



Republic of Zambia

CONCEPT NOTE FOR THE NATIONAL RESEARCH AND INNOVATION SYMPOSIUM

Developed by:
Department of University Education – Ministry of Education

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Introduction

Other than providing quality university education, Higher Institutions of Learning have a duty to spearhead the Research Agenda of the Country and facilitate the nurturing and commercialization of innovative ideas that come out of their research activities. Further, there is a missing link between various economic players across all sectors, Sector specific research institutions, think tanks and Higher Education Institutions; a situation that has led to most government policies being developed devoid of utilizing evidence based research. It is for this reason that the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the University of Zambia will be hosting the inaugural National Research and Innovation Symposium from 26th to 27th October, 2022 at the University of Zambia. The theme of the symposium is *“Setting the Agenda for Economic transformation through Research and Innovation”*. **THE INVITED GUEST OF HONOR IS HIS EXCELLENCY MR. HAKAINDE HICHILEMA, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA.**

Objectives

In order to contribute to the new Dawn Government’s focus on reconstructing the economy and harnessing the potential that exists in Higher Institutions of Learning, Specialised Research Institutions, Sector Specific Think tanks and other Economic players, the inaugural symposium will focus on the following objectives:

- Bring together key sector-based stakeholders such as Universities (both public and private), Specialised Research Institutions, think tanks, sector based Professional Bodies, Innovation Hubs, Regulators, Policy makers, Financial Institutions and Industrial sector players to present papers highlighting major structural challenges in the economy by sector and propose remedial measures;
- Create a platform for setting the national research agenda and required collaborations among players;
- Bring to the fore, various innovative ideas generated by Zambians for possible uptake and commercialisation to create value; and
- Create an annual platform for disseminating information and knowledge generated through conducted research.
- Inform policy makers and other stakeholders of the research and innovations that have been undertaken locally.

Thematic Areas

In order to unpack the overall theme and structure the conversation, the symposium invited interested institutions and individuals to submit papers in line with the following thematic areas through an open call:

1. **Education as a driver for economic transformation;** papers in this thematic area will focus on how the Education sector particularly the Higher Education sub sector can be adequately utilised to propel economic transformation.
2. **Agriculture and Agro processing;** The Country has been talking about diversifying the economy from an over reliance on the mining sector to one that adds value to agricultural output through value addition. Papers in this thematic area will focus on presenting implementable options for both policy and practice;
3. **Infrastructure vis-à-vis Trade and Investment;** To transform the economy, the country needs reliable key infrastructure that facilitates investment, lowers the cost of doing business and enables seamless commerce and international trade. Therefore, papers in this thematic area will focus on the various types, ranging from energy, transport, communication, border facilities and skills-based infrastructure, that are ~~is~~ required for Zambia to build reliable and resilient infrastructure base that facilitates industrial growth and trade expansion;
4. **Energy and Environment;** In order to facilitate sustainable economic growth, a reliable energy supply (both petroleum and electricity) is needed. In the same vein, as we develop a reliable energy mix, the environment needs to be taken care of. Therefore, papers in this thematic area will focus on proposing an energy mix that is aligned to environmental sustainability; and
5. **ICT and digitalization;** The world is in the fourth industrial revolution. For Zambia to leapfrog the missed opportunities in the past eras of industrialisation, increased investments in ICT and digital smart systems will be required for the economy to deliver sustainable growth in all sectors. Therefore, papers in this thematic area will focus on proposing strategies that the country can adopt to not only prepare the economy for the fourth industrial revolution but also reap some of the benefits that already abound.

Attendance

Attendance is open to institutions and individuals that are interested to be part of setting a national agenda that supports research outputs as a basis for economic development planning. In this regard the following at the categories of participation:

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| i. Individuals sponsored by institutions: | K1,000 per sponsored person |
| ii. Individuals not sponsored by institutions: | K500 |
| iii. Students: | K100 |

All payments are to be made upon registration to the Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies (DRGS) at the University of Zambia.

Expected outcomes

As the Country seeks to transform the economy, it is imperative for policy formulation across all sectors to be driven and informed by evidence produced through research that takes into account both the internal structure of the economy and global trends. The symposium is an opportunity for researchers to present their research findings and innovations to industry and policy makers. This symposium which will be held annually and hosted by Universities across the country will create a platform for researchers from various fields to present their solutions to key economic challenges that require research based evidence. Researchers will be given the opportunity to share research outcomes that will ultimately inform policy. Further, this symposium will facilitate the establishment of linkages between research institutions, higher learning institutions, policy makers and industry.