

**REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA**

**MINISTRY OF HEALTH**

**OPENING REMARKS BY THE MINISTER OF HEALTH,**

**HON SYLVIA T. MASEBO, MP, ON THE OCCASION OF THE POLICY DIALOGUE WORKSHOP TO STRENGTHEN FINANCING OF PRIMARY HEALTH CARE, BETWEEN MINISTRY OF HEALTH, MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND NATIONAL PLANNING AND MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**TO BE HELD AT TAJ PAMODZI HOTEL, LUSAKA,**

**FROM 17TH - 20TH JUNE, 2024,**

Ministry of Health

Ndeke House

Haile Selassie Avenue

P.O. Box 30205

**Lusaka – ZAMBIA**

* **PROF. CHRISTOPHER SIMOONGA, PERMANENT SECRETARY ADMINISTRATION – MINISTRY OF HEALTH;**
* **DR. KENNEDY LISHIMPI, PERMANENT SECRETARY, TECHNICAL SERVICES – MINISTRY OF HEALTH;**
* **MS. LOIS MULUBE, PERMANENT SECRETARY, PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION, MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND NATIONAL PLANNING**
* **MS. MWAKA MUKUBESA, PERMANENT SECRETARY, BUDGET AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND NATIONAL PLANNING;**
* **MR. DANIES CHISENDA, PERMANENT SECRETARY, ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE, MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND NATIONAL PLANNING;**
* **MR. MAAMBO HAMAUNDU, PERMANENT SECRETARY ADMINISTRATION, MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT;**
* **MR. NICHOLUS PHIRI, PERMANENT SECRETARY TECHNICAL SERVICES, MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT;**
* **DR. ABBI EDIR, DIRECTOR AFRICAN ECONOMIC RESEARCH CONSORTIUM;**
* **ROBIN SHARMA, USAID COUNTRY OFFICE DIRECTOR;**
* **COSMAS SOHIA, REPRESENTATIVE OF PROPEL HEALTH;**
* **ALL GOVERNMENT DIRECTORS PRESENT;**
* **SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS PRESENT;**
* **DISTINGUISHED INVITED GUESTS;**
* **MEMBERS OF THE PRESS;**
* **LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.**

IT IS MY PRIVILEGE TO GIVE THE OPENING REMARKS AT THIS IMPORTANT MEETING WHOSE OBJECTIVE IS TO DIALOGUE AT POLICY LEVEL AND COME UP WITH A ROAD MAP TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COLLABORATIVE FRAMEWORK THAT WILL FACILITATE THE STRENGTHENING OF FINANCING OF PRIMARY HEALTH CARE IN ZAMBIA.

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN**

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA, UNDER THE ABLE LEADERSHIP OF HIS EXCELLENCY, MR. HAKAINDE HICHILEMA, THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA, IS COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT ALL ZAMBIANS HAVE ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH SERVICES AS CLOSE TO THE FAMILY AS POSSIBLE. GOVERNMENT IS FURTHER COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT ZAMBIA ATTAINS UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE (UHC) BY THE YEAR 2030.

THIS IS IN LINE WITH THE GOALS OF HEALTH SYSTEMS WHICH ARE:(1) IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF POPULATIONS, (2) IMPROVING THE RESPONSIVENESS OF THE HEALTH SYSTEM TO THE POPULATION IT SERVES AND (3) FAIRNESS IN FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION, THAT IS, THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE BURDEN OF PAYING FOR HEALTH SYSTEM IS FAIRLY DISTRIBUTED ACROSS HOUSEHOLDS.

**DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,**

THERE HAS BEEN A NUMBER OF CHANGING CONCEPTS ABOUT HEALTH AND THESE INCLUDE: (1) COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CARE OF 1946, (2) BASIC HEALTH SERVICES OF 1965, (3) PRIMARY HEALTH CARE OF 1978, (4) HEALTH FOR ALL (HFA) BY THE YEAR 2000 OF 1977, (5) MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS MDGS OF 2000, AND (6) SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS) OF 2015.

WHAT IS OUTSTANDING ABOUT PRIMARY HEALTH CARE IS THAT IT HAS CONTINUALLY STOOD THE TEST OF TIME AS AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE VEHICLE TO THE ATTAINMENT OF UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE. PRIMARY HEALTH CARE IS THE FOUNDATION OF ANY STRONG, EQUITABLE HEALTH SYSTEM. IT IS THE FIRST POINT OF CONTACT FOR PEOPLE SEEKING HEALTHCARE SERVICES, AND PLAYS A CRITICAL ROLE IN PROMOTING WELLNESS, PREVENTING DISEASE, AND MANAGING CHRONIC CONDITIONS. YET IN MANY OF OUR COUNTRIES, PRIMARY HEALTH CARE REMAINS UNDERFUNDED AND UNDER RESOURCED.

THIS WAS RECENTLY AUTHENTICATED DURING THE ASTANA DECLARATION OF 2018 WHERE ARTICLE 2 STATES THUS:

**“CONVINCED THAT STRENGTHENING PRIMARY HEALTH CARE IS THE MOST INCLUSIVE, EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT APPROACH TO ENHANCE PEOPLE’S PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH, AS WELL AS SOCIAL WELL-BEING, AND THAT PRIMARY HEALTH CARE IS A CORNERSTONE OF A SUSTAINABLE HEALTH SYSTEM FOR UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE AND HEALTH-RELATED SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS. ….. WE WILL EACH PURSUE OUR PATHS TO ACHIEVING UHC SO THAT ALL PEOPLE HAVE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO THE QUALITY AND EFFECTIVE HEALTH CARE THEY NEED, ENSURING THAT THE USE OF THESE SERVICES DOES NOT EXPOSE THEM TO FINANCIAL HARDSHIP” (WHO, 2019, P. 5).**

**ESTEEMED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN**

WITH THE ABOVE BACK GROUND, THE HOLDING OF THIS WORKSHOP IS TIMELY IN THAT IT WILL FACILITATE ACCELERATING THE ATTAINMENT OF UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE FOR ZAMBIA. I WOULD THEREFORE TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK THE ORGANIZERS OF THIS WORKSHOP FOR THEIR INTERVENTION.

I WOULD FURTHER LIKE TO COMMEND THE PERMANENT SECRETARIES FROM THE THREE MINISTRIES, MINISTRY OF HEALTH, MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND NATIONAL PLANNING AND MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT FOR COOPERATING AND COMING TO ONE TABLE TO DISCUSS HOW BEST TO COLLABORATE AND DELIVER QUALITY HEALTHCARE SERVICES TO THE ZAMBIAN PEOPLE. THE GOAL OF THIS MEETING IS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DEVOLUTION OF PRIMARY HEALTH CARE TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

THIS IS A TRUE DEMONSTRATION OF WORKING AS ONE GOVERNMENT. MUCH AS OUR MINISTRIES MAY PERFORM DIFFERENT PORTFOLIOS, THE OVERALL GOAL IS THAT WE ARE ONE GOVERNMENT AND HEALTH IS NOT JUST A RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH, HENCE, THE RECENT EMPHASIS IN THE HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES, WHICH HIGHLIGHTS THE NEED FOR ONE OF THE PRINCIPLES OF PRIMARY HEALTH CARE, WHICH IS INTERSECTORAL COORDINATION.

HAVING COLLABORATION WILL GREATLY INCREASE THE CHANCES OF PROVIDING EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SERVICES, WHICH WILL IN TURN TRANSLATE INTO THE ATTAINMENT OF UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE FOR ALL ZAMBIANS.

**DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

TO WALK THE COMMITMENT, THE NEW DAWN GOVERNMENT HAS EMBARKED ON THE DEVOLUTION OF PRIMARY HEALTH CARE TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES. THE DEVOLUTION OF THESE SERVICES TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES WILL IMPROVE THE ACCESSIBILITY, RESPONSIVENESS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF HEALTHCARE SERVICE, WHILE FOSTERING GREATER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY.

DEVOLVING PRIMARY HEALTH CARE WILL FURTHER MAKE THE ATTAINMENT OF UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE EASIER BECAUSE IT IS AN ESTABLISHED FACT THAT HEALTH IS PRODUCED IN THE COMMUNITY. THEREFORE, STRENGTHENING FINANCING PRIMARY HEALTH CARE WILL TRANSLATE INTO STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES TO HANDLE HEALTH ISSUES AT COMMUNITY LEVEL.

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

OTHER FACTORS THAT COME INTO PLAY INCLUDE ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY AND AVOIDANCE OF ABUSE OF FINANCES FOR PRIMARY HEALTH CARE. THIS IS IN ADDITION TO THE OTHER BUILDING BLOCKS NAMELY HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY, HUMAN RESOURCES FOR HEALTH, HEALTH INFORMATION SYSTEM, RESEARCH, VACCINES, MEDICINES AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES AS WELL AS LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

IT IS WITH THE ABOVE BACKGROUND THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBIA WELCOMES THE INITIATIVE BY PROPEL AND AFRICAN ECONOMIC RESEARCH CONSORTIUM (AERC) TO HOLD THIS WORKSHOP FOR THE PURPOSES OF POLICY DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH, MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND NATIONAL PLANNING AND THE MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT.

THIS IS THE RIGHT APPROACH AS IT RESONATES WELL WITH THE GOVERNMENT POLICY FRAMEWORK WHICH ESPOUSES A ONE GOVERNMENT APPROACH. ONLY BY WORKING TOGETHER CAN WE ENSURE THAT EVERYONE IN OUR COMMUNITIES HAS ACCESS TO THE QUALITY PRIMARY CARE SERVICES THEY NEED AND DESERVE.

AS I CONCLUDE, I WOULD ONCE AGAIN LIKE TO THANK USAID, PROPEL AND AERC FOR THIS INITIATIVE AND TO COMMEND ALL THE PARTICIPANTS FOR COMING TO DIALOGUE ON THIS IMPORTANT TOPIC. I URGE YOU ALL TO TAKE AN ACTIVE PART AND JUDICIOUSLY DELIBERATE ON THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE.

OVER THE NEXT FOUR DAYS, I ENCOURAGE YOU ALL TO HAVE AN OPEN AND CANDID DISCUSSION ABOUT THE CHALLENGES WE FACE IN FINANCING PRIMARY HEALTH CARE, AND TO COLLABORATE ON DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS. SHARE YOUR IDEAS FREELY AND COME UP WITH SOLUTIONS ON HOW BEST WE CAN LEVERAGE DOMESTIC RESOURCES, AS WELL AS SUPPORT FROM GLOBAL HEALTH PARTNERS TO FINANCE PRIMARY HEALTH CARE IN ZAMBIA.

MY HOPE IS THAT BY THE END OF THIS WORKSHOP, WE WILL HAVE A CLEAR ROADMAP FOR STRENGTHENING PRIMARY HEALTH CARE IN OUR COUNTRY. YOUR DELIBERATIONS MAY BE CHALLENGING, HOWEVER, THEY ARE CRITICAL, IF WE ARE TO ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE AND IMPROVE HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR ALL OUR CITIZENS.

I WISH YOU THE BEST IN YOUR DELIBERATIONS. BE REST ASSURED THAT GOVERNMENT IS IN FULL SUPPORT OF THIS MEETING. BY STRENGTHENING FINANCING FOR PRIMARY HEALTH CARE, WE CAN TOGETHER ATTAIN UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE BY THE YEAR 2030.

IT IS NOW MY SINGULAR HONOUR AND PRIVILEGE TO DECLARE THIS INTER-MINISTERIAL POLICY DIALOGUE MEETING, TO STRENGTHEN FINANCING FOR PRIMARY HEALTH CARE, OFFICIALLY OPENED.

**THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS!**