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Misuse of public funds sickening - Mweetwa

By Chambwa Moonga

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CORNELIUS Mweetwa

CORNELIUS Mweetwa says the trend of misusing public funds in the public sector is deeply sickening. Commenting on the continued losses and misappropriation of public funds as highlighted in the 2012 Auditor General's report, Mweetwa, the African Parliamentary Network Against Corruption (APNAC) president and Choma Central UPND member of parliament, said it was shocking that people in the civil service were so active in abusing public funds. "Well, issues of misusing public funds are on the rise and this is because people are acting with impunity and so there is need to employ deterrent measures to save public finances. Corrective measures seem not be working because the sanctions are administrative in nature," said Mweetwa, who is also UPND deputy spokesperson. "People need to take these

things very seriously and in Zambia, with a small number of people that we have, it is very, very shocking and highly demoralising that some people in the civil service are abusing public funds; it is deeply sickening." He suggested that punitive measures be put in place to end the indiscriminate misappropriation of government funds as corrective ones had failed to yield tangible results.

According to the 2012 Auditor General's report released recently, government has continued to lose huge sums of money due to financial irregularities, failure to collect tax on assessments and uncollected duties by the Zambia Revenue Authority, among other irregularities. Meanwhile, Mweetwa has castigated former Solwezi Central MMD member of parliament Lucky Mulusa for accusing the UPND of desperation in the adoption process of a candidate for the forthcoming Solwezi Central by-election.

He said Mulusa should tone down and stop accusing the UPND of desperation over the forthcoming Solwezi Central by-election.

"If he was quoted correctly... that statement he made in The Post accusing us of being desperate, that's very, very sad from a person who, by now, we expect to have climbed the ladder to understand the political terrain of this country. He must act with a sense of humility because it is not only him who has been injured by that nullification of Solwezi Central seat but all of us, including some PF members of parliament. So, let him tone down," Mweetwa said.

He said it was wrong for Mulusa to continue unleashing aggression on the UPND.

"The way he is talking, the aggression he is unleashing on us, he should expend those energies against PF - we are his colleagues. I can assure you that as a party we are extremely strong in Solwezi. So, it is not right for anyone to begin to drink from the cup of past glory because that is political strangulation," Mweetwa said.

Mulusa last week revealed that the UPND had been blackmailing him into recontesting the seat on its ticket.

He said he was shocked with the UPND's recent behaviour where it was taking advantage of problems in the MMD to coerce MMD members to join it. Mulusa said the UPND was a grouping of desperate people who can do anything for votes.

Asked about the adoption process for the Mkushi South, Solwezi Central, Katuba and Kasenengwa constituencies and possibilities of the UPND working with other parties, he said the party would soon announce its candidates and that he did not have an official party position over an alliance with other political parties.

"We'll soon announce our candidates for the seats that are hanging in the balance, and about working with other parties, I'm not aware of the official party position," said Mweetwa.

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