

PRESS RELEASE

Zambia's Creative Sector Poised for Growth: Collaborative Workshop Charts Path for Increased Investment.

The People's Action for Accountability and Good Governance in Zambia (PAAGZ), in partnership with the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Art, and the National Arts Council, convened a three-day budget consultative workshop for creatives and sector players in Kafue district, Zambia. Held from May 15th to 17th, 2024, under the theme "Accelerating Economic Development through Increased Public Investment in the Creative Sector," the workshop brought together key stakeholders from across and beyond the arts, including representatives from the Ministry of Finance and National Planning, Parliamentary Budget Office, and local artists, to engage in critical discussions on securing more meaningful investment and public funding for the sector.

This collaborative effort aimed to stimulate conversation, build a case, and empower the arts sector with strategies for actionable interventions that highlight the potential value the sector holds for Zambia's revenues, national growth, and development. In his opening address, Permanent Secretary of Arts, Mr. Fumba Chama, emphasized that *"the creative sector needs more investment than empowerment to contribute fully to the country's growth. It is critical for the sector to demonstrate professionalism, improve governance structures, and formalize the industry."* He further highlighted that arts, culture, and creativity can be largely exported at a higher rate when an enabling environment is in place, which the ministry is working towards.

Through open dialogue and knowledge exchange, participants explored sectoral needs and value addition, investment opportunities, advocacy for increased funding, and understanding budgetary processes. In his opening remarks, Mr. Khazike Sakala, PAAGZ Executive Director, underscored the need for the sector to be recognized as an effective economic contributor and for pushing beyond the current allocation threshold towards achieving the 1% government funding for arts and culture as per the AU Declaration. He emphasized that engagements like this workshop, supported by key proponents like Selam Sweden through the Connect for Culture Initiative, are building blocks for making a concrete case for increased allocation to the arts.

The workshop set a strong foundation for advocating to the Ministry of Finance and National Planning for more resources for the arts sector, emphasizing its socio-economic value and impact. A Ministry of Finance representative highlighted the importance of raising awareness within the ministry about the revenue-generating potential of the arts sector and she expressed a commitment to advocate for increased resource allocation due to her exposure and appreciation of the arts contributions. This sentiment was echoed by a representative from the National Assembly of Zambia, who committed to championing advocacy efforts for the arts within parliament and to inviting the project to make its case through available spaces. *"This workshop was an eye-opener. We have seen and heard firsthand how the arts sector creates significant employment and revenues, and with proper resourcing, it can compete as a priority sector like agriculture and mining,"* he said.

Key outcomes from the workshop included recognizing the arts and creatives sector's potential for economic growth and job creation, especially among youth, necessitating greater public resource allocation. The importance of involving artists as key drivers of advocacy was also highlighted. One creative who participated remarked, *"We need workshops like this for not only technocrats but for creatives and artists as well to understand and appreciate the various*

institutions and opportunities available to influence budgetary allocations. There should be support from actors like PAAGZ in building our capacity to make budget submissions so we can directly influence and contribute to changing our plight as artists within the sector.”

Lastly, legislative and fiscal reforms were identified as essential for improving the business environment for artists. While strides have been made through the introduction of the National Arts Policy of 2023 and the revised National Film Policy of 2023, there is a greater need to strengthen legislation that will facilitate a well-regulated, formalized, and professionalized sector prioritized for its contribution to national development in Zambia.

In conclusion, PAAGZ and its partners are committed to working together to ensure that Zambia's vibrant arts sector receives the support it deserves to flourish and contribute to national development. The creative industry has the potential to drive economic growth, create jobs, and contribute to Zambia's socio-economic development. We urge the government to prioritize and fund the creative industry incrementally and progressively in line with the AU Declaration to unlock its full potential.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Khazike Sakala', with a circular stamp or mark on the left side.

Khazike Sakala (**Executive Director**)

Peoples Action for Accountability and Good Governance in Zambia (PAAGZ)