

SPEECH BY THE ZAMBIA FEDERATION OF EMPLOYERS PRESIDENT MR. ALFRED MASUPHA AT THE NATIONAL TRIPARTITE DIALOGUE ON MATERNITY PROTECTION HELD ON 27-28 MARCH 2013 AT GOVERNMENT COMPLEX - LUSAKA.

- THE GUEST OF HONOUR DR. CHRISTINE KASEBA SATA FIRST LADY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
- HONOURABLE MINISTER OF GENDER AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT – HON INONGE WINA
- DEPUTY MINISTER OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY HON.....
- THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION
- PRESIDENT OF THE ZAMBIA CONGRESS OF TRADE UNION MR LEONARD HIKAUMBA
- THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS OF ZAMBIA
- DISTINGUISHED INVITED GUESTS LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

I AM GREATLY HUMBLLED TO HAVE BEEN ACCORDED THIS ^{DST} OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE SOME REMARKS AT THIS NATIONAL TRIPARTITE DIALOGUE ON MATERNITY PROTECTION.

GUEST OF HONOUR LADIES AND GENTLEMEN THE SUBJECT OF MATERNITY PROTECTION AT WORK IS A COMPLEX MATTER. IT IS A COMPLEX MATTER IN THAT IT CONCERNS THE HEALTH OF NEWBORN BABIES AND THAT OF THEIR MOTHERS WHO ARE ENGAGED IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN THE WORLD OF WORK.

END SENTEL

THE GREATEST CHALLENGE IN HANDLING THIS COMPLEX MATTER LIES IN STRIKING A BALANCE BETWEEN ENSURING THAT THE WOMEN'S ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES DO NOT POSE RISKS TO THE HEALTH OF THE WOMEN AND THEIR BABIES AND ALSO THAT THE WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE ROLE DOES NOT COMPROMISE THE ECONOMIC SECURITY OF THEIR HOUSEHOLD . THE MATTER OF MATERNITY PROTECTION SHOULD ALSO NOT BRING DOWN THE PRODUCTION LEVELS OF THE ENTERPRISES IN WHICH THE WOMEN WORK.

GUEST OF HONOUR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, YOU ARE AWARE THAT CURRENT LEGISLATION ON MATERNITY LEAVE IN ZAMBIA PROVIDES FOR 120 CALENDAR DAYS PAID MATERNITY LEAVE FOR THE CATEGORY OF WORKERS THAT ARE COVERED UNDER THE STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS ON MINIMUM WAGES AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT AND 90 DAYS FOR WORKERS THAT ARE REPRESENTED BY TRADE UNIONS AND THOSE IN MANAGEMENT POSITIONS WHICH IS PROVIDED FOR IN THE EMPLOYMENT ACT CAP 268 OF THE LAWS OF ZAMBIA.

GUEST OF HONOUR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, YOU MAY WISH TO KNOW THAT FOR OVER A DECADE, THE ZAMBIA FEDERATION OF EMPLOYERS HAVE BEEN ADVOCATING FOR A REDUCTION FROM THE 120 CALENDAR DAYS IN THE STATUTORY INSTRUMENT ON MINIMUM WAGES AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT TO 90 DAYS.

THE REASON FOR THIS ADVOCACY HAS BEEN TO HARMONISE PAID MATERNITY LEAVE DAYS IN THE TWO LEGISLATIONS AND TO CAUTION THE COST IMPACT OF PAID MATERNITY LEAVE ON THE EMPLOYER WHO CURRENTLY BEARS THE FULL COST OF PAYING A SALARAY TO A FEMALE EMPLOYEE WHO TAKES UP MATERNITY LEAVE.

GUEST OF HONOUR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, YOU MAY ALSO WISH TO KNOW THAT IN JANUARY 2011, THE TRIPARTITE CONSULTATIVE LABOUR COUNCIL MEETING DISCUSSED THE POSSIBILITY OF ZAMBIA RATIFYING ILO CONVENTION 183, CONCERNING THE REVISION OF THE MATERNITY PROTECTION CONVENTION.

THE MEETING OBSERVED THAT ARTICLE 4 OF CONVENTION 183 PROVIDES FOR NOT LESS THAN 14 WEEKS MATERNITY LEAVE AND A FURTHER 6 WEEKS IN REGARDS TO PROTECTION OF THE HEALTH OF THE MOTHER AND THAT OF THE CHILD WHICH BRINGS THE TOTAL NUMBER OF MATERNITY LEAVE TO 20 WEEKS WHICH TRANSLATES TO 210 DAYS.

AS THOUGH THIS WAS NOT ENOUGH THE CONVENTION PROVIDES FOR A PROVISION OF PAID ONE OR MORE DAILY BREAKS OR DAILY REDUCTION OF HOURS OF WORK TO BREAST FEED A CHILD.

OBSERVING FURTHER THAT THE CONVENTION IN ARTICLE 6 RECOMMENDS FOR PAYMENT OF CASH BENEFITS TO BE PAID TO A EMPLOYEE WHO MAY PROCEED ON 20 WEEKS MATERNITY LEAVE AND THAT AN EMPLOYER SHALL NOT BE INDIVIDUALLY LIABLE FOR THE DIRECT COST OF ANY SUCH MONETORY BENEFIT TO A WOMAN EMPLOYED BY HIM OR HER, THE TRIPARTITE CONSULTATIVE LABOUR COUNCIL RESOLVED THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT AND NECESSARY FOR THE NATION TO REVIEW THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM IN THE COUNTRY AND COME UP WITH