



SPEECH

BY THE NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY BOARD CHAIRPERSON

DR PAUL ZAMBEZI

DURING THE RISK ASSESSEMENT TRAINING WORKSHOP

AT CRESTA GOLFVIEW HOTEL, LUSAKA.

6th APRIL, 2018.

SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS PRESENT

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANISATION REPRESENTATIVES

FACILITATORS OF THE WORKSHOP, DR. MASAMI TAKEUCHI, DR. BERT
POPPING AND DR. HELLEN KAJUJU

THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL BIOSAFETY
AUTHORITY AND FELLOW BOARD MEMBERS

STAKEHOLDERS IN BIOTECHNOLOGY AND BIOSAFETY

NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY STAFF

INVITED GUESTS

THE MEDIA

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

GOOD MORNING,

I AM DELIGHTED TO BE HERE. TO BE PART OF THIS WORKSHOP. SOME OF YOU HAVE BEEN HERE FOR THE PAST TWO DAYS, AND I HAVE BEEN RELIABLY INFORMED AND I HAVE ALSO OBSERVED THAT THE TRAINING HAS BEEN SO INTERESTING AND COMPREHENSIVE.

WE ARE HAPPY AS THE BOARD OF THE NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY ZAMBIA, TO HAVE JOINED THIS VERY IMPORTANT TRAINING SESSION AND HAVE A FEEL OF HOW RISK ASSESSMENTS SHOULD BE DONE IN ORDER TO ENHANCE DECISION MAKING.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

RISK COMMUNICATION IS VERY IMPORTANT IN ALL SECTORS OF LIFE AND FOR US AS REGULATORS OF THE GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS IN THE COUNTRY IT IS CRITICAL IN THAT WE CAN NOT WORK EFFECTIVELY IF WE DO NOT COMMUNICATE WELL BOTH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY.

WE ARE ALSO COGNISANT OF THE IMPORTANT ROLE THAT THE MEDIA PLAYS IN RISK COMMUNICATION. THEREFORE, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE MEDIA AND ALSO PROVIDE THEM WITH THE REQUIRED INFORMATION WHENEVER THEY NEED IT.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FAO EXPERTS FOR COMING TO FACILITATE THIS IMPORTANT TRAINING ON RISK ASSESSMENTS AND RISK COMMUNICATION.

I AM CERTAIN THAT THE TRAINING HAS CONTRIBUTED TO BUILDING THE CAPACITY ESPECIALLY FOR THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND THE AUTHORITY AS A WHOLE.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I AM AWARE THAT A NUMBER OF LESSONS AND GOOD PRACTICES HAVE BEEN LEARNT AND THAT THEY WILL GO A LONG WAY IN ENHANCING INSTITUTIONAL AND REGIONAL CAPACITIES.

SPECIFICALLY I AM AWARE THAT THE FOLLOWING ISSUES HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS KEY IN FURTHERANCE OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT. THESE INCLUDE

- BUILDING TECHNICAL CAPACITY IN THE SECRETARIAT
- DEVELOPING GUIDELINES AND STANDARD OPERATING PRODURES FOR CONTAINED USE AND CONFINED FIELD TRIALS
- THERE IS NEED TO ENHANCE CURRICULUM AT UNIVERSITIES TO ENSURE THAT STUDENTS ARE MADE AWARE OF KEY ELEMENTS IN BIOTECHNOLOGY AND BIOSAFETY AS IT RELATES TO REGULATIONS.
- THERE IS NEED TO ENHANCE AWARENESS OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND THE MEDIA
- THERE IS NEED TO CONDUCT A SURVEY IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH CONSUMER UNDERSTANDING ON GENETICALLY MODIFIED PRODUCTS
- THERE IS NEED TO CONDUCT A SURVEY IN ORDER TO QUANTIFY THE THREATS ON THE REGULATORY MECHANISMS
- THERE IS NEED TO COME UP WITH A REGIONAL COLLABORATIVE FRAMEWORK WHICH SHOULD HAVE THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS

- a. A ROSTER OF EXPERTS FOR THE COMESA REGION IN ORDER TO HELP ACCESSING EXPERTISE THAT INDIVIDUAL MEMBER COUNTRIES MAY BE LACKING.
- b. DEVELOP COMMON TEMPLATES FOR RISK ANALYSIS.
- c. CREATE A HOTLINE FOR DOSSIERS AS WELL AS ASSESSMENTS OF DOSSIERS REGIONALLY.

IN CONCLUSION,

I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE GAINED FROM THIS TRAINING WILL BE WELL UTILISED AND BENEFIT NOT ONLY THOSE OF US HERE BUT ALSO OUR KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF HUMAN, ANIMAL HEALTH AND A SAFE ENVIRONMENT.

LASTLY BUT NOT THE LEAST I WANT TO THANK THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANISATION FOR CO- FUNDING THIS WORKSHOP. WE ARE SO GRATEFUL. TO THE FACILITATORS I SAY JOB WELL DONE AND I HOPE THIS WILL NOT BE THE FIRST AND LAST TIME WE ARE SEEING YOU. TO THE PARTICIPANTS I HOPE YOU ARE MORE ENLIGHTENED ON RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK COMMUNICATION.

I THEREFORE, DECLARE THIS WORKSHOP CLOSED.

THANK YOU