



MINISTRY OF HEALTH

SPEECH BY THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

DR KENNEDY MALAMA

DURING THE SIGNING CEREMONY OF THE MEMORANDUM OF
UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY AND
THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH

HELD AT MINISTRY OF HEALTH NDEKE HOUSE LUSAKA - ZAMBIA

10TH OCTOBER, 2018.

THE REGISTRAR FOR THE NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY,
MANAGER FOR ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE AT NATIONAL
BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY,

OTHER OFFICIALS FROM THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH

OFFICIALS FROM THE NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY

OTHER GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS PRESENT

STAKEHOLDERS IN BIOTECHNOLOGY AND BIOSAFETY

INVITED GUESTS

THE MEDIA

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

GOOD AFTERNOON,

I AM DELIGHTED TO WITNESS SIGNING OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND THE NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY. THIS CEREMONY IS LONG OVERDUE AS THE PROCESS HAVING STARTED IN 2017. I AM VERY HAPPY THAT TODAY IT IS FINALLY COMING TO PASS. WHAT WE ARE WITNESSING TODAY IS THE STRENGTHENING OF THE ALREADY EXISTING COLLABORATION WE HAVE WITH THE NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY.

INVITED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WE ARE SIGNING TODAY IS THAT THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH WILL PROVIDE THE NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY WITH SUPPORT STAFF AT THE PORTS OF ENTRY TO BE ABLE TO PERFORM SOME OF THE NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY FUNCTIONS. THIS WILL ENSURE THAT THERE IS A CLOSE MONITORING OF ANY PRODUCTS THAT MAY CONTAIN GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS OR LIVING MODIFIED ORGANISMS STARTING FROM THE POINTS OF ENTRY, BOTH INLAND AND AT THE BORDER POINTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

FOR A START IN THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WE WILL PROVIDE A SMALL NUMBER OF HEALTH INSPECTORS TO HELP IN ACHIEVING THE OTHER OBJECTIVES OF BOTH THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND THE NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY. THE INSPECTORS WILL BE TRAINED AND EQUIPPED ON SPECIFIC MATTERS SO THAT THEY OPERATE ACCORDING TO THE MEMEORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING.

INITIALLY, THE POINTS OF ENTRY INCLUDE BORDER PORTS SUCH VICTORIA FALLS, KAZUNGULA, KATIMA MULILO, CHIRUNDU, KASUMBALESA, CHANIDA, MWAMI AND NAKONDE. AIRPORTS SUCH AS THE KENNETH KAUNDA INTERNATIONAL (LUSAKA), HARRY MWANGA NKUMBULA (LIVINGSTONE) AND SIMON MWANSA KAPWEPWE (NDOLA) HAVE ALSO BEEN INCLUDED.

THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WILL ALSO ENSURE THAT ENFORCEMENT OF FOOD LEGISLATION IN ZAMBIA IS CARRIED OUT IN AN EFFECTIVE, CONSISTENT AND COORDINATED MANNER WHICH MINIMIZES DUPLICATION OF OFFICIAL CONTROLS. PARTICULARLY, THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WILL PROMOTE EFFICIENT ENFORCEMENT OF THE FOOD REGULATION SUCH AS THE FOOD AND DRUGS ACT CHAPTER 303 AND THE PUBLIC HEALTH ACT CHAPTER 295 OF THE LAWS OF ZAMBIA AND MINIMIZE UNDUE REGULATORY BURDENS ON FOOD BUSINESS.

FURTHERMORE, WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WILL ALSO ENCOURAGE CLOSER CO-OPERATION, LIAISON AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE AT THE LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL BETWEEN OFFICERS OF BOTH PARTIES AND ENSURE SAFTY FOR HUMANS, ANIMALS AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

IN IMPLEMENTING THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING, FOCUS WILL ON DEALING WITH THE INSPECTION OF PRODUCTS THAT MAY CONTAIN OR ARE PRODUCTS OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS. SUCH PRODUCTS COULD BE PROCESSED FOOD, GRAINS, SEEDS, FEED AND OR PHARMACEUTICALS. IT'S IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT OTHER PRODUCTS INVOLVE LIVE AND VIABLE GENETICALLY

MODIFIED ORGANISMS. SUCH ORGANISMS ARE ILLEGAL IN ZAMBIA AND COULD BE OF BIOSAFETY AND BIOSECURITY IMPORTANCE TO THE COUNTRY.

INVITED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

YOU MAY WISH TO ALSO KNOW THAT FROM THIS IMPORTANT DOCUMENT THAT WE ARE SIGNING TODAY, THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH HAS A KEY ROLE OF MONITORING THE QUALITY AND SAFETY OF THESE PRODUCTS THROUGH THE SET STANDARDS. WE ARE HAPPY THAT THE NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY ALSO IN ITS MANDATE OF REGULATING THE GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS HAS A BIOSAFETY COMPONENT. WE CANNOT AFFORD TO HAVE ANYTHING COME IN THE COUNTRY WHICH IS NOT SAFE FOR HUMANS, ANIMALS AND THE ENVIRONMENT. THEREFORE, THERE IS NEED THAT WE ENSURE THAT BIOSAFETY STANDARDS ARE ADHERED TO STARTING WITH CONTAINED USE, APPLICATION, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, IMPORT AND TRANSIT PARTICULARLY FOR PRODUCTS THAT INVOLVE GENE MODIFICATION TECHNOLOGY.

IN CASES WHERE WE HAVE DOUBTS ABOUT SOME PRODUCTS THROUGH THIS PARTNERSHIP, OUR COUNTRY NOW HAS CAPACITY AND WE WILL ENSURE THAT WE PROVIDE LABORATORY SERVICES TO TEST SUCH PRODUCTS SO THAT WE ARE SURE THEY ARE SAFE.

AS THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH, WE WILL ENSURE THAT WE WORK HAND IN HAND WITH THE NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY WITHIN THE PROVISIONS OF THE BIOSAFETY ACT No.10, 2007, AT THE SAME TIME ENFORCE THE PROVISIONS OF THE FOOD AND DRUGS ACT CHAPTER 303 AND THE PUBLIC HEALTH ACT CHAPTER 295 OF THE LAWS OF ZAMBIA.

INVITED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

IN CONCLUSION, I WOULD LIKE TO URGE ALL THOSE OFFICERS THAT WILL BE APPOINTED IN THIS PARTNERSHIP TO ENSURE THAT THE OBJECTIVES OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING IS EFFECTIVELY ACHIEVED.

THANK YOU ALL