



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

REPORT

OF THE

**COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ON THE FREE
EDUCATION POLICY IN ZAMBIA: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES.**

FOR THE

SECOND SESSION OF THE THIRTEENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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FOREWORD

Honourable Madam Speaker, the Committee on Education, Science and Technology has the honour to present its Report for the Second Session of the Thirteenth National Assembly. The functions of the Committee are set out in Standing Orders No. 197 (c) and 198 of the National Assembly of Zambia Standing Orders, 2021.

In line with its Programme of Work for the Second Session of the Thirteenth National Assembly, the Committee undertook a study on the topical issue namely: "*The Free Education Policy in Zambia: Opportunities and Challenges*". The Committee held twenty meetings to consider the topical issue. In order to fully interrogate the topical issue, the Committee requested detailed memoranda from various stakeholders. The stakeholders were also invited to appear before the Committee and speak to their memoranda in order to afford the Committee an opportunity to make clarifications on issues contained in the memoranda. The list of stakeholders who appeared before the Committee is at Appendix II.

The Committee's Report is organised in two parts. Part I presents the Committee's findings from its deliberations on the topical issue, including findings from the tours. Part I further presents the Committee's observations and recommendations on the topical issue. Part II contains the Committee's observations and recommendations on its consideration of the Action-Taken Report on the Report of the Committee for the First Session of the Thirteenth National Assembly.

The Committee is grateful to all stakeholders who tendered both written and oral submissions. The Committee further wishes to thank you, Madam Speaker, for affording it an opportunity to carry out its work. The Committee also appreciates the services rendered by the Office of the Clerk of the National Assembly during its deliberations.



Mr Twaambo Elvis Mutinta, MP
CHAIRPERSON

June, 2023
LUSAKA

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ECE	Early Childhood Education
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
8NDP	Eighth National Development Plan
OVC	Orphan and Vulnerable Children
PMEC	Payroll Management and Established Control
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
SADC	Southern African Development Community
TEVETA	Technical Education Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority
ZAQA	Zambia Qualifications Authority
ZQF	Zambia Qualifications Framework

1.0 Membership of the Committee

The Committee consisted of Mr Twaambo E Mutinta, MP, (Chairperson); Ms Sibongile Mwamba, MP, (Vice Chairperson); Mrs Chrizoster Phiri Halwindi, MP; Mr Tyson Simuzingili, MP; Mr Elias Daka, MP; Mr Davies Chisopa, MP; Mr Ackleo Ives Aaron Banda, MP; Mr Alex Katakwe, MP; Mr Golden Mwila, MP; and Mr Heartson Mabeta, MP.

The membership of the Committee changed when Mrs Chrizoster Phiri Halwiindi, MP, replaced Mr Lloyd Lubozha, MP, who was appointed to serve on another Committee.

PART I

CONSIDERATION OF TOPICAL ISSUE

2.0 THE FREE EDUCATION POLICY IN ZAMBIA: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

2.1 Background

In January 2022, the Government of the Republic of Zambia introduced the Free Education Policy from Early Childhood Education to secondary school level in all Government schools. According to the findings from the schools visited by the Ministry of Education, as well as literature gathered and analysed, it was established that the public had responded positively to the free education policy reforms as seen in the overwhelming response and increase in school enrolments.

However, some stakeholders had observed that the overwhelming response to the Free Education Policy had increased the number of pupils in relation to the teachers in classrooms, thereby causing overcrowding and making the environment unbearable for both learners and teachers. Some stakeholders had argued that the overcrowding in classrooms across the country threatened the very essence of attending school, and that if not well managed; this might negatively affect the quality of education. Others argued that the education system was clearly not ready for this reform as schools and teachers were overwhelmed.

In light of the above, the Committee resolved to undertake a study on the implementation of the “Free Education Policy in Zambia: Opportunities and Challenges.” In doing so, the Committee interacted with various witnesses who made written and oral submission on the Free Education Policy in Zambia. The list of witnesses is attached at Appendix II. In order to appreciate what was obtaining on the ground regarding the implementation of the Policy, the Committee undertook local tours to Luapula, Northern and Central Provinces. They later undertook a foreign tour to learn best practices from Kenya where this Policy has been implemented.

3.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study were to:

- i. appreciate the adequacy of the legal and policy framework supporting the Free Education Policy;

- ii. identify the positive effects of the implementation of the Free Education Policy;
- iii. appreciate the challenges in the implementation of the Free Education Policy; and
- iv. make recommendations on the way forward.

4.0 SUMMARY OF SUBMISSIONS BY STAKEHOLDERS

The following is the summary of submissions made by various witnesses that appeared before the Committee.

4.1 Adequacy of the Legal and Policy Framework Supporting the Free Education Policy in Zambia

The Committee was informed that there was no comprehensive legal framework guiding the provision of free education in Zambia. However, what was in existence were various provisions in the law that generally supported the provision of free education as set out hereunder.

4.2 Legal Framework

Stakeholders informed the Committee that there were a number of pieces of legislation that attempted to promote free education in Zambia. Some of the pieces of legislation highlighted by the stakeholders were as set out below.

4.2.1 The Education Act, No. 23 of 2011

The Committee was informed that Zambia's main legislation on education was the *Education Act, No. 23 of 2011*, which identified each person's rights to Early Childhood Education, Basic Education and High School Education and that every child had the right to free basic education. Stakeholders submitted that under section 15 of the Act, the Zambian child had been given the right to free basic education, and in their view, this was the clearest legal provision for free basic education in Zambia, but it left out early childhood and secondary education.

4.2.2 The Children's Code Act No. 12 of 2022

Stakeholders informed the Committee that access to education was also enshrined in the *Children's Code Act, No. 12 of 2022* and emphasised that education ought to be transformational. Section 10 (1) (a) of the Act emphasised that a child's right to education provided under the *Education Act, No. 23 of 2011* should be directed at ensuring education of a child and developing their talents, skills, mental and physical abilities to the child's fullest potential.

4.2.3 The Persons with Disabilities Act, No 6 of 2012

Stakeholders informed the Committee that *the Persons with Disabilities Act No. 6 of 2012* supported the provision of free education under section 22 (2) (b) which provided that persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary, secondary and higher education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live.

4.3 Policy framework

The Committee was informed that Zambia was one of the countries in Africa that had committed itself in trying to make education a right to all its citizens. Stakeholders informed the Committee that some of the policies that supported the provision of free education in Zambia included the under listed.

4.3.1 Free Primary Education Policy of 2002

The Committee was informed that this policy was introduced in 2002 to make primary education from grades one to seven free. This led to the abolishment of all user and examination fees at Grade seven and provided for free learning materials to pupils while uniforms were no longer compulsory. The Policy also introduced termly grants to schools to cater for administrative costs.

4.3.1 The Eighth National Development Plan

Stakeholders submitted that the Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP) set out Zambia's strategic direction and development priorities for the period 2022 to 2026. One of the strategic development areas of the 8NDP was the Human and Social Development. This strategic development area addressed the need to develop human capacity through investment and interventions in education and skills development, health and nutrition, water and sanitation. Strategy Number One of the Human and Social Development Strategic Development Area focused on enhancing access to quality, equitable and inclusive education and prioritised the provision of free education from early childhood to secondary level. This was in line with the Free Education Policy.

4.3.2 The National Education Policy of 1996

The Committee was informed that this Policy also governed the provision of education in Zambia although it did not have a clear provision on free education. The Policy was mainly conceived on the basis of democratic principles of decentralisation, efficiency, equity, accountability and cost effectiveness. The Policy heavily promoted cost sharing between the State and the beneficiaries. It also recognised education as a right for each individual. The Policy further recognised that the Government was the custodian of human rights for all citizens including the right to education.

4.3.3 The Ministry of Education's Guidelines for the Utilisation of Funds

The Committee was informed that the Ministry of Education's Guidelines for the Utilisation of Funds in Schools were developed to facilitate the implementation of the 1996 National Education Policy (Educating our Future), which articulated the provision of universal access to education for learners. The attainment of the Policy vision was premised on the Treasury providing adequate resources to meet all requisites in Government Schools that were necessary for the provision of universal access to education for all. The Policy document supported the provision of free education in Zambia from Grades 1 to 12 by ensuring that accountability was upheld in all schools.

4.3.4 Regional and International Commitments

The Committee was informed that Zambia had ratified regional and international treaties that protected the right to education and ensured the provision of universal quality and inclusive education. These endorsements ensured that Zambia made laws in line with the international standards. Some of these instruments included the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Education, the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

Generally, stakeholders were of the view that the legal and policy framework supporting free education in Zambia from early childhood to secondary level was inadequate. In this regard, the Committee was informed that there was need to translate the pronouncement of free education into a policy document and law. They explained that there was need to review existing policies and laws in order to adequately guide the implementation of the free education.

4.4 Effects of the Implementation of the Free Education Policy on the Management of Schools

The Committee was informed that implementation of the Free Education Policy in Zambia had resulted in the following listed hereunder.

i. Increased enrolment in schools

According to a study undertaken by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Zambia National Education Coalition (ZANEC) and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in April, 2022, it was discovered that by February 2022, there was a general increase of the enrolment rate by 9.6 per cent in all provinces of Zambia. Stakeholders submitted that the increase was as a result of the Free Education Policy, which had provided several children an opportunity to get back to school. Previously, some parents could not afford to pay the user fees that were being charged by the schools, thereby denying several children access to an education.

ii. Contributing towards equality of all children

Children from every part of the country were able to access education. This entailed an expanded opportunity for children to realise their potential and contribute to national development.

iii. Reduction of negative vices

Negative vices such as child marriages, early pregnancies and general delinquency of children were likely to reduce with the children's extended stay in schools.

iv. Increase in the demand for more resources

An increased demand for human resources; classroom space; teaching and learning materials; had been noted.

v. **An increased demand for support staff**

An increased demand for support staff to provide services for sanitation; safety and security; and generally keeping the environment clean and conducive for learning had also been noted.

4.5 Challenges in the Implementation of the Free Education Policy in Zambia

The Committee was informed that in as much as the Free Education Policy had led to an increase in the school enrolment, equity and equality in relation to access to education, it should also be noted that there were several challenges that had arisen as a result of the implementation of the Policy. Some of the challenges highlighted are set out here under.

4.5.1 Inadequate School Infrastructure

There was no corresponding increase in infrastructure to the increase in the number of students enrolling. The Committee was informed that classrooms were overcrowded making it difficult for teachers to teach effectively and, thereby, compromising the delivery of quality of learning.

4.5.2 Increase in the Pupil - Teacher Ratio

The Committee was informed that while free education had led to an increase in the student enrolment, the increase had in most cases out passed the number of teachers required to teach these learners. This had led to an increase in the pupil-teacher ratio, leading to further administrative challenges. The Committee was informed that it was difficult for the teachers to process assignments leading to less work being given to the pupils and poor quality of learning outcomes. It was noted that the recent recruitment of 30, 496 teachers by the Government was a positive move towards the provision of quality education and addressing the high teacher workload. However, the number of teachers recruited was not commensurate to the increase in the number of learners arising from the implementation of the free education policy, as the country already had a teacher deficit of about 115,000 before the recruitment. This meant that with the recruitment of 30, 496 teachers, Zambia still had a teacher deficit of 85,000. It was, therefore, submitted that more teachers needed to be recruited to effectively address the issues of pupil-teacher ratio in order to improve learning outcomes.

4.5.3 High Pupil - Desk Ratio

The Committee was informed that as a result of the free education policy, there had been an overwhelming number of students enrolling into schools. This had resulted into a lack of infrastructure to support the high enrolment levels. Some schools did not have adequate resources such as desks and chairs to match the high level of enrolment. There was no corresponding increase in infrastructure. This had affected the pupils' overall learning standards.

4.5.4 High Book-Pupil Ratio

The Committee was informed that as a result of the free education policy, there was a shortage of textbooks in most schools because of an increase in the number of learners. The Committee learnt that the book-pupil ratio was 1:10 in most schools.

4.5.5 Compromise in the Quality of Education

The Committee was informed that the increase in enrolment had resulted into overcrowding in classrooms and a threat on the provision of quality education. In the *Continuity of Learning Survey* carried out by the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders, 73 per cent of the teachers who were sampled for the study reported that there was overcrowding in classrooms which compromised the quality of education being provided in schools. This was because, schools were failing to provide adequate teaching and learning materials leading to an increase in the pupil - book ratio, pupil - desk ratio and the pupil - teacher ratio. This had made it difficult for teachers to effectively manage the high numbers of pupils in their classrooms. It was further noted that most schools, especially in rural areas, were already overcrowded even before the implementation of the Free Education Policy, largely due to inadequate infrastructure.

4.5.6 Stalled Infrastructure Development in Some Schools

The Committee was informed that before the introduction of the Free Education Policy, some schools were utilising part of the resources realised from the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) Fees and project fees to develop school infrastructure. However, most of these infrastructure development activities had stalled in some schools because parents were no longer required to pay these fees. The School Guidelines for the Utilisation of Funds only allowed for not more than 10 per cent of the total grants to be utilised towards rehabilitation, as well as the construction of school infrastructure. This amount was not adequate resulting in many schools failing to complete projects that were already underway.

4.5.7 Few Teachers to Cater for the Needs of Learners with Special Needs

The Committee was informed that there was a significant increase in the number of learners with special needs enrolled in 2022. This increase was attributed to the pronouncement of free education. However, there had not been a corresponding increase in the number of teachers deployed to cater for learners with special education needs.

4.5.8 Negative Impact of Free Education Policy on Community Schools

The Committee was informed that Community Schools continued to rely on community-sponsored teachers to conduct classes. However, parents and community members were no longer contributing funds or goods to pay these teachers who volunteered to teach in community schools because of the message of free education for all. Many community schools that were operating well with volunteer teachers in 2021 were unable to continue doing so as volunteer teachers had discontinued their services because members of the community were not willing to remunerate them. Communities assumed that the free education for all also applied to community schools. Most community schools had few or no government sponsored teachers and even those community schools that received Government grants were not allowed to employ teachers using grants.

4.5.9 Lack of Qualified Accountants

The Committee was informed that most schools did not have qualified accountants to run the Accounts Departments. It was submitted that if this situation was left unchecked, there would be misapplication of public funds and poor accountability in most schools.

4.5.10 Children Coming Back Through the Re-Entry Policy were Disadvantaged

The Committee was informed that the increase in the demand for classroom space as a result of free education had disadvantaged the girls who were coming back to school after teenage pregnancies and child marriages because there was less attention given to them due to increased enrolments in schools. Stakeholders submitted that it was difficult to convince teenage mothers to go back to schools where they did not feel welcome because of the huge demand for learning space arising from the implementation of the Free Education Policy.

4.5.11 Poor Transparency and Accountability in the Utilisation of Funds

The Committee was informed that in some instances, there was no transparency and accountability in the utilisation of the school grants as procedures outlined in the Fund's Utilisation Guidelines were not followed. On payment of support staff in the Ministry of Education Grant Guidelines, it was stipulated that support staff should be paid K1, 600.00 each, but in most schools, support staff were only paid K500.00 or lower as a monthly salary. There were also allegations of abuse of the free education funds by headteachers.

4.5.12 Reduced Availability of Funds for Infrastructure and Other Special Projects

The Committee was informed that schools were failing to pay utility bills such as electricity and water because the grant that was provided by the Government was inadequate. This was not so much of a problem when schools were allowed to raise their own revenue through user, PTA fees and project funds. However, these sources of funding had been abolished and schools had to wait for the limited grant to be disbursed from the Government before they could procure the requisite consumables. This was considered to be demotivating and had potential to compromise the quality of service provision. Stakeholders, therefore, submitted that there was need to devise a strategy that would ensure that funds for payments of utilities and other consumables were available every time schools needed them.

4.5.13 Limited Information on How Vulnerable Children in Schools can Access Support Through the School Grants

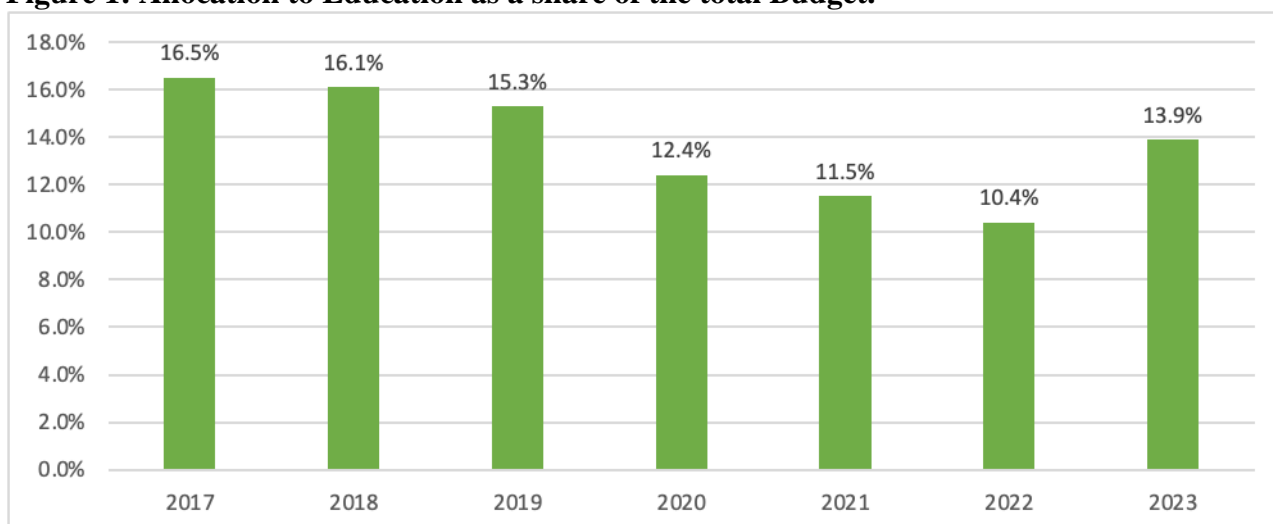
The Committee was informed that there was limited information provided to families and Parent Teacher Associations on how to access support such as books, uniforms and sanitary pads through the school and Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC) grants. This was negatively affecting the smooth implementation of the Free Education Policy.

4.5.14 Insufficient Budgetary Allocation to the Education Sector

The Committee was informed that apart from the challenges created by the Free Education Policy, there were challenges that were in existence even before the policy was in place. Stakeholders submitted that despite the increase in the budgetary allocation to the education

sector as a share of the budget from 10.4 per cent in 2022 to 13.9 per cent in 2023, allocation had been declining over the years as shown in figure 1. While the Education 2030 Framework for Action recommended that governments should allocate between 15 per cent and 20 per cent of the national budget to education, the Government of Zambia had consistently allocated lower percentages. The 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 national budgets for example allocated only 12.4 per cent, 11.5 per cent, 10.4 per cent and 13.9 per cent, respectively as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Allocation to Education as a share of the total Budget.



Source: Data from the Ministry of Finance Budget speeches

5.0 TOURS

5.1 LOCAL TOUR TO LUAPULA, NORTHERN AND CENTRAL PROVINCES

In order to appreciate the opportunities and challenges in the implementation of the Free Education Policy in Zambia, the Committee undertook a local tour of Luapula, Northern and Central Provinces. The main purpose of the local tour was to give Members an opportunity to see what was obtaining on the ground regarding the implementation of the Free Education Policy in Zambia. In this regard, the Committee held stakeholder meetings in all the provinces visited with the Provincial Education Officers (PEOs), Principal Education Standard Officers (PESOs), District Education Board Secretaries (DEBS), District Education Standards Officers (DESOs), Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), head teachers, teachers and pupils in selected schools.

The findings of the Committee during the local tour are summarised below:

(a) Benefits of the Free Education Policy in Zambia

The following are the benefits of the Free Education Policy in Zambia:

(i) *Increased allocations of funds for schools*

The Committee was informed that there was an increase in the allocation of funds in schools although this was still inadequate. For example, in Luapula Province, the total allocation for

school grants increased from K17,262,091.11 in 2021 to K155,079,798.40 in 2022 as shown in Table 1. These allocations included funds for Early Childhood Education; Primary and Secondary education; Orphans and Vulnerable Children; and School requisites. The increase was attributed to the implementation of Free Education Policy.

Table 1: Allocations of school grants to the three levels of education in Luapula Province

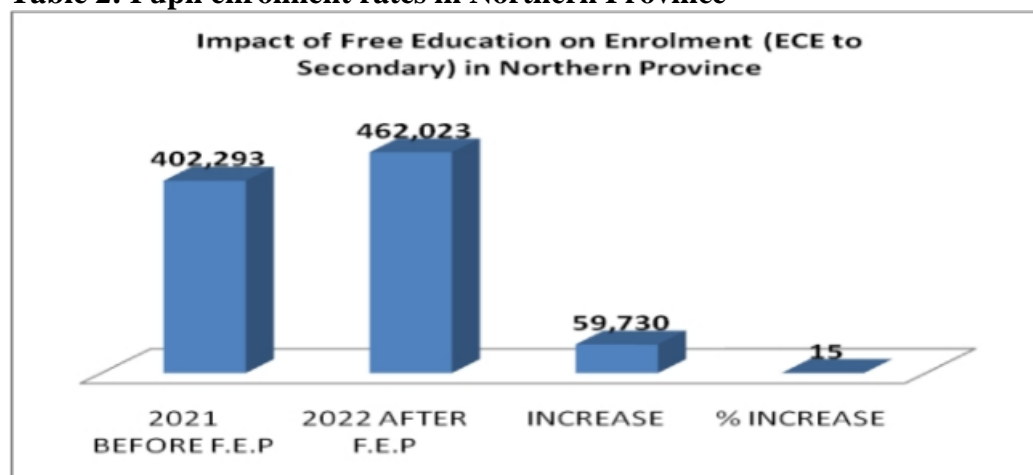
Programme	2021	2022	Variance (ZMW)	% Variance
	Total Approved (ZMW)	Total Approved (ZMW)		
5501 Early Childhood Education	1,018,614.99	2,753,095.50	1,734,480.51	170%
5502 Primary Education	11,483,351.63	37,459,664.03	25,976,312.40	226%
5503 Secondary Education	4,760,124.49	114,867,038.87	110,106,914.38	2313%
5599 Management and Support Services(PEO)	91,133.38	648,192.24	557,058.86	611%
Luapula Province	17,353,224.49	155,727,990.64	138,374,766.15	797%

Source: Provincial Education Office – Luapula Province, 2023

(ii) Increased enrolments

The Committee heard that the implementation of the Free Education Policy from ECE to secondary school had resulted in increased enrolments in schools. In the Northern Province, the Committee was informed that schools recorded a significant increase in enrolment by 1 per cent from 402,293 in 2021 to 462,023 in 2022 across all levels as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Pupil enrolment rates in Northern Province



Source: Provincial Education Office – Northern Province, 2023

(iii) Increased household disposable income

The Committee was informed that there had been an increase of disposable income at household level resulting from savings that came as a result of free education. Parents or guardians were using this income on other household demands instead of paying for school fees.

(iv) *Increased business opportunities*

The Committee was informed that there was an increase in business opportunities to the business community to supply various school requisites such as teaching and learning materials including supply of desks under the Community Development Fund (CDF).

(b) *Challenges of the Free Education Policy in Zambia*

The following are the challenges of the implementation of Free Education in Zambia:

(i) *Inadequate school infrastructure*

The Committee was informed that as a result of free education, there was an increase in the number of students in schools resulting in inadequate classroom space. This was because most of the pupils that had dropped out of schools because of financial reasons were back in school.

Inadequate space in a classroom at Mutende Combined School in Mansa



(ii) *Inadequate desks to match increased enrolments*

The Committee was informed that the expectation in schools was to have one desk for two or three pupils. However, this was not the case in almost all the schools visited. A check at Chakopo Primary School in Mansa revealed that five to six pupils were sharing a desk and in some instances, pupils were found seated on the floor especially those in primary section.

Inadequate desks in a classroom at Chakopo Primary School in Mansa



(iii) *High pupil-teacher ratio*

The Committee was informed that the increase in the number of learners in schools had outnumbered that of teachers, thereby increasing the pupil to teacher-ratio. The Committee heard that high pupil to teacher ratio had a negative impact on the learning and performance of both the teacher and the learner as contact time was not sufficient.

(iv) *Inadequate mathematics and science teachers*

The Committee was informed that while the number of learners had increased as a result of free education in Zambia, there was no corresponding increase in the number of mathematics and science teachers.

(v) *Limited access to Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and Lack of Computer Studies Teachers*

The Committee was informed that there was limited access to ICT among the learners in most of the schools visited. In addition, these schools did not have teachers for computer studies. The Committee heard that this had negatively impacted on the teaching of ICT in schools.

(vi) *Lack of access to electricity*

The Committee was informed that most of the schools in Zambia especially in rural areas did not have access to electricity. This had negatively impacted on the provision of free education as learners were not able to use computers and access online materials for research.

(vii) Inadequate school grants

The Committee was informed that grants that were allocated to schools were in some instance not matching with the number of learners at particular schools as a result of the increased enrolment.

(viii) Inadequate teaching and learning materials

The Committee was informed that due to increased enrolment in schools, teaching materials such as teaching aids and textbooks were inadequate.

(ix) Inadequate water and sanitation facilities

The Committee was informed that as a result of increased enrolment, there was a high demand for water and sanitation facilities which did not match the increased numbers of learners, thereby posing a health hazard to learners, especially girls.

(x) Inadequate reliable transport for monitoring standards

The Committee was informed that in most districts, the District Education Standard Officers did not have reliable transport to effectively carry out their mandate of ensuring that the required standards were adhered to. In most instances, the Committee observed that the District Education Standard Officers were relying on other line ministries for their mobility.

(xi) Inadequate teachers and equipment for learners with special education needs

The Committee was informed that since free education was introduced, there had been massive excitement from the community to enrol children with special needs. However, this was not supported by the recruitment of qualified teachers for pupils with special needs. Further, the Committee was informed that Chileshe Chepela Special School in Kasama had inadequate special education teachers and equipment for special learners such as wheel chairs, crutches, walking sticks and hearing aids.

(xii) Lack of science laboratories and equipment

The Committee was informed that most of the schools that were recently upgraded to secondary schools lacked laboratory facilities which made the teaching of science and technology only limited to theory. Further, the Committee was informed that most schools found it a challenge to procure science apparatus especially that they had to import the apparatus.

Science laboratory at Mutende Combined School in Mansa



(xiii) Lack of qualified accountants in most schools

The Committee was informed that most schools did not have qualified accountants to manage finances. This had resulted in teachers being seconded to carry out accounting roles. Further, the Committee was informed that with the school grants that were being sent directly to schools, there was need to have qualified accountants who could properly manage these funds.

(xiv) Reduced contributions of funds towards the PTA School Programmes

The Committee was informed that as a result of the introduction of the Free Education Policy, some parents had stopped contributing funds towards the implementation of school programmes under the PTA. For example, at Mutende Combine School in Mansa, construction of a science laboratory had stalled after the introduction of the Free Education Policy as parents were not contributing towards the project.

5.2 FOREIGN TOUR

The Committee undertook a foreign tour to Nairobi, Kenya from 30th April to 6th May, 2023. The purpose of the tour was to benchmark on the best practices in the implementation of the Free Education Policy in Kenya. In order to fully appreciate the subject, the Committee interacted with various stakeholders including the Minister of Education in Kenya, the Chief Executive Officer of the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, the Parliamentary Committee responsible for education in Kenya, the Kenya Primary Schools Head Teacher's Associations and the Teacher's Service Commission in Kenya.

The findings of the Committee during its tour are set out below.

The policy and legal framework that governed the Free Education Policy in Kenya

The Committee was informed that in Kenya there existed a similar programme on free Education as in Zambia which extended from Early Childhood Education to Secondary Education. Kenya had passed various legislation and policies that supported and protected the Free Education Policy, some of which were as stated below.

i. Sessional Paper No 1 of 2005

This policy outlined that the decline in secondary school enrolment was attributed to high costs and hence recommended secondary education to be part of basic education in Kenya. Basic education in Kenya, which run from early childhood to secondary school was free and compulsory.

ii. Sessional Paper No 1 of 2019

This policy ensured free and compulsory secondary education and also sustained 100 per cent transition from primary to secondary school.

iii. National Education Management Information System

To support the management and monitoring of free education in Kenya, the Government of Kenya established the national education management information system as an online platform that managed the education data and information for all schools in the country. It is aimed at improving the management of education in Kenya by providing accurate, timely, and reliable data to playmakers, education managers and other stakeholders.

The Committee was informed that during the 2002 general elections in Kenya, the National Rainbow Coalition made the provision of free education part of its election manifesto. Following its victory in 2003, the then Minister of Education launched the Free Education Policy after the proposal in the manifesto was adopted into a policy by Parliament after wide consultations from the citizens of Kenya.

On the legal framework, the Committee was informed as stated below.

i. The 2010 Constitution of Kenya

In Kenya, the Constitution provided that education was a human right and as such, every child had a right to free and compulsory basic education. In addition, every child had the right to be protected from abuse, neglect, harmful cultural practices and all forms of violence. It must be noted that in Kenya, free education only covered the cost of tuition fees, as the cost of feeding, transport, uniforms and others expenses remained a cost of the parents.

ii. The Basic Education Act of 2013

The Act provided that the Government must provide free and compulsory basic education, as already provided in the Kenyan Constitution. The Committee was informed that under the Act, basic education was defined to mean from early childhood to secondary school level. It

was an offence under the Education Act in Kenya, for every parent that did not ensure that their children regularly attended school.

iii. Children's Act of 2001

This Act provided that every child was entitled to free compulsory basic education in accordance with Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as the Constitution of Kenya.

The effects of the implementation of the Free Education Policy on the management of schools in Kenya

The Committee was informed that at the introduction of the Free Education Policy in Kenya, there was a lot of pressure for the schools to accommodate the large numbers of pupils that had turned up. The Committee learnt that in order to manage the high numbers in some schools, authorities had to construct some tents in order to provide learning space for some pupils.

Further, the Committee was informed that in order to deal with challenges of infrastructure, the Government of Kenya allocated the National Government Community Development Fund to each County which was meant for the education and security enhancement. The Committee was informed that the National Government Community Development Fund had greatly helped in the construction of infrastructure, as this fund only had two aspects to cover, that is to say education and matters to do with security in each of the county of Kenya.

In view of the above, the Committee was informed that the free education policy in Kenya had promoted the provision of primary education to all children of school going age, that is, six to fifteen years and adults, that is, those above sixteen years who never had the opportunity. The Committee was informed that some of the effects of the implementation of the free education policy on the management of schools in Kenya included the under listed.

i. Increased Enrolment

The immediate impact of free education was the sudden increase in enrolment. In 2003, over 1 million children who had dropped out of school rejoined. Today, primary school enrolment stood at over 12 million. This exerted a strain on the classrooms where there was overcrowding and the few teachers who were strained by large classes. The Committee was informed that in some cases, tents were constructed just to ensure that space was created for each child to learn from.

ii. Congestion due to High Numbers

As a result of increased enrolment, there was congestion in schools which resulted in pressure on the limited facilities like classrooms, dormitories, wash rooms and science rooms among others. There was also reduced teacher pupil contact, challenges in maintaining discipline, as well as a reduced burden of fees on the households.

iii. **Increased Administrative Responsibility**

As a result of the free education policy, there was increased administrative responsibility on the teachers due to increase in enrolment, need to account for the capitation grants as well as matters to do with procurement of a number of materials that may be needed among others.

iv. **Diminished Parental Responsibility**

As a result of the free education policy, there was diminished parental commitment on the parenting responsibility.

v. **High Transition Rate**

The Committee was informed that the transition to secondary school and beyond in Kenya had been tremendous. Universities were overflowing with students. In the 2023 academic year, over 170,000 students would be joining the university. Other tertiary institutions such as National Polytechnics and Technical Vocational Educational Training colleges had also become popular and were admitting over 100,000 students annually.

Impact of the Free Primary and Secondary Education Policy in Kenya

The Committee was informed that basic education was free in Kenya. The Government met the cost of tuition through capitation grants which currently were at KES 1400 per child. The Government also paid teachers and supplied textbooks to all public schools. The Committee was informed that the underlisted were some of the notable impacts.

i. **Increase in enrolment rates**

One of the most significant impacts of free primary education in Kenya had been the increase in enrolment rates. Prior to the introduction of free primary education, many families could not afford to send their children to school, particularly those in low-income households. However, with the abolition of school fees, more families were able to send their children to school. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, enrolment rates for primary education increased from 6.2 million in 2002 to 8.3 million in 2003, the year free primary education was introduced;

ii. **Increased retention rates**

Free primary education had also led to increased retention rates. Prior to the introduction of free primary education, many children dropped out of school due to the inability to pay school fees. With the abolition of school fees, more children were able to stay in school, leading to higher retention rates. According to the Ministry of Education, the net enrolment rate for primary education in Kenya increased from 70 per cent in 2002 to 84 per cent in 2018;

iii. **Improved gender parity**

Prior to the introduction of free primary education, many girls dropped out of school due to the inability to pay school fees or cultural beliefs that prioritised boys' education over girls. However, with the abolition of school fees, more girls have been able to enrol and stayed in

school, leading to improved gender parity. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, the gender parity index for primary education increased from 0.92 in 2002 to 0.98 in 2019; and

iv. Improved literacy rates

With more children able to enrol and stay in school, more children were receiving an education and acquiring literacy skills. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics, the literacy rate for youths aged between fifteen and twenty-four in Kenya increased from 85.1 per cent in 2003 to 94.1 per cent in 2018.

The Committee was also informed that other impacts of the free education policy were the reduced regional disparities in access to education, improved foundational literacy and numeracy levels, improved text book ratio to 1:1 from grade one to grade seven and improved inclusion for learners with special needs and disabilities.

Challenges in the implementation of the Free Education Policy in Kenya

The Committee was informed that despite the positive impact of the Free Education Policy in Kenya, there were still a number of gaps and challenges in its implementation, some of which included the underlisted.

i. Inadequate funding

While the Government had continued allocating funds for free education, the amount was often insufficient to cover all the school needs. As a result, some public schools struggled to provide necessities such as stationery and infrastructure.

ii. High enrolment

Kenya's teacher-pupil ratio has in most cases surpassed the recommended UNESCO ratio of 1:40. This affected methodology and teaching-learning interaction and has put a high demand on teachers.

iii. Poverty

Despite free education, many families were unable to afford other expenses such as school uniforms and transportation.

iv. Regional disparities

There were also significant regional disparities in the implementation of free education, with some schools in urban areas receiving more resources and better infrastructure than those in rural areas.

v. Staff shortage

Staff shortage had continued to affect the smooth provision of free education.

Strategies put in place by the Government for the improvement of the Free Education Policy in Kenya

The Committee was informed that the Government of Kenya had implemented a number of measures intended to improve the implementation of the free education policy as set out below.

- (i) In Kenya, the Constitution as well as other pieces of legislation, such as the Basic Education Act and Children's Act had clearly provided for free education from early childhood education to secondary school level. The Constitution in Kenya as well as the two Acts mentioned above provides that basic education in Kenya shall be free and compulsory. In Kenya, the Basic Education Act provides that it is an offence for parents who fail to make available their children for school.
- (ii) In Kenya, the Government has put on national grid 98 percent of all the schools in the country which has helped in the promotion of the free education as students were able to access learning materials online using computers and tablets. Tablets and routers were readily available in schools. Schools which had not yet been put on national grid had been provided with solar energy. In Kenya, the digital literacy programme in schools was highly promoted and had greatly enhanced free education.
- (iii) The Government of Kenya had delegated the function of procuring text books for each learner in school from grade one to seven in all the subjects to the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development so as to achieve the 1:1 text book ratio. In order to ensure, the 1:1 text book ratio in Kenya, the Government partnered with the World Bank and other stakeholders. The Government in Kenya also encouraged more writers and publishers to write more books.
- (iv) To support the management and monitoring of free education in Kenya, the Government of Kenya established the national education management information system as an online platform that managed the education data and information for all schools in the country.
- (v) The Government in Kenya paid examination fees for the children in school including those in private schools.
- (vi) In Kenya, education from grade one to twelve in the country was a National function, meaning the Government was fully responsible. It must, however, be noted that early childhood education had been devolved to the local authorities.
- (vii) In order to ensure that only children that existed benefited from Government funding, the Government in Kenya had come up with the national education management information system to monitor the registration of students. Further, it is also a requirement in Kenya to produce a birth certificate for one registering for education for easy tracing of beneficiaries of free education.
- (viii) In Kenya, the Government had dedicated 26.9 per cent of the national budget to education.

- (ix) In Kenya, the Committee on Education interrogated the sector budget for education and had the capacity to amend the figures before it was presented in Parliament. Further, the Committee also provided oversight on administrative functions in the education sector.
- (x) In Kenya, the Government provided each County the National Government Constituency Development Fund. This fund catered for two components, that was, education and security. Most of the infrastructure development in terms of school buildings was achieved through this fund.
- (xi) In Kenya, the free education policy which was born from a manifesto had crystallised into law.
- (xii) In Kenya, schools were encouraged to be innovative and raise funds through the Parent Teachers Associations so as to complement funding from the Government.
- (xiii) In Kenya, the Government implemented a continuous recruitment of teacher at 100 per cent. Teachers that retired from the service were immediately replaced through recruitment.

6.0 COMMITTEE'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After careful consideration of both written and oral submissions from stakeholders, and taking into consideration, the findings from the local and foreign tours, the Committee makes the observations and recommendations set out hereunder.

6.1 Legal and Policy framework

The Committee observes that the introduction of the Free Education Policy in Zambia is not backed by any statutory provision.

In this regard, the Committee recommends that the Government should put in place a comprehensive policy and legal framework that will guide the provision of free and compulsory education in Zambia. Further, the Committee recommends for the criminalisation of conduct by parents who wilfully neglect to make available their children for school, as is the case in Kenya.

6.2 Infrastructure Development

The Committee observes that the increase in enrolments resulting from the implementation of the Free Education Policy has posed a challenge to the available infrastructure in schools due to inadequate number of classrooms.

In light of this, the Committee recommends that the Government should allocate more resources to the expansion of school infrastructure and boarding schools in rural areas, so that overcrowding in schools can be resolved. Further, the Committee recommends that security measures such as school security fencing should be put in place to prevent vandalism and theft in schools especially those in urban areas.

6.3 High Pupil - Teacher Ratio

The Committee observes that the Free Education Policy has generally led to an increase in the enrolment rate because the Policy has given several children an opportunity to get back to school. Despite the Government having employed 30, 496 teachers recently, statistics from the Ministry of Education show that the country has a deficit of about 85,000 teachers.

The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Government should prioritise the recruitment of more teachers especially in mathematics, science and computer studies in secondary schools.

6.4 High Pupil -Book Ratio

The Committee observes that in most of the schools visited during the local tour, stakeholders submitted that there is a shortage of learning materials such as books as pupils are made to share the few that are available.

In this regard, the Committee urges the Government through the Curriculum Development Centre in Zambia to partner with cooperating partners to improve the book-pupil ratio. Further, the Government should encourage more local writers and publishers to write more books as is the case in Kenya where the Government through the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development has collaborated with local writers and publishers in writing books and publishers and ensured that each learner had a book in all the subjects.

6.5 Inadequate Budgetary Allocation

The Committee notes that despite the increase in the budgetary allocation to the education sector as a share of the budget from 10.4 per cent in 2022 to 13.9 per cent in 2023, the allocation had been declining over the years. While the Education 2030 Framework for Action recommended that governments should allocate between 15.0 per cent and 20.0 per cent of national budget to education, the Government of Zambia had consistently allocated lower proportions. The 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 national budgets for example allocated only 12.4 per cent, 11.5 per cent, 10.4 per cent and 13.9 per cent respectively of the total budget to education, which was still below the recommended 15.0 to 20.0 per cent.

In light of the above, the Committee strongly urges the Government to progressively increase the budgetary allocation to the education sector to the level recommended by the 'Education 2030 Framework for Action' of between 15.0 to 20.0 per cent, as is the case in Kenya where the Government has dedicated 26.9 per cent of the national budget to education.

6.6 Reduced Availability of Funds for Infrastructure and Other Special Projects

The Committee is concerned that as a result of the Free Education Policy, which has led to the unprecedented increase in the number of pupils in schools and a ban for school authorities from collecting funds from the learners, some schools are now failing to complete infrastructure development projects as the allocated percentage towards infrastructure development was inadequate.

Therefore, the Committee recommends that the Government should increase the grants allocated to school infrastructure and it should also ensure timely release of such grants for the smooth operations of schools. Further, the Committee recommends that schools should be allocated grants in proportion to their needs.

6.7 Sensitisation on the Free Education Policy

In agreeing with various stakeholders who appeared before it, the Committee observes that there is limited understanding of the Free Education Policy by communities. This has been seen from the fact that despite the introduction of the Free Education Policy, few parents take their children to early childhood learning centres and special education units. Further, few children attend early childhood education classes in rural areas where classes have been opened. Furthermore, most parents are not aware of the other benefits that go with the Free Education Policy.

In this regard, the Committee urges the Government through key offices such as the District Education Board Secretaries (DEBS) to undertake robust sensitisation awareness programmes on the Free Education Policy. Sensitisation should be conducted using various strategies including physical meetings with communities and other means of communication such as radio programmes in order to explain the role of parents, Parent Teacher Associations and community members in the implementation of the Free Education Policy.

6.8 Increase of resources towards Special Education Schools

The Committee is concerned that the implementation of the Free Education Policy has not adequately addressed the demands of children with special needs. For example, at Chileshe Chepela Special School in Mansa, the Committee observed that there was limited mobility gadgets like wheel chairs, crutches, walking sticks to name but a few.

The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Government should put more resources into schools dealing with children with special needs. Further, the Committee recommends that primary schools with boarding facilities should be included in the Constituency Development Fund school bursary programme, as most schools for children with special needs are invariably boarding schools.

6.9 Status of Community Schools

The Committee observes that there are no clear guidelines provided for community schools with regard to the Free Education Policy. The Committee notes that community schools that were previously serviced by volunteer teachers are now facing an acute shortage of teachers. This is because the volunteer teachers who were paid through community contributions are no longer providing their services as they are not being paid. This problem has arisen mainly because most communities have stopped contributing to these schools after the pronouncement of free education and as a result, teachers are no longer forthcoming to teach.

In view of this challenge, the Committee urges the Government to urgently review the 2016 Guidelines for the Operation of Community Schools to reflect any changes brought about by the implementation of the Free Education Policy, including a clear pathway for community schools to access and use school grants.

6.10 Poor Collaboration Between Government and Cooperating Partners

The Committee observes that there is poor collaboration between the Government and cooperating partners with regards to the implementation of the Free Education Policy. It is of the view that challenges arising from the implementation of the Policy, such as the infrastructure gap, could be dealt with by working together with cooperating partners.

In this regard, the Committee urges the Government to seriously encourage cooperating partners including the business houses, churches and Non-Governmental Organisations to supplement Government efforts in providing relevant support to the schools.

6.11 Employment of Qualified Accountants

The Committee observes that there is a limited number of qualified accountants in schools to effectively handle Government grants, especially in rural areas.

The Committee recommends that the Government should urgently ensure that all schools have qualified accountants to effectively handle financial matters. The Committee further recommends that there should be capacity building for all school management teams on the application of the *Public Financial Management Act, No. 1 of 2018* and the *Guidelines for the Utilisation of Funds in Schools, 2022* which provides for rules and procedures for the utilisation of public funds, including applicable penalties to be meted out against erring officers.

6.12 Inadequate desks

The Committee observes that as a result of the Free Education Policy, there has been a critical shortage of desks in most schools. Nonetheless, the Committee observed some strides in various schools to increase desks by using local suppliers of desks during the local tour.

In this regard, the Committee recommends for the provision of sufficient desks to all learners as a matter of urgency by replicating strategies that are being implemented in places where schools are using local business communities to supply desks.

6.13 Inadequate school grants

The Committee observes that in some instances, grants that are allocated to schools are insufficient to meet the increase in the number of learners at particular schools.

In this regard, the Committee recommends that the Government should increase the allocation of grants to school. However, in order to ensure equity, that is, where the allocation corresponds to the number of beneficiaries, the Committee recommends that the Government should introduce the national education management information system which reflects the actual number of beneficiaries of the grants as is the case in Kenya. The national education management information system will also help in ensuring that grants are provided according to the number of learners at a specific school as such data will readily be available.

6.14 Lack of Science Laboratories and Equipment

The Committee notes that most of the schools that were recently upgraded to secondary schools lack laboratory facilities. This has resulted in the learners not appreciating the practical aspect of the sciences.

In this regard, the Committee recommends that the Government should as a matter of urgency construct science laboratories and equip them with adequate tools.

6.15 Inadequate reliable transport for monitoring of school standards

The Committee observes that in most districts, the District Education Standard Officers do not have reliable transport to enable them to effectively function. This has compromised standards in most cases.

In this regard, the Committee recommends that the Government should, as a matter of urgency, procure vehicles for Standard Officers to enable them function effectively.

6.17 Lack of access to electricity and digital learning

The Committee observes that most schools in Zambia especially in rural areas lack access to electricity and this is negatively impacting on the provision of free education through digital learning as learners are not able to use computers and access learning materials using computers.

In this regard, the Committee urges the Government to increase access to electricity in schools as is the case in Kenya where 98.0 per cent of all schools in the country have access to electricity thereby contributing to the promotion of free education.

6.18 Continuous recruitment of teachers

The Committee observes that most schools do not have sufficient teachers because of the implementation of Free Education Policy.

In this regard, the Committee recommends that, like in Kenya, the Government should implement continuous recruitment of teachers where teachers that retired from the service are immediately replaced.

6.19 Newly upgraded secondary schools

The Committee observes that a number of schools in the country have been upgraded to secondary status in the absence of the required establishment of a normal secondary school.

In this regard, the Committee recommends that the Government should as a matter of urgency enforce the Payroll Management and Established Control (PMEC) system for the upgraded schools so as to enhance the Free Education Policy at secondary level especially in science subjects.

6.20 Teacher motivation

The Committee observes that the Free Education Policy has resulted in congestion in schools hence putting so much pressure on teachers in the execution of their duties. This may negatively affect the motivation of the teachers.

In this regard, the Committee recommends that the Government should come up with incentives that will motivate teachers such as promotions, rural hardship allowance, confirmation and double class and responsibility allowances.

PART II

7.0 CONSIDERATION OF THE ACTION-TAKEN REPORT ON THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR THE FIRST SESSION OF THE THIRTEENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

7.1 REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ZAMBIA'S SCHOOL RE-ENTRY POLICY

7.1.1.1 Absence of a Statutory Instrument to Support Implementation of the School Re-entry Policy

The previous Committee had recommended that the Government should issue a Statutory Instrument that would support the implementation of the School Re-entry Policy.

Executive's Response

It was reported in the Action-Taken Report that the Ministry of Education was in the process of finalising the National Education Policy before embarking on the review and amendment of the *Education Act, No. 23 of 2011*. The Ministry of Education would consider issuing a Statutory Instrument that would support the implementation of the School Re-entry Policy once the *Education Act, No. 23 of 2011*, was amended accordingly.

Committee's Observations and Recommendations

The Committee notes the response from the Executive and resolves to await a progress report on the issuance of a Statutory Instrument that will support the implementation of the School Re-entry Policy.

7.1.2 Lack of Understanding of the School Re-entry Policy by School Managers

The previous Committee had strongly recommended that the Government should take drastic measures to ensure that all teachers were re-oriented on the implementation of the School Re-entry Policy.

Executive's Response

It was reported in the Action-Taken Report that the Ministry of Education had embarked on the Re-orientation programmes aimed at empowering provinces, districts and school

management and teachers in implementing the Re-entry policy. The Ministry had taken on board the Headteachers Association to help reach as many headteachers as possible to share and empower them with information and knowledge to implement Government policies such as School Re-entry Policy adequately. Recently, the Ministry had shared and oriented the Headteachers on implementing the School Re-entry Policy who gathered in Kabwe, Chongwe and Lusaka, respectively, from across the country.

Committee's Observations and Recommendations

The Committee takes note of the response given by the Executive and resolves to await a progress report on the statistics.

7.1.2.1 Lack of Emphasis on Comprehensive Sexuality Education Programmes in Schools

The previous Committee observed that comprehensive sexuality education programmes in schools were not fully being implemented, yet the programme was necessary and critical in providing information on issues of sexual reproductive health and rights. The previous Committee observed that the reluctance in the implementation of this programme was the reason why pregnancy cases among the girls remained high.

The previous Committee had, therefore, urged the Government to consider heightening comprehensive sexuality education programmes in schools, as this would contribute to not only reducing the number of pregnancies among the girls, but also to contribute to the implementation of the School Re-entry Policy.

Executive's Response

In response, the Executive explained that despite steps being taken towards the promotion of the comprehensive sexuality education, the situation remained the same.

Committee's Observations and Recommendations

The Committee takes note of the response given by the Executive and resolves to await a progress report on the heightening comprehensive sexuality education programmes in schools.

CONSIDERATION OF THE ACTION-TAKEN REPORT ON THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE TWELFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

7.2 SKILLS AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

7.2.1 Lack of Adequate and Appropriate Infrastructure to Support Vocational Training

The previous Committee had resolved to await a progress report on the procurement of more equipment for carpentry, bricklaying, metal fabrication and welding, home economics, music education, art and design, physical education and sports, to support vocational education training in all schools in the country.

Executive's Response

It was reported in the Action-Taken Report that the Ministry of Education, in 2020, procured some more equipment in carpentry to enhance the implementation of the two-tier system and vocational training in particular. The Carpentry tool kits were distributed to a total number of 1,000 primary and secondary schools. Each province had 100 schools receiving Carpentry tool kits. However, there were still more schools that needed equipment for vocational training.

Further, the Executive reported that the Ministry of Technology and Science was implementing the two-tier system or secondary school vocational education in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Technology and Science was implementing this programme through six trades training institutions namely; Lukashya, Mansa, Solwezi, Mongu, Chipata Trades Training Institutes and Nkumbi International College. These institutions were all beneficiaries of the training equipment and tools that were procured by the Ministry in 2020. The allocation of the training equipment and tools was based on the training programmes offered.

The Executive through Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority was responsible for assessing and examining all the students/pupils that underwent training through the secondary school vocational education and training. The Technical Education Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA) was collaborating with the Ministry of Education in ensuring quality training of Secondary School Vocational Training.

Committee's Observations and Recommendations

The Committee takes note of the response given by the Executive and resolves to await a progress report.

7.2.2 Lack of Appropriately Trained Instructors in Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVET) Programmes

The previous Committee had noted the response from the Executive that the Ministry of Education was collaborating with TEVETA in the area of capacity building of teachers handling TEVETA programmes in schools. The Executive had stated that the process was ongoing and the retraining of the remaining teachers in design and technology, home economics and hospitality and agriculture science was waiting funding.

Executive's Response

It was reported in the Action-Taken Report, that the status quo had remained the same. However, the Ministry was planning to mobilise funds to continue with the training started at Kabwe Institute of Technology involving all ten provinces.

Committee's Observations and Recommendations

In noting the response from the Executive, the Committee resolves to await a progress report on the ongoing programme to train more instructors who would implement the TEVET programme in schools.

7.2.2.1 Non-inclusion of Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVET) Level 2 and Level 3 Trade Test Certificates in the Zambia Qualifications Framework

The previous Committee had noted the response from the Executive that level 2 and level 3 trade test certificates awarded to the learners by TEVETA had been included in the revised National Qualifications Framework which was in the process of being approved. The previous Committee had therefore, resolved to await a progress report on the matter.

Executive's Response

It was reported in the Action-Taken Report that the Zambia Qualifications Framework (ZQF) was made up of ten levels. Further, the ZQF was divided into three sub-frameworks namely, general and further education and training, trades and occupations and higher education. Each of the levels was defined by what were called level descriptors that generically prescribed the Knowledge, Skills and Competences expected to be attained by a graduate at that level. In addition to the level descriptors, the quantity of learning was measured by the total number of notional hours that were further translated into credit value for a qualification at that level.

The trades and occupations sub-framework, being quality assured by TEVETA catered for qualifications that were placed on levels 3 to 6 of the ZQF. The notional learning hours and comparability of programme learning outcomes to the level descriptors of the ZQF determine the level at which the qualification sat on the framework. In the trades and occupations sub-framework, the minimum notional hours at level 3 were 1200, which translated into a qualification of one-year duration. It was on account of this minimum ZQF standard that, trade test levels 2 and 3 qualifications were not on the ZQF because they fell short of the minimum notional hours to be placed on the ZQF. The trade test level 3 catered for training lasting zero to three months (including never been to school but have skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning) while trade test level 2 catered for training of three to eight months.

In response to the various stakeholder concerns on qualifications not considered on the ZQF, the (ZAQA) reviewed the ZQF and consequently the Zambia Qualifications Authority Act. The revised ZQF had provided for the inclusion of the Trade Tests Level 2 and 3 and other qualifications that were currently not catered for.

The reviewed ZQF implementation was dependent on the enactment of the Zambia Qualifications Authority Bill, 2022 into law. The ZAQA Bill 2022 had provided for the revision of the ZQF to cater for the affected qualifications.

ZAQA had put in place measures that would address the concerns of the Committee as soon as the ZAQA Bill 2022 was passed into law.

Committee's Observations and Recommendations

In noting the response given by the Executive, the Committee reiterates its earlier recommendation and resolves to await a progress report on the inclusion of level 2 and level 3 trade test certificates awarded to the learners by TEVETA in the revised National Qualifications Framework and its subsequent approval.

7.2.3 Lack of Evaluation Mechanism in the Implementation of the Vocational Training

The previous Committee had noted the response from the Executive that the Ministry of Education implemented the revised curriculum in four phases using a phased approach from 2014 to 2017 as follows:

- (i) Phase I was implemented in 2014 at Early Childhood Education (ECE), Grades 1, 5, 8, and 10;
- (ii) Phase II was implemented in 2015 at adult literacy, grades 2, 6, 9, and 11;
- (iii) Phase III was implemented in 2016 at grades 3, 7 and 12; and
- (iv) Phase IV was implemented in 2017 at grade 4 level.

It was stated that the entire curriculum, including the implementation of the Secondary Vocational Education Training, was earmarked for review after five years. In this regard, the Ministry of Education had started internal preparations to evaluate the implementation of the revised curriculum from ECE up to tertiary education in colleges of education. The Committee had resolved to await a progress report on the matter.

Executive's Response

It was reported in the Action-Taken Report that the Ministry of Education had constituted a Technical Working Group to conduct a 2013 curriculum evaluation exercise that had already started the preliminary work. Curriculum evaluation was the process of measuring and judging the extent to which the planned learning activities and opportunities, as expressed in the formal curriculum, actually produced the expected results. The outcome helped ascertain whether the curriculum could be revised or reviewed. The evaluation would be done from ECE up to tertiary level. The curriculum evaluation report would identify the gaps in the curriculum and would be used to inform the Government on the next steps to take.

Committee's Observations and Recommendations

In noting the Executive's response, the Committee resolves to await a progress report on the expected evaluation of the revised curriculum implementation from ECE up to tertiary education in colleges of education.

CONSIDERATION OF THE ACTION-TAKEN REPORT ON THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE TWELFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

7.3 THE TEACHING OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS IN ZAMBIAN SCHOOLS

7.3.1 *Policy Framework to Support the Teaching of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics*

The previous Committee had noted the response from the Executive that the draft National Education Policy document was developed for the entire education system, in which the policy framework was to support the teaching of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics in Zambian schools as a stand-alone policy.

In this regard, the previous Committee had resolved to await a progress report with regards to the finalisation of the reported draft National Education Policy document developed for the entire education system.

Executive's Response

It was reported in the Action-Taken Report that the Ministry of Education had circulated the final draft to departments for verification.

Committee's Observations and Recommendations

In noting the response from the Executive, the Committee resolves to await a progress report on the finalisation of the draft National Education Policy.

7.4 CONSIDERATION OF THE ACTION TAKEN REPORT ON THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR THE THIRDSSESSION OF THE TWELFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

7.5 THE TEACHING OF COMPUTER STUDIES IN ZAMBIAN SCHOOLS

7.5.1 *Policy Framework to Support the Teaching of Computer Studies*

The previous Committee had resolved to await the final launch of the Education Information and Communication Technology Policy.

Executive's Response

It was reported in the Action-Taken Report that the verification for the National Education Policy to give policy direction on ICT was still being finalised.

Committee's Observations and Recommendations

The Committee notes the response from the Executive and resolves to await a progress report on the final launch of the Education Information and Communication Technology Policy.

8.0 CONCLUSION

The Committee notes that the introduction of the Free Education Policy from early childhood to secondary level is a very important move that the Government has undertaken in its quest at ensuring that every child has access to education. However, the implementation of the Free Education Policy has come with some challenges.

The major challenge experienced is that schools have found it very difficult to manage the increased learner population who are now competing for limited educational goods and services. The Committee is of the view that the Government needs to do more in order to provide free and quality education for all Zambians.

The key success which is worth noting is that a lot of children have managed to come back into the school system. This is evident from the rise in the learner population country wide. The effective implementation of the Free Education Policy is, therefore, expected to increase education attainments in the country and ultimately lead to the improved welfare of its citizens.



Mr Twambo Elvis Mutinta, MP
CHAIRPERSON

June, 2023
LUSAKA

APPENDIX I - List of National Assembly Officials

Mr Francis Nabulyato, Principal Clerk of Committees (SC)
Mrs Chitalu K Mumba, Deputy Principal Clerk of Committees (SC)
Mrs Angela M Banda, Senior Committee Clerk (SC)
Ms Carol Ndoti, Acting Committee Clerk
Ms Eneless Njobvu, Typist
Mr Daniel Lupiya, Committee Assistant
Mr Muyembi Kantumoya, Parliamentary Messenger

APPENDIX II – List of Witnesses

National Action for Quality Education in Zambia (NAQEZ)
Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops
Action Aid-Zambia
CAMFED Zambia
Zambia Open Community Schools (ZOCS)
World Vision Zambia
Zambia National Education Coalition's (ZANEC)
Save the Children
ChildFund Zambia
Basic Education Teachers Union of Zambia (BETUZ)
House of Chiefs
Policy Monitoring and Research Centre
Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR)
Plan International Zambia
Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis & Research (ZIPAR)
Zambia National Union of Teachers (ZNUT)
Ministry of Finance and National Planning
Ministry of Youth, Sport and Arts
Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare
Ministry of Education