

**OPENING SPEECH BY GUEST OF HONOUR, MS. NAMUCANA
MUSIWA – JCTR BOARD VICE CHAIRPERSON - AT THE 2022
NATIONAL SUMMIT ON THE SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE PEOPLE**

“Building Conducive Conditions for Inclusive Development”

19TH MAY, 2022

HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT PRESENT;

REPRESENTATIVES FROM VARIOUS GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES;

REPRESENTATIVES FROM COOPERATING PARTNERS;

HEADS OF INSTITUTIONS;

MEMBERS OF THE PRESS;

DISTINGUISHED PARTICIPANTS;

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the honour I have been given to officiate the 2022 National Summit on the social conditions of the people being hosted by the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR). This cardinal summit is aimed at highlighting the social conditions of the people of Zambia amidst the many challenges the country is facing. Allow me to welcome you all to this Event.

The Zambia 2015 Living Conditions Monitoring Survey shows that over 54.4 percent of the population was living below the national poverty line with 76.6 percent of the population in rural areas and 23.4 percent in urban areas. Additionally, the JCTR BNNB does indicate a rise in the

cost of living over the years at the backdrop of high poverty levels and incomes averaging K4, 391.00 as at the 2020 Labour Force Survey.

A case in point in Lusaka, in April, 2021, the cost of living stood at K8, 743.89 but has risen to over K9, 300.00 as of April, 2022. This is indicative of the enormous challenge that indeed warrants the scaling up of various social protection measures by the government of Zambia. Following the 2022 National Budget, under the theme “Growth, Jobs and Taking Development Closer to the People”, some notable measures meant to address the high cost of living and welfare of citizens have been put in place. These include commitment to the stabilisation of macro-economic variables such as inflation, planned reform of the Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP) and the provision of incentives for enhanced output and production. Other measures include the increase in the non-taxable income threshold from K4, 000 to K4, 500, the employment of 30, 000 teachers and 11, 200 health workers, the abolishment of school tuitions, PTA and examination fees. Additionally, government has in the year 2022 committed to clearing the K2billion arrears owed to Pensioners. This particular vulnerable group has continued to languish in poverty with many having died without receiving the dues of their work.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

You would agree with me that addressing the many challenges that plague our nation is a mammoth task requiring a multidisciplinary and multi-stakeholder approach.

It is for this reason that this Summit has brought together stakeholders who include a representative from the Trade Unions, representatives from the Civil Society Organisations, a nutrition expert, a representative from the marketeers, and representatives from other sectors of the society to help us understand some of the challenges on the ground. This is a very good forum that will provide

information that the Government needs in responding and developing various interventions to address the escalating cost of living especially for the most vulnerable in our society.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to thank all the stakeholders who have put aside their time to come and participate in this National Summit. It is only through a collective effort as demonstrated by your coming this morning that the country's economic development agenda can be achieved.

Let me once again take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the organizers of this event for inviting me to officiate this very important event. It is my expectation that, through this collaborative effort, our country can achieve the objectives that we have set for ourselves in the recently launched 8th National Development Plan.

Distinguished Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, with these few remarks, it is now my honour and privilege to officially declare this National Summit open and wish you all successful deliberations

Thank you for your attention.