



## STATEMENT ON NATIONAL DIALOGUE

1. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to this brief Press Release presentation and we wish you all compliments of the season.
2. Since we are still in the Christmas season, on behalf of the Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ), Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ) and Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops (ZCCB), we avail ourselves of this opportunity to wish you and through you the nation at large a grace-filled time and God's abundant blessings in this new year and indeed always.
3. The theme and message of Christmas is presented to us by St. Luke the Evangelist when he quotes the angel who appeared to the shepherds: "***I bring you news of great joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a Saviour is born to you; he is Christ the Lord.***" St Luke continues, "***With the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly hosts praising God in the words, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace to those of good will'***" (Luke 2:10-14). Therefore, joy and peace are the themes of Christmas.
4. The source of the Christian joy, happiness and peace is the fact that we belong to God and participate in God's life. Therefore, we must respect and reverence each human life and each other as members of God's household. The greatest gift we Christians can give to the world is the joy and peace proclaimed by the angels. In fact, the birth of Christ marked a definitive reconciliation between humanity and God. Therefore, we are called to live as a reconciled people.
5. In the Bible, **peace means love, forgiveness, reconciliation, good will and good relationships between people.** This is the good news meant for people of all races, pigmentation, religions, tribes, political affiliation and ideologies. This is the peace we wish for our nation Zambia. **However, there can be no peace without justice at personal as well as at all levels of society.**

6. **True dialogue means a change of heart, attitude and behavior. It is a project, an on-going process and effort. It is the way of life for us Christians which should be heard in our words, seen in our faces and actions because it is in our hearts.** Lack of peace hurts everyone especially the weak, the elderly, the poor, women and children. It hurts us Christians because we are essentially brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ who identifies himself with the same poor and the suffering.
7. Despite the public pronouncements that Zambia is a peaceful country, the reality on the ground is different due to many acts of injustice, a growing culture of corruption, incidences of violence and utterances out of deep-seated hatred. **We therefore earnestly appeal to all our political leaders to stop insulting each other or anyone who does not agree with their political opinion and start genuinely to respect fellow political players as legitimate opponents with their constitutional right to hold their political opinion and to propagate it among the general public. It demands that all political party leaders declare and enforce zero tolerance for political violence and to bring culprits to book by handing them over to law enforcement institutions. It means that all political leaders must give the planned for 'national dialogue' a chance to succeed by committing themselves to dialogue without preconditions with a view to level the playing field. These leaders of political parties must restrain themselves and their members from making inflammatory or irresponsible statements.**
8. **We also call upon media houses to refrain from sensationalism and polarization of people or political institutions;** let them not join the irresponsible people who want to be spoilers of the process and the noble objective of a successful and fruitful national dialogue.
9. **Peace cannot come to our country if successful administrations do not take drastic steps to stamp out the endemic corruption among public servants which has reached epidemic proportions against the backdrop of the highest poverty index since the dawn of our political independence in 1964.** It is unacceptable that some public service personnel have amassed enormous wealth in dubious or highly questionable ways and within a short time in the service. It is a scandal that year in and year out, the Auditor General's report reveals hair raising miss-application and miss-appropriation of huge sums of public funds by public officers but few, if any culprits, are punished. For how long shall public anger be restrained given the high unemployment levels particularly among young adults. Unless most of these young adults whose number increases each year can be quickly absorbed by the labor market, we might be sitting on a latent volcano! **That is why national dialogue and reconciliation is critical so that**


**politicians and other stakeholders can address the situation and assist the current administration to grow the economy to accommodate job seekers.**

10. We believe in dialogue because it is essential for holistic national development as there cannot be any meaningful development where there is tension and lack of effective as well as peaceful engagement among various groups in the country. It is for this reason that we support and wish to contribute and make ourselves available for the restoration of peace in the country through dialogue.
11. **We are saddened by the recent outbreak of cholera in Lusaka and other parts of the country and the loss of more than 50 persons from this epidemic. Our hearts go to the many families who have lost their loved ones from the disease.** We pray for God's peace, comfort and encouragement during this time of national crisis. We pray for the various teams working on the ground to fight the cholera outbreak so that this may be overcome quickly and life may be restored to normal. We support the efforts of other stakeholders in this battle against cholera and pledge ourselves to collaborate with government in addressing the epidemic.

May God bless our nation Zambia !!

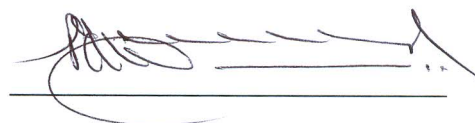
*Signed and issued on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2018*

Bishop Alfred Kalembo  
**President of CCZ**



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Bishop Paul E. Mususu  
**Chairman of EFZ**



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Archbishop Telesphore G. Mpundu  
**President of ZCCB**



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