



## LABOUR DAY: “ACCELERATING SOCIAL ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION THROUGH SUSTAINABLE AND DECENT JOB CREATION AMIDST COVID-19”

**PRESS STATEMENT**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2022**

International Workers’ Day, also known as Labour Day in Zambia, is commemorated every year to celebrate the various achievements of workers who keep the economy growing in their various roles and capacities. This year’s Labour Day theme **“Accelerating Social Economic Transformation through Sustainable and Decent Job Creation Amidst COVID-19”** speaks to the aspirations of job creation and economic growth as Government seeks to create opportunities for the eligible citizenry, particularly the youth in the widened scope of the labour market. Government has committed to creating jobs through the creation of an enabling environment for both the public and private sector to create jobs. This entails creation of jobs that are decent, respect for the rights of workers and ensure provision of conducive spaces for human beings and observation of safety standards.

The COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected the labour market through job losses as businesses struggled. The mitigation measures put in place by Government did not spare the various worker categories. In the education sector, for instance, closure of schools, universities and colleges particularly private institutions whose operations depended on fees paid by learners could not afford to pay employees, resulting in job losses. In the tourism and service sectors, the closure of bars, nightclubs, gyms, casinos, cinemas and other social amenities further exposed the already vulnerable class of employees in Zambia to further vulnerability.

Domestic workers are another category that have borne the negative impacts of COVID-19 on the labour market. Many employers put up preventive measures that did not allow their domestic workers to report for work. Unfortunately where such measures were put in place, the end result was a suspension of pay.

From the above scenario, this year's theme is a timely call to re-invigorate job creation efforts; it represents the aspirations of Government to create jobs especially, for the youth who account for 50% of the over 17 million population. The unemployment rate for this segment of Zambia's population stands at an average of 15.3%. With these statistics, it is imperative that as the country celebrates this Labour Day, the aforementioned theme should be actualized through the creation of an enabling environment for job creation by the private sector as well as local SMEs, which should deliberately endeavor to employ the youth and other eligible citizens. Government's move to employ 11,276 health workers and 30,000 teachers in the health and education sectors, respectively, must be commended, as this is the right step towards job creation. However, we implore the private sector to complement Government's efforts in creating decent jobs.

PMRC encourages employers and employees in both the formal and informal sector to adhere to provisions of labour laws and safety standards in their areas of operation. It is important that all employees in different capacities perform their best to boost the productivity levels the country needs for economic growth, especially as the country is on a path to recovery from the pandemic. May we all work with dedication and positivity.

PMRC wishes all workers in Zambia a Happy Labour Day!

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