



AFRICA FREEDOM DAY: ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE LEVERS FOR BUILDING THE AFRICA WE WANT

PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Zambia joins the rest of Africa in commemorating this year's African Freedom Day under the theme "**Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa we Want**".

As we celebrate this important day it is imperative that we reflect on our African journey to freedom that reminds Africans of their struggle to freedom and the steps made towards achieving our goal of becoming a great continent.

With over 72 ethnic groups, Zambia is endowed with cultural norms and traditional ceremonies that are characterised by festivals such as music, dances and theatre. **To safeguard Zambia's arts, culture and heritages, the National Cultural Policy of 2003 was developed aimed at facilitating the participation of all stakeholders in the development and promotion of our culture.**

The African Union (AU) aspiration number 5 of Agenda 2063 envisages "**An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage and shared values and ethics**". This aspiration is critical to the preservation of African Arts, Culture and Heritage as it endeavours to **fulfil an African cultural renaissance which is pre-eminent and also inculcates the spirit of Pan Africanism; as well as taps into Africa's rich heritage and culture to ensure that the creative arts are a major contributor to**

Africa's growth and transformation; as well as restores and preserves Africa's cultural heritage including its languages.

Indeed this has lead to the emergence of the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) Sector. The cultural and creative industries has the main objective of producing or reproducing, promotion, distribution or commercialization of goods, services and content activities derived from cultural, artistic or heritage origins. To this end, **CCI's worldwide play a critical role in economic growth through the contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**. It is in this respect that the recognition of CCI's in achieving the Agenda 2063 objectives "regional integration, inclusive and sustainable economic development", that the African Union has declared the year 2021 as "**The AU Year of the Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We Want**"

Zambia as a nation believes in the cultural incorporation of social behaviour and societal norms, as well as language, knowledge, beliefs, arts, customs, capacities and habits of various communities. It is in light of this that **the 2021 theme is a clear continental declaration for member states to invest more financial resources into the promotion of national and regional unity by investing in African culture and heritages as an engine for promoting and achieving the national economic and social development goals as outlined in Africa's Agenda 2063**.

This year's commemoration of the Arts, Culture and Heritage comes at a time when the African continent is still grappling with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has imposed heavy human, financial and economic costs on Africa. **African countries should however, view the pandemic as an opportunity for the increased use of technology to enhance the CCI's sector through the use of digital platforms in the promotion of African goods and services to the World**. Finding solutions for Africa starts with us and true solutions to our problems lie within Africa, through unity of purpose. Our unity can make us one great Africa that will live to triumph above its problems. **The pandemic has presented itself as an opportunity to retool Africa's socio-economic priorities and direction** by focusing on the role that cultural industry plays towards creating and harnessing stronger CCI's as well as more resilient, healthy and social sectors promoting equality, inclusion, social cohesion and resurgence as inspired by a true unity of purpose - the Ubuntu Philosophy.

Wishing all our partners across Africa a happy Africa Freedom Day.

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