



Republic of Zambia

**SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND  
MEDIA AND CHIEF GOVERNMENT SPOKESPERSON,  
HON. CHUSHI KASANDA, MP, AT THE AFRICA MEDIA  
CONVENTION ON SATURDAY, 13<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 2023, AT  
MULUNGUSHI CONFERENCE CENTRE (KK WING),  
LUSAKA.**

- **The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Information and Media, Mr. Kennedy Kalunga**
- **Other senior Government officials present**
- **Dr. Audrin Mathe, Executive Director, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology of the Republic of Namibia**
- **The UNESCO Regional Director for Southern Africa**
- **The AU Representative**
- **The Chairperson Southern African Editors' Forum**
- **The Southern African Editors' Forum Secretary General**
- **Chairperson, Media Liaison Committee**
- **The Information Director, Republic of Zimbabwe**
- **Director of Information, Republic of Malawi**
- **Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,**

I bring warm greetings from the His Excellency the President of the Republic of Zambia, Mr. Hakainde Hichilema.

The President would have loved to be with you today but as you aware, he only arrived yesterday after a week-long tour of duty in Europe.

Having said that, I am happy to interact with you once again as you come to the end of what I believe has been a very fruitful conference.

Once again, on behalf of the Government and people of Zambia, I extend to you all, our deepfelt gratitude for the honour you bestowed on us to host this conference.

**Chairperson, Ladies and gentlemen,**

African Governments have high ambitions for their people. Ambitions for a better life. Ambitions for better education. Ambition for its citizens to have food on their tables. Ambitions for stability, peace, unity and prosperity.

This is the hallmark of every Government.

African Government also desire that its people are free to express themselves and indeed enjoy other freedoms and rights.

Agenda 2063 of the African Union amplifies this fact. Among other aspirations, the agenda focuses on the following:

1. **A high standard of living, quality of life and wellbeing for all citizens;**
2. **Well educated citizens and skill revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation;**
3. **Healthy and well-nourished citizens and**
4. **Transformed economies**

**Chairperson, Ladies and gentlemen,**

May I add that Agenda 2063 also includes the need for Africa to attain a free, independent and professional media that will serve as a catalyst without which, the

realisation of our goals that we have set for ourselves as continent, can be difficult to attain.

In short Chairperson, I am simply saying the media is central to everything we do at national, continental and global levels.

It is, therefore, our encouragement to the Africa Media Convention to sustain its efforts of promoting the growth of the media on the continent through foras such as this one.

In the same vein, I urge the Southern African Editor's Forum which I may call a media think-tank of the region to bring down issues discussed at forums such as this one, into the Newsrooms for purposes of building capacities our media practitioners.

The issues that you have discussed during this conference, among them, **a high-level panel discussion on the status of Press Freedom in Africa, Frameworks and Policies in practice, strengthening the Africa digital platform for the safety of journalists and Women journalists in Africa and Freedom of Expression**, are so key that they should not end among ourselves gathered here.

#### **Chairperson, Ladies and gentlemen**

I am aware that the discussions around these and other issues, were robust.

It is our firm belief that with such expertise, Africa is on the right path in its media development agenda.

As I stated in my welcome remarks a few days ago, Zambia under the leadership of President Hakainde Hichilema, has restored media freedom and the freedom of expression.

Government has gone further to embark on the process to repealing and replacing the Public Order Act. We have also removed the Criminal Defamation of the President and abolished the Death Penalty.

We have done this to enhance the people's enjoyment of their rights and freedoms.

#### **Chairperson, Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is Government's hope that when this meeting is called again next year, we will be looking at how much progress would have been made in actualising our ambitions for a free, independent and professional media which serves as a driver for the enjoyment of other human rights.

Finally, ladies and gentlemen, it is our hope that you had a wonderful stay in Lusaka and that you have decided to stay a little longer.

I thank you.