



(This Document is the Property
of the Government of the Republic of Zambia)

**PRESS STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND MEDIA ON THE
DECISIONS MADE BY CABINET AT THE 3RD CABINET MEETING HELD ON MONDAY,
16TH MARCH, 2026**

The President of the Republic of Zambia, Mr. Hakainde Hichilema, called for the 3rd Cabinet Meeting in the Year 2026, at State House, on Monday, 16th March, 2026, to deliberate on policy and legislative matters that should foster national economic development for the good of the people.

Cabinet made the following decisions:

1. Extension of Business and Operating Hours.

Cabinet approved to extend the business and operating hours to run for 24 hours for business houses, markets and bus stations.

The establishment of a 24-hour economy presents a transformative opportunity for the country to unlock new avenues of economic growth, employment and service delivery. The extension of business and operating hours for businesses is premised on the need to maximise productivity, enhance competitiveness and create inclusive economic opportunities across all sectors of the economy.

Cabinet indicated that going forward, there is need to see more supermarkets, ordinary markets, bus stations and other business places to be operational 24 hours per day.

2. Legislative Matters:

(a) The Education (Amendment) Bill, 2026.

Cabinet, approved a Bill entitled "The Education (Amendment) Bill, 2026," for publication and introduction in Parliament during the current sitting.

The Bill is intended to provide for the right to free education for a child enrolled in a public educational institution from early childhood care, development and education, to secondary school education; and revise the system of school education.

This follows the decision by Cabinet to legislate into law, the free education policy put in place by Government, which has become useful to the

vulnerable in society. With the implementation of this policy, already, 2.6 million learners have returned to class at both primary and secondary school levels.

(b) The Parliamentary and Ministerial Code of Conduct (Repeal) Bill, 2026.

Cabinet, approved in principle, to the introduction of a Bill in Parliament to repeal the Parliamentary and Ministerial Code of Conduct Act, Chapter 16 of the Laws of Zambia.

The current Act has never been amended since its enactment in 1994 and consequently, contains outdated provisions that do not reflect the current constitutional and governance framework. The current Act also lacks alignment with the modern legislative drafting standards and contains several legal and procedural gaps that hinder its effective application.

The enactment of the Bill is, therefore, expected to enhance integrity, transparency and accountability in Members of Parliament and, by extension, strengthen public confidence to the National Assembly as an institution.

(c) The National Assembly (Powers and Privileges) (Repeal) Bill, 2026.

Cabinet, approved in principle, to the introduction of a Bill in Parliament to repeal the National Assembly (Powers and Privileges) Act, Chapter 12 of the Laws of Zambia.

The Bill aims to declare and define certain powers, privileges and immunities of the National Assembly, members and officers of the National Assembly; secure freedom of speech in the National Assembly; regulate admittance to the precincts of the National Assembly; and give protection to the persons employed in the publication of the reports and other papers of the National Assembly.

The current law was enacted in 1956 and last amended in 2016. However, the law no longer adequately supports the evolving needs of parliamentary governance.

The proposed legislation is, therefore, expected to strengthen parliamentary integrity, promote procedural fairness and safeguard the independence of the legislature in line with democratic principles.

(d) The Resettlement Management Bill, 2026.

Cabinet, also approved in principle, to the introduction of a Bill in Parliament entitled the "Resettlement Management Bill, 2026," in order to provide a comprehensive legal framework for the establishment, management and administration of resettlement schemes and compensation for persons

affected by public and private development projects, as well as disasters and forced displacements.

The Bill, when enacted, will contribute to improved governance, better protection of vulnerable communities, as well as provide for more sustainable and socially responsible development outcomes and also reduce project delays stemming from land disputes, and ensure that resettlement practices meet globally accepted social and environmental standards.

(e) Amendment of Various Pieces of Legislation on Appointment of Members of Boards and Committees.

Cabinet, approved 38 Bills on the appointment of members of Boards and Committees, for publication and introduction in Parliament during the current sitting.

The objectives of the Bills are to amend the various pieces of legislation, so as to revise the composition of the Boards and Committees, in order to increase participation of the private sector; ensure adequate gender and national representation, as well as participation of persons with disabilities and the youth.

3. Ratification of the Revised African Maritime Charter of 2010.

Cabinet, approved the ratification of the Revised African Maritime Transport Charter of 2010 under the African Union programme on maritime and the blue economy.

The ratification of the Revised African Maritime Transport Charter of 2010, will enhance regional integration and coordination with other African Union Member States, in unlocking the potential of Africa's maritime sector in promoting intra-African trade and trade with other continents.

The Charter is consistent with the aspirations of the Government, of transforming the country into a multi modal transport and logistics hub for the region, through enhanced collaboration.

4. Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Citizens to Social Protection and Social Security.

Cabinet, approved the ratification of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Citizens to Social Protection and Social Security.

The Protocol was developed in 2015, following the decision made by Member States, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Union Commission, and with the support of a wide range of Civil Society Organisations including International Trade Union Confederation Africa.

Zambia has not yet ratified the Protocol, therefore, ratifying the Protocol, signifies a profound commitment by the country, to uphold and prioritise fundamental human rights, foster international cooperation, and adhere to common standards concerning social protection and social security.

5. Hosting of the Eighth Board Meeting of the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage.

Cabinet, also approved Zambia's hosting of the Eighth Board Meeting of the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage, scheduled to take place from 22nd to 24th April, 2026, in Livingstone.

The Fund is a key component of the global climate finance architecture and is anchored on the principle of climate justice, recognising that countries with the least contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions are experiencing the most severe climate - related impacts.

The hosting of the Eighth Board Meeting of the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage in Zambia, is significant as it will enable the country to contribute to global strategies for addressing climate change related loss and damage, promote regional cooperation and strengthen support for vulnerable developing countries.

Expansion of University Education

In winding up debate for the day, Cabinet agreed that in line with the promise by President Hakainde Hichilema, for Government to build a university in North-Western Province, this gesture shall be extended to five (5) other Provinces of Eastern, Luapula, Northern, Southern and Western.

Cabinet expressed the need to establish public universities in these Provinces, as a way to ensure that citizens in these Provinces are able to access university education within their Provinces. Cabinet stressed that "education" remains an equilibriser in one's life.



Hon. Cornelius Mweetwa, MP

**MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND MEDIA AND CHIEF GOVERNMENT
SPOKESPERSON**

17th March, 2026