

President of the Republic of Zambia - Hakainde Hichilema

Draft

Your Excellency, on behalf of the Southern Africa Editors Forum (SAEF), the Media Liaison Committee (MLC) in Zambia, journalists, and delegates from all corners of Africa, I say to you and your good government ZIKOMO KWAMBIRI for allowing us to host this important 2nd African Media Convention in your beautiful country.

The Africa Media Convention is the continental gathering which is held a week after the global celebrations of World Press Freedom Day (WPF) on 3rd May and is designed to safeguard the hard-won media freedoms and safety of journalists on the continent. 2nd in Zambia because of the improved change in media reform policies and the working environment being created by your government in this country.

Today, the whole of Africa and the world stand proud of this country and your government as we witnessed for the past year the reopening of closed radio stations and newspapers among other positive media reforms and developments.

We are aware that Prime TV was only reopened after the 2021 elections which ushered in your administration.

Three radio stations had their operating licenses **suspended** during the same period. Thanks to the current administration for bringing about reforms in the sector that include repealing and amending various laws that are hostile to press freedom

Your refreshing approach to media law reforms has sent a strong signal to other African countries that it is possible for governments to build a strong working relationship and a conducive environment for the media to operate, for the benefit of its people.

Every May 3, journalists around the world celebrate Press Freedom Day which they have done since 1993. This day is celebrated with the intention of reviewing the level of press freedom in the world,

protecting the freedom of the press and paying respect to journalists who were killed while carrying out their duties at work.

May I take this opportunity to acknowledge the unwavering support we received from various government departments, the Ministry of Information and Media, and all partners who assisted us in the planning process and funding of this event, especially UNESCO Addis, UNESCO Rosa, UN-Zambia, the African Union, the Government of the Republic of Zambia, Women in News, the Media Liaison Committee in Zambia and members of the AMC continental organising committee.

Once again, we congratulate and thank you Hon. President for this new and good direction to promote Freedom of the Press in your country and Africa in general.

I thank you! God bless you, Zambia, the continent, and the world!