



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
GENEVA

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STATEMENT BY:

H.E. MR. LOVE MTESA

**AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE IN GENEVA**

ON THE CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

**AT THE SPECIAL SESSION
OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**GENEVA
11TH AUGUST 2006**

SATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR LOVE MTESA (ZAMBIA) AT THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL (UNHRC) ON 11 AUGUST 2006 IN GENEVA

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

It is just about a month ago that this Human Rights Council met to discuss the conflict between Israel and Palestine. It is very unfortunate that we have to meet again under similar circumstances and this time to look at the conflict between Israel and Lebanon.

The conflict between Israel and Lebanon is now in its fourth week. Many people in the region are wondering where the international community is and what it is doing to stop the conflict. As the conflict rages on, innocent people, mostly the vulnerable, elderly, women and children are dying in both Israel and Lebanon. Those who have survived and have lived through this crisis and continue to do so, are wondering and they are asking themselves the question: Where is the international community and more especially the United Nations Security Council?

Mr. Chairman,

With all the images, that we are seeing each and everyday, through the electronic media, of the dead and the anguish of families both in Israel and Lebanon, it is time to put an end to the killing of innocent people and indiscriminate destruction of the infrastructure, including roads and bridges, regardless of the cause or circumstances that led to the conflict. Civilians, both in Lebanon and in Israel, do not deserve to die the way that they are dying. Even soldiers, on both sides, do not deserve to die the way that they are dying. The duty of soldiers, of course, is to safeguard the territorial integrity of their respective countries and not to go beyond unless they are specifically invited to do so for

a specific purpose.

What we must value now is life and thus steps must be taken immediately to save the lives of those who are living. This distinguished Council knows too well that everyone has a right to life. Therefore it is unacceptable that innocent people should be made to pay with their lives for misunderstandings existing at the level of leaders and misunderstandings of which they are not a part. Leaders have a duty to ensure that they do not plant seeds of hatred between nations, which will only have the unfortunate effect of igniting further conflicts in future.

It is therefore, very important that a cease fire comes into effect immediately in order to save lives and to bring back hope to the people in both Lebanon and Israel who, I'm sure, feel let down, in different ways, by the international community and in particular by the United Nations Security Council.

The international community did not react to this crisis in good time hence its escalation to the present level. My delegation does not wish to see a recurrence of such a conflict but in the event that it does, it is our hope and desire that the international community will meet up to the challenge and respond in good time in order to avoid the loss of life and the destruction of infrastructure, including roads and bridges, that we have witnessed in Lebanon, which goes beyond sane and sober reasoning.

Mr. Chairman,

We are all aware that the United Nations Security Council is seriously considering this matter and is trying to come up with a resolution that is acceptable to both parties. At the pace that the Security Council is going, it is not clear when this resolution will be reached. However, as the process is going on in New York, people continue to die and

my delegation does not believe that the saving of innocent lives should be dependent on the agreement to be reached by the Security Council. We are therefore appealing that as the negotiations are going on in New York, a cease-fire should immediately take effect.

It is very important that both parties to the conflict show restraint and stop the indiscriminate killing. Therefore it is unacceptable that innocent people should pay with their lives for misunderstandings of which they are not a part.

Mr. Chairman,

We are aware that there are a number of proposals on how to reach a permanent solution to the recurring conflicts between Israel and Lebanon. Whatever resolution is arrived at, all we want to see, is ever lasting peace in the Middle East as a whole, where Israel and Lebanon as well as Palestine, will live in peace and harmony and respect each others' territories, not only as good neighbours but in recognition that they belong to one human race. Therefore, no one has a right to eliminate the other.

I submit, Mr. Chairman, that the war in the Middle East is immoral and unjustified. And therefore it must stop forthwith.

For the love of peace of the people of Lebanon and of Israel and of the whole Middle East Region, my delegation will vote for the draft Resolution before us.

Thank you Mr. Chairman