



SPEECH

**SPEECH BY THE BOARD CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL BIOSAFETY
AUTHORITY**

DR PAUL ZAMBEZI

**DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS
CONSULTATIVE WORKSHOP**

AT BEST WESTERN PLUS HOTEL, LUSAKA.

6th DECEMBER, 2018.

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS PRESENT

THE DELEGATION FROM THE AFRICAN BIOSCIENCES NETWORK OF
EXPERTISE

THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

RESEARCHERS PRESENT

STAKEHOLDERS IN BIOTECHNOLOGY AND BIOSAFETY

THE MEDIA

INVITED GUESTS

DISTINUGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

GOOD MORNING,

IT IS MY PLEASURE TO WELCOME YOU ALL TO THIS VERY IMPORTANT CONSULATIVE WORKSHOP.

AS YOU MAY BE AWARE, THE MANDATE OF THE NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY IS TO REGULATE RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, IMPORT, EXPORT, CONTAINED USE AND RELEASE OR PLACING ON THE MARKET OF ANY GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISM WHETHER INTENDED FOR RELEASE INTO THE ENVIRONMENT, FOR USE AS A PHARMACEUTICAL, FOOD, FEED, PROCESSING OR, PRODUCT OF A GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISM.

YOU MAY ALSO BE ALIVE TO THE FACT THAT GENE MODIFICATION IN ZAMBIA HAS REMAINED AND CONTINUES TO BE A SENSITIVE MATTER IN OUR COUNTRY - NOTWITHSTANDING THE EXISTENCE OF THE RELEVANT POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS.

WHILE THERE IS A UNIVERSAL RECOGNITION AND REALIZATION THAT BIOTECHNOLOGY CAN SIGNIFICANTLY CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF ANY NATION, THERE IS EVEN A GREATER NEED TO PUT IN PLACE MEASURES THAT CAN ENSURE THAT THE APPLICATION OF BIOTECHNOLOGY DOES NOT CAUSE HARM TO HUMAN AND ANIMAL HEALTH, AS WELL AS THE ENVIRONMENT.

THUS, TO EFFECTIVELY AND FULLY ACHIEVE ITS MANDATE THE NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY NEEDS TO CONTINUOUSLY BUILD ITS REGULATORY CAPACITY THROUGH SUCH MEANS AS THE ENHANCEMENT OF GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS IN ORDER TO ADVANCE THE NATION'S QUEST FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ON ONE HAND, AND THE NEED TO PROTECT

HUMAN AND ANIMAL HEALTH, THE ENVIRONMENT AND BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, ON THE OTHER HAND.

ACCORDINGLY, I AM PLEASED TO NOTE THAT TODAY WE SHALL HAVE ANOTHER MILESTONE IN STRENGTHENING OUR REGULATORY MANDATE THROUGH PUTTING IN PLACE GUIDELINES FOR CONTAINED USE AND CONFINED FIELD TRIALS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

HAVING SUCH GUIDELINES CANNOT BE OVEREMPHASISED AS THIS WILL ENHANCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH AND INDUSTRIAL CAPACITY TO SAFELY APPLY BIOTECHNOLOGY TECHNIQUES FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF ZAMBIA'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL WELLBEING.

IT IS AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND THAT THIS CONSULTATIVE WORKSHOP HAS BEEN ORGANISED. THE STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPATING IN THIS WORKSHOP HAVE BEEN DRAWN FROM GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTIONS AND COOPERATING PARTNERS, AMONG OTHERS.

AT THIS JUNCTURE, ALLOW ME TO MAKE MENTION HERE THAT SINCE WE HAVE RECOGNISED THE NEED FOR CONTINUOUS CAPACITY BUILDING, WE ARE PRIVILEGED TO HAVE IN OUR MIDST OFFICIALS FROM A NEPAD AGENCY, THE AFRICAN BIOSCIENCE NETWORK OF EXPERTISE, WHO HAVE COME TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL SUPPORT AS WE DEVELOP THE GUIDELINES.

IT IS HOPE THAT THIS WORKSHOP WILL ACHIEVE THE FOLLOWING GOALS:

- PROVIDE GUIDELINES FOR INSPECTION OF CONTAINED USE AND CONFINED FIELD TRIAL FACILITIES;
- SUPPORTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH AND INDUSTRIAL CAPACITY; AND
- PROMOTE THE SAFE APPLICATION OF BIOTECHNOLOGY TECHNIQUES FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF ZAMBIA'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL WELLBEING.

IN CONCLUSION,

I WISH YOU THE BEST DURING THE DELIBERATIONS. IT IS MY HOPE THAT THIS WORKSHOP WILL LEAD FORMULATION OF GUIDLEINES AND STANDARDS THAT WILL ADDRESS THE SHORTCOMINGS IN BIOSAFETY.

I THANK YOU.