

2024 NEW YEAR MESSAGE

PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday 1st January, 2024

The Policy Monitoring and Research Centre (PMRC) would like to thank all partners and stakeholders for their exceptional support that they had provided during the year 2023. Since its inception, PMRC has continued to complement Government with evidence-based policy research across sectors within its thematic areas to support the country's economic transformation agenda as espoused in National Development Plans. PMRC remains committed to promoting public understanding through research and education in collaboration with Government Ministries, Government Agencies, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Academia, among others.

As we begin 2024, we wish to acknowledge some of the milestones the country achieved during the year 2023, which saw significant advancements with regards to enhancing human development through increased investment in education. The Government introduced the Free Education Policy, which intends to make early childhood, primary, and secondary education free to all citizens by removing the monetary obstacles that have made education inaccessible to the majority of Zambian citizens, as well as lay the building blocks for a labour force that responds to the dynamic needs of the economy.

On 22nd of June, 2023, the Government reached a staff-level agreement with the Official Creditor Committee (OCC) on a debt treatment that is in line with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) program parameters and agreed on the Memorandum of Understanding in October 2023. These developments are significant strides towards achieving long-term debt sustainability for Zambia. Going forward, Government has continued to seek agreements with private creditors, including Eurobond holders, consistent with the program parameters and on comparable terms, as defined by the official bilateral creditors. This measure will help improve the business environment and consequently macroeconomic parameters key to economic stabilization.

Zambia has consistently maintained positive ties both bilaterally and multilaterally in the area of international cooperation. Some of such relationships, on the other hand, include the ongoing efforts of the United States to restructure its partnership with Zambia by enhancing its cooperation between the two countries. The Vice President of the United States of America, Kamala Harris, during her nine-day African tour, visited Zambia from the 31st of March to the 1st of April, 2023. During her visit, it was announced that the United States' Government intends to provide more than \$505 million in bilateral assistance during the 2024 fiscal year bilateral assistance. The assistance is earmarked for

economic transformation, expanded global health, innovations towards climate change solutions, and increased investments in democracy and governance programming. On the other hand, the President of Germany, His Excellency Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier visited Zambia on the 1st and 2nd of November, 2023. This monumental visit signified a pivotal moment in the strengthening of bilateral ties and the pursuit of shared developmental goals between the two nations. During this auspicious visit, President Steinmeier and President Hakainde Hichilema engaged in substantive bilateral discussions that covered a wide spectrum of critical areas of mutual interest, aligning with the priorities outlined in Zambia's Eighth National Development Plan. These discussions focused on fostering cooperation in essential sectors, each of which plays a pivotal role in driving Zambia's sustainable development and economic growth.

On the 29th of September, 2023, the Minister of Finance and National Planning, Dr. Situmbeko Musokotwane, unveiled the K179 billion 2024 National Budget under the theme "Unlocking Economic Potential." The 2024 budget was presented in a setting characterized by anxiousness and high expectations following the nation's successful staff-level agreement with the Official Creditor Committee (OCC) on a debt treatment that complies with the requirements of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) program in June 2023. Additionally, this budget holds significance as it is the second one following the attainment of an IMF Extended Credit Facility, which was officially announced in September 2022. The 2024 National Budget seeks to promote economic growth through enhanced private sector investment, increased production and productivity, and improved public service delivery. The Government is therefore committed to providing policy framework, resources, and incentives to unlock the economic potential of the country.

Zambia's economic outlook for 2024 remains positive with growth projected to increase to above 4% underpinned by the continued policy reforms and recovery in mining sector, services, and local manufacturing of fertilizer ; higher global copper prices; and the market confidence associated with ongoing fiscal consolidation measures. Going into 2024, PMRC remains committed to supporting Government, agencies, and development partners in developing evidence-based policy recommendations for the effective delivery of the national development agenda. In 2024, we will be committed to providing high quality policy analysis and reform proposals to complement the Government's efforts in the pursuit of economic transformation. In this regard, we shall continue to partner with like-minded institutions to promote and encourage dialogue and debate on social and economic policy issues critical to national development. We are thankful to all the key stakeholders that we worked with in 2023 and we are hopeful and confident that we will pursue more undertakings of national importance with a broadened scope to support sustainable development.

We wish you all a prosperous 2024.



SYDNEY MWAMBA
PMRC Executive Director

For more details, interviews or queries about this PMRC Media Statement
Please contact;

POLICY MONITORING AND RESEARCH CENTRE

Corner of Nationalist & John Mbita Roads, opposite Ridgeway Campus gate
10101 Lusaka, Zambia
Tel: +260 211 269 717 | +260 979 015 660
<https://pmrczambia.com>