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REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE

DEPUTY PERMANENT SECRETARY SOUTHERN PROVINCE

MRS. YOLANTA MUTYAMBE MALUNGA

AT THE

OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE ZAMBIA WOMEN IN ENGINEERING
CONFERENCE HELD AT AVANI VICTORIA FALLS RESORT, IN
LIVINGSTONE

ON

19TH APRIL 2024

- THE EIZ PRESIDENT, ENG. ABEL NG'ANDU
- THE FIRST FEMALE PRESIDENT, NIGERIAN SOCIETY OF ENGINEERS, ENG. MARGARET AINA OGUNTALA
- THE EIZ COUNCILLORS PRESENT
- THE ZAMBIA WOMEN IN ENGINEERING SECTION CHAIRPERSON, ENG. AGNESS MOFYA MWANSA
- THE VICE CHAIRPERSON FOR WOMEN IN ENGINEERING RWANDA, ENG. NICOLE MUKWINDI UWINEZA
- THE REGISTRAR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER ENG. DAVID KAMUNGU
- THE ZWES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
- DISTINGUISHED INVITED GUESTS
- MEMBERS OF THE PRESS
- LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

I FEEL SO HONOURED TO BE PART OF THIS GROUP OF FORMIDABLE WOMEN WHO ARE MAKING GREAT STRIDES TO BRIDGE THE GENDER GAP IN ENGINEERING, AND HAVE STEPPED IN WITH DIVERSE VIEWPOINTS TO ENHANCE SOCIAL-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

THIS IS A GREAT DAY FOR YOU AND I AM VERY HAPPY TO BE SHARING IT WITH YOU THROUGH THIS CONFERENCE THAT IS BEING HELD UNDER THE THEME, ***RESILIENCE AND INNOVATION - WOMEN ENGINEERING THE FUTURE.***

LET ME BEGIN BY COMMENDING THE ZAMBIA WOMEN IN ENGINEERING SECTION AND YOUR LEADERSHIP FOR THE FIGHT YOU ARE PUTTING UP, CLAIMING YOUR SPACE IN A MALE DOMINATED INDUSTRY.

THIS VERY CONFERENCE SIGNIFIES THE IMPORTANCE YOU HAVE ATTACHED TO INCREASING THE NUMBERS OF WOMEN IN ENGINEERING, A MOVE THAT WILL GREATLY BENEFIT THE INDUSTRY AND THE ECONOMY AS A WHOLE.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

INCREASING THE NUMBER OF WOMEN IN ENGINEERING BENEFITS SOCIETY, ESPECIALLY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. ENGINEERING IS CRITICAL IN DRIVING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS.

WOMEN REPRESENT HALF OF OUR POPULATION, AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION IS THE KEY TO UNLOCKING INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS. WOMEN BRING DIVERSITY TO THE ENGINEERING INDUSTRY AND LEAD TEAMS TO THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX.

WOMEN ENGINEERING PROFESSIONALS CAN CHANNEL THEIR VALUABLE SKILLS AND EXPERIENCES INTO ADDRESSING CHALLENGES OUR COUNTRY

IS FACING, SUCH AS ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER, ENERGY, HEALTHCARE AND MUCH MORE.

A MORE DIVERSE ENGINEERING TEAM BRINGS A BROADER RANGE OF PERSPECTIVES AND EXPERIENCES TO THE TABLE, WHICH CAN LEAD TO MORE CREATIVE AND EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS TO COMPLEX PROBLEMS.

WE NEED AN INDUSTRY THAT IS MORE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SOCIETY WE LIVE IN.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

NOT LONG AGO, IT WAS UNCOMMON TO SEE A WOMAN IN A HIGH-VISIBILITY JACKET AND HARD HAT CARRYING OUT ENGINEERING WORKS. BUT AS THE WORLD CONTINUES GRAPPLING WITH CLIMATE CHANGE AND OTHER CRITICAL ISSUES REQUIRING INTENSE INTERVENTIONS, MORE WOMEN HAVE STEPPED IN WORKING ALONGSIDE THE MENFOLK, CONTRIBUTING GREAT IDEAS AND INNOVATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

THANK YOU TO ZWES FOR YOUR CONTINUED EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE MORE WOMEN TO JOIN THE PROFESSION. WE HAVE NOTICED A LOT OF PROGRAMMES THAT ARE GOING ON IN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES, INSPIRING OTHER WOMEN TO ACHIEVE GREAT HEIGHTS IN LIFE.

PLEASE CONTINUE WITH THE SAME SPIRIT BECAUSE IT IS INDEED THE RESPONSIBILITY OF WOMEN ENGINEERING PROFESSIONALS TO BE ROLE MODELS FOR YOUNGER GENERATIONS AND ELIMINATE THE WORD INEQUALITY IN THE HISTORY OF THIS COUNTRY.

WE MUST CONTINUE HIGHLIGHTING THE OPPORTUNITIES OF ENGINEERING TO GIRLS AT A VERY YOUNG AGE; GET THEM EXCITED ABOUT

ENGINEERING AND THEN MAKE SURE THEY ARE ON THE RIGHT PATHWAY WITH MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE WHILE THEY ARE AT SCHOOL, SO THAT THEY HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET INTO ENGINEERING.

AS GOVERNMENT, WE WILL CONTINUE SUPPORTING THE EIZ AND ZWES BY PUTTING UP EFFECTIVE POLICIES THAT WILL INCREASE THE POTENTIAL TO DEVELOP INCLUSIVE, INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR THE COMPLEX PROBLEMS THE COUNTRY IS FACING.

ADDITIONALLY, WE ARE WORKING ON ELIMINATING THE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO WOMEN'S UNDERREPRESENTATION IN ENGINEERING. THIS INCLUDES DISCRIMINATION AND STEREOTYPES ABOUT GENDER AND STEM CAREERS.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

ONE OF THE BIGGEST CRISES THREATENING THE WORLD TODAY IS CLIMATE CHANGE AND ZAMBIA HAS NOT BEEN SPARED. WE CAN TELL BY THE CURRENT DROUGHT WE HAVE WHICH HAS AFFECTED PRODUCTIVITY. FROM LOAD SHEDDING TO INADEQUATE RAIN FOR AGRICULTURE.

WE NEED ENGINEERING PROFESSIONALS TO MITIGATE THE DAMAGE BY IMPLEMENTING MORE SUSTAINABLE INITIATIVES IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT.

THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM STATE THAT BUILDING A MORE SUSTAINABLE WORLD WILL REQUIRE MORE WOMEN ENGINEERING PROFESSIONALS. WE AGREE, AND SO WE ARE TAKING STEPS TO ENSURE WOMEN ARE GIVEN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AS BOTH DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION, AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE FUTURE ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO US.

ENSURING THAT EVERYONE FEELS ENCOURAGED TO SHARE THEIR IDEAS ISN'T JUST THE RIGHT THING TO DO, WE BELIEVE IT DRIVES INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT.

ALLOW ME TO ALSO SPEAK TO THE MEN.

YOU OUR MEN CAN PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN SUPPORTING WOMEN IN ENGINEERING BY BECOMING ALLIES AND ADVOCATES FOR GENDER DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION.

MEN CAN ALSO SUPPORT WOMEN IN ENGINEERING BY LISTENING AND LEARNING FROM THEIR EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES.

THE GOAL OF PROMOTING GENDER DIVERSITY IN ENGINEERING IS NOT TO EXCLUDE OR DISPLACE MEN BUT RATHER TO ENSURE THAT EVERYONE HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO PURSUE AND SUCCEED IN THIS FIELD.

I ALSO ENCOURAGE ENGINEERING COMPANIES TO DEVELOP INCLUSION FRAMEWORKS THAT CATER FOR BOTH MEN AND WOMEN AND ASSIST EVERYBODY; MALE AND FEMALE TO THRIVE IN THEIR WORK ENVIRONMENT.

WE NEED TO CREATE A CULTURE WITHIN THE ENGINEERING PROFESSION THAT VALUES AND PROMOTES DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION—A CULTURE WHERE ALL INDIVIDUALS CAN THRIVE AND CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR FULL POTENTIAL.

DESPITE THE PROGRESS WE ARE MAKING TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS, THERE IS STILL WORK TO BE DONE. WE NEED TO MAKE SURE THE DISCIPLINE IS MORE APPEALING AND BY DOING SO, IT WILL FILTER THROUGH TO THE WIDER INDUSTRY, ENABLING A TRULY INCLUSIVE, OPEN, AND EQUAL CULTURE.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

ONLY WHEN THE BODY OF ENGINEERING PROFESSIONALS TRULY REFLECTS THE SOCIETY IT SERVES — IN TERMS OF GENDER, CAN IT MOST EFFECTIVELY SERVE THE NEEDS OF THAT SOCIETY. ONLY THEN WILL IT UNDERSTAND ALL THE COMMUNITIES IT IS SERVING, HARNESS THE WIDEST VARIETY OF VIEWPOINTS AND GENERATE PROSPERITY FOR ALL.

WITH THESE FEW WORDS, I WISH YOU THE BEST FOR A VERY PRODUCTIVE CONFERENCE.

GOD BLESS YOU.

I THANK YOU.