

**SPOTLIGHTS ON ZAMBIA'S RELATIONS
WITH ARAB AND AFRICAN COUNTRIES***

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I Feel highly honoured to have been invited to this distinguished university to speak to you about Zambia, the country which I represent in the Arab Republic of Egypt in the capacity of an Ambassador.

While thanking you Mr. Chairman for the opportunity you have so generously accorded me this afternoon, permit me at the same time to laud you for the accurate timing of the invitation which came at a period when the name of my country has been frequently mentioned in the press in connection with the situation in southern Africa. Where as you know the diabolical system of apartheid like zionism has been bitterly condemned world side.

May, I, Mr. Chairman, digress a little here by saying that Egypt and Zambia have a common struggle and president Sadat's decision to storm the zionist soldiers across the canal on 6th october 1973 is an eye opener of what unity of a democratic people can achieve in dealing with an oppressor and an expansionist. For this and other reasons we must draw nearer to each other and close our ranks. With such a close affinity existing between Zambia and Egypt the need to know each other better in various fields of cooperation cannot be over-emphasised.

Due to time factor, however, I propose to deal briefly with four points with a view to leaving sufficient time for questions and discussions. I intend to deal with these points in this order :

1. Zambia's political set up - with particular reference to one party participatory democracy .
2. Zambia's relationship with Rhodesia and South Africa.
3. Tanzam - Tanzania railway.
4. Zambia - Arab relations.

1. *One party participatory democracy.*

Zambia became independent, under the dynamic leadership of H.E.D.R.

Short notes on the talk delivered by H. E. Ambassador H.M. NZUNGA.

Kenneth David Kaunda, on the 24th of october 1964 after nearly 84 years of colonial rule. As a british colony Zambia was then known as northern Rhodesia' The name "Zambia" which was adopted at independence is derived from river Zambezi, the largest and longest river in the country.

After independence, Zambia was committed on one hand to safeguarding. This independence and on the other to persuing an ambitious national development and reconstruction scheme. It is not my intention to say much about this as you will have read or seen for yourselves what achievements have been accomplished by my government just in 10 years of independence.

These achievements have only been possible through a well organized political system geared to save man and man alone. At independence and thereafter until december 1972 Zambia was a multi-party state with U.N.I.P. The united national independence party and A.N.C. the african national congress as the two major parties.

In december 1972, the constiturion was amended, after a democratic process by the commission of inquiry, to provide for a one party system and that party is U.N.I.P. It is the sole and the only legal political party in the country.

To appreciate this, It is important to understand here that the new system is in fact called a "one party participatory democracy". With "participatory democracy" as the operative words.

It was necessary to have a "one party" system because :

- (a) It was the only way to provide a political climate for as many peopleas possible to participate in the development of the country.**
- (b) Ws were convinced that no useful purpose was served in having another party which was in no way providing the country with a constructive opposition.**
- (c) The oppositiion party had no chance of defeating the government in power, let alone forming a new converment because of its numerical inferiority in parliament.**
- (d) The findings of the commission of inquiry which had been appointed to look into whether or not there should be a one party system in the country ; confirmed our convictions that there was need and the answer was a "Democratic yes" (composition of commission).**

Is opposition within one party system feasible ?

The answer is yes ; provided it is constructive. After all the function of the opposition is to provide creative tension and awareness.

2. Zambia's relations with Rhodesia and South Africa

May I now turn to Zambia's relations with Rhodesia and South Africa.

We in Zambia do not hate the *Ian Smiths* of Rhodesia or *John Vorsters* of South Africa. We however hate their systems of government. We do so because their governments are both, oppressive and discriminatory. We had been through that system of government ourselves only the years ago, so know what it is and what it means.

Soon after independence in 1965 Ian Smith's government declared - UDI - Unilateral Declaration of Independence. Economically this meant a lot of sufferings for us in Zambia. Smith began to control the supply of petrol for us and imposed heavier taxes on the coal to our mines etc... Because of our economic set up before independence, Smith was sure he would have us bend to our knees. To his surprise we survived. In 1973, he created another economic strangulations.- Closure of the border between us and his country - which backtired and again we made it, thanks to you all here and many other friendly countries for support you gave both morally and financially.

It is clear therefore that as far as we are concerned we have neither political nor economic relations with Rhodesia. Zambia could not have any diplomatic relation with Rhodesia since we do not recognise the government. In so far as South African is concerned, our only way to have trade with this country depended on the railway routes which passes through Rhodesia. As we do not agree with their racial policy we do not therefore have any diplomatic, economic or political cooperation.

Liberation struggle

It may be argued that we in fact have political relations with both Rhodesia and South Africa because of the recent events in Southern Africa which appeared to show that Zambia, among other countries, does in fact have relations.

If we are to assist in the achievement of independence by our brothers in Zimbabwe and Namibia for the moment and South Africa later, and there are avenues opened to us and within the guidelines of the O.A.U., We will facilitate the process. It is clear therefore that we may be misunderstood as we were in the case of Mozambique, but the resultant truth may be a clear proof of our honesty.

3. Tanzam Railway

In 1965 soon after the U.D.I. It became obvious to Zambia that she could no longer rely on the railway routes which pass through racially controlled countries. Zambia had to find alternative routes. The construction of a railway to the east coast - through Tanzania was therefore given serious consideration, and hence the birth of the «Great freedom railway». There had been however an earlier survey of this railway - by a British firm in 1952. It was not considered economical to build it then because the area it was intended to traverse was undeveloped. Despite this conclusion we decided to build it in association with our brothers in Tanzania.

Zambian, unlike the colonial government, is native and indigenous, its outlook on economic development of the country is therefore different. Whatever we do now in Zambia is always calculated in long span policy. We believe in providing tools for development before we can expect a part of our country to develop - the horse must pull the cart, and not the other way round otherwise it is an accident. We therefore want to develop our country by long term planning not by accident. In this spirit we believe that the area which the railway will traverse will automatically catch up with the developments. What economic viability would one want other than transporting one's import and export commodities !

I was however fortunate to have been the railway's first executive officer in 1968 and based in Dar-Es-Salaam. I served on the project for one year.

Both Tanzania and Zambia made a world wide appeal for building the railway the only nation that came to our aid, was the People's Republic of China who gave us generous loan conditions. It is expected that the railway will be operational up to Mpika in Zambia this year and completion is expected next year.

4. Zambia - Arab relation

There is no doubt that Zambia's relations with Arab countries in terms of cordiality is very good indeed.

There are however two aspects in this regard which one must examine to justify one's assertions, and these are the political and economic relations.

- (i) There is no doubt that politically we speak one and the same language and hence our support for each other at international bodies like U.N. This, I would say is equally true for the whole of Africa. There

are however allegations regarding the middle east crisis, that Zambia among other African states severed relations with Israel in order to obtain favourable oil terms - to say the least this is tantamount to accusing a country of corruption. We refuted this in the strongest terms and still do.

It will be realised that the oil weapon was only used after the war and not before. It is apparent therefore that oil issue played no part in our decision to sever relationship with Israel. There were two main principles which influenced our decision. These were that Egypt as an African country needed our support. and secondly, We do not approve of the expansionist policies which were the main reason behind Israel's aggression.

- (ii) Economically there is a lot of room for Zambia and the Arab states to exploit. It must however be remembered. Without being too emotional, that both Zambia and Arab countries are developing nations and consequently they both are producers of raw material - same as African states are to each other. But in those fields where certain commodities can be exchanged. Let us do so. Where joint ventures are a viable proposition let us promote them to our mutual advantages.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, before I pause for questions and discussions. Let me say again how grateful I am to have been offered this opportunity of speaking to you and exchanging ideas. Such forums, if regular, will in my opinion provide an atmosphere for promoting understanding and cementing good knowledgeable relationship. My sincere thanks go to Dr. Salwa Labib in particular for having encouraged me to find time to come and speak.

Longe live Africa

Long live Afro-Arab solidarity.

Thank you

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