

**REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE CHIEF JUSTICE OF
THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA MRS JUSTICE IRENE
MAMBILIMA DURING THE HANDOVER CEREMONY OF
COURT EQUIPMENT TO THE JUDICIARY OF ZAMBIA
ON 30TH NOVEMBER, 2016 AT RADISSON BLU**

Hon. Minister of Justice

His Excellency, German Ambassador

His Excellency, Head of Delegation of the European Union
and COMESA Ambassador

Distinguished invited guests

I am pleased to be here to receive the donation of courtroom equipment, on behalf of the Judiciary. This donation has been made possible by the generous support of our cooperating partners, the European Union (EU) and the Federal Republic of Germany through the German Development Cooperation (GIZ).

As has been mentioned, this handover ceremony comes within the framework of the Programme for Legal Empowerment and Enhanced Justice Delivery (PLEED) implemented by GIZ and is aimed at speeding up court proceedings and achieving a marked reduction in the backlog of cases.

The donation is very timely and significant. It comes at a time when the Judiciary is undergoing rapid transformation, with the coming on board of new courts, the Constitutional Court and the Court of Appeal and the specialised courts of the High Court. With these changes, come increased litigation as the litigant public is becoming increasingly aware of its rights in response to the ever-changing needs of society.

Invariably, these changes entail that we, as the Judiciary, have to be up to the task. We can no longer insulate ourselves against the river of technological advancement, which is transforming courtrooms world over. The days of relying on the old and time-consuming “pen and paper” tradition of recording proceedings and filing of court processes, are long gone. We have to embrace new practices that are more efficient and effective. But at the same time these must be practices that do not compromise our goal to deliver justice.

We view digitalisation as an important step to help people have equal access to justice. This in turn increases public trust and awareness. Therefore, the 40 Luminex stenotype machines and the other courtroom equipment, that we are receiving today, will, without doubt, go a long way to improve our efficiency in the delivery of timely and fair

justice and increase access to justice to the Zambian people.

We are already seeing the benefits of generating real-time transcripts of proceedings. With the coming of real time court reporters, our work has been made much easier. Judges are now able to receive verbatim proceedings contemporaneously. Parties are now able to access proceedings for purposes of preparing their cases for appeal. There has been greater transparency as issues of case records going missing have reduced remarkably. We are working towards reducing pending trials and Judgments.

At this juncture, permit me to thank, most sincerely, the European Union and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany and GIZ. The gesture further

strengthens our cordial relationship which is centred on seeing timely justice and increased access to justice through the computerisation of the court system and training in the use of the computers. I would like to assure you that the equipment shall be put to good use.

As I end, allow me to quote from a renowned US Professor of Law, Federic I. Lederer who once said-

“The courtroom is not only a place of adjudication, but it is also an information hub. The rapid adoption of courtroom technology is changing the nature of both litigation and adjudication, and we are potentially on the road to a virtual courtroom.”

With this donation, I can safely say we are moving one step closer to making our courts, virtual courtrooms, where none of the participants need to be in the same place.

I thank you for your attention.