



SPEECH MADE BY

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REGISTRAR AT THE

NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY

**DURING THE SECOND BIOSAFETY CLEARING HOUSE
III PROJECT (BCHIII) WORKSHOP**

**HELD AT FAIRMOUNT HOTEL, LIVINGSTONE-
ZAMBIA**

8 AUGUST, 2018.

THE ACTING DISTRICT COMMISSIONER MRS HELLEN MWANZA
GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS PRESENT
REGIONAL ADVISOR FROM THE UNITED NATIONS **DR OSSAMA ABDEL-
KAWY**
STAKEHOLDERS IN BIOTECHNOLOGY AND BIOSAFETY
NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY STAFF
INVITED GUESTS
THE MEDIA
DISTINUGISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN
ALL PROTOCOLS OBSERVED

GOOD MORNING,

I WELCOME YOU ALL TO THIS IMPORTANT EVENT - THE SECOND BIOSAFETY CLEARING HOUSE (BCH) NATIONAL WORKSHOP FOR KEY STAKEHOLDERS. THIS WORKSHOP IS A FOLLOW UP TO THE FIRST WORKSHOP WHICH WAS HELD IN LUSAKA IN FEBRUARY THIS YEAR.

ALLOW ME TO START BY EXPLAINING TO THIS GATHERING WHO WE ARE AS THE NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY.

THE NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY IS A STATUTORY BODY ESTABLISHED UNDER THE BIOSAFETY ACT NO. 10 OF 2007. OUR MANDATE IS TO REGULATE THE RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, APPLICATION, IMPORT, EXPORT, TRANSIT, CONTAINED USE, RELEASE OR PLACING ON THE MARKET OF ANY GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISM WHETHER INTENDED FOR USE AS A PHARMACEUTICAL, FOOD, FEED OR PROCESSING, OR A PRODUCT OF A GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISM.

INVITED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

AS AN ORGANISATION, WE HAVE BEEN SO BUSY ENSURING THAT WE WORK AS PER OUR MANDATE.

WE HAVE INTENSIFIED PUBLIC AWARENESS AND SENSITISATION CAMPAIGNS OF STAKEHOLDERS, CONSUMERS, CLIENTS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC. WE ARE ALSO USING DIFFERENT PLATFORMS SUCH AS MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS AND MEETINGS TO REACH OUT TO THE MASSES. WE HAVE ALSO BEEN TO SOME PARTS OF THE COUNTRY (EASTERN, WESTERN, SOUTHERN AND LUSAKA PROVINCES) TO SENSITISE STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS AT SOME BORDER POINTS.

WE HAVE ALSO BEEN DOING RANDOM SPOT CHECKS TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE. I MUST MENTION THAT DURING OUR SPOT CHECKS WE HAVE WARNED AND CAUTIONED SOME DIFFERENT ORGANISATIONS TO ENSURE THAT ALL WHICH IS REQUIRED IS IN PLACE.

HOWEVER, I AM HAPPY TO INFORM YOU THAT MOST OF THE CLIENTS ARE COMPLYING. MOST OF THE BIG DISTRIBUTORS AND THE BIG CHAIN STORES HAVE HAD THEIR PRODUCTS UNDERGO RISK ASSESSMENT.

IN ENSURING INCREASED COMPLIANCE, THE NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY HAS BEEN ENGAGING VARIOUS GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AT POINTS OF ENTRY.

MOST OF OUR STAKEHOLDERS AT THE BORDER PORTS HAVE BEEN SENSITISED TO CHECK THE TYPE OF PRODUCTS ENTERING THE COUNTRY.

RECENTLY GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO INTRODUCED A SINGLE WINDOW CONNECTIVITY WHERE WE WILL BE PUT ON THE ASYCUDA WORLD UNDER ZAMBIA REVENUE AUTHORITY FOR CONTINUED MONITORING PURPOSES.

INVITED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO DISCLOSE THAT THE LONG AWAITED MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH HAS BEEN CONCLUDED AND WE WILL BE SIGNING IT BEFORE THE END OF THIS MONTH. THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH IS FOR APPOINTING EXTERNAL INSPECTORS TO INCREASE SURVEILLANCE, MONITORING AND INSPECTION MECHANISMS. WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT THIS WILL FURTHER HELP IMPROVE OUR MONITORING AS WE SIGN OTHER MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH OTHER PARTNERS. WE NEED TO HAVE PRESENCE AT CRITICAL POINTS OR PORTS OF ENTRY.

IN THE AREA OF PERMIT ISSUANCE, THE NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY HAS SO FAR ISSUED **24 PERMITS** FOR IMPORT AND PLACING ON THE MARKET PRODUCTS THAT MAY CONTAIN GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS SINCE 2015. WE HAVE ALSO ISSUED **TWO** RESEARCH PERMITS INVOLVING HIV VACCINE AND **ONE** ON MALARIA. THE HIV RESEARCH ACTIVITIES ARE BEING CONDUCTED BY CENTRE FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASE RESEARCH IN ZAMBIA (CIDRZ) IN LUSAKA AND THE OTHER IS ALSO BY CIDRZ AND THE ZAMBIA EMORY HIV RESEARCH PROJECT THIS IS IN LUSAKA AND NDOLA. THE MALARIA RESEARCH IS BEING DONE BY MACHA RESEARCH

TRUST AND IT IS STILL ON CONFINED STAGE. WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT IT SHOULD BEGIN THIS MONTH.

THE GENERAL PUBLIC MAY WISH TO KNOW THAT THE RESEARCH FACILITIES ARE ALSO NOT SPARED FROM SPOT CHECKS. WE WERE IN MACHA RECENTLY TO ENSURE THAT ALL THE REQUIREMENTS WERE IN PLACE BEFORE THE RESEARCH BEGINS AND WE ARE HAPPY TO SAY THAT THE RESEARCH INSTITUTE IS COMPLYING AND ADHERING TO BIOSAFETY STANDARDS AND GOOD LABORATORY PRACTICES, EVEN AT THIS STAGE (CONFINED). WE HAVE ALSO BEEN TO CIDRZ ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE TO BIOSAFETY STANDARDS AND ALL IS WELL.

AN ON THE SPOT CHECK FOR CIDRZ WAS DONE TO ENSURE THAT BIOSAFETY STANDARDS ARE ADHERED TO FOR THE SAFETY OF HUMANS, ANIMALS AND THE ENVIRONMENT. THEY HAVE ACTUALLY SET UP THE LABORATORY WELL AND ALL SAFETY MEASURES ARE IN PLACE.

INVITED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

ZAMBIA NOW HAS CAPACITY TO REGULATE ACTIVITIES INVOLVING GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS IN THE COUNTRY. THE BOARD OF THE NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY HAS APPOINTED A COMPETENT SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC) WHICH CARRIES OUT RISK ASSESSMENT ON ALL APPLICATIONS FOR PERMITS TO IMPORT PRODUCTS OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY IS A REGULATORY AUTHORITY THAT DOES NOT HINDER NOR PROMOTE GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS BUT REGULATES THE APPLICATION, CONTAINED USE, DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH IN A JUDICIOUS WAY. THE ACT PROVIDES FOR THAT AND AS A COUNTRY WE HAVE PROGRESSED AND NOW HAVE CAPACITY FOR BOTH INFRASTRUCTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCE. THE COUNTRY IS NOW ABLE TO MONITOR AND ENSURE SAFETY FOR HUMANS, ANIMALS AND THE ENVIRONMENT. ALLOW ME TO POINT OUT HERE THAT AS FOR RESEARCH, THE ACTIVITIES ARE IN STAGES FIRSTLY STARTING IN A CONTAINED FACILITY, THEN IN A CONFINED FIELD TRAIL (LIMITED RELEASE) THEN IN FARMS/FIELD FOR COMMERCIAL RELEASE. ALL THESE STAGES ARE REGULATED AND MONITORED IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PARTICULAR GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISM, OR PRODUCT AND THE SAFETY TO HUMANS, ANIMALS AND THE ENVIRONMENT. IN THAT VEIN, THE ONUS TO DO RESEARCH IS NOT ON THE NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY BUT THE SCIENTISTS AS THEY SEE THE NEED DEPENDING ON ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES IN RELATION TO CURRENT TRENDS IN THE ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMICALLY IN THE COUNTRY/WORLD OVER.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

AS I HAVE ALREADY ALLUDED TO ABOVE ON OUR MISSION TO CONDUCT AWARENESS AND SENSITISATION EXERCISES, WE ARE GATHERED HERE AGAIN TO UNDERSCORE THE NEED TO SHARE INFORMATION. AS SUCH, THROUGH THIS WORKSHOP ON THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING HOUSE, WE ARE GATHERED HERE IN ORDER TO ACTUALISE THE REASON IT WAS SET FOR.

NOW, THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING HOUSE (BCH) IS A MECHANISM SET UP THROUGH THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY TO FACILITATE THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON LIVING MODIFIED ORGANISMS AND TO ASSIST THE PARTIES TO BETTER COMPLY WITH OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE CARTEGENA PROTOCOL.

THE CARTEGENA PROTOCOL IS THE MAJOR INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENT UNDER THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY BUT IT IS FOCUSED ON LIVING MODIFIED ORGANISMS. THE PROTOCOL WAS ADOPTED IN JANUARY 2000 AND BECAME EFFECTIVE IN SEPTEMBER 2003. ONE OF ITS AIM IS TO PROTECT BOTH BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND HUMAN LIFE FROM ANY ADVERSE EFFECTS OF ORGANISMS MODIFIED BY BIOTECHNOLOGY. ABOUT 166 COUNTRIES, INCLUDING ZAMBIA, ARE PARTY TO THE PROTOCOL.

THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY STRESSES THE NEED TO PROTECT HUMAN HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT FROM THE POSSIBILITY OF NEGATIVE OUTCOMES OF MODERN BIOTECHNOLOGY, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME SEEING THE POTENTIAL FOR GOOD RESULTS OF INNOVATION IN SUCH AREAS AS IMPROVING FOOD SUPPLIES THROUGH AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT.

AS SUCH THIS WORKSHOP FOR KEY STAKEHOLDERS AIMS TO SET UP PROCEDURES AND MECHANISMS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABILITY OF AN EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION TO THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING HOUSE. IN ADDITION, THE WORKSHOP IS ALSO AIMED AT ESTABLISHING NATIONAL PROCEDURES AND OPERATIONAL LINKAGES TO GATHER INFORMATION TO

BE PLACED ON THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING HOUSE IN LINE WITH NATIONAL BIOSAFETY POLICY AND BIOSAFETY FRAMEWORK. PARTICIPANTS IN THIS WORKSHOP INCLUDE KEY STAKEHOLDERS, AMONG THEM BIOSAFETY CLEARING HOUSE FOCAL POINTS, NATIONAL AUTHORISED USERS, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATIONS OFFICIALS.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THESE KEY STAKEHOLDERS HAVE A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMMON FORMATS OF BIOSAFETY CLEARING HOUSE RECORDS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE INSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES FOR CREATING AND REGISTERING BIOSAFETY CLEARING HOUSE INFORMATION AND MAKING BIOSAFETY RELATED DECISIONS IN ORDER TO AMONG OTHER THINGS:

- a. ENSURE COMPLETENESS AND ACCURACY OF BASIC NATIONAL RECORDS (NATIONAL CONTACTS AND LAWS/REGULATIONS) AND THAT BIOSAFETY CLEARING HOUSE FOCAL POINTS ENTER NATIONAL RECORDS EFFICIENTLY ONTO THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING HOUSE WEBSITE.
- b. ENHANCE VISIBILITY OF NATIONAL DECISIONS ON LIVING MODIFIED ORGANISMS AND RISK ASSESSMENT REPORTS, WHEN AND WHERE THESE EXIST.
- c. USE, MAINTAIN AND MANAGE BCH IN LINE WITH NATIONAL BIOSAFETY FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION.

INVITED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

BIOSAFETY CLEARING HOUSE PROVIDES FOR PUBLIC NOTIFICATION INTERNATIONALLY AND LOCALLY. THE NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY HAS SO FAR REGISTERED AND POSTED 10 BCH DECISIONS ON THE WEBSITE (WWW.NBAZAMBIA.ORG.ZM), YOU CAN GET TO THE WEBSITE AND READ ON THE DECISIONS POSTED SO FAR.

AS THE NATIONAL FOCAL POINT, THE NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY IS COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT BOTH HUMAN HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT ARE BOTH PROTECTED FROM ANY POSSIBLE NEGATIVE OUTCOMES OF MODERN BIOTECHNOLOGY.

INVITED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

IN CONCLUSION, I WISH TO URGE ALL THE PARTICIPANTS TO THE BCH NATIONAL FOCAL POINT, NATIONAL AUTHORIZED USERS, COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITY STAFF, AND OTHER INFORMATION PROVIDERS WITH TECHNICAL NATIONAL BCH RESPONSIBILITIES TO HAVE A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMMON FORMATS OF BCH RECORDS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE INSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES FOR CREATING AND REGISTERING BCH INFORMATION AND MAKING BIOSAFETY RELATED DECISIONS.

I WISH YOU ALL A FRUITFUL WORKSHOP.

I THANK YOU ALL.

