

**SPEECH BY HER LADYSHIP THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE
REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA, HON. LADY JUSTICE MRS IRENE .C.
MAMBILIMA ON TUESDAY, APRIL 11TH 2017**

Today marks the official launch of the second Mediation Settlement Week for the Year 2017. The purpose of mediation Settlement Week is not only to provide an opportunity to litigants to have their disputes tabled before a mediator, but it is also an open day for the Court for purposes of providing a forum for interaction between judges, counsel, litigants, and the mediators. The judges and mediators are available to answer any queries that counsel and the litigants may have. They are also available to receive any suggestions that you may have that will help us improve the service we are providing. I, therefore, urge you to feel free in your consultation.

I have been informed by the Judge-in-Charge at Lusaka that this Mediation Settlement Week is a special one because we have more than two hundred cases that have been referred to mediation. I would urge counsel and the litigants to do their best at attempting to settle. The settlements will not only help counsel and litigants conclude their matter in a speedy manner and thereby reduce on costs, but it also helps in decongesting our already clogged court system. Once again, I remind counsel that a high turnover of cases increases the frequency with which you bill, but it also makes you the preferred lawyer as you would have provided a satisfactory service to your client by having his or her case resolved quickly and at minimum cost.

On the sidelines of Mediation Settlement Weeks, the High Court will continue to refer matters to mediation in the usual manner. The High Court will also continue to abide by the time lines agreed upon for disposal of cases. This is all aimed at decongesting the courts so that we can fulfill our constitutional mandate of speedy delivery of justice. However, this can only be achieved by the full participation of all the stakeholders, being the Law Association of Zambia and their clients, being the litigants before our courts.

With these few words, it is now my honor to officially declare the Mediation Settlement Week officially launched.