

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CARITAS ZAMBIA COMMENDS CALL FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH, URGES PEOPLE-CENTRED IMPLEMENTATION OF “GROW ZAMBIA” AGENDA

Lusaka, 14th October 2026

Caritas Zambia warmly congratulates His Excellency President Hakainde Hichilema on the ambitious plan he set out at the official opening of the First Session of the Fourteenth National Assembly on Friday, 9th October 2026.

Under the theme “Grow Zambia: an agenda for inclusive growth and opportunity for every Zambian,” the President described his vision of “a Zambia in which every citizen has a sense of belonging; a Zambia where every community benefits from national progress.” We warmly welcome this commitment to leaving no one behind. It speaks directly to the values that guide our work: human dignity, solidarity and the preferential option for the poor.

The people of Zambia need hope, and they need solutions. Too many families continue to carry the weight of the cost of living, unemployment and the effects of climate change. It is therefore encouraging to hear the President describe the path ahead as “one of hope, responsibility and shared purpose,” and to see that hope matched with clear targets that are, in his words, “ambitious, but achievable.” Caritas Zambia is glad that the President is providing this leadership.

We particularly welcome the commitments to turn economic stability into “tangible benefits for all citizens, including putting food on the table”; to put 500,000 hectares under irrigation; to establish a skills training centre in every district; to recruit more teachers and health workers; and to expand the Social Cash Transfer.

The true measure of these targets will be whether ordinary families are living better lives: whether growth reaches the household, creates decent jobs for young people, benefits communities living alongside our mineral wealth and protects children and vulnerable citizens.

For this reason, Caritas Zambia expects the 2027 National Budget, which the President said will set out how this agenda is financed, to be people-centred. It must bring relief to households struggling with the cost of living and lift people out of poverty, through adequate funding for social protection, education, health, water and small-scale farmers. In particular, we look to the Budget to show:

- **Mining that benefits communities:** With a target of 3 million tonnes of copper a year, the Budget should ensure that mineral revenues are reinvested in human development, that mining communities receive a fair and visible share of the wealth from their land, and that local content, value addition and the formalisation of small-scale miners create jobs for young people. The question is not only how much copper Zambia produces, but how much development Zambia produces from its copper.

- **A Lobito Corridor that reaches the people:** The President named the Lobito Corridor among the strategic corridors that will make Zambia a regional transport and logistics hub. Investment in the corridor should be matched in the Budget by support for the communities along its route, so that they gain jobs, markets and services, and are protected from displacement and environmental harm, rather than watching wealth pass through.
- **Safeguarding Children in the Digital Age:** As Zambia expands digital infrastructure, modernization must not leave children vulnerable to online abuse, cyberbullying, and digital exploitation. A child-friendly justice system must evolve alongside technology. We look to the 2027 Budget to fund digital literacy in schools and community centres, strengthen law enforcement capacity to prosecute cybercrimes against children, and expand child-friendly reporting mechanisms and psychosocial support services.
- **Governance and accountability:** We welcome the President's pledge of "no sacred cows" in the fight against corruption. The Budget should fund oversight institutions adequately, open public procurement and the management of mineral revenues and the Constituency Development Fund to public scrutiny, and report regularly to citizens on progress against the Grow Zambia targets.

The President rightly said that "the future we seek cannot be delivered by the Government alone." Caritas Zambia accepts this invitation and will continue to work with Government, guided by Catholic Social Teaching, for human dignity, social justice and the common good.

We once again congratulate the President and wish him wisdom and God's guidance.

Issued by:

Fr. Dr. Gabriel Mapulanga
Executive Director, Caritas Zambia