



Press Statement

POWER OUTAGE OF MONDAY 15TH JUNE, 2009

The Energy Regulation Board has engaged Zesco Limited to establish the full extent of the causes and effects of the nationwide blackout that occurred on Monday 15th June, 2009, at around 20:00hrs.

Preliminary indications are that the June 15th power outages occurred when one of the two 125 Mega-Volt-Amperes (MVA) 330kV/88kV Transformers at Leopards Hill Substation in Lusaka caught fire. Leopards Hill Substation is the main substation linking the two major power stations namely Kafue Gorge and Kariba North Bank Power stations to the rest of the Zambian Power System.

Our initial investigations indicate that the blackout did not have the same cause as that experienced in January 2008. Zesco has made progress in implementing the recommendations of the blackout committee of enquiry. This is largely why power supplies were maintained to the Western Province and parts of Southern Province during the blackout. The ERB will assess the causes of the blackout and will inform the public of our findings in due course.

The Energy Regulation Board would like to urge members of the public to remain calm during this period. Technically speaking the public should be aware of the following when blackouts occur:

1. The challenges faced during the night in restoring electricity supplies to consumers were as a result of low consumer loads which induced high voltages in the transmission lines. This had the effect of prolonged

restoration times faced during the night from the time of the power blackout.

2. The generating machines and sub-stations have in-built controls that prevent them from being damaged in the event that there is insufficient “load” to run the machines. This protection is what operated last night and as such prevented further damage to the system. This is the expected operation of a power system under the circumstances.
3. During the blackout, 80-MW of electricity was imported from SNEL, the electricity utility in Democratic Republic of Congo. In addition, CEC also switched on the 80 MW of gas turbine alternator generation capacity they own to ensure the mining sector was not adversely affected by the blackout.

In light of the above occurrence and the loss of the transformer, we would also like to urge electricity users countrywide to minimize the use of electricity during peak consumption periods.

The public will be kept informed of any further developments in relation to the power outage.

LUKONDE MFULA
ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
16th June 2009