



Embassy
of the Federal Republic of Germany
Lusaka

**STATEMENT BY THE AMBASSADOR OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY,
H.E. ACHIM BURKART
AT THE OCCASION OF THE HANDOVER CEREMONY
OF COURT EQUIPMENT TO THE JUDICIARY OF ZAMBIA
VENUE: RADISSON BLU HOTEL
DATE: 30 NOVEMBER, 10:00 hrs**

- Minister of Justice Hon. Given Lubinda
- Chief Justice of Zambia, Irene Mambilima
- H.E. Head of Delegation Mr. Alessandro Mariani
- Representatives of Government
- Representatives of Civil Society
- Representatives of the Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to be here today to be part of the handover ceremony of court equipment to the Judiciary of Zambia. I am particularly pleased to note the presence of Chief Justice Mambilima and the newly appointed Minister Lubinda. This is indeed a very good sign for our common spirit of cooperation and the commitment of the new Zambian Government to implement necessary reforms in the judiciary. And it is also a good indicator for donor-coordination here in Zambia: the EU and Germany are pooling their funding in the justice sector in order to be more effective and to have a better impact on the ground. The “Programme for Legal Empowerment and Enhanced Justice Delivery” – in short “PLEED” is implemented by the German GIZ, one of the biggest and most renowned Implementing Agencies worldwide.

Ladies and Gentlemen, my task today is very simple as my dear colleague and friend, Alessandro Mariani, the EU Head of Delegation, will elaborate on the details of the PLEED Programme and on the nature of the court equipment that will be handed over today.

Let me just emphasize that the cooperation of the German Government with the Republic of Zambia is guided by our commitment to fundamental good governance principles, such as democracy, the rule of law and the promotion of human rights. Against this background Germany encourages the Zambian Government’s efforts to consult the citizenry and to partner with organised civil society in the advancement of democracy and development of the country. This is particularly important in governance reform processes such as the reform of the judiciary and the reform of legislation related to the enactment of the amended constitution. If you want to win the trust and the support of ordinary citizens in the street you have to prove that you really listen to what they say and let them participate in the respective reform processes. And you have to ensure that legal services provided to the citizens are delivered in an independent, transparent, timely and professional manner. Nothing is worse for a Government anywhere in the world than having its citizens lose confidence in the procedures of the legal system and being accused of bias and arbitrariness.

This is the very reason why Germany, together with the EU is supporting the “Programme for Legal Empowerment and Enhanced Justice Delivery” aiming to ensure rights holders in Zambia experience improved justice delivery and enhanced respect, protection and fulfilment of their human rights.

Let me get a bit more concrete. For example, my Government hopes that the speeding up of court proceedings and reduction of backlog of cases has an immediate effect on the time that remand prisoners have to spend in prison before their case can be concluded, either by acquittal or conviction. This requires that court reporters are not only being assigned to the highest courts in Zambia but also to magistrate courts throughout the country and be equipped with state of the art court infrastructure.

In addition, PLEED has a second important focus which is the development of paralegal services, the standardisation of their training and recognition by the state. The Judiciary plays a big role in this, as the paralegals ideally work closely with judicial officers, judges and other justice institutions. As being a lawyer myself, I couldn't give more emphasis on this matter.

One of the major challenges with regard to access to justice through legal aid in Zambia is the absence of a comprehensive national legal aid policy and corresponding legal framework to guide the provision of legal aid, particularly by non-State actors who currently provide the services in an ad hoc and unregulated manner. I therefore appeal to the Zambian Government that the national legal aid policy (after its finalisation with PLEED support) can be approved by cabinet next year in order to validate all stakeholders efforts made to this day and provide a comprehensive working environment for paralegals in Zambia.

Hon. Minister, Hon. Chief Justice, dear colleagues,

Through the PLEED-programme, we hope to ensure court rooms work more effectively so that the judiciary can deliver its work quickly and efficiently. We also hope that paralegal services will be given a standardised and reliable environment to work in. We are looking forward to a continued strong partnership with the Ministry of Justice and civil society to ensure we can make justice more effective together.

Thank you very much! Zikomo!