

Scores defy COVID-19 rules to witness Lungu's launch of Kafue overpass

By [Julia Malunga](#),

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A MULTITUDE of Patriotic Front cadres yesterday flouted COVID-19 regulations to witness the commissioning of the Makeni overpass.

Rather than enforce the COVID-19 prevention measures, President Edgar Lungu expressed delight at the presence of the PF cadres, most of whom were unmasked.

“Ladies and gentlemen and most important for me, fellow PF party cadres, we are here because of you. We shouldn't lose sight of your presence. You made us what we are,” President Lungu acknowledged the cadres.

He said that the overpass would promote efficiency and safe movement along Kafue Road.

“The Lusaka City Decongestion Project is just one example of such cordial relations that have existed between the two countries over the years. On behalf of the Zambian government, the people of the Republic of Zambia and, indeed, on my own behalf, let me express my deep gratitude to the Indian government and the people of India for the continued support and partnership. I further extend my gratitude to the contractor, Afcons Infrastructure Limited, for the good works executed thus far. I wish to assure you that such support will not go unnoticed,” President Lungu said.

“My government has worked to improve the livelihood of all Zambians regardless of ethnicity, gender or political orientation. We have embarked on several projects aimed at transforming the face of Zambia in all parts of the country. The Lusaka City Decongestion Project is just one of the many projects that government is undertaking to ease the movement of people, goods and services within the city of Lusaka and across the country. The bridge we are commissioning today (Monday) will promote efficient and safe movements along Kafue Road. By reducing the traffic congestion along this road, we will be saving on time spent on the road resulting in increased productivity. With increased productivity, comes improvement in people's livelihood.”

He added that the PF government would continue to invest in infrastructure.

“Infrastructure development is a critical catalyst to enhanced economic growth, and therefore, my government will continue to invest in infrastructure, such as roads, schools, hospitals and many other such infrastructure. I have heard some sections of our people arguing that ‘they cannot eat roads and as such, government should not invest so much in infrastructure...’ To the contrary, provision of essential infrastructure is key to unlocking the economic potential of our country resulting in many benefits for our people. As such, my government will not be distracted from doing what is necessary. We will not relent from providing the necessary infrastructure,” President Lungu said.

“Apart from infrastructure development, my government is determined to create various jobs, especially for the growing youth population. I have been informed that through this project, over 1,000 direct jobs have been created for our men and women. Additionally, several other indirect jobs have also been created through various other ancillary businesses resulting from this project. Ladies and gentlemen, the relevance of any infrastructure is dependent on the design and, therefore, it is necessary to ensure that any infrastructure put up, incorporates appropriate designs that assure value for money.”

President Lungu also said time to talk more would resume ahead of next year’s general election to showcase what his administration had achieved to voters.

“Today, we are commissioning the completion of Makeni flyover, which is part of the four fly-over bridges to be constructed under this project. The benefits of the Makeni flyover bridge will be immediate because the travel time between Kafue roundabout and Chilanga will be reduced to nearly half, as the freeway will not be burdened by turning or joining vehicles at the Chawama-Makeni junction. I keep reminding myself that I shouldn’t talk too much, I should be working because the time for talking will be in 2021 when we will be showing you what we have done,” said President Lungu.

And Local Government Minister Dr Charles Banda said the project engaged 60 local contractors.

“I wish to further state that in line with the government policy on sub-contracting of construction works, 20 per cent of the contract sum has been reserved for Zambian sub-contractors. I am glad to report that the project has engaged 60 local contractors undertaking various works,” said Dr Banda.

Meanwhile, Indian High Commissioner to Zambia Ngulkam Jathom Gangte said his country would continue to help Zambia in the fight against COVID-19.