

**HIS HIGHNESS, SHEIKH TAMIM BIN HAMAD AL THANI, THE
AMIR OF THE STATE OF QATAR;
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY;
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS;
EXCELLENCIES, HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT;
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN;**

It is with profound honour and a deep sense of historical responsibility that I deliver this statement on behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Zambia.

I warmly thank the Government and People of the State of Qatar for their gracious hospitality and the exceptional courtesies extended to me and my delegation here in Doha.

We gather here not only to reflect on the enduring legacy of the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, but to chart a bold and inclusive path forward as we commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the United Nations. These two milestones Copenhagen and UN80 are more than symbolic. They represent a continuum of global aspiration: a shared commitment to human dignity, social justice, and people-centred, equitable, and sustainable development. They remind us that social progress is not a technical exercise, but a moral and political imperative.

Excellences

This Summit convenes at a pivotal moment in human history. Our world faces multiple, interlinked crises: economic uncertainty, climate change, debt distress, rising inequality, protracted conflicts, and unemployment that threaten to erode hard-won gains in human development. Therefore, this Summit must mark a turning point a moment when our commitments are translated into concrete action and where social justice, equity, and dignity for all, including children, youth, persons with disabilities, and older persons, become the compass of our collective efforts.

We welcome and support the Doha Political Declaration, which renews the vision of Copenhagen and strengthens the three fundamental pillars of social development: poverty eradication, full and productive employment, and social inclusion.

Excellences

The Copenhagen Declaration was a watershed moment. It recognised that poverty is multidimensional, that employment is a cornerstone of dignity, and that social integration is essential to peace. Thirty years later, these principles remain as urgent as ever.

In Zambia, we continue to confront challenges of youth unemployment, rural poverty, gender inequality, and climate vulnerability. Yet we are not passive. Guided by our Eighth National Development Plan and in alignment with Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals, we are investing in human capital, expanding access to education and health, and building stronger social protection systems.

Through our Social Cash Transfer Programme, we now reach about 60 percent of the poorest households, providing predictable income support to the most vulnerable. We have made education free at primary and secondary levels, expanded the National Health Insurance Scheme, and are strengthening child protection systems to ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive.

We recognise that child welfare is both a moral imperative and a cornerstone of sustainable development. With children representing nearly half of Zambia's population, our investments in nutrition, early childhood care, education, and protection are designed to nurture the next generation of citizens who will drive our nation's future.

Excellences

We are also proud to be part of the African Union's efforts to advance inclusive development through the African Continental Free Trade Area, the African Peer Review Mechanism, and the AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy. These continental frameworks reflect Africa's determination to shape its own destiny and to contribute meaningfully to global governance.

This year's Summit is enriched by the launch of the UN80 Initiative, which seeks to renew the social contract between governments and their people, and between the United Nations and the communities it serves. Zambia welcomes this initiative as an opportunity to reimagine multilateralism one that is inclusive, transparent, and responsive to the needs of developing nations.

Excellences

Zambia continues to align national financing with social priorities, ensuring that economic growth translates into decent work and reduced poverty. For us, poverty eradication must go beyond welfare it requires inclusive growth, equitable access to opportunities, and sustained investment in human capital.

As climate change increasingly threatens livelihoods, we are mainstreaming resilience into all social development frameworks through climate-smart social protection and community livelihood initiatives that cushion households and promote sustainability.

Excellences

Social development is not a peripheral concern it is the foundation of peace, prosperity, and human dignity. As we mark thirty years since Copenhagen and eighty years of the United Nations, let us not merely commemorate these milestones. Let us act. Let us build societies where dignity is not a privilege but a right; where opportunity is not inherited but created; and where justice is not delayed but delivered.

Zambia stands ready to work with all partner governments, civil society, the private sector, and youth to advance the promise of Copenhagen and the vision of UN80.

Together, let us forge a future that is inclusive, resilient, and just for every person, in every nation, and for generations to come.

I THANK YOU.