Zambia: ‘We Stay in ICC’

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Zambia will continue to uphold its membership on the International Criminal Court (ICC), Parliament heard yesterday.

Justice Minister Given Lubinda told the House that from the submissions received from a country-wide consultative process, 91.43 per cent of the petitioners were against the idea of Zambia withdrawal from the ICC while only 8.57 per cent were of the view that the country should consider pulling out.

He said the results showed that Zambians wanted to continue to stand by the ideals and values for which the ICC was established to strengthen and uphold human rights.

“Mr Speaker, allow me to report to this Honourable House that the people of Zambia spoke very unequivocally through this consultative process… it is my rare duty and privilege to officially announce that Zambia shall continue to uphold her membership in the ICC,” he said.

Mr Lubinda said this in a ministerial statement when he updated the House and the nation at large on outcome of the recent consultative process on Zambia’s membership to the ICC.

At the 28thSummit of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU) early this year, resolved on a non-binding recommendation that there should be a mass withdrawal of African countries from the ICC citing partiality of the Court.

President Edgar Lungu, not willing to arbitrarily commit Zambia to any position, chose instead to sound out the general public’s opinion via consultative process conducted across the country.

Mr Lubinda told the House that the result of the consultative process was well covered in the media and was already a matter of public knowledge.

This was the position that Zambia would present to the AU when the time for making such submission was due in July 3rd to 4th, this year in Ethiopia.

He said the information received from the AU Commission was that the discussion on the ICC and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) should not be agenda items for the summit, but for a later summit.

He said Zambia would work to strengthen its national judicial system to effectively fulfill its mandate to cooperate with ICC and prosecute international crimes to contribute to the global fight against impunity.

He said democracy was expensive and there was nothing sinister about Government consulting its citizens because of its open door policy of dialoguing with its citizens.

He was responding to UPND Kabompo West MP Ambrose Lufuma, who asked in a follow-up question why Government went ahead to have a consultative process when it knew that majority Zambians could support upholding ICC’s membership.

Meanwhile, Local Government Minister Vincent Mwale said the misapplication of funds by most council’s in the country was attributed to failure to comply with ministerial guidelines.

Updating the House on council’s financial management and utilisation of Local Government’s Equalisation Fund, Mr Mwale said there was a general outcry from the public on management of public funds by most council’s.

He said in a ministerial statement that financial mismanagement had also been attributed to solicited, unjustified and rampant local and foreign travel by most council officials, while others leave their offices without authority.”