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MAKE ICTS AFFORDABLE

By Flolics Kasumbalesa

President Banda has called on players in Information Communication Technology (ICT) to come up with cheaper solutions to help countries like Zambia to access ICTs services.

The president said this in a speech read for him by vice president George Kunda during official opening of the 5th International Conference on ICT development education and training in Lusaka yesterday.

Mr. Banda said public private partnerships to pilot of fast track ICT based projects must, therefore, be encouraged.

He said ICTs are a prerequisite to wealth creation and can help to improve the quality of life in under developed countries. He appealed to manufacturers and service providers to consider promoting electronic learning in Zambia.

“ICTs can be used to bridge the gap between developed and underdeveloped countries. They can lead to greater knowledge of issues and are an effective tool in enhancing good governance which can lead to greater knowledge, competition and productivity.”

He said government is committed to enhancing the ICT sector by promoting equitable access to information to ensure that as many Zambian as possible benefit from its use. Mr. Banda said government is aware that ICTs alone can not have an impact until they help to eliminate poverty. He said Zambia is committed to achieving the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs), saying ICT can help attain this.

President Banda said Zambia’s vision is to become a middle income earner by 2030 and that through ICTs, this can be achieved. Minister of Education Dora Siliya said ICTs can help to change people’s mind set.

She said ICT can help to enhance collaboration between learning institutions which can be linked via tools like XVD technology that was launched on Wednesday and will be able to link the university of Zambia and Copperbelt University to universities in Japan.

Anglican Bishop of Gambia Reverend Teliwe Johnson, who gave the key note address, said Africans must continue to teach values of respect and diplomacy and not allow technology to destroy this.

Rev. Johnson said it is important not to let young people abuse ICTs which are available through services such as face book and twitter.

The two day conference, which ends today, has attracted more that 1,700 delegates from 78 countries.