

# REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA



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## **STATEMENT MADE**

**BY**

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THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**AT THE**

**42<sup>nd</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION FOR  
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ON IMPROVING PUBLIC  
SECTOR EFFECTIVENESS**

February 4, 2004

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

May I start by joining other delegations in congratulating you and other Members of the Bureau on your election to lead the deliberations of this important Commission. I would like to assure you of my delegation's cooperation in this regard.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his report [E/CN.5/2004/5] on improving public sector effectiveness, which is one of the priority themes for the Commission.

My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the 77 on the theme.

Mr. Chairman,

Improving public sector effectiveness is essential to the promotion of social development, social justice and the well-being of our people. These sectors include Health, Education, Welfare, Housing and other Community amenities, as emphasized in the report of the Secretary-General. We also agree that the primary responsibility in providing these services rests on the Government. It is on this basis that most politicians are elected by their people, to whom they promised delivery of these services.

Mr. Chairman,

As we all know, the responsibility of any Government is beyond and above the provision of social services. There are other equally important complementary sectors such as agriculture, food security, manufacturing, construction, communication and transport, just to mention a few. It is also a known fact that Government responsibilities to its people require both human and financial resources. As much as Governments are committed to improve the delivery of social services to their people, most developing countries, particularly the Least Developed Countries, lack both human and financial resources.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation agrees with the views contained in the Expert Report, that given the situation in which developing countries are faced with, there is need for partnership between Government on one hand,

and the private sector and Non-Government Organization (NGOs) on the other. Such partnership can enhance the effort of the Government in the delivery of social services. The issues of accessibility, quality and productivity of such services can indeed be addressed.

Mr. Chairman,

The issue of financing for the social sector is crucial and needs to be addressed. As indicated in the report of the Experts, taxation remains the main source of public revenues. In practice, however, it has proved difficult in developing countries where the unemployment rate is very high, unmanageable external debt, high import bill and very low productive investment. Under such circumstances, the tax base is too narrow to sustain public expenditure needs, let alone, social sectors. It is clear that taxation as a means of revenue in developing countries has limitations given the above factors.

Mr. Chairman,

In addressing problems related to financing of the social sectors, which is the focus of our debate, there is need to explore all possible sources of finance and best way of delivery of social services depending on factors prevailing in each of our country. Although privatization brings the much need capital and an alternative means of social service delivery, it has its own disadvantages. Private Clinics and Private Schools in general, provide quality services but are beyond the reach of the majority poor population as they cannot afford high fees. In other words, the services provided by the private sector are for the rich people who mostly comprise less than 10 per cent of the population in developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

While we welcome the participation of the private sector and the NGOs in the financing and delivery of social services, the Government remains the primary provider of social services to all its people, irrespective of their gender, social and economic status in society. It is for this reason, that I appeal to the international Community to provide more technical assistance to developing countries, particularly LDCs like my country ZAMBIA, and to increase the Official Development Assistance (ODA) to the internationally agreed targets.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, I would re-state my Government commitment to improve the public sector effectiveness with the cooperation of the private

sector and NGOs. Given the circumstances that my country is in, Zambia will require financial assistance, from the international Community, including the United Nations. The cancellation of our external would go a long way in channeling the resources to improve the public sector effectiveness.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

md/lb.