

Remarks by Gianluca AZZONI

**Head of Cooperation at the Delegation of the European
Union to Zambia and COMESA,**

**on the occasion of the launching of the capacity building
programme in support to the Zambia energy sector**

Lusaka, 27 August 2019

The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Energy,
BRIGADIER GENERAL EMELDAH CHOLA,

Deputy National Authorising Officer for the European
Development Fund, Ms CHASIYA KAZEMBE,

Chief Executive Officers of energy sector institutions

Senior Government Officials,

Fellow cooperating partners

Representatives of the Private Sector and Civil Society
Organisations,

Representatives of the Media,

Ladies and gentlemen,

A very good morning to you all, I am very pleased to participate on behalf of the European Union in the launch of this very important programme aimed at strengthening capacities within Zambia's energy sector.

This is an important milestone and I wish to acknowledge the good work done by many participants here today under the lead of the Ministry of Energy and including institutions like the Energy Regulation Board, the Rural Electrification Authority, ZESCO and OPPPI as well as the IAEREP programme technical advisors, the EDF – NAO programme support team in the Ministry of Finance and our EU Delegation team.

As already explained, the EU has allocated 1.7 million euro (or 25 million Kwacha at prevailing exchange rate) in the form of grants for this programme, and this programme is a key component of a much larger effort under the European Development Fund to promote increased Access to Electricity and Renewable Energy Production in Zambia.

The preparation of this programme has been fully participatory and has benefited from a gap analysis followed by numerous stakeholder consultations designed to ensure the best targeting of activities towards priority needs.

So we see this programme as a key tool for addressing critical gaps affecting the ability of sector institutions to fully play their role in implementing the overarching policy goals set by the Government of Zambia. Allow me to highlight a few important areas:

The first one has to do with investments. In recognition of the central role of public and private investments in promoting the much needed diversification of energy sources, this programme aims at shaping more effective, transparent and inclusive institutions and processes in order to create a conducive environment for investments while at the same time encouraging responsible and reliable private sector participation, risk taking and financing.

Another key area is the creation of human capital and skills for the labour market. This is to be achieved through the development and updating of curricula for the energy sector, training of trainers and exposure of young professionals to business activities by means of sponsored scholarships. As part of this activity, champion trainers and centres of excellence will be supported in keeping up with the rapid pace of technology development.

In the area of energy efficiency and conservation, activities will aim to increase domestic capacities in the field of energy audits, by assisting in establishing a national association of energy efficiency experts and by helping ZABS (the Zambian Bureau of Standards) to be accredited with an international professional institution. This is part of a wider goal under the EU-Zambia partnership to promote the emergence of modern and reliable energy conservation services which will also be pursued by supporting selected public-private partnerships aimed at improving energy performance.

Distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen

The programme we are launching today also intends to raise awareness on affordable renewable energy and energy efficiency solutions available to consumers (with emphasis on the youth), enterprises and local communities, so as to make them active players of change and promoters of Zambia's transition towards greener economy.

The approach retained recognises the role of community-based and civil society organisations in sharing information with local communities, particularly in rural areas and in making know-how transfer applicable in practice. The involvement of these actors in building credibility, trust and confidence at local level is often underestimated.

Indeed, the modalities that will drive implementation of this capacity building programme recognise that civil society, the public sector and the private sector need to work together more effectively. This is a fundamental condition of success and I trust that the programme will be rolled out in this manner. It is our expectation that many public bodies, private actors, educational institutions, CSO and NGOs as well as energy consumers will be partnering with the programme and benefit from it.

Permanent Secretary, Ladies and Gentlemen

This three-year capacity building programme is very timely and responds to the current and prospective needs of the

sector very well. We all look forward to seeing its intended results becoming visible as soon as possible.

While we should rightly be satisfied at the achievement of this milestone, we see no room for complacency as we are only at the beginning of the journey and a huge task lies ahead in taking forward the ambitious set of measures contemplated under the programme.

I therefore call on each and every one to make every effort to facilitate a timely and smooth implementation. The success of this programme by and large depends on everyone's continued commitment and preparedness to provide input as and when required.

On behalf of the European Union Delegation, I wish you all the best in the implementation of the programme and thank you very much for your attention.

Zikomo Kwambiri