



YOUTH DAY- ENHANCING YOUTH PARTICIPATION AT ALL LEVELS OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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This year, Zambia celebrates youth day under the theme **“enhancing youth participation at all levels of national development”**. This year’s celebrations come at a time when there is renewed hope for greater youthful participation in the national development agenda as well as a heightened expectation that **Government will foster job creation, youth economic empowerment, inclusion in the governance of the country, equal education opportunities and enforcement of the rule of law.**

Economically, this theme **entails the need for Government’s transformation agenda to be youth-centred** through the use of fiscal policies and job creation drivers in the Agricultural, Finance, Information and Communication Technology, Tourism and Manufacturing sectors that have been touted as key sectors for economic transformation.

Politically, the large youth turnout during the 2021 general elections demonstrated that the young population have a key role to play in driving Zambia’s democracy. **This year’s theme therefore calls for enhanced youth participation in the political sphere through the deliberate inclusion of a clause in the electoral policy framework that mandates political parties to adopt the youth in all their organizational structures**, especially with regards to nominating members of parliament.

At a cultural and social level, this year's theme calls for the abolishment of social and cultural norms that exclude young girls from attaining their full potential as a result of teenage pregnancies and early marriages. This therefore calls for the **enhancement of equal opportunities in access to education and economic empowerment.**

The Policy Monitoring and Research Centre (PMRC) is elated by the strides that Government has made to ensure youths are empowered through the establishment of the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises as well as the Ministry of Science and Technology. This is a positive step towards encouraging the Zambian young population to venture into entrepreneurship and innovative skills. **Entrepreneurship and innovation in the private sector are the engine for investment, job creation, poverty alleviation and sustainable economic growth for any economy.** The promotion of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) schools will ensure that students are thoroughly equipped with the necessary knowledge to be better able to support the development of science and technology industries across the country.

Furthermore, the decision by Government to allocate over K2.5 million towards Youth Empowerment Programmes under the K25.7 million Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in the 2022 National Budget is an **opportunity for the youth to shape the development of their communities through the establishment of businesses that foster job creation and income generation, which is key for poverty reduction.**

PMRC urges young people to stay away from vices that could derail their full participation in the national development agenda such as drug and alcohol abuse, theft and graft and the abuse of social media. PMRC encourages all youth to take care of their physical and mental health this year. Best wishes to all of Zambia's young people and a fruitful Youth Day Commemoration.

For more details, interviews or queries
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