

## **Hon. Minister of Southern Province Speech**

**Speaker:** Hon. Minister Cornelius Mweetwa

**Event:** Annual Business Conference (ABC).

**Location:** Avani Hotel, Livingstone.

**Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

**Time:** -

**Length:** 15 Minutes

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- The ZICA President – Ms. Cecilia Zimba
  - The Head of ACCA Zambia - Ms. Janice Matwi.
  - The Head of ZICA – Mr. Anthony Bwembwa
  - The Head of CIMA Zambia – Mr. Gordian Bowa
  - Conference Speakers
  - Delegates
  - Media representatives
  - Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen all protocols observed.

It is my pleasure to join you this morning for the ACCA Zambia, ZICA and CIMA Annual Business Conference and it is heartening to see you all the accountancy bodies collaborating to host such an important event.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

When the Annual Business Conference last convened in 2019, no one could have envisioned what the next four years would look like. The COVID-19 pandemic is a tragedy on a global scale. We are relieved and thankful to be able to reconvene.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In the past four years, we have witnessed remarkable progress, as well as challenges, on global commerce and trade.

Firstly, the pandemic highlighted the importance and necessity of digitalization and meaningful connectivity and access to digital platforms for trade. We watched social and economic activities shift online.

As activities shifted to online spaces, glaring inequalities were highlighted for countries such as ours. Our trading was mostly face to face and struggled to evolve to online platforms to ensure sustainability and business continuity.

Our government, led by His Excellency President Hakainde Hichilema has taken care to bring along everyone. We are ensuring our citizens have digital capabilities to create platforms to carry out their various business activities.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is important to note post pandemic that e-commerce has entered the world of professional services and is disrupting a space previously seen as the stronghold of a few firms. MSMEs are now able to competitively scale up due to the expedited growth of e-commerce. My Ministry is working across various sectors to create sustainable frameworks to support the MSME's contribution to growing our economy. The 2023 budget delivered last month is themed "Growth, Jobs and Taking Development Closer

to the People” and I am delighted to note that your theme “Shaping the future of business and the workplace post pandemic” aligns to this and addresses how finance business leaders can use their skills to support government’s agenda to build a thriving economy.

As you gather here, I implore to adopt a mindset change to use your skills to move from survival to recovery of our economy. The world and our country has changed and it’s not returning to how things were. We must rethink businesses for a sustainable recovery and building back better. The accountancy profession has a major part to play because what professional accountants analyse, interpret, and decide today, changes tomorrow. Changes it so businesses and economies work for the public good in a way that builds long-term resilience. That is why I encourage you to seek to become better informed through forums such as this gathering here. As you build your skills, more trusted and impactful.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It’s time for balance sheet information to take primacy in informing policymakers on how to achieve an inclusive and build sustainable resilient economies. It is my understanding that professional accountants have a unique blend of understanding of context, appreciation of risk, implementation and operational know-how, alongside technical and ethical competencies. This means that accountants are well placed to support sustainability and elevate Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) so that

they become a standard tool for measuring and activating success across government, business, finance and civil society.

I am now delighted to officially open this year's Annual Business Conference.

Thank you.