



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

SPEECH BY DR. HAPENGA.M. KABETA

PERMANENT SECRETARY

MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS DEVELOPMENT

**DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE DIALOGUE FORUM ON
THE CRITICAL MINERALS STRATEGY**

27TH MAY, 2026

- **The Africa Director, Natural Resource Governance Institute- Ms. Nafi Quarshie;**
- **The Executive Director, Centre for Trade Policy and Development, Mr. Isaac Mwaipopo;**
- **Senior Government Officials Present**
- **Representatives from various Civil Society Organisations;**
- **Representatives from the Academia;**
- **Members of the Press;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

It is my distinct honour and pleasure to officially open this important Dialogue Forum on Zambia's Critical Minerals Strategy.

Allow me at the outset to commend the Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI), the Centre for Trade Policy and Development and all cooperating partners for proposing this important partnership with Government to co-host this multi-stakeholder dialogue on Zambia's National Critical Minerals Strategy.

This dialogue comes at an important time as the country continues to make steady progress towards the implementation of the National Critical Minerals Strategy. This engagement therefore, provides an opportunity to consolidate the progress made so far, facilitate shared learning among stakeholders, and obtain valuable input from both state and non-state actors on emerging priorities, opportunities and implementation challenges.

Ladies and Gentlemen

As you are aware, the global transition towards clean energy, digital transformation and advanced manufacturing has significantly increased demand for critical minerals such as copper, cobalt, manganese, graphite, lithium, nickel and rare earth elements. These minerals are now central to the development of electric vehicles, renewable energy technologies, battery storage systems and modern industrial infrastructure.

Zambia is strategically positioned to contribute meaningfully to this global transition. As a country endowed with vast mineral resources, we have an opportunity not only to increase mineral production, but also to leverage our mineral wealth for economic transformation, industrialisation, job creation and sustainable development.

It is against this background, that Government developed and launched the Critical Minerals Strategy in 2024 in order to unlock value across the mining value chain while ensuring that mineral resources contribute to inclusive and sustainable national development as espoused in the National Mineral Resources Development Policy and the Eighth (8th) National Development Plan.

Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to inform you that the Strategy is anchored on key strategic objectives aimed at positioning Zambia as a competitive and responsible player in the global critical minerals value chain.

Key objectives of the Strategy include advancement of geological mapping and mineral resource development and management in order to improve the availability of geological data, promote mineral exploration and support informed investment

decisions. As such, Government commenced the implementation of the Countrywide High Resolution Aerial Geophysical Survey aimed at reducing exploration risks, improving geological information and supporting targeted mineral exploration across the country.

Secondly, the Strategy also seeks to enhance strategic partnerships between Government and the private sector, recognising that sustainable growth in the mining sector requires collaboration, innovation and shared responsibility among stakeholders. It is for this reason that Government has continued to strengthen strategic partnerships through initiatives such as the Zambia–DRC Battery Council supported by Afreximbank, as well as the signing of Memoranda of Understanding with the European Union, the United States of America and Saudi Arabia’s Manara Minerals aimed at promoting investment, value addition and cooperation across the critical minerals value chain.

Further, the Strategy places strong emphasis on mineral beneficiation and value addition so as to maximise economic returns, promote industrialisation and create employment opportunities for the Zambian people. Government is therefore actively promoting policies and investments aimed at encouraging local processing, mineral value addition and downstream industrial development such as the DRC and Zambia Battery precursors and establishment of Special Economic Zones through the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry.

In addition, the Strategy prioritises research and development as a critical component for driving innovation, technology transfer, skills development and the sustainable exploitation of critical minerals. The Ministry is in the process of formulating Critical Minerals Regulations to promote value addition to critical minerals and

restrict the export of critical materials in raw form. Government therefore continues to support initiatives aimed at strengthening research, technical capacity and knowledge systems within the mining sector.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me to state that the Government of the Republic of Zambia remains steadfast in creating a predictable, transparent and competitive mining sector that attracts investment and promotes responsible resource development.

Beyond the strategic objectives I have highlighted, Government has also undertaken a number of policies, legal, institutional and other strategic interventions aimed at strengthening governance and improving the overall performance of the mining sector. Among these interventions is the establishment of the Minerals Regulation Commission to strengthen oversight, enhance regulatory efficiency and promote transparency in the mining sector.

Government is also implementing deliberate measures to support the formalisation and growth of the artisanal and small-scale mining subsector through capacity building programmes, trainings and the subsequent issuance of mining licences in order to enhance participation, improve safety and increase productivity among local miners.

Further, Government has prioritised local content development and increased citizen participation across the mining value chain to ensure that Zambians derive meaningful benefits from the exploitation of our mineral resources.

At the same time, emphasis continues to be placed on environmental sustainability, transparency and good governance to ensure that mineral resource development is undertaken responsibly and contributes to inclusive and sustainable national development.

Ladies and Gentlemen

As Government, we recognise that the successful implementation of the Critical Minerals Strategy will require strong collaboration among Government institutions, the private sector, cooperating partners, academia, civil society and local communities.

I therefore urge all participants to engage openly and constructively during the discussions, and to contribute solutions that will help position Zambia as a leading player in the global critical minerals value chain.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me to reiterate that the future of mining is rapidly evolving, and Zambia must position itself strategically to maximise the opportunities presented by the growing global demand for critical minerals. Through sound policies, strategic partnerships and responsible resource governance, we can transform our mineral wealth into long-term economic prosperity for current and future generations.

It is now my singular honour and privilege to officially declare the NRGi Dialogue Forum on Zambia's Critical Minerals Strategy officially open.

I thank you.