

(Government of the Republic of Zambia)



**SPEECH BY**

**MRS CHAWE P.M. CHUULU, PERMANENT SECRETARY FOR THE MINISTRY OF  
COMMERCE, TRADE AND INDUSTRY**

**FOR**

**HON. CHIPOKA MULENGA, MP**

**MINISTER OF COMMERCE, TRADE AND INDUSTRY**

**AT THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY WORKSHOP HELD ON 21<sup>ST</sup> -22<sup>ND</sup> APRIL, 2022**

**IN LUSAKA, ZAMBIA**

The Vice President of the Republic of Zambia,

The Secretary General of COMESA,

The Director and Chief Executive Officer of the COMESA Competition Commission,

The Executive Director of the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission,

The Chief Executive Officer of the Zambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry,

Distinguished Senior Government Officials,

The President of the Zambia Chamber of Mines,

Private Sector Representatives,

Distinguished Participants,

The Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All Protocols observed

It is my honour and privilege to be part of this important event. My simple and humble duty this morning is to invite the Guest of Honour, Honourable Felix Mutati, Minister of Technology and Science, who is representing Her Honour, Mrs. W.K. Nalumango, the Vice President of the Republic of Zambia to officially open this auspicious occasion. But before I invite the Guest of Honour, allow me to highlight a few points.

### **Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen**

The theme for this workshop, “*The Role of Competition and Consumer Protection Laws in Post COVID-19 Business Recovery*”, is in line with the aspirations of attaining middle income status by 2030 in accordance with the Vision 2030 and Government’s aspiration to restore, repair and revive the Zambian economy especially after the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nearly 5 percent of businesses in Zambia permanently closed since the onset of COVID-19 in early 2020, more than 70 percent of Zambian firms were experiencing depressed demand for their goods and services compared to the pre-pandemic period and around one quarter of firms are concerned about falling into areas of outstanding liabilities.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As you may be aware, the pandemic disrupted the supply chain with 70 percent of firms experiencing a distraction to their supply of raw materials and inputs, and some manufacturing companies were only using half if not less, of their production capacity to produce goods.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Currently companies are trying to recover and the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry in collaboration with other sector Ministries and in consultation with the private sector players, is working around the clock to put in place strategies that will facilitate among others the ease of doing business through reduced processes and procedures required to adhere to regulatory requirements and reduce costs. In addition the ministry is working towards increasing sensitization on regulatory requirements such as competition laws.

## **Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Government attaches special importance to competition and consumer protection law in the promotion of trade liberalization, enhance the support given towards this workshop.

It is our interest to see that competition regimes, whether at national or regional level, enhance efficient market conduct and promote overall productivity and competitiveness of markets in Zambia and beyond. And this can only happen if key stakeholders are aware of competition and consumer protection laws and their role in implementation.

It is therefore, gratifying that the participants will be able to discuss the role that competitive markets can play. This is important for Businesses especially in a large market such as the COMESA Region.

More so, its beneficial to have dedicated enforcement authorities not only a national but a regional authority that is mandated to promote fair competition within the markets. This makes it easy for such authorities to work towards the greater interest of the regional market. Specifically, I wish to pay tribute to the COMESA Competition Commission for the work they are doing in collaboration with authorities in the member state towards a liberalized market.

**Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Competition and Consumer Protection Commission and COMESA Competition Commission have had an active cooperation framework agreement since 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2016. Such collaborations are key in the effective enforcement of regional and national competition and consumer protection laws.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Seeing that both the national and regional competition authorities are mandated to enforce competition law, it is my firm belief that this workshop will clarify the jurisdictional boundaries that each institution covers, either separately, nationally or collaboratively regionally.

This will give the business community the needed direction on how best to comply with the respective competition laws and support smooth implementation of such laws in Zambia and the Common Market respectively.

**Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In conclusion, I would like to urge the regulators such as the COMESA Competition Commission and indeed the national authority, the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission to continue raising awareness on competition and consumer protection law among the businesses especially the small and medium enterprises so as to promote compliance. Further, such awareness will help them identify anti-competitive practices that threaten their continued survival by other market players and report such practices to the appropriate competition authority at national or regional level.

**Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is now my honour and privilege to invite the Guest of Honour, Honourable Felix Mutati.

Guest of Honour Sir.

**Thank you!**