



The Commonwealth

16 August 2017

Commonwealth Secretary-General's Statement on the *Nolle Prosequi* entered by the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) in Mr Hakainde Hichilema's Treason Case

I am delighted to learn that Zambia's Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) has today entered a *nolle prosequi* in the treason case involving Mr Hakainde Hichilema, leader of the United Party for National Development (UPND), Zambia's main opposition political party.

The DPP's decision to issue a *nolle prosequi* in the case against Mr Hichilema is reasonable and offers a unique opportunity for the country to move forward in the interest of all Zambians, and to achieve political cohesion and reconciliation through dialogue.

The DPP, as a custodian of the public interest and the rule of law, must have weighed what was in the interest of justice and the public interest at this delicate point in Zambia's history and decided that, at this material time, it was not in the interest of the public to prosecute the leader of the opposition, especially following the commitment to peace and harmony generously given by both President Lungu and Mr Hichilema to me during my recent visit to Zambia, and their pledge to engage in a constructive, responsible and forward-looking dialogue. This is an opportunity for Zambians and their leaders to show the world that the Republic of Zambia still remains a symbol of peace and a beacon of stability, unity and political tolerance in Africa and the Commonwealth.

I would also like to use this opportunity to thank President Edgar Lungu and Mr Hichilema for their commitment and resolve to move forward, putting the past behind them and looking ahead to jointly and collectively address the issues that have deeply divided the peace-loving people of Zambia. I believe Zambians can rely on these leaders to wholeheartedly engage in this process and to craft a democratic, sustainable pathway which will lead the country not just to successful elections in 2021, but beyond.

In the spirit of dialogue, cooperation and mutual trust, it is crucial that all stakeholders continue to be respectful, gracious, magnanimous and supportive of an environment that is conducive to this mutually agreed constructive engagement. It is in the interest of the peace-loving people of Zambia that I encourage all stakeholders to work collaboratively and make this dialogue a reality, and use it as an opportunity to weave and reinforce a narrative of social harmony and mutual respect in Zambian politics.



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I am pleased that Professor Ibrahim Gambari has accepted to be my Dialogue Envoy for Zambia. The Commonwealth will ensure that he travels to Zambia at the earliest convenience to start consultations with all relevant stakeholders, to support and progress discussions on the roadmap and other modalities for the dialogue. The Commonwealth, the church, civil society, political parties, and all other stakeholders would work towards ensuring that dialogue outcomes are implemented in good time for the 2021 elections.

May God continue to bless the people and leaders of Zambia as they embark on this noble journey of peace and harmony.