



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA



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Media Statement

For Immediate Release

Zambia elected to UN Committee on Information bureau

UNITED NATIONS, New York, Monday, 22 April, 2013 – Zambia has been elected to the United Nations General Assembly Committee on Information (COI) bureau, to represent the African Group, for a two-year period 2013-2014.

At the opening of the 35th Session of the Committee on Information (COI) at the UN Headquarters, the Government of Tanzania, speaking on behalf of the African Group, proposed the First Secretary for Press and Public Relations at the Permanent Mission of Zambia to the United Nations, Chibaula Silwamba, to serve as Rapporteur of the Committee in the bureau to represent the 54-Member State continent. The Committee on Information, comprising of 114-Member States, unanimously elected Mr Silwamba.

Before his election as rapporteur, Mr Silwamba chaired the opening meeting of the Committee on Information on behalf of the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the UN, His Excellency Eduardo Ulibarri. In the previous bureau, Mr Silwamba served as Vice-Chairperson to Ambassador Ulibarri for one year.

“Day after day, reality reminds us that information, communications and data management are key and fast drivers of the political, economic, cultural and social dynamics of contemporary life,” said Ambassador Ulibarri in his farewell speech read for him by Mr Silwamba.

Others elected Committee on Information bureau are Permanent Representative of Oman to the UN, Lyutha Al-Mughairy as chairperson and three vice-chairpersons – Yegor Pyvovarov (Ukraine), Ambassador Juan Manuel Gonzalez De Linares (Spain) and Gabriel Orellana Zabalza (Guatemala).

Addressing the Session after the election, Counsellor for political and administration at the Zambian Mission to the UN, Gertrude Mwape noted that the Committee on Information has been a strong and reliable advocate of fundamental freedoms of expression, speech and media.

Ms Mwape, speaking on behalf of Zambia's Ambassador to the UN Dr Mwaba Kasese-Bota, said the Government of Zambia was committed to promoting and protecting human rights and freedom of expression and speech.

"Zambia wishes to stress the important role that freedom of expression, speech and the media play in consolidating social and economic development as well as promotion of democracy," Ms Mwape said. "The Government of Zambia remains steadfast in its quest to enhance media freedom and access to information to ensure many people have timely and accurate information to enable them make informed decisions for the benefit of their lives, their communities and the country at large."

She said the Government has encouraged the establishment of private media, and this has led to an increase in the number of privately-owned electronic, print and online news media in the recent past.

On digital migration, Ms Mwape said Zambia, like other African countries, had made head ways in the process of changing the Terrestrial TV Broadcasting platform from analogue to digital, and expressed confidence that with the Government's commitment, the country will meet the 2015 target.

Ms Mwape called for closer ties between the media in Zambia and the UN Department of Public Information (DPI) – which is the global body's media wing.

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Notes for Editors

- The Committee on Information is a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, established in 1978 by the General Assembly to deal with questions relating to public information.
- It examines the United Nations public information policies and activities in light of evolving international relations, and evaluates the Organization's progress in the information and communications field.
- The 114-Member State Committee is mandated to promote a more effective global information and communications order to strengthen peace and understanding.
- The Committee meets once a year for a two-week period, usually in April-May. This year it will meet between 22nd April and 2nd May.
- During the two-week session, delegations discuss a wide-ranging review of the UN Department of Public Information and its three sub-programmes — the News and Media, Outreach and Strategic Communications Divisions.