- THE MINISTER OF SPORTS YOUTH AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
- THE PERMANENT SECRETARY- MINISTRY OF WATER DEVELOPMENT SANITATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
- THE KAFUE TOWN COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON
- THE DIRECTOR OF SPORT
- THE NATIONAL SPORTS COUNCIL OF ZAMBIA ACTING GENERAL SECRETARY, MR. RAPHAEL MULENGA
- THE ZAMBIA CANOEING AND ROWING ASSOCIATION VICE PRESIDENT
- ALL SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS PRESENT
- DISTINGUISHED INVITED GUESTS
- MEMBERS OF THE PRESS
- LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

GOOD AFTERNOON

HONOURABLE MINISTER, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

IT IS AN HONOUR TO BE HERE THIS AFTERNOON AT THE GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONY OF THE KAFUE RIVER ROWING CENTRE. THIS HAS BEEN A PROJECT UNDER PREPARATION FOR MANY YEARS AND MARKS A LONG AND PRODUCTIVE HISTORY OF THE CLEAN WATER PARTNERSHIP AGENDA BETWEEN THE WORLD WIDE FUND for NATURE AND THE WORLD ROWING FEDERATION.
HONOURABLE MINISTER LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:


SADLY, NOT IN ZAMBIA WE HAVE A GROWING PHENOMENON OF DRY RIVERS AND DRY BOREHOLES WHICH NEED REVERSALS. THIS HAS COME ABOUT DUE TO HUMAN ACTIVITIES SUCH AS EXCESSION DAMMING, CULTIVATION AND CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN AT RIVERS SOURCES, GROUND WATER RECHARGE POINTS AND GROUND WATER. THIS THREATENS LONG TERM WATER SECURING. EVEN FOR RIVERS THAT ARE STILL FLOWING, TOO OFTEN OUR RIVERS HAVE BECOME THE DUMPING GROUND FOR WASTE PRODUCTS FROM INDUSTRIAL, DOMESTIC AND AGRICULTURAL SOURCES, THEREBY POLLUTING THE VERY WATER WE NEED TO STAY HEALTHY AND DRIVE THE ECONOMY. ACCORDING TO A ZEMA REPORT PUBLISHED IN 2012, ZAMBIA’S SURFACE WATER BODIES, SUCH AS THE KAFUE RIVER, ARE UNDER SIGNIFICANT STRESS FROM DISCHARGES OF INDUSTRIAL WASTE AND
SEWAGE, AND AGRICULTURAL RUN-OFF OF PESTICIDES, FERTILIZERS AND SEDIMENT. ACCORDING TO THE WWF ZAMBIA KAFUE RIVER SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS REPORT, THE WATER HAS REACHED ITS MAXIMUM WATER ALLOCATION POTENTIAL REQUIRING WATER USERS ESPECIALLY COMMERCIAL ONES SUCH AS ZAMBEEF AND ZAMBIA SUGAR TO ADOPT RIGOUROUS SUSTAINABLE USE WATER PRINCIPLES TO GUARANTEE WATER SUPPLY FOR THEIR BUSINESSES, COMMUNITIES AND OTHER PLAYERS IN THE FUTURE.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

WATER QUALITY IS ALSO AN ISSUE. IT IS DIRECTLY LINKED TO WATER AVAILABILITY, AS THE POLLUTION OF WATER RESOURCES MAY PROHIBIT CERTAIN USES, SUCH AS PROVIDING SAFE DRINKING WATER. ACCORDING TO THE 2018 ZAMBIA DEMOGRAPHIC AND HEALTH SURVEY (ZDHS) 64 PER CENT OF THE POPULATION USE BASIC DRINKING WATER SERVICES (87 PER CENT IN URBAN AREAS, 49 PER CENT IN RURAL AREAS). AS SUCH CONCERTED INTEGRATED EFFORTS BY ALL STAKEHOLDER NEEDS TO BE MADE TO ENSURE THAT WE CAN KEEP OUR RIVERS CLEAN.

HONOURABLE MINISTER LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

THE COST OF WATER POLLUTION IS HIGH. WATER POLLUTION NEGATIVELY IMPACTS HEALTH OUTCOMES AND INCREASES DOMESTIC HEALTH
EXPENDITURE THROUGH THE INCREASED DISEASE BURDEN RESULTING FROM DRINKING CONTAMINATED WATER. POLLUTION DEGRADES THE ENVIRONMENT THROUGH ACCUMULATED TOXINS AND NUTRIENT LOADING AND DECREASED BIODIVERSITY, AND HURTS THE ECONOMY BY REDUCING PRODUCTIVITY AND RAISING THE COST OF WATER TREATMENT.

BECAUSE OF THESE AND MANY THREATS, WWF ZAMBIA COMMITS ITSELF TO CONTINUE WORKING WITH ITS PARTNERS VIA RESEARCH, INVESTMENT, COMMUNITY AND POLICY ENGAGEMENT TO INSPIRE AND WORK TOWARDS FREE FLOWING AND HEALTHY ZAMBIAN RIVERS AS A GUARANTEE FOR ATTAINMENT OF WATER SUSTAINABILITY IN PARTICULAR AND THE 2030 SDGS IN GENERAL.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

WE ARE EXCITED ABOUT THIS GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY FOR A WATER LEADERSHIP CENTRE WILL THAT WILL RESPOND THE CHALLENGES FACED BY OUR RIVERS. THE KAFUE RIVER FLOWING RIGHT OUTSIDE MIRRORS THE CHALLENGES FACING MANY RIVERS AROUND THE WORLD AND WWF AND FISA WILL USE THEIR GLOBAL REACH TO SHARE THE OUTPUT AND BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT FAR BEYOND ZAMBIA AND INSPIRE OTHERS TO CREATE CHANGE IN THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES.

WITH EXISTING PIONEERING PARTNERSHIP, WWF WITH WORLD ROWING IS AIMING TO BUILD A WORLD-CLASS ‘WATER LEADERSHIP CENTRE’ ON THE
Banks of the Kafue River, where communities, Scientists, conservationists and decision-makers will come together to better understand, manage, sustainably use and enjoy the freshwater resources they depend on. This is a centre that will advance excellence in the field of water resources research much needed to effective respond to climate impacts on the economy and biodiversity.

The KRRC will be a regional hub to boost research, funding and freshwater conservation expertise and contribute to sustainable water management in the Zambezi river basin. It will contribute to educating Zambia and Southern Africa’s next generation of water experts and serve as a hub for water stakeholders to advance good water management.

The centre will also support improved decision-making for local communities and water users – from utility companies and heavy industry to farmers, fishers and recreational users – through its programme of training, awareness-raising and problem resolution.

The centre will also create a permanent base for the development of rowing in Zambia with outreach to Southern African countries. Further, local schools and universities will use the centre for an innovative curriculum of environmental
EDUCATION AND WATER-BASED SPORT, BUILDING LASTING CONNECTIONS WITH THE RIVER THEY RELY ON.

HONOURABLE MINISTER, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS FACILITY, THE KAFUE RIVER ROWING CENTRE, TO OUR FRIENDS IN THE WATER AND ENVIRONMENT SECTOR IS PRETTY OBVIOUS. THERE IS A VERY OBVIOUS LINK BETWEEN THE NEW CENTRE’S PLANNED FACILITIES FOR RESEARCH, FOR STUDIES REGARDING WATER MANAGEMENT, EDUCATION, DEVELOPMENT OF KEY DECISIONS, NEW TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT RELATED TO THE MANAGEMENT OF WATER IN OUR RIVERS. HOWEVER, THE TIES TO ROWING MAY SEEM A LITTLE LESS OBVIOUS.

FOR THOSE NOT FAMILIAR WITH ROWING, ROWING IS A CLEAN WATER SPORT-AS THE SAYING GOES ROWERS ONLY ROW IN CLEAN WATER. THE WORLD’S ROWERS SUPPORT THIS CAMPAIGN BECAUSE CLEAN WATER IS VITAL FOR OUR SPORT, BUT MAINLY BECAUSE THEY KNOW THAT POLLUTED WATER RESOURCES ARE A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH – AND THAT THEY CAN HELP TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. AS SUCH THIS FACILITY WILL HAVE A UNIQUE MISSION OF PROMOTING THE SPORT OF ROWING TO ENSURE WE ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OF THE SUPPORT IN ZAMBIA BY ADVANCING THE TRAINING AND PRACTICE OF THE SPORT IN WAYS THAT STIMULATE THE RAISE OF CLEAN WATER IN OUR RIVERS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN
WE ARE OF THE STRONG VIEW THAT A RIVER CAN NOT BE SAVED UNLESS PEOPLE ARE CONNECTED TO IT. THE INNOVATIVE USE OF SPORT WILL HELP SHARE THE OUTPUT AND BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT FAR BEYOND TRADITIONAL METHODS AND WILL INSPIRE OTHERS TO CREATE CHANGE IN THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES.

HONOURABLE MINISTER LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

ALLOW ME TO STATE THAT THIS GROUNDBREAKING EVENT IS IMPORTANT TO ALL OF US BECAUSE IT REPRESENTS A "CALL" FOR STAKEHOLDERS TO COME TOGETHER TO SUPPORT THIS PROJECT. THIS PROJECT PROVIDES A SERIOUS COMMITMENT TO THE SUSTAINABILITY OF OUR RIVERS. A COMMITMENT TO THE SUSTAINABILITY OF OUR RIVERS THROUGH RESEARCH, GOOD DECISION MAKING, SCIENTIFIC ENQUIRY, EDUCATION, ROWING AND THE APPRECIATION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR COMMON GOOD-WATER. WE MUST ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT WATER IS A COMMON GOOD AND IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EVERYONE TO TAKE CARE OF IT.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

ON THIS HAPPY OCCASION, ALLOW ME TO END BY ASKING ALL OF US TO REMEMBER THAT AS THE ZAMBIA AND THE WORLD IN GENERAL CONTENDS WITH COVID 19, CLIMATE CHANGE AND GLOBAL WARMING, AS WEATHER PATTERNS TURN UNPREDICTABLE AND AS WE COPE WITH MORE AND MORE NATURAL DISASTERS, THE ONLY WAY FORWARD IS TO BUILD THE RESILIENCE
OF OUR ECOSYSTEMS BY PROVIDING FOR A NEW DEAL FOR NATURE AND PEOPLE.

THANK YOU,