

NO donor or friend can help us solve all our problems. What will change this country is not what other nations or other people give us, but what we do with what we are given and what we have.

We need aid, but aid alone won't solve all our problems. We need to put in our own effort, our own resources. We have to learn to make the best use of what we have and what we are given by others. There has to be efficient, effective and orderly use of resources, financial and otherwise.

We welcome the assistance from the European Investment Bank to Zesco. We need to invest more in our energy sector. We have got great potential in this area, but we have not been prudent in the exploitation and management of our hydro-power potential. The inefficiency, ineffectiveness and mismanagement at Zesco has retarded our growth in this sector. Zesco has not been managed well and has been politically abused. In most of the elections we have held since 1991, Zesco has been a source of finance and logistical support to successive MMD governments. This, in turn, encouraged mismanagement, misuse and misapplication of funds within Zesco. Appointments to key managerial positions have usually been based on political patronage and nepotism. Zesco is filled with employees brought there by politicians. And some of these employees are totally useless, they are of no value to the company. But they have to be there because those in power wanted them to be there. Zesco has over-employed and its management bill may be too high for the size of income it is generating. Clearly, Zesco has been a victim of corruption and abuse of power. If corruption is removed from its business, Zesco would do much better and would be able to fulfil its obligations to the nation.

It is therefore pleasing to hear from Patrick Walsh, a European Investment Bank director, that they are pleased with the way things are today being managed at Zesco and are also happy with our current government's attitude towards corruption and the efforts that are being made to fight it.

It is not possible for Zesco to achieve much if its resources are not being utilised in a more rational and prudent manner, if its resources are

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Aid is not a substitute for self-reliance

being stolen, misused, misapplied and misappropriated in all sorts of ways.

We should also take very seriously Walsh's caution on aid dependency. Walsh has urged us to be self-reliant as we seek aid. Truly, this is the way things should be. Aid, on its own, will not develop this country and give us the good life we desire and deserve. The future of this country and its prosperity lies totally or squarely on us as citizens and on the efforts we exert. Donor aid is simply aid. It gives us a push, a start but it will not be able to propel us to the higher heights we seek. The Europeans and other donors, whatever their goodwill, will not be able to develop our country for us. Moreover, they have got their own countries to take care of. And right now most of them are going through a very difficult economic period, they are facing serious recessions. Some of them need help from us in the developing world. Angola had to come to the aid of its former donor - Portugal.

There is need for us to start relying on our own efforts, on the hard work and intellectual capacity of our own people. Aid is good, but it brings with it certain negative things. Excessive reliance on aid may lead to loss of initiative and creativity on our part. We may start to develop a feeling that someone else will always do it for us - a dependency syndrome. And dependency is often accompanied by irresponsibility in the management of what you have been given. It is usually not easy to understand the nature of things we have not sweated for, we have just been given. There is no sensible alternative to self-reliance and frugality in the management of our resources and in our efforts to

develop our country and our people.

We will soon be reaching 50 years of independence. There is need to start taking stock of what we have done or not done, what we have achieved or failed to achieve in all areas of human endeavour. Half a century is not a short period in today's world.

We have resources that need to be exploited. We cannot develop without fully exploiting the immense natural resources that our country is endowed with. We have a great advantage of hydro-electricity potential over other countries in the region. But we are not taking advantage of this to generate abundant and cheap electricity for the development of agriculture, manufacturing, mining and other industries that need a lot of energy. We are still very short of electricity in a country with so much hydro-power potential. We still have many homes that have no access to electricity and most of our people in rural areas are living as if they are in the 12th century. Our forests are disappearing because of reliance on cutting trees for *malasha*. Our agriculture still lacks cheap electricity for irrigation. If cheap energy is not our strategic advantage, what will?

Again, this brings us back to the issue of corruption. Where there is corruption, national priorities are likely to be misplaced. Where there is corruption, things that matter most to the nation will be sacrificed for small benefits that greedy individuals are seeking. Where there is corruption, there will be no optimal utilisation of financial and other resources. In today's highly competitive world, if we fail to utilise our potential strategic advantages, then we are out of the race.

A clear, honest, selfless and dedicated leadership is required. A leadership that puts national interests first and subordinating to this is a must if we have to harbour any hope for progress and a reversal of economic fortunes. It is therefore important for us as a nation to ensure that the anti-corruption policy of this government is not reversed but succeeds. There is need for every citizen of goodwill to join the fight against corruption and ensure that public resources are utilised in the most efficient and honest manner and for the benefit of all.