



ZAMBIA NATIONAL EDUCATION COALITION
Promoting Quality Education For Every Zambian

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ZANEC PRESS STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY

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The Zambia National Education Coalition (ZANEC) is pleased to join the rest of the world in celebrating the 2024 International Literacy Day. This day is not just featured on the educational calendar but also serves as a day for appreciation and looking back on the importance of education as an important component for national and sustainable development. Education empowers people, builds societies, and enhances the collective health of the nation.

This year's theme, which is **"Promoting multilingual education: Literacy for mutual understanding and peace."** highlights the important role of literacy in fostering mutual understanding and lasting peace, particularly within multilingual contexts. This year's theme connects well with Zambia's belief that multilingualism is not a mere concept but an invaluable tool for embracing differences within our societies. In our country where more than 70 languages are spoken, the idea of multilingual education for Zambians is a way of enhancing synergy inclusive development, and cohesion. All Zambian children irrespective of their language, ethnicity, gender, or disability should be able to access the Right to Education – which goes beyond availing opportunities of schooling, but respects the cultural background of every child with the help of multilingual education.

The term literacy entails something more than reading and writing; it is a fundamental human right. Hence, ZANEC commends the government for its achievement in setting up 940 Early Childhood Education (ECE) centers and equipping 75% of these centers with locally developed materials. It is clear that early childhood development is the building block for a career for every person and therefore it is imperative for the government to remain focused in this area.

With the recent statistics, the government has also achieved more in the work of the Youth and Adult Literacy Education (YALE) sector with the establishment of 103 centers in the 10 provinces. These two sectors are of great importance in combating the high illiteracy rates in our country.

However, despite these efforts on the part of the government, there are still marked differences in literacy levels, especially in the rural and urban areas which remain to be addressed in the quest for quality education. As of now, the figures demonstrate that the rate of literacy remains low especially in rural settings and in most cases



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among women which progressively limits their ability to participate in socioeconomic development. This disparity can be explained through the gross underfunding of the YALE sector, which was allocated only 0.02% of the total education budget for the year 2023, and the inadequate deployment of teachers to the Early Childhood Development (ECD) subsector.

To promote multilingual literacy education, ZANEC would like to take this opportunity to make the following recommendations to the Ministry of Education:

1. In light of the present energy crisis, it is recommended that the government gives first consideration to the purchase of solar lamps and solar panels, for literacy centers to facilitate learning.
2. There should be adequate funding for the creation and publication of educational resources, such as texts and stories, written in native languages to promote multilingual education.
3. We recommend salary harmonization across ECD, Primary, and Secondary education sectors to ensure fair compensation for teachers at all levels.
4. The government should increase the deployment of adult literacy teachers by at least 5% to address the shortage and improve literacy rates among adults.
5. The Ministry should prioritize the construction of additional YALE centers and advocate for CDF investments toward building more adult literacy centers.

Finally, ZANEC would like to wish you all a productive and happy International Literacy Day. Let us unite in building a literate nation that embraces diversity, and inclusivity, and promotes mutual understanding.

For/ZANEC



George Hamusunga

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR