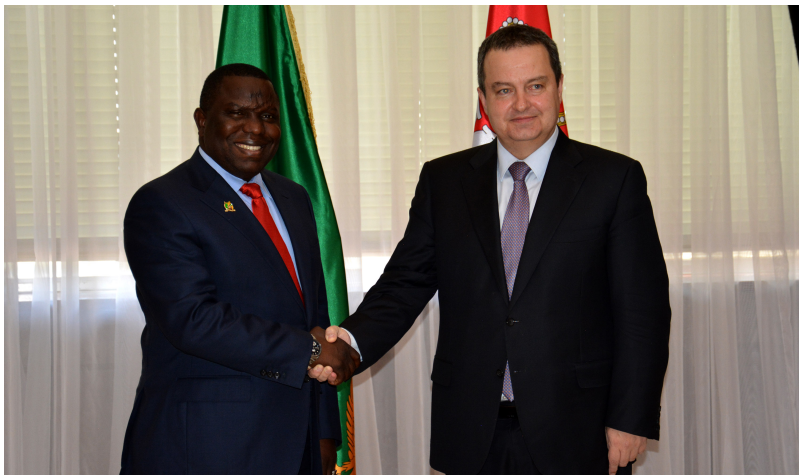




First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic met today the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Zambia Harry Kalaba.

At a press conference held after the meeting, Foreign Minister Dacic stated that this was the first visit of a Zambian official at such a high level after many years, and that Minister Kalaba was visiting at his invitation.

The Foreign Ministers of Serbia and Zambia agreed that it was necessary to develop traditionally friendly relations between the two countries, dating back to the time of the former Yugoslavia, and that an effort should be made to enhance trade which is now only 27,000 dollars.

“This came as a result of the policy of not fostering friendly relations”, said the Serbian Foreign Minister, underlining that he launched the initiative at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that Serbia restores its friendly relations with many countries from Africa, Latin America and Asia.

The Serbian Foreign Minister indicated that restoration of bilateral cooperation should be reflected in more frequent political contacts, as well as exchange of support. Minister Dacic expressed his gratitude to Zambia for its principled position, as it did not recognize the unilaterally declared independence of Kosovo and Metohija. “Their position is highly fair and acceptable to us, meaning that they believe that no unilateral steps should be taken without prior agreement”, said Dacic.

Addressing the press, Minister Kalaba said that it was unfortunate that Serbia and Zambia had not been fostering their relations through trade which was now almost non-existent, adding that his country wished to develop cooperation with Serbia particularly in areas of economy, culture, military, agriculture and sports. He emphasized that the Belgrade business community was welcome in Zambia.

Kalaba reiterated that his country did not recognize the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo and Metohija, and that it would refrain from making any decision before the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina is brought to an end.