

## Statement of ZAMBIA

By Mr. Mabvuto SAKALA, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education

### ZAMBIA

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Minister of Higher Education, that was unable to attend this Programme,

The Organizers of the Programme,

The Host Country,

And the Fellow Participating Countries,

As Zambia focuses on implementing its national development plan, with focus on diversification of all the economy, from mining to agriculture, tourism and other sectors, we as a country cannot afford to live out the benefits and contribution of Science and Technology toward achieving our development Agenda.

As such Zambia has been reinvigorating the Space Sciences institution as part of its capacity building and the establishment of the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) is one such initiative. Under it, our government is establishing a Ground Receiving Station (GRS), which is expected to be commissioned in July 2018, the initiative that was started January this year with resources from our local Treasury. The GRS is being implemented within the context of Zambia's national data infrastructure programme, and it is a major step in enhancing Zambia capability.

At the individual level, in line with the observation made by the Ambassador Omamo, Cabinet Secretary for Defence, Kenya, as a Country we have dedicated a fund that is targeted for female scholars, at Master and PhD level, specifically for the science related subjects. I want to mention that this has not come without a backlash, because the male feel that they have been discriminated, so we have opened it up to the males, but we are giving priorities to the females.

We are also undertaking extensive legal and regulatory reforms, and policy reforms, to ensure that the legal and policy environment, is supportive of our space science programme. We have also deliberately targeted the establishment of Universities of Science and Technology, and no other subjects. We have also established an Academy of Sciences to enhance this programme.

With respect to environmental sustainability, I think Zambia recognizes the benefits of space sciences in the sustainable management of our natural resources, and I am glad to note that Zambia, like a lot of other African countries, have an abundance of natural resources, but they might not be abundant in the near future if we do not manage them well. Like everything else, it might come to an end, and therefore the GRS is an Earth Observation equipment, to also facilitate identification of the challenges related to sustainable environmental management, as for instance, illegal mining - which as you know is a major industry - as also we are embarking on diversification hoping that with space science we will

be able to address issues of deforestation and disaster management, to support our economy diversification programme.

Currently, because of the interventions related to this field, we have embarked on planting a million trees, initiative launched by our Vice President, a week ago, and we hope to plant a million trees later this year, to address the challenges of deforestation, and I think without this intervention, we would not have managed.

Specific to Space Partnerships, as a country, we are I think the “New Kid on the Block” in terms of the interventions related to this field, and as we forge ahead in space science programme partnerships, with regional and international institutions to be very critical, we do not want to reinvent the wheel, if the institutions that we believe in, are forged ahead we are going to learn from them, and in this regard we are hoping this and other Forums in the future, will enhance our collaborations with our existing partners, and also open up opportunities for new ones.

Currently we are in the process of operationalizing partnerships with the Twenty First Aerospace Technology Company of China, for setting up of our GRS, we are also in the initial stages, of sending a memorandum of understanding with the United States Geological Survey, LANDSAT Programme, and also with the South African National Space Agency.

We have a lot to benefit from the countries that have made head way in this, and as a country we do not want to reinvent the wheel, as previously stated. As a Government we are committed to the Space Science Programme, and it’s evident from the fact that there has been over 30% increase in our national budget for this year targeted to all these interventions, and that’s a good commitment on our part. We also want to appreciate the support we are getting from our cooperating partners, and we are hoping that this will follow though in the years to come.

Lastly, as in conclusion, we are grateful to have been invited to this Forum, and I thank you all for listening.

Thank you.