



AFRICA FREEDOM DAY 2023

PRESS STATEMENT

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Zambia joins the rest of the African continent in commemorating Africa Freedom Day 2023, under the African Union theme ***“Our Africa, Our Future”***. This year’s commemoration is of significant importance as it is the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the precursor of the African Union. Together with the other 54 member countries, today we reflect upon major successes, milestones, challenges and the way forward under Agenda 2063.

Agenda 2063 summarised envisions a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development; an integrated continent; politically united and based on Pan-Africanism; an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law. The continental goals are reflected in Zambia’s national values and principles under the Constitution – morality and ethics; patriotism and national unity; democracy and constitutionalism; human dignity, equity, social justice and non-discrimination; good governance and integrity; and sustainable development. The prominence of good governance is articulated in the Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP) (2022-2026), which is one of the four pillars. **The 8NDP recognizes the importance of a good governance environment which entails respect for human rights and freedoms, entrenching transparency and accountability, participation, strengthening the democratic process, enhancing access to justice and observance of the rule of law, and upholding our national values and principles.** When all these elements work together to present a

strong conducive environment for meaningful development, countries thrive and citizens benefit. There must, however, be ownership between the leaders and the led. When the narrative changes to common ownership of the goal, peace and stability become the norm.

Zambia's development agenda is premised upon a **peaceful sub-region as it seeks to leverage its land-linked position; this represents an opportunity to enhance trade with its neighbours. It is strategically located as a hub of production, value addition and food distribution. This is the current narrative. Historically, this position rendered Zambia a safe haven for neighbouring countries engaged in the freedom struggle.** A common thread links the past to the present and on to the future—peace and stability. Zambia has continued to perform acts of good neighbourliness – emergency response to countries in distress as witnessed during the experience with cyclone activity off the coast of Mozambique, which also adversely affected Malawi; Zambia is home to refugees and asylum seekers, among other notable examples.

The recent co-hosting of the Summit for Democracy in March 2022 was an opportunity for Zambia to showcase its successes and milestones as well as report on progress made since the first summit. In furtherance of its commitment to democratic tenets, Zambia reported on its commitment to legislative reforms and strengthening of governance institutions, including the Electoral Commission of Zambia; Government also renewed its commitments in order to effectively address threats to democracy.

Calls for the respect for the rule of law have been echoed over time, examples abound of where the breakdown in social order is attributed to its absence in the governance of a country. It has been agreed that more needs to be done and it is incumbent upon our leaders to recommit to the vision of the founding fathers of the OAU to make Africa united.

This continental agenda reinvigorates us to look inward and draw down Vision 2030 as we seek to restore economic equilibrium. We urge our leaders to remain resolute and make meaningful sacrifices for the welfare of the people as it was 60 years ago when the OAU was established. May the continent abide unwaveringly by the vision of "Our Africa, Our Future."

Happy Africa Day, fellow Zambians!



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