

Priority 10:

State-Financed Housing Schemes

We shall seek to convert the National Housing Authority (NHA) into an autonomous, self-sustaining and revenue-generating entity, which shall incorporate all existing national public housing programs. Its mandate shall include the following functions: (a) implementation of home ownership schemes for all civil servants; (b) provision of low-cost housing units for low-income families nationwide; (c) stipulation of fair eligibility requirements to be met by applicants for low-income public housing; (d) generation of rules of occupancy, and determination of rental and other related charges; and (e) management of a home-ownership scheme for low-income families to be financed through low interest mortgages.

In this endeavor, we shall also seek to place a moratorium on forced relocation of squatter compounds nationwide until:

(a) Low-cost public housing units are provided by the National Housing Authority (NHA) and/or the Zambia National Building Society (ZNBS); and

(b) Site and service areas designated by local authorities for re-settlement are furnished with running water, electricity, public transportation routes and portals, and other essential public services and facilities.

To bolster the availability of low-cost building materials nationwide, we shall provide attractive incentives designed to induce investments in the production of cement, timber, window panes and frames, paint, bricks, roofing materials, doors and door frames, and construction equipment.

With respect to street vendors' makeshift stalls or "tuntemba," which have sprang up in town centers across the country, we recognize that they are an important source of income for so many of our fellow citizens who cannot find jobs in the formal sector. As such, we shall work closely with municipal authorities and chambers of commerce and industry to provide secure, hygienic and low-cost retail stands in town centers, which are the major customer bases for street vendors.

In this connection, we welcome the passage of the Markets and Bus Stations Act Number 8 of 2007, which places the control of markets and bus stations under management boards consisting of representatives of local authorities, marketeers, bus operators, consumers, and other relevant stakeholders. The

Act will certainly enable consumers, vendors and other stakeholders to participate actively in making decisions that have a bearing on their welfare.

**Priority 11:
Caring for Disadvantaged Citizens**

We shall make an earnest effort to care for adults and children who are economically and/or physically disadvantaged through such institutions as the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ZAPD), Children In Need (CHIN), the Zambia National Federation of the Blind (ZNFB), the Zambia Heroes and Freedom Trust (ZHAFT), the Salvation Army, the Zambia Red Cross Society, Twalumba Senior Citizens Organisation (TWASCO), the Senior Citizens Welfare Foundation (SCWF), the Zambia Interfaith Networking Group on HIV/AIDS (ZINGO), independent operators of orphanages nationwide, and many other non-governmental organizations and foreign governments.

We shall work closely with Disabled Persons' Organizations (DPOs) in identifying and meeting the educational, training and other basic needs of disabled Zambians as provided for in Article 112(f) of the Republican constitution, and by the Persons with Disabilities Act of 1996. Besides, we shall ensure that:

- (a) All public transportation vehicles, business premises and public buildings are accessible to persons with disabilities;
- (b) Disabled persons are represented in the governance of the country through presidential appointments; and that
- (c) The "Nothing about us, without us" slogan of the international disability movement is supported and promoted through active participation by disabled persons in the generation and implementation of government policies that affect them.

Compatriots, we would certainly be amiss not to recognize the vital role being played by these non-governmental organizations and foreign governments in catering for the basic needs of disadvantaged citizens nationwide.

With respect to the unemployed youth who are currently roaming the streets, we shall fully and promptly revive and revitalize the Zambia National Service (ZNS) production camps and make it possible for them to enroll in government-financed entrepreneurial and other skills-training programs to be offered in the camps on a voluntary basis.

The Chiwoko ZNS Camp in Katete, the Kitwe ZNS Camp, and the Chishimba ZNS Camp in Kasama shall periodically recruit unemployed youth to pursue vocational training programs—which shall include courses in carpentry, auto-mechanics, agriculture, bricklaying, plastering, tailoring and designing, and shoe-making and repairing. The vacated refugee camps dotted across the country shall also be utilized for skills-training purposes.

Graduates from skills-training centers shall be encouraged to form joint business ventures, and shall be provided with start-up kits and financial resources through relevant government ministries, the Youth Empowerment Program, and the Resettlement Department of the Office of the Republican Vice President. And institutions like the King George Center in Kabwe shall be expanded to accommodate larger numbers of graduates.

Priority 12:

The Fight against Corruption

Fellow Zambians, corruption, as The Post newspaper advised African legislators in an article entitled "African Leaders and the Fight against Corruption" of August 11, 2005, "can only be fought resolutely and relentlessly by people who are free from it." Accordingly, we shall relentlessly seek leaders with a high sense of morals and probity, demonstrated through their previous positions.

Besides, we shall strictly enforce the code of conduct established for deputy ministers, Cabinet Ministers and members of the National Assembly by the Parliamentary and Ministerial Code of Conduct Act of 1994.

Moreover, we shall require all educational and training institutions in the country to provide basic ethics education by incorporating a topic on ethical and professional conduct in selected core subjects or courses. Such a measure is certainly in the public interest because "to educate a [person] ... in mind and not in morals," as the late Theodore Roosevelt of the United States once warned, "is to educate a menace to society."

Priority 13:

The Fight against Crime

Fellow Zambians, we shall combat crime and other social vices nationwide through localized police units (including paramilitary units) by allocating more money to the police units to enhance their capabilities in terms of communications, transportation, crime-fighting gadgets and equipment, and security cameras for installation in town centers and on major roads and streets.

Moreover, we shall allocate most of the 37 video-mounted Nissan vans initially allocated to the Zambia News and Information Services (ZANIS) to the country's provinces for use by the civil police in crime-fighting and developing sound police-community relations. And we shall provide for the hiring and training of at least 13,000 police officers within 2 years of assuming office in order to bolster the work of the 14,000 officers who are currently serving the nation.

Further, we shall provide for the electrification of houses for police officers nationwide within 12 months of assuming office. There are just too many law-enforcement officers who are having a hard time preparing meals and uniforms in readiness for work due to the lack of electricity in their houses.

Besides, fellow citizens, we would be amiss here not to remind ourselves of what happened in July 2001. In that year, our beloved country was openly disgraced by Scotland Yard's refusal to assist local law enforcement officers in investigating the assassination of Mr. Paul Tembo. Clearly, we should not continue to embarrass ourselves by relying on foreign institutions to conduct credible and state-of-the-art criminal investigations.

We shall, therefore, create an autonomous and non-military national criminal investigations and research center to be run by local experts, and to be equipped with laboratories and other essential facilities for processing and analyzing nebulous crime-related evidence from local police units. The center shall also assume responsibilities relating to fire arm control and registration. It shall be referred to as the "Fire Arms and Criminal Investigations Bureau."

Priority 14:

Competent Government Leaders

Compatriots, socio-economic conditions in the domestic, regional and global environments are changing constantly. As such, yesterday's approaches to the resolution of our country's problems are not likely to do an effective job; after all, they have evidently and lamentably failed to do the job in the past! We, therefore, need leaders who are willing to develop new attitudes, skills and strategies in order to wrestle successfully with the complex and volatile socio-economic conditions of our time.

As such, we shall expect all government leaders to consider themselves as being on "job-on-training" regardless of the extent of their previous experience in politics and governance. And such leaders shall be technocrats, and not clueless figureheads! Accordingly, the citizens we are considering for top-level government positions come from a diversity of institutional settings—including the Bank of Zambia, the World Bank, educational and research institutions within Zambia and in the Diaspora, professional associations, the civil service, the business sector, and existing political parties and alliances.

They are among Zambia's sons and daughters who are adjudged to possess the necessary knowledge and skills relating to the overall missions and objectives of the government ministries and agencies which they shall be expected to administer. Accordingly, they will translate our policies into concrete benefits for all Zambians.

Besides, we need leaders who understand the need to make a quick transition from campaigning to governing upon being appointed or elected to positions of authority. We also need leaders who recognize citizens' right to vote for candidates of their choice without being threatened that their communities would be excluded from the development process if they do not vote for candidates fielded by the ruling political party.

To us, every person and every place in our beloved country deserves a fair share of the national cake!

Fellow Zambians, we shall also make an earnest effort to promote the active participation of women in all spheres and facets of Zambian society through high-level presidential appointments at Cabinet and Permanent-Secretary levels. Also, each of Zambia's provinces shall be well-represented at Ministerial and Permanent-Secretary levels.

**Priority 15:
Promotion of Zambian Culture**

We shall make an earnest effort to preserve our country's national treasures, including national monuments, museums, and historical sites through the National Heritage Conservation Council (NHCC) and a new Ministry for Culture and Community Services. Besides, we shall promote our cherished cultural and traditional values, as well as promote traditional music and culture-related crafts.

Without the cherished cultures and traditions, which our chieftains nationwide are expected to play a vital role in preserving for their subjects and for posterity, we would have been a lost and bogus people.

In this endeavor, we shall, among other things, convert the National Cultural Center for Zambia (NCCZ) into a self-sustaining autonomous agency upon ensuring that it has an adequate sitting capacity, a modern art gallery, a well-furnished crafts workshop, a modern and well-equipped photographic and recording studio, and a modern and well-equipped printing press. And we shall expect NCCZ and the National Arts Council to work hand in hand in promoting culture nationwide.

In this connection, we shall provide for government subventions to support the local publication of biographies on notable citizens in any field of human endeavor. We have an obligation to catalogue the exemplary accomplishments of our fellow citizens for future generations.

We are, in this regard, thinking about outstanding individuals in sport, politics, journalism, broadcasting, music, art, business, teaching, science and technology, trade unionism, the military, law enforcement, social work or community service, civil rights, and traditional leadership, among many other facets and spheres of human endeavor.

The government subventions shall also be made available to support the publication of books on traditional ceremonies like the Mukulu Pembe, Kuomboka ceremony, the Shimunenga ceremony, Lwiindi, Mutomboko, Kulamba, Mbambala, the Lunda Lubanza, Chisemwa Cha Lunda, Lubinda Ntongo, the Likumbi Lya Mize, Inchibwela Mushi, Musaka / Jikubi, Chabalankata, N'cwala, Nsomo, Kunyanta Ntanda, Tuwimba, and Ukusefya Pa Ng'wena, among many others.

We shall also require municipal councils to provide for the naming of some of the new streets, parks, playgrounds, residential sites, and public buildings in their areas of jurisdiction with names of traditional ceremonies or deceased prominent Zambians.

Priority 16:
The Fragile Natural Environment

We shall provide adequately for the financial and material needs of the Environmental Council of Zambia (ECZ), created under the Environmental Protection and Pollution Control Act of 1990 to protect the environment and control pollution so as to provide for the health and welfare of persons and the environment. We want to make it possible for the Council to perform its mandate of coordinating environmental management efforts nationwide, fostering awareness about the need to protect the fragile natural environment, and enforcement of regulations pertaining to the control and prevention of air, water and solid-waste pollution.

Priority 17:
The Republican Constitution

A lot of people in our beloved country want a new Republican constitution that will incorporate the submissions they made to the Electoral Review Technical Committee (ERTC) and the Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) to be seriously considered in the constitution-making process, and to have it sooner rather than later. So, why impose anything else on them? In other words, I am saying, "Give the people what they want."

The ERTC and CRC have already done a commendable job in this regard. It is, therefore, irresponsible for the authorities to continue to keep the Draft Republican Constitution prepared by the CRC in December 2005 on the shelves, gathering dust.

By the way, the Republican constitution is not for a particular political party or clique of government leaders; it is a constitution for all Zambians—today and forever! I believe it is unforgiving for government leaders to fail to demonstrate the fact that they are individually and collectively accountable to the people. How is it possible that partisan and selfish interests can intoxicate leaders to the extent of making them to disregard the will of the people to whom they are supposed to be accountable?

Priority 18:
Libraries and the Internet

Compatriots, provincial governments shall be expected to provide and run public libraries in their areas of jurisdiction. The national government shall bolster the efforts of provincial governments in this endeavor through sustained financial and material support. And we shall strive to narrow what has been referred to as the "digital divide"—that is, the gap between people who have access to the Internet and those who do not have access to such a facility—by making the Internet available at centrally located public libraries nationwide. We want greater numbers of our people to gain access to the "information superhighway" for news, information, and goods and services from any part of the globe that are available through the Internet.

Priority 19:
Garbage Collection and Disposal

Zambia's towns and cities are currently experiencing serious problems at all stages of solid-waste management—that is, the collection, sorting, transportation, and disposal of garbage. Unfortunately, the accumulated garbage in our midst is a very serious health hazard. For instance, piles of uncollected solid-wastes facilitate the formation of pools of stagnant water and create breeding grounds for mosquitoes and, as such, expose residents to the deadly malaria parasite.

Besides, outbreaks of cholera, meningitis and other contagious diseases in the country have been directly linked to the absence of effective solid-waste disposal systems, together with the lack of potable water in some communities and unhygienic street-vending of foodstuff.

We shall, therefore, provide for adequate financial grants and incentives to local councils and private organizations in order to facilitate the regular collection and recycling of solid wastes, the production of biodegradable products which can naturally break down into elements that are less harmful upon being discarded, and the manufacturing of reusable products and parts of products.

Meanwhile, it is important to recognize the efforts of members of the MANGOKA Secretariat—who represent the residents of Marapodi, Ng'ombe and Kamanga residential areas in matters of sanitation and garbage collection and disposal in Lusaka city, and the Copperbelt-based Asset Holding Company.

We also appreciate the contribution of cooperative endeavors in solid-waste management and sanitation, including the Sustainable Lusaka Project (SLP) financed by Ireland Aid, the Lusaka-Dayton partnership created by the Lusaka City Council and the Dayton municipality in the USA, the "Keep Lusaka Clean" campaign, the "Make Zambia Clean and Healthy" campaign, the Zambian Red Cross Society door-to-door community health-education campaign, the Lusaka Solid Waste Management Project funded by the Danish Development Agency, and the Resource Cities Program sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Priority 20:
Sustained Peace and Stability

We shall foster the evolution of a society in which people's rights and freedoms shall be fully recognized and respected by the government through a new Ministry for Culture and Community Services; and a society in which ethnic, cultural, racial, and religious diversity shall be appreciated, tolerated and celebrated. Moreover, we shall relentlessly pursue lasting peace and stability within Zambia and the African Union, as well as foster sound relations between our country and all peace-loving nations worldwide.

Compatriots, what I have outlined thus far are great priorities for our beloved country. But these priorities are meaningless without our individual and collective commitment to pursue them. I, therefore, wish to ask of you today what the late John F. Kennedy asked of his fellow American citizens in his inaugural presidential speech in 1961: "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country."

My fellow Zambians, here is what we need to do for our beloved country: let us put our political alignments, tribal identities, religious convictions, and professional affiliations aside and give the Agenda for Change party the mandate to jump-start the country's socio-economic system so that it can adequately meet our basic needs and expectations, and the needs and expectations of future generations.

Please join us in our quest to redeem our Motherland from its current state of socio-economic decay and backwardness. Together, we can realize the benefits of independence, democracy and economic liberalization by means of simple, practical and commonsense solutions to the problems facing our beloved country.

May God bless you all, and may He also bless our beloved country.

Thank you.

Henry Kyambalesa
President, AfC Party
