



Republic of Zambia
Ministry of Information and Media

**SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND MEDIA AND CHIEF GOVERNMENT
SPOKESPERSON HON. CHUSHI KASANDA, MP, AT THE
CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR JOURNALISTS ON EFFECTIVE
REPORTING ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES, MONDAY, 27TH DECEMBER, 2021**

- **The Director of Public Affairs at the United States Embassy in Zambia**
- **The Executive Director - Continental Leadership Research Institute (CLRI)**
- **The Executive Director - Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA)**
- **Civil Society leaders present**
- **Members of the press**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

I thank you for the invitation to officiate at the capacity building training workshop for journalists on effective reporting on human rights issues.

I wish to state that the New Dawn Government is committed to ensure that the rule of law is upheld in Zambia and that democratic principles are enhanced. To achieve this, the role of the media is critical to ensure that the voice of the people is heard through skilled and well researched reporting.

It, therefore, gives me immense pleasure to note that the Continental Leadership Research Institute (CLRI) a local civil society organisation (CLRI) with the support of the United States Embassy in Zambia, has embarked on a project that aims at strengthening the voice of rural communities through civic education programmes and also building the capacity of media personnel to effectively report on human rights activities.

Government highly commends the initiative as it goes a long way in highlighting a number of human rights violations in our rural communities which include early and forced marriages of young girls, domestic violence, gender-based violence and harmful traditional practices. This project is, therefore, timely in supplementing Government's efforts in addressing these and other social vices in our rural communities.

I wish to remind the media that they can only contribute effectively to this fight through factual, objective and balanced reporting, hence the importance of this training - to empower the media with skills to report on human rights issues competently and compellingly.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Government believes that citizens' enjoyment of their human rights cannot be complete without access to clean drinking water, education, health, food, shelter, and other social amenities and necessities.

It is for this reason that Government has embarked on a wide range of measures to revamp the country's economy so that Zambians can lead good and happy lives. Some of the measures may be discomforting to our people, but they are intended to restore the country on a path to sustainable economic growth and development.

In this regard, Government is confident that Zambians will soon begin to feel the positive impact of some of the measures such as the record-breaking K25.7 million Constituency Development Fund (CDF) which it will start rolling out to the constituencies countrywide, come January, 2022, in order to accelerate national development.

Further, Government is also on course to implement other landmark developmental targets such as the recruitment of 30,000 teachers, introduction of free education from early childhood to secondary level as well as the recruitment of 11,200 health personnel, among other priorities. This follows the approval of the 2022 national budget by Parliament last week.

These are some of the benefits from Government's decision to remove subsidies on fuel so that the money saved is spent on critical sectors to improve people's living standards.

The decision is premised on Government's conviction that spending resources on employing more teachers, more health personnel, building more schools and hospitals and provision of free education to our children, is a nobler cause than spending the country's scarce resources on fuel subsidies which is unsustainable, given the country's huge external debt.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I conclude, I wish to applaud the cordial relations that exist between Zambia and the United States of America.

As a country, we continue to derive immense benefits from our bilateral relations with the United States of America, ranging from trade and economic cooperation to health.

Of particular note is the support that Zambia continues to receive from the United States in the fight against HIV/AIDS, including the Covid-19 pandemic.

You may also wish to recall, ladies and gentlemen, that recently, President Hakainde Hichilema participated in a virtual Summit on Democracy at the invitation of the President of the United States of America Joe Biden. This is a further demonstration of the warm relations between the two countries which continue to grow from strength to strength.

Finally, I urge participants to ensure that they put to good use the skills that they will acquire in this training.

I also urge the media at large, to place high premium on human rights issues on their reportorial agenda.

It is now my honour and privilege to declare the media capacity building training workshop on effective reporting on human rights issues, officially opened.

I thank you.

