

**LUSAKA PROVINCIAL COMMITTEE LAUNCH**  
**LUSAKA SECONDARY SCHOOL (GRZ)**  
**SATURDAY, 30<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2016**  
**NATIONAL CHAIRMAN SPEECH**

- The National Secretary,
- The National Treasurer,
- The Vice Publicity Secretary,
- I recognize the Presence of three members of the Cheke National Executive Committee (N.E.C.) who were recently ratified by N.E.C. to fill some vacant Executive Committee positions:
  - Mrs. Agness Fundulu – Chairperson, Cultural Sub-Committee
  - Mr. Chilunda Masambo Lewis – Vice Chairperson, Youth
  - Mr. Mwingunga Kavungu – Vice Chairperson, Religious Affairs Sub- Committee
- Still on this point, may I also take advantage to announce that few more positions have been ratified in the Executive Committee:
  - Mr. Oliver Mundanya – Vice Chairperson, Cultural Sub-Committee
  - Pastor Kennedy N. Njamba – Chairperson, Religious Affairs Sub-Committee
  - Mr. Brian Kayongo – Chairperson, Youth
- May I say Brothers and Sisters present.

I welcome you to this historic event today. I say historic because this is the first time in the history of Cheke Cha Mbunda Cultural and Writers Association to formulate and launch a Lusaka Provincial Committee.

This event kick starts our programme of re-launching other Provincial, District and Branch Committees in relevant provinces of the republic of Zambia, which were dissolved at the Cheke Cha Mbunda Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

Today's programme kick starts the Cheke administration from that of "Reactive" to "Proactive" which will be inclusive of everyone in authority of Cheke from N.E.C, to all Committees and move away from expecting N.E.C. to do everything while the rest of the members watch.

You will notice that these positions are somehow different from the accustomed ones. However, the positions are at chairmanship level in The National Executive Committee (N.E.C.). The idea is that while N.E.C. are formulator and interpreters of policies approved by the Annual General Meeting (AGM), Provincial Committees are implementers through District and Branch Committees

who are the grassroots. Therefore the process has to be coordinated down the line of implementation.

I do not want to go into divulging the Cheke history otherwise we will be here the whole day. I will however, draw your attention to the fact that Cheke have scored a lot of successes since, until a disruptive hand overshadowed, in the dark era of 2013 to 2015. This was an era in which Cheke was viewed as semi political and Mbunda people rated as tribal and anarchist.

This was an era in which you were told that Cheke was formed in Kaoma and therefore leadership and Headquarters should revolve around Kaoma and Western Province only and that its membership is automatic to all Mbundas. It was also propagated that the "Cheke Traditional Ceremony" was launched in Kaoma in the year 2000 and therefore the need to revive it.

## **Brief History**

1). Cheke Cha Mbunda Cultural and Writers Association originally began along the line of rail. It formally existed in 1956 as Mbunda Tribal Association under the Chairmanship of Mr. Kalimbwe. In 1959 Mbunda Speaking People of Mufulira formed an organisation which they called "Mwondo wa Mbunda".

In 1967 Mbunda Speaking People in Ndola formed another organization called "Mbunda Writers Association". This organisation was unified with "Mwondo wa Mbunda" under "Mbunda Writers Association. They started publishing a Magazine called "Kapila".

The objective of the organization since its inception has been to gather and preserve the traditions and culture of the Mbunda speaking peoples, having published a series of magazines such as Muthzimbu and "Likalavandthzi Iya Mufuko (Preservation of Cultural Values).

In 1981 Mbunda Speaking People in Lusaka, Monze and Kaoma met and revived the objectives of "Mbunda Writers Association by forming "Cheke Cultural Writers Association. "Cheke in the Mbunda language means "'light" as it gets brighter and brighter in the darkness of the night to morning brightness'.

Perhaps this was the era under which membership was automatic to all Mbundas.

However, in 1981 they drew up a new constitution and received a Certificate of Registration from the Government of the Republic of Zambia on March 26, 1982. This therefore meant that Cheke became a "Corporate Body" with a set of rules and regulations, including paid up membership as stipulated in that constitution.

In 2006 the Association Constitution was revised.

In August 2007, Mbunda Speaking People met in Lusaka and resolved to once again change the name of the organisation to "Cheke Cha Mbunda Cultural and Writers Association". This change was necessitated by their changed vision of not only writing about culture but reviving, preserving, and protecting the history and culture of the Mbunda Speaking People.

On 13th February 2008 they were issued with a change of name Certificate of Registration.

- 2). In the year 2000 a function was held in Kaoma not to launch a “Cheke Traditional Ceremony” but to launch the researched “History and Cultural Life of The Mbunda Speaking People” book, 1994 English edition. Therefore the claim advanced in the attempted introduction of a Cheke Cha Mbunda Ceremony at one of the Mbunda Chief’s palace as a revival of an old ceremony cannot be sustained.

## Current Vision

### 1). Policy Statement

In the pursuit of its programmes and activities the Association shall at all times conduct its affairs within the framework of its constitution and the Laws and Regulations of the Government of the Republic of Zambia. Admittance to the Association is open to all Mbundas, adult persons who accept and subscribe to the aims and objectives of the Association and any other persons interested in the promotion, encouragement and revival of the **MBUNDA** cultural activities and is conferred through payment of membership fees. The Association is nonpolitical and supports the Government of the day.

Cheke Cha Mbunda, currently enjoys support from 99.9% of the nine (9) Mbunda chiefs in Zambia, and give unequivocal respect and support to Traditional Institutions in their respective palaces and chiefdoms. Cheke's role in relation to the Mbunda chiefdoms is advisory. Cheke derives its authority from its constitution and the AGM as its highest organ. Being an Association and because of the high respect given to the various Chiefdoms, the chiefs have no control over or participate in the day-to-day running or implementation of the Association's policies, objectives and programmes. They thus do not issue directives to the Association's elected office bearers. Consequently, they do not, severally or individually, issue statements or write instructions or requests using Cheke stationery.

### 2). Objectives

- i). Overall objectives are to ***“Revive, Preserve, Promote and Protect the cultural heritage of the Mbunda people group from foreign influence.***

Foreign influence in this regard could arise from both external countries and from local traditions. The objective could be achieved by Cheke in diplomatic liaison with the traditional leaders.

Tribal wars ended a long time ago and if Mbunda people chose to revive their warlike nature they would just end up being arrested by law enforcement officers.

Cheke believes in dialogue and maintain good neighborliness, therefore members should use diplomatic avenues and language when communicating with others even if they aggrieved the Association. Cheke members should use diplomacy when approaching ethnic groups which infringe the rights of Mbundas.

Cheke is totally opposed to formation of administrative structures like the so called Mbunda Royal Establishment (MRE) and its Mbunda Royal Council (MRC) on principle. With due respect, one Mbunda chief cannot declare such structures to

report to him without consulting the other eight Mbunda chiefs. Worse still without consent from the Mbunda monarch in Angola. As Mbundas we equally yearn to have such structures as other ethnic groups do but correct procedure need to be followed. Cheke will only accept such structures if and when the idea is supported by the other Mbunda chiefs in Zambia and the Mbunda monarch in Angola. I can confirm, these are also the views of His Majesty King Mbandu III, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Mbunda monarch in Angola, according to the minutes of the meeting attended by representatives of both the advocates of the Mbunda Royal Establishment, Mbunda Royal Council and Cheke Cha Mbunda, during his last visit to Zambia in which he ordered for an end to those structures.

It is worth noting that the Mwene Mundu chieftainship was the first to migrate to Barotseland, Kalabo in 1795 with all Mbunda traditions but some of those traditions have not be practiced for a long time.

Such a situation could not be changed in one year especially after a 221 or so years of non-practice. It required a lot of diplomacy.

The researched history show that Mbunda ethnic group is one of the main Bantu immigration groups from KOLA who primarily settled in Angola and late settlers in Barotseland in 1795 after the Aluyi had already settled there, though Mbundas are early settlers in the now Zambia from the Ngonis and other settlement groups now enjoying full recognition of their culture and traditions.

Therefore, Cheke's position is that Mbunda ethnic group is a distinct group with its Monarch in Angola and royal blood chiefs that cannot be subjugated or beg for recognition by or from another ethnic group on account of late settlement. Mbunda situation is more or less the same as the Chewa chieftainship of Paramount Chief Undi in Zambia with authority over the Chewas in Malawi and Mozambique.

As researchers, Cheke is alive to the fact that King Lobosi in the late 1800s decreed that all the people of Barotseland are Lozis, as a unifying factor after defeating the Makololo who occupied Barotseland for a little while. This resulted in the Mbundas naming him "Liwanika Lya Mafuti" (Unifier of the nation), "Njamba Kalimi Lifuti Limulimina" (An elephant does not cultivate, nationals cultivate for it) bestowing an elephant symbol of his kingdom, which has been maintained up to now. However, good as that decree might have seemed though, it ended up eroding the culture and traditions of other ethnic groups in Barotseland.

On that account and many others, Cheke are ready to dialogue with the Barotse Royal Establishment (BRE) over the Mbunda grievances as presented for the first time at the last Barotse National Council (BNC).

Cheke would however, not play politics or neither exercise anarchy on these issues by disrespecting the rightful authorities in their lands of settlement nor following blindly actions of those that have places of settlement they call their own in Zambia. It is folly to declare Mbunda Royal Establishment just because the Nkoyas have done

so. Nkoyas have chiefs recognized so by the Government. How many Mbunda chief are recognized as such by Government gazette? None! Nkoyas have Kaoma which they call their land. What about Mbundas? Which specific area in Zambia do they call their own land without stepping on others people's toes?

- ii). In addition to advancing the Mbunda culture, heritage and values, it is also Cheke's objective as partners with the government of the day in fostering and Advancing Human Rights of members, Improving access to Religious activities and information, Education and Communication, promotion of programs targeting Young members, strengthening research, and Good Governance, reducing poverty levels among Cheke members, and broadening empowerment interventions, reduction of stigma and discrimination levels in order to optimize the expected result. Yes, stigma and discrimination levels that causes some Mbundas to identify themselves as Lozis or Luvaes even to Population Census official thereby distorting the actual Mbunda population.

To achieve all that, since the last AGM that ushered in the new executive, Cheke National Executive Committee has been working on a 2016-2021 Strategic Plan, July 2016-June 2017 Action/Operation Plan and amendments to the Constitution, in order to have a proactive approach and inclusiveness to achieving the objectives.

To comprehend this approach we need to first understand ***Relationship of Mbunda Chiefdom and Management Structure of Cheke Cha Mbunda.***

Structures of Mbunda chiefdoms mainly follows a traditional organization form. The entire Mbunda community in Zambia has nine chiefdom areas, subsequently divided into villages each of which is headed by a village headperson. With reference to Western province a village or cluster of villages are registered in Lozi village registers which translates into Regions.

The Regions, each of which is headed by a Senior Lozi Headperson or traditional Mbunda chief. It is along this same line that Mbunda chiefdoms are built.

I will breakdown various organs of Mbunda chiefdoms and how they relate with Cheke Branch Committees.

### **1). Village Authority/Compound (Urban setting)**

This authority is comprised of the Village Headperson and elected representatives including women and youths. It is the lowest organ of governance and the closest to the people. It initiates policies, which address needs of the villagers. The Village Authority is the engine for development initiatives.

### **2). Cheke Branch Committees/Compound (Urban setting)**

These comprise cluster of villages. It serves as a link between villages and the Cheke District Committee, and provides leadership to a district. The Branch Committees are the grassroots of Cheke.

### **3). Cheke District Committees/Political Constituencies (Urban Setting)**

These are made up of voluntary members from different sectors and disciplines occupied with various activities, including financial and economic, agriculture, good governance and human rights, gender and women empowerment, youth, security and culture.

It coordinates with area members of Parliament, government departments and NGOs operating in the area including representatives of women and youth affairs and ward councilors. The district chairperson presides at all meetings of the District Committee. They are responsible for policy implementation, monitoring and ensuring proper management and administration of Cheke programs at grassroots. They are also there to ensure that skills and development-related experience brought in by individuals from outside the traditional set up are fully utilized.

### **4). Cheke Provincial Committees**

These are the 'Think Tanks' which disseminate policies for various divisions of the Cheke N.E.C through the National Secretariat. They examine and debate the suitability of draft policies and proposals presented to it by the National Secretariat. These committees are also responsible for mobilizing resources and fundraising for programs, and also accountability of funds held in bank accounts, and producing monthly financial reports to the National Secretariat.

### **5). Cheke National Secretariat**

An Administrative Secretary (ex – officio) responsible for the day-to-day management of the association will head the Cheke National Secretariat. The Programs, Communication, Finance and Administration officers will support the Administrative Secretary's Office. All the personnel will report directly to the Administrative Secretary, except for the Finance who will report directly to the N.E.C. Treasurer. The job descriptions for the various positions in the structure will be contained in the Cheke Constitution.

Co-ordination and implementation of the Cheke Strategic Plan will primarily be the responsibility of the Cheke National Secretariat under the Administrative Secretary. The Administrative Secretary reports to the Cheke N.E.C. through the quarterly board meetings.

### **6). Cheke National Executive Committee (N.E.C.)**

N.E.C. will be responsible for overall governance, policy guidance, strategic direction, approving plans and providing general oversight and will meet quarterly except in cases of emergency that need its direction.

### **7). Cheke Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

The AGM is the supreme authority of Cheke. It is held annually. It is responsible for examining and approving policies initiated by the village authorities through Branch Committees and District Committees, debated by the Provincial Committees and formulated by the National Executive Committee. This is the only organ with the power to approve amendments to the Constitution. Because of its importance in the development of the Cheke, the AGM commands a wide range of representation from the entire Cheke.

All this therefore sets a tone to what is expected from all of us as members of the Cheke Cha Mbunda and office bearers to be elected here today and other committees in relevant provinces throughout Zambia. Measure yourselves and identify where you fit in.

Remember, we have a commitment not only to advancing the Mbunda cultural, heritage and values but also advancing Human Rights of members, Improving access to Religious activities and information, Education and Communication, promotion of programs targeting Young members, strengthening research, and Good Governance, reducing poverty levels among Cheke members, and broadening empowerment interventions, reduction of stigma and discrimination levels in order to optimize the expected result.

Together we will succeed.

With these remarks, I declare the Cheke Cha Mbunda – Lusaka Provincial Committee launched.



Ndandula Libingi

**National Chairman**

**Cheke Cha Mbunda Cultural and Writers Association**