

‘THE BEST ECONOMIC POLICY IS HIGHER  
EDUCATION’:  
TRANSFORMING HIGHER EDUCATION TO  
TRANSFORM THE ECONOMY

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Director-General



## HISTORICAL CONTEXT + BACKGROUND THOUGHTS

We cannot go further into the future without looking deeper into the past.

# LOCKWOOD REPORT, 1965

To understand the importance of the **University of Zambia** (University in Zambia), we must go back to the Lockwood Report.

In para 3 of the Report, it is stated: “The starting point of our enquiry into the establishment of a university has been a two-fold conviction: first, that the university be responsive to the real needs of the country; secondly, that it must be an institution which on merit will win the respect and proper recognition of the university world.

Unless it satisfies these two criteria, it will fall short of meeting its national responsibility. It must combine practical service **to the nation at a critical time in its life**, with the fulfilment of the historic purposes of a university as a seat of learning, a treasure house of knowledge and a creative centre of research.”

# PRESIDENT KENNETH KAUNDA, 1966

When President Kaunda was being installed as Chancellor for UNZA, he said:

“The University of Zambia is **one of the keys** that can open the door of the future and help us to overcome the persistent evils of poverty, ignorance and disease.”

“Many of the our hopes for the future of our land and its **people** are wrapped up in this institution. Without it, we cannot hope to become the nation we want to be.”

# PROFESSOR LAMECK GOMA, 1971

“It is essential to maintain in the university an atmosphere of freedom, stimulation, tolerance and critical openness to new or opposing ideas. The teacher, let alone a university one, must feel free to explore issues of public significance and moment, on which there may be no agreement, and to follow the truth wherever it may lead.”

Since the late Professor Goma, the public university in Zambia has unfortunately been silenced by propaganda and relegated into irrelevance.

Professor Lameck Goma called this “the guilty silence of the universities.”

## IVORY TOWER, QUIET ENJOYMENT

Many of our university campuses have been turned into exclusive spaces where staff and students now seek a culture of comfort and pomposity, fueled by academic arrogance.

Professor Andrew Siwela in 1997 called this “**the quiet enjoyment of our conditions of service**”

# A UNIVERSITY UNDER ATTACK

Quality of teaching and learning is being questioned.

In the past, university graduates were said to have been half-baked.

Today, they may not even have come near the oven.

# BOBBY BWALYA COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

In 1997, the Bobby Bwalya Commission of Inquiry noted that:

“The quality of education in the university depends on the presence of a critical mass of professionals, skilled individuals who constitute the academic staff. Without significant attention to retention, motivation and commitment of this critical mass in the university, **the problem of quality in the core functions of the university is bound to persist**”

# VISION 2030

“The challenges for university education over the twenty-five years of the Vision 2030 are to **rehabilitate existing infrastructure** and construct new facilities to support the development of human capital. **Staff development and retention of qualified staff** will also be a focus in order to **improve quality of university education**.”

## **NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY, 2019, PAGE 2**

“The **quality of education** and **its relevance** to industry remains elusive and a number of objectives relating to quality remain unachieved.

Previous efforts focussed on improving access, and although issues of quality were included in these efforts, these issues were not given prominence.”

## 8NDP, 2022-2026:

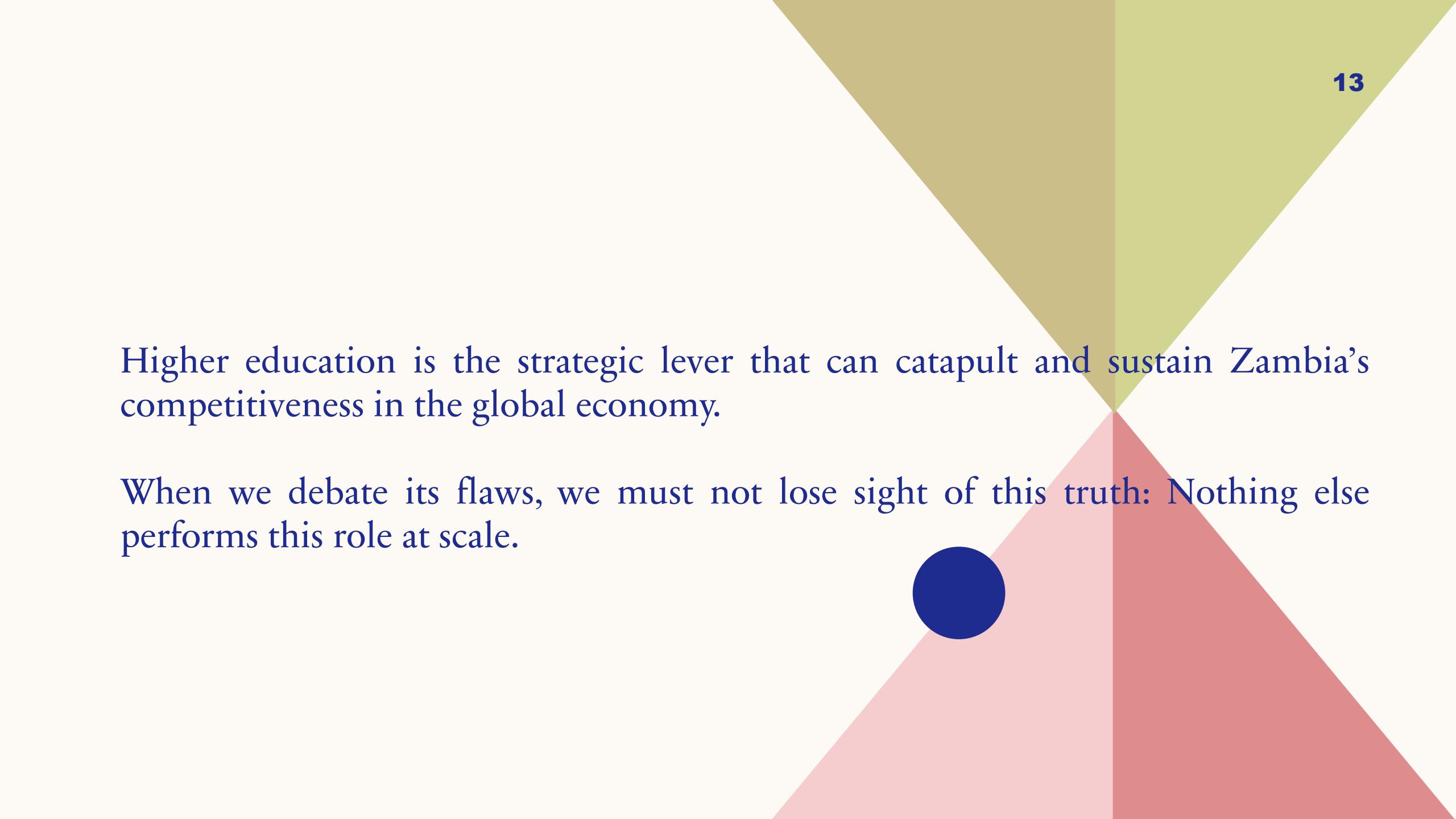
Page 46 of the 8NDP states that:

“With regard to university education, while more universities have been established, there is a weak regulatory framework which has led to the compromise in the quality of university education. There is also inadequate qualified manpower to teach at tertiary level.”

# QUALITY SITS AT THE CROSSROADS

World Bank, UKaid, GRZ (2015) report on *Education Public Expenditure Review in Zambia* stated that:

“Depending on the quality of education these youth receive, they could be an asset or liability.”



Higher education is the strategic lever that can catapult and sustain Zambia's competitiveness in the global economy.

When we debate its flaws, we must not lose sight of this truth: Nothing else performs this role at scale.

# HIGHER EDUCATION POVERTY

Poverty in Zambia is no longer the absence of income: It is the absence of the correct type of higher education.

# **PRESIDENT HAKAINDE HICHILEMA**

Free education policy; 2021

The President has directed that education (higher education) should be classified as an economic sector; 2025.

The starting point is higher education.

## CONTRIBUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION REMAINS SINGULAR

Universities are the engines that power medical breakthroughs, create technological innovation, and produce intellectual leadership.

The economy of knowledge vs the economy of goods and services.  
(Intellectual property vs movable property + immovable property).

GOAL: Convert knowledge into goods and services.

But the story of higher education in Zambia has been a story of diminishing returns.

# TRANSFORMATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

We cannot solve all the problems in the public university by simply throwing more money at it.

## **DEFINING THE CONTOURS OF TRANSFORMATION**

Seminal Speech, 30 pages

Transformation of university education in Zambia. Speech by Professor Kazhila Chinsembu, delivered at the engagement meeting with Vice-Chancellors of public universities, Mulungushi International Conference Centre, Lusaka, 25 April 2024.

“We need radical transformation of university education. We need to move and lead the university away from its old story of shame. This means that we cannot transform if we simply graft our policy reforms onto the weak and precarious foundation of the past.” (page 18).

# HEA IS ADVISOR TO MINISTER ON ANY ASPECT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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# BRIDGING VICE-CHANCELLORS TO MINISTER:

## AUTONOMY Vs ACCOUNTABILITY

“Today, your most urgent mission as a Vice-Chancellor is to drive the university out of the clutches of failure”.

“Your role as Vice-Chancellor is to carefully calibrate and recalibrate political and technical strategy”.

“Autonomy does not include bending the truth”.

“As a Vice-Chancellor, your pursuit is neither conspicuous consumption nor the quiet enjoyment of your conditions of service”.

“Your job as Vice-Chancellor is to ensure that the university remains a public space for scholarship, imagination, reflection and mental fermentation”.



# DISCUSSING PROFESSORIAL PROMOTIONS

30 August 2024: CBU

“Out of this crucible of scarcity will emerge a professor”.

Professor Vernon Chinene has advised HEA to publish gazette of HEA recognized Professors.



# PROFESSORIAL APPOINTMENTS

Many Professors in private universities are dubious.

Professorship should not be granted on  
compassionate grounds.

# STRENGTHEN INSPECTIONS, AUDITS: REDUCE OVER-CROWDING

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## RANDOM INSPECTIONS: LEVY MWANAWASA MEDICAL UNIVERSITY CAMPUS IN KABWE



# CHIEF INSPECTOR



## **ENACTMENT OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION REGULATIONS, 2024**

Increased annual student levy from K4 to K70; annual audits, introduced annual institutional audit fee.

We have introduced the regulation of affiliations.

In 2026, we plan to review the SI in order to introduce penalties.

# RESTRUCTURING OF HEA

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Create Regional Office in Ndola.

Digitalization: Complete National Student Database; roll-out digital platform for accreditation.

Strengthen accreditation to improve curriculum transformation, curriculum innovation, stakeholder input, and Afrocentricity or **post-colonial higher education (IKS system)**.

Strengthen research and planning.

# **BUILDING BRIDGES OF TRUST: QUALITY ASSURANCE IS NOT A BADGE THAT YOU WEAR, IT IS A VIRTUE.**

DG's Tour of Provinces: Central, Eastern, Southern, Western, NWP.



# BENCHMARKING STUDY TOURS

Philippines: Strengthen medical training: University Teaching Hospital must be a requirement; use of mannequins.

GTEC: Budget vetting; ?Single Spine Salary Structure ?

Malaysia: Parents' saving scheme for higher education/ Educational City

Kenya: Central Admission System to curb over-enrolment/ over-crowding

SA: Naming Convention for Degree Programs.

# PER CAPITA COST

At the University of Rwanda, the unit cost per year for each STEM student is about US\$ 2,000 and the unit cost per year for each non-STEM student is about US\$ 800.

These figures include cost of tuition, salaries, utility bills, internet, legacy debt, etc.



## Japan: INQAAHE – International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

>> Build bridges of trust >> Transformational QA model

>> Use of AI

# **TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION**

Africa Universities Summit, Kigali, 2025

Africa Universities Summit, Nairobi, 2026

*'Zambia ku Chalo': Moderator of Panel Discussion at the Africa Universities Summit 2026; Growing Ambition: Building University Preparedness for Africa's Human Capital Potential.*

# BENCHMARKING INFORMS UNIVERSITY REFORM

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“The public university is in a very delicate moment, but it must stay strong, it must stand on the truth. In the midst of uncertainty, the role of the Vice-Chancellor is to bring courage to the process of university reform. The resources may be limited, but we urge you to *do more with less*, so that university education responds to the challenges of our time”



# HIGHER EDUCATION DIPLOMACY



**INTERNATIONAL BENCHMARKING HAS  
HIGHLIGHTED WEAKNESSES IN SPECIFIC  
AREAS OF REGULATORY GOVERNANCE.**

**URGENT REFORMS ARE NEEDED.**

# **PERFORMANCE-BASED FUNDING MODEL<sup>36</sup>** **FOR PUBLIC UNIVERSITY EDUCATION**

Based on success and achievement of predefined goals:

Graduate quality (distinctions, merit, credits), relevance, degrees in high-demand fields, and employability

Research Productivity & Impact (Homo Academicus Impactus)

# NATIONAL GRADUATE SURVEY

National Tracer Study

Inform the development of the National Human Resource Plan & Academic programming in universities.

Graduate unemployment

# STRENGTHEN REGULATORY OVERSIGHT

Letter from Cabinet is clear: While government encourages private sector provision of higher education, the mushrooming of private predatory corner-shop colleges and universities must stop.

Review the Higher Education Policy of 2019

Review Higher Education Act: To introduce penalties, redefine roles of professional bodies (ZMA, RDAZ, Vet Council of Zambia, etc)

## STRENGTHEN STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Sunday Interviews (17 Nov 2024; 23 Nov 2025)

Radio: Phoenix FM, Breeze FM, Radio Liseli, Radio Lyambai, Lusaka Radio, & Radio Chimwemwe

Students: UNZASU >> strengthen student evaluation of teaching

# **BREAKFAST MEETING: NURTURE THE FULL PROFESSORS**

Full Professors must be tenured;  
provide 5-year contracts even after  
they attain retirement age.

Breakfast meeting with Full  
Professors.

Full Professors to meet the  
Republican President.



# INVESTMENT FORUM



## HIGHER EDUCATION INDABA 2025

“unlocking Zambia’s Potential Through New investments In Quality Higher Education”

Exhibit, sponsor or attend Zambia’s first investment forum for higher education.

REGISTER  
NOW

[www.hea.org.zm/indaba](http://www.hea.org.zm/indaba)



8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2025

Avani Victoria Falls Resort, Livingstone



**Honourable Mr. Douglas  
Munsaka Syakalima, MP.**  
Minister of Education



**Professor Kazhla C.  
Chinsembu**  
Director-General  
Higher Education Authority (HEA)



**Professor Oliver Saasa**  
Chancellor of Mulungushi University  
Chairperson of the Board of ZANACO



**Dr. Christine Mushibwe**  
Vice-Chancellor  
Unicaf University Zambia



**Professor Pinalo  
Chitwanakeni**  
Vice-Chancellor  
University of Luuka (UNILU)



**Mr. Muyangwa Muyangwa**  
Director General  
National Pension Scheme Authority (NAPS)



**Mrs. Beauty Zimba**  
Registrar / CEO Nursing and  
Midwifery Council of Zambia (NMCZ)



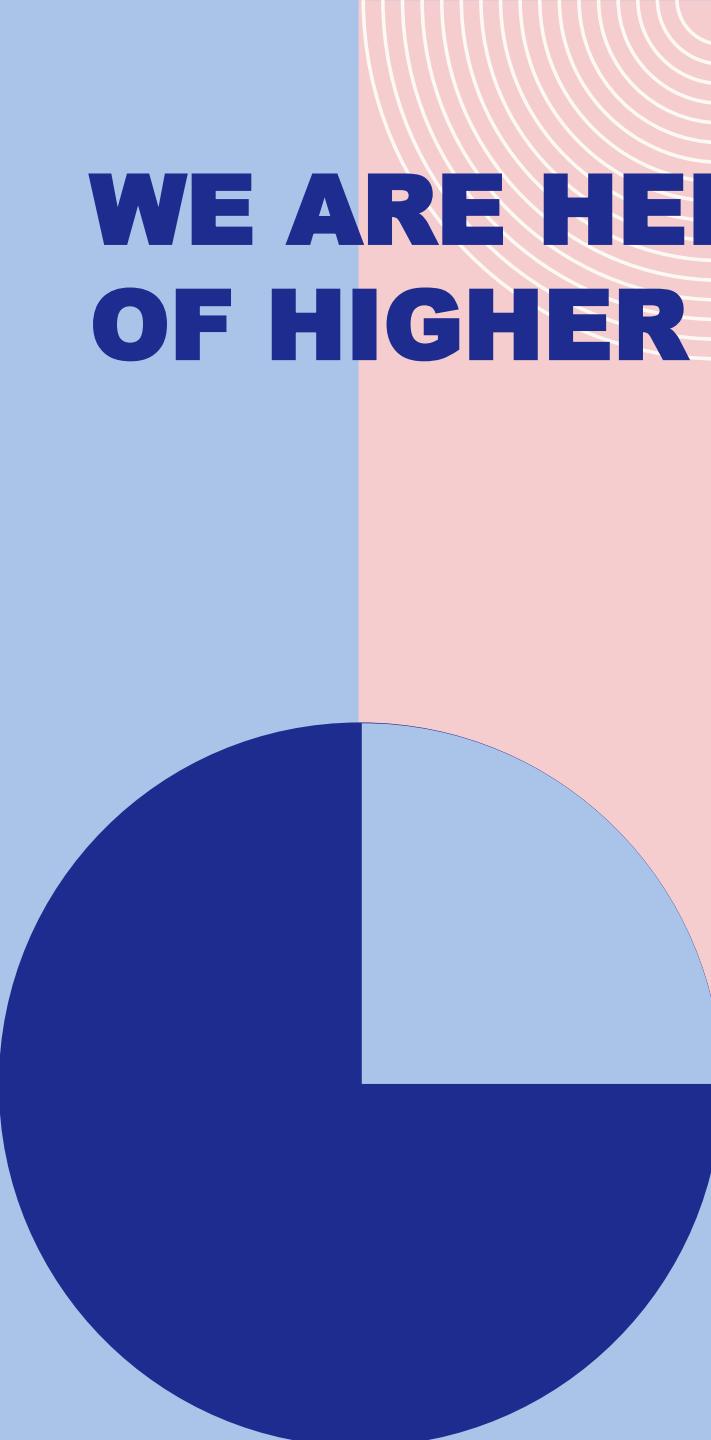
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Director and Chief Executive Officer  
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**WE ARE HERE TO REDEEM THE PROMISE  
OF HIGHER EDUCATION**





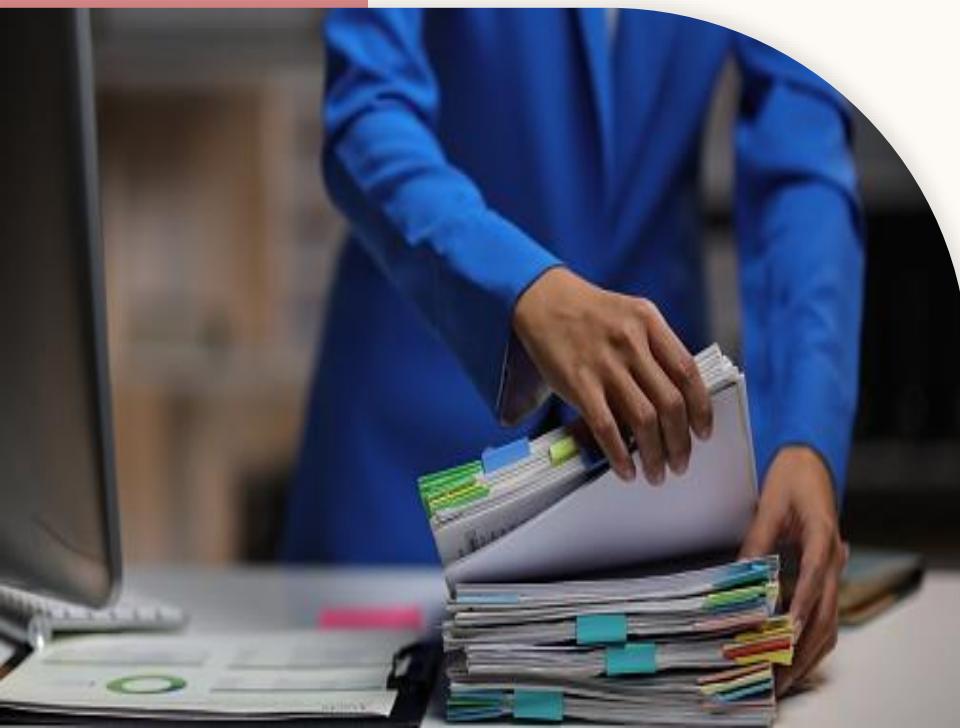
# Deconstruct and reconstruct higher education



If we are to transform the economy, we must first destroy the old system of higher education, and build a completely new system of higher education.



# Assessment of knowledge for national development



No 50+1

Higher education is the best economic policy.

Students should convert knowledge into goods and services.

Higher education must reduce poverty.

# TRANSFORMATION, A COMPLETE OVERHAUL

Here, we argue that higher education in Zambia requires exigent transformation and complete overhaul and re-envisioning.

Such a transformation should not shy away from causing epistemological ruptures and jettisoning of archaic or irrelevant curricula.

# TRANSFORMATION MUST INCREASE VALUE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Transformation should bring about a new system of higher education, one that increases the contributions of higher education to the economy.

@HeaZambia



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HIGHER  
EDUCATION  
AUTHORITY

# RE-CENTRE HIGHER EDUCATION

We must re-centre higher education as the most critical ingredient for economic development (World Bank, 1998).

Transformation must have a strategic intent, it cannot be a random aimless transformation.

Unless we develop a high-risk appetite, transformation of higher education will not be successful.  
**It will not even begin.**

Higher education institutions must place teaching, learning, and research in the national context.

# TECTONIC SHIFT

We should provide a tectonic transformational framework to deconstruct, reconstruct and redefine the purpose of higher education.

# TIDES AGAINST TRANSFORMATION

The marketization of higher education (universities act like businesses selling pieces of paper, knowledge and credentials) confounds the quality of higher education.

One tide against  
transformation => Diploma Disease

# LET ME END WHERE I STARTED...

The best economic policy is higher education.

HEA is transforming higher education in order to transform the economy.

Trust the process.

**THANK  
YOU**

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