Good morning everyone, esteemed guests from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, and USAID. It is with great pleasure and excitement that I extend a warm welcome to each and every one of you on this momentous occasion. Today, we gather not only as representatives of our respective ministries, but also as partners in a journey towards transformative change and unparalleled collaboration. Over the next four days, we have the unique privilege of engaging in meaningful dialogue that transcends boundaries and fosters innovation. Together, we will explore avenues for enhanced collaboration between ministries and leverage our collective expertise and resources to drive positive change.

My name is Sophia Comas and I am a health financing expert here on behalf of Palladium, an organization that is partnering with AERC to implement PROPEL Health. PROPEL Health stands for Promoting Results and Outcomes through Policy and Economic Levers. It is a five-year initiative generously funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and aims to revolutionize the landscape of healthcare delivery by improving the enabling environment for equitable and sustainable health services, supplies, and delivery systems, especially in the areas of FP and reproductive health and its integration with HIV, maternal and child health, and primary healthcare.

At the heart of PROPEL Health lies a commitment to promoting primary health care (PHC) services. As we strive towards the ambitious goal of achieving universal health care coverage (UHC) by 2030, countries like Zambia stand to benefit immensely from the initiatives of the PROPEL Health project. Through strategic policy formulation and advocacy, we can harness the potential of PHC to drive tangible improvements in healthcare outcomes for all.

Today’s gathering is a testament to our shared commitment to creating synergy between our ministries, enabling us to communicate effectively and utilize resources efficiently. By fostering a structured policy dialogue, we can unlock new opportunities for collaboration and innovation, laying the groundwork for a more resilient and sustainable healthcare system. Today and this week, we will discuss how to identify challenges in resource planning and facilitate agreements to expedite the release of allocated funds, track utilization and enhance efficiency, accountability, and transparency of PHC spending over the budget cycle at both national and sub-national levels. It is worth noting that PHC was chosen as a focus point due to its cost-effectiveness and potential for far-reaching impact. By investing in PHC initiatives, we can redirect resources to where they are most needed, ensuring that every amount spent yields maximum returns in terms of improved health outcomes.

As we embark on this journey together, let us draw inspiration from the wealth of expertise and knowledge present in this room. With the support of our esteemed partners we have a unique opportunity to effect real change and drive progress towards our shared goals.

In conclusion, I extend my deepest gratitude to each and every one of you for your dedication, passion and unwavering commitment to improving healthcare in Zambia. I urge all of us here to engage in meaningful and comprehensive discussion, for the goal of developing a Collaborative Framework which can be used to drive and sustain additional collaborations. Together, let us seize this opportunity to shape the future of healthcare in Zambia and beyond.

Thank you