

**SPEECH READ BY THE ZAMBIAN MINISTER  
OF COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT,  
HON. BATES NAMUYAMBA, M.P., AT THE  
WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION  
SOCIETY, GENEVA: 10 – 12 DECEMBER, 2003**

MR PRESIDENT,

HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT,

HEADS OF DELEGATIONS,

YOUR EXCELLENCIES, AMBASSADORS  
AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES

DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

ON BEHALF OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA, HIS EXCELLENCY LEVY PATRICK MWANAWASA, STATE COUNSEL, I WISH TO THANK THE SWISS GOVERNMENT, THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL AND THE ITU FOR ORGANISING THIS SUMMIT AND GIVING MY COUNTRY THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK AT THIS HIGH LEVEL FORUM.

THE ZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT, HAS GIVEN FULL SUPPORT TO THE HOLDING OF THE SUMMIT FROM ITS GENESIS AT THE INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION PLENIPOTENTIARY CONFERENCE IN MINNEAPOLIS, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, THROUGH TO THE ADOPTION OF THE PROPOSAL BY THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

**ZAMBIA HAS FURTHER SUPPORTED THE HOLDING OF THE SUMMIT THROUGH THE AFRICAN UNION, REGIONAL MEETINGS AND ALL THE INTERNATIONAL PREPARATORY MEETINGS.**

**MR. PRESIDENT**

**THE FOREGOING ACTS REAFFIRM OUR DESIRE AND CONVICTION THAT THE WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY WILL PROVIDE A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE WHOLE WORLD.**

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**FROM THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO ME, THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR BOTH THE DRAFT DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES AND PLAN OF ACTION WERE VERY DIFFICULT. IT IS GRATIFYING TO LEARN THAT THEY HAVE SINCE BEEN RESOLVED.**

**MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN**

**THIS IS THE FIRST HISTORICAL SUMMIT OF ITS KIND AND THE FIRST TIME FOR HEADS OF STATES AND GOVERNMENTS, THE CIVIL SOCIETY AND UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES TO GET TOGETHER TO DISCUSS ISSUES OF THE INFORMATION SOCIETY.**

WE NEED A SOCIETY THAT IS SUFFICIENTLY HONEST AND OPEN MINDED TO RECOGNIZE ITS PROBLEMS, SUFFICIENTLY CREATIVE TO CONCEIVE NEW SOLUTIONS AND SUFFICIENTLY PURPOSEFUL TO PUT THOSE SOLUTIONS INTO EFFECT.

IT SHOULD BE, IN SHORT, A SELF-RENEWING SOCIETY, READY TO PROVIDE SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS IT WILL NOT WAIT UNTIL TOMORROW TO RECOGNIZE.

**MR. PRESIDENT**

**THE WORLD IS AT A TURNING POINT AND IS BEING TRANSFORMED BY RAPID AND WIDE SPREAD POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES. THESE CHANGES ARE FUNDAMENTAL IN NATURE, MARKING THE SHIFT FROM THE INDUSTRIAL ERA TO THE NEW INFORMATION AGE.**

**ZAMBIA AND AFRICA AS A WHOLE ARE PARTICULARLY AFFECTED BY THE DIGITAL DIVIDE. WE ARE STRUGGLING TO PROVIDE FOR THE BASIC NEEDS OF OUR PEOPLE WHO ARE AFFECTED BY POVERTY AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS, SUCH AS HIV/AIDS, AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT.**

**MANY OF OUR PEOPLE HAVE NEVER MADE A PHONE CALL DESPITE BEING WITHIN EASY WALKING DISTANCE OF A TELEPHONE.**

**THE DOMINANT MEDIUM FOR ACCESSING INFORMATION IN AFRICA IS VIA RADIO AND TO A LESSER EXTENT, TELEVISION, MAKING MEDIA DIVERSITY AN IMPORTANT GOAL ON THE CONTINENT.**

**UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE CANNOT BE OBTAINED WITHOUT THE BUILDING OF THE RELEVANT TECHNOLOGICAL INFRASTRUCTURE.**



**UNFORTUNATELY, COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURES IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA ARE AMONG THE LEAST DEVELOPED IN THE WORLD. TELEDENSITY IN THE REGION IS AMONG THE LOWEST IN THE WORLD. THIS GREAT DISPARITY IS PERPETUATING THE IMBALANCE IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY BETWEEN AFRICA AND THE REST OF THE WORLD.**

**MR. PRESIDENT**

**MY GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF OUR CITIZENS AND ECONOMIC STRENGTH OF OUR SOCIETY AND TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF AN EQUITABLE AND PEACEFUL GLOBAL COMMUNITY.**

**IT THEREFORE CALLS FOR PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THE IDENTIFICATION OF POSSIBLE MECHANISMS FOR THE REALISATION OF THE RESOLUTIONS OF THIS SUMMIT, INCLUDING THAT OF THE DIGITAL SOLIDARITY FUND. WE THEREFORE WISH TO ASSOCIATE WITH OTHERS WHOSE GOALS ARE TO TRANSFORM THE DIGITAL DIVIDE INTO DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY.**

**WE TOO ARE VERY CONCERNED ABOUT EVER INCREASING INEQUALITIES IN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND IN THE ACCESS TO AND USE OF TECHNOLOGIES AND URGE THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO HELP ZAMBIA AND OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO BUILD THEIR CAPACITY IN NARROWING THIS GAP.**

**WE URGE THE SUMMIT TO SUPPORT REGIONAL INITIATIVES SUCH AS THE NEW PARTINERSHIP FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT (NEPAD), WHICH IS A VEHICLE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA.**

**MY GOVERNMENT IS IN THE PROCESS OF FINALIZING THE NATIONAL ICT POLICY, WHICH WILL ENABLE US REASSESS OUR DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES IN ORDER TO MAKE THE NECESSARY INVESTMENTS IN BUILDING A KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY.**

**MR. PRESIDENT**

**IT IS GRATIFYING TO NOTE THE SUMMIT HAS SET PRINCIPLES AND AN ACTION PLAN TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT, AND THE CHALLENGES OF CYBER SECURITY, INTERNET GOVERNANCE AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION FOR GLOBAL DISCUSSION AT THE HIGHEST GOVERNMENTAL LEVEL.**

**I AM CONFIDENT THAT ZAMBIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES ATTENDING THIS WORLD SUMMIT WILL ABIDE BY THE COMMITMENT THEY HAVE MADE SO FAR IN BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE, AND MAKE WIDER EFFORTS TO BUILD AN INCLUSIVE GLOBAL INFORMATION SOCIETY A SUCCESS. WE BELIEVE THAT THESE ARE CRITICAL STEPS IN NARROWING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE.**

**I THANK YOU.**