

PRESS STATEMENT

WHAT IS SO “GOLDEN” ABOUT ZAMBIA’S JUBILEE?

ASKS OASIS FORUM!

The year 2014 marks Zambia’s Golden Jubilee having attained independence in 1964. Reflections on the quality of political governance experienced throughout this period clearly shows that this country’s development has been consistently undermined by a self-centred political leadership. The current PF government has not been any different and has gone further to exhibit a less than high calibre of leadership. For this reason, the Oasis Forum would like to state the following and urges all Zambians, especially the political elite, to seriously ponder on these messages:

First and foremost, the Politicians have to clearly understand that the **Zambian people are more than ever enlightened and clear about the power they possess to change their destiny**. Arrogance and a ‘know it all’ attitude are what lead to the fall of regimes. Therefore, the politicians in power (and even those in the opposition) have to be clear that Zambians shall never allow them to take them on a roller coaster ride and expect a positive result on Election Day.

Secondly, in this year of the Golden Jubilee, which represents a year of cleansing in all respects, it must be made clear to the government that we expect change in the governance of this Country. **The writing is on the wall that mere rhetoric and half-hearted pronouncements without any matching action will surely invite a harsh reaction from the Zambian people**. It is unacceptable that successive ruling regimes have stylized their selfishness and undemocratic behaviour by always engineering constitutional review processes deliberately geared to fail in delivering a people-centred and people-driven constitution.

Thirdly, political leadership has, throughout this period from independence, fallen short of the required integrity and credibility in their conduct of public affairs and in the use of the authority and power vested in them by the people. Unfortunately, Zambia has continued to witness a leadership that thrives on abusing the vested power, authority and resources to protect personal interests at the expense of the common good. In particular, the on-going constitution making process provides a timely and good case of how an important national governance project can, with so much ease, be twisted and rendered to suit the interests of a few individuals. **Accordingly, we call on all Zambians never again to accept low calibre leadership**

On the basis of these observations, the Forum would like to further urge all the people of Zambia to continue insisting that we have a people driven constitution. We urge everyone (fathers, mothers, children, working class, self-employed, unemployed, students, etc.) to use whatever forum they have to continually talk about the Constitution. DO NOT BE INTIMIDATED as the law is on our side. Dictatorships thrive on intimidation in the hope that people will keep quiet and not demand their rights. Remember always that evil prevails where the good keep quiet. The power we have now is the right to speak and speak freely and continually.

The bad governance Zambia has experienced over the years is traceable to a lack of a good constitution which establishes proper governance structures. We need a proper constitution sooner rather than later.

On the part of the Oasis forum, we would like to advise the nation that the 3 church mother bodies which are part of the Oasis forum shall direct all their churches and parishes to dedicate some minutes every Sunday to talk about the Constitution and the need to ensure we have one in place soon. This shall continue until we have a people driven constitution.

The other members of the Forum namely, LAZ and NGOCC shall continue to hold forum discussions and engage in other nation-wide activities to push for a people driven constitution

As we conclude, we again would like to remind the government that the writing is on the wall: This is a year of cleansing. Mediocrity will not be accepted. People's demand for a People driven Constitution shall be achieved.

We wish Zambia a Pleasant and successful golden jubilee

Thank you.

Signed:

Rev. Suzanne Matale – General Secretary of the Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ).

Rev. Pukuta Mwanza – Executive Director of the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ).

Mr. James Banda - President of the Law Association of Zambia (LAZ).

Mrs Beatrice Grillo – Chairperson of the Non-Governmental Coordinating Council (NGOCC).

Bishop Kalembo – President of CCZ.

Fr. Cleophas Lungu – Secretary General of Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC).