



***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

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**CTPD CALLS ON GOVERNMENT TO ENHANCE INVESTMENTS TOWARDS ACTUALISING THE POTENTIAL OF THE DIGITAL ECONOMY.**

The Centre for Trade Policy and Development (CTPD), calls on the new administration to put more investment and resources towards developing a strong digital and entrepreneur led Zambian economy, driven by skilled MSMEs, particularly those led by the younger generation. The success for an improved Zambian economy now and in the future, should not only be anchored on agriculture, mining, trade, and investment but should be buttressed with highly skilled human resource and smart citizens for business innovations, product development and value addition promotion.

Generally, employment and economic activities in Zambia declined in the services and tourism sector, industry (including manufacturing and construction), as well as agriculture mostly due to reduced MSMEs business income and job losses caused by COVID-19. The advent of COVID-19 has identified trends that are likely to shape the future economies and has summoned policy direction that developing countries like Zambia should undertake towards securing a sustainable future economy.

Access to digital technology and entrepreneurship will be key economic drivers in post-pandemic world. We need to ensure that our Zambian people are smart and fully equipped with the business skills and tech-competencies for the future, especially the young generation. Key among the skills required for the future economies include e-commerce, digital financial services, product development, innovations, value addition skills, research, and development (R&D) skills, as well as 21st century competencies and structural education reforms to respond to technology advancements among many others.

Fostering strong, flexible, inclusive, and resilient Labour markets and industries is also important in assuring jobs and products exports survival, for local manufacturing industries are sustained. This is especially in view of increasing regional and continental integration such as the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Thus, the new administration should be more alert on policies around Labour mobility, infant industry protection, as well as expansion policies on social protection and safety nets, as these will become even more crucial for the future.

As such, CTPD reiterates the need for the scale up of Governments investment and resource commitment through the Ministry of Technology and Science and the Ministry of SMEs to promote skills development and countrywide access to affordable technology, internet, and communication network services. Access to technology and communication channels is key to helping the country in advancing other agendas such as addressing environmental challenges, including climate change, extreme weather, and natural disasters for a sustainable future. By increasing investment focusing on digitalization and entrepreneurial skills development, Zambian citizens can be empowered with skills to adapt to the ever-changing global economy and be able sustain business and employment, as well as encourage innovation to generate sustainable and inclusive growth.

**Issued by:**

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Editor's Note

The Centre for Trade Policy and Development (CTPD) is a not-for-profit, membership based trade policy and development think tank. The organization was established in 1999 and existed as the civil society trade network (CSTNZ), until 2009 when it was rebranded as the Centre for Trade Policy and Development (CTPD).

The mandate of CTPD is to influence pro-poor trade and investment reforms at national, regional and multilateral levels as well as facilitate the participation of various stakeholders including member organizations in ensuring that trade is used as a tool for poverty eradication.

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