



Republic of Zambia

**Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and
Early Education**

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT ON
THE REVISED NATIONAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM
FRAMEWORK BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF
EDUCATION, SCIENCE, VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EARLY
EDUCATION ON 21ST FEBRUARY, 2014**

Mr. Speaker

I thank you for giving me this opportunity to present this Ministerial Statement on the revised National Education Curriculum Framework. In my 2014 Ministerial Policy statement to this august house when I presented the Ministry's estimates of expenditure for the financial year 2014, the house will recall that regarding the national curriculum, I stated and I quote:

" The highlight of the 2013 activities was the introduction of the new National Education Curriculum Framework, 2013 saw the completion, piloting in all provinces and evaluation of the Framework which is ready to be rolled-out in phases. The Framework has been developed to provide guidance on the preferred type of education for the nation. It is a product of a consultative and participatory process over the last four years with all key stakeholders", End of quote.

Today, it is imperative that I update Honourable Members of Parliament on the revised curriculum because of the crucial role Honourable MPs play in the education sector. I will lay on the table the said Zambia Education Curriculum Framework 2013 to allow Honourable MPs to further interrogate and gain sufficient insights of the curriculum. I also lay on the table three appendices to my statement:

Appendix 1 : Why a Local Language? 10 Reasons why.

Appendix 2 : Why a Local language ? Research Evidence

Appendix 3 : Children whose Local Language is English

Mr. Speaker

I want to mention here that the national school curriculum has not been reviewed for many years. The curriculum which we have been using in our school system is what our founding fathers and mothers put in place after the country's attainment of independence and which was based on the repealed 1966 Education Act. Due to passage of time and changes in the social, economic, political and technological life of the nation, our school curriculum became, in many ways archaic and required serious attention.

Mr. Speaker

Over the years there have been many studies which have revealed the inadequacies of the national curriculum. Over the same period many loud voices of discontent over the curriculum have emerged from academicians, language experts, educational psychologists, educationists, Parliamentarians and other stakeholders. Infact, many negative aspects about the curriculum have been ably documented in the National Education Policy 1996 – Educating Our Future. Mr. Speaker some of the negative aspects are the following:

1. A dominantly examination oriented curriculum that places heavy emphasis on factual information that did not assess critical learning areas.
2. A curriculum that controlled much of the teaching and learning at the primary school level without consideration of the fact that the child's dominant way of learning is through exploration and experiencing.
3. A large used as medium of instruction in the early Grades (Lower Primary) that is alien to the majority of learners and which was different from the language of the community and home.
4. An excessively overloaded and inflexible curriculum.
5. A curriculum which had little consideration for emerging technological and social developments (i.e. information and Communications Technology, life skills education, sexuality education, financial education and entrepreneurship education).

Mr. Speaker

Due to these and other many other factors, the Zambian education system did not provide learners with desired education. Many learners in primary schools did not exhibit the expected fundamental competences in reading, writing and numeracy. At the secondary school level, learners lacked knowledge, skills and values that should characterize a secondary school learner. The outcome of this is predictable. The learning achievements among our learners in all the subjects are very low as compared to other countries in the sub region.

Mr. Speaker

You will recall that last week when I presented a statement on examinations results, I stated that, although improving, the quality of passing among our learners is not satisfactory. This is because many learners do not acquire fundamental competences in their early learning and fail to comprehend new knowledge or concepts at higher levels of the education system

Mr. Speaker

It should be noted that all learners everywhere have the right to the fullest possible personal development through high standards of teaching and educational support. To safe guard this right, the Ministry has the obligation to ensure that many factors that contribute to quality in education (i.e. the curriculum and its associated materials, the actual teaching methodologies, the assessment processes and school supervision) are taken care of in order to promote effective teaching and learning. It is for this reason that my Ministry has comprehensively reviewed the school curriculum.

Mr. Speaker

The theme of the curriculum is:

"Empowering Learners by Putting Theory into Practice"

This theme is intended to remind our teachers that their teaching methods and strategies should now focus on producing a learner who will have life skills to cope with different challenges of life. This is in line with Patriotic Front Party Manifesto which seeks to re-orient the curriculum at all the levels of education to put emphasis on life skills.

Mr. Speaker

I wish to take this opportunity to inform this august House that the implementation of the new school curriculum shall be conducted in phases:

Year	Grade/Level						Adult Literacy
	Pre-school	1	5	8	10		
2014		1	5	8	10		
2015		2	6	9	11		
2016		3	7	12			
2017		4					

In view of this implementation plan, I wish to state that the first examination based on the new curriculum will be administered at Grade 9 in 2015. This shall be followed by Grades 7 and 12 examinations in 2016.

Mr. Speaker

May I now outline briefly the prominent reforms in the Education Curriculum at the different levels of the education system.

Early Education

At the Early Childhood Education level, the main changes are as follows:

1. The curriculum has been standardized. All early learning centers will use one curriculum which has been developed by the Ministry. Both public and private institutions are required to use the new national curriculum. This is meant to provide uniform early education to all learners in the different parts of the country and in line with international standards.
2. The new curriculum has been linked to Grade 1 in order to help learners transit smoothly into primary school.

3. Much time at this level must be devoted to Social Interaction through play activities constituting 60% while academic activities will constitute 40% of the learning time;
4. The Medium of Instruction at this level shall be a local familiar language to the children in the particular locality.

Mr. Speaker

The Primary School Level

Currently, a Local language is used as a medium instruction at Grade one only and English takes over at Grade 2. In the new Curriculum the changes are:

1. The Medium of Instruction from Grade 1 – 4 shall be a subject beginning at Grade 2. From Grade 5 upwards the medium of instruction shall continue to be English which is the official language for the country. This change at Grade 1 – 4 will enable many learners to acquire basic literacy, numeracy, scientific and technology knowledge, skills and values because the teaching will be done in a language they understand well.
2. The Ministry has developed a new approach to the teaching of initial literacy in the early grades which follows the internationally recognized methods of teaching literacy based on initial sounds, phonics and word building. It is widely accepted that initial literacy is very important and it is key to successful learning at school and is an element for active participation in social, economic, cultural and political life. This methodology will enable many learners in the early grades to acquire basic literacy skills thereby breaking through in reading. When children are able to read and write, it becomes easier for them to learn any other subject in school including foreign languages;
3. The Ministry has introduced Literacy and numeracy competence tests at Grades 1 and 4 to ensure that learners breakthrough in literacy and numeracy at the lower primary before they proceed to Grade 2 and Grade 5. For this reason, teachers will work hard so that their learners pass and proceed to next levels;
4. Information and communications Technology (ICT) has been introduced in the primary school curriculum which is meant to create ICT awareness among primary school learners; and

5. In the area of Special Education, Sign Language has been introduced. This is meant to help hearing impaired learners to acquire some means of communication.

Mr. Speaker

The Secondary School Curriculum

The secondary school curriculum has also undergone some reforms. The major ones being:

1. The creation to two (2) curriculum paths at Grade 8, academic and vocational. The academic path is meant for learners with passion for academic subjects and desire for careers in that direction.
2. The vocational path is for learners with ambitions and interests in technical and other hands-on subjects. The curriculum will provide practical skills to such learners starting at Grade 8 up to Grade 12. In the provision of this curriculum, schools shall closely collaborate with Technical, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA) and other line ministries. Learners studying the vocational curriculum will obtain trade certificates as well as Grade 9 or Grade 12 Certificates. The trade certificate will be offered by TEVETA whereas the academic certificate, that is Grade 9 or 12 shall be given by the Examinations Council of Zambia. In the first phase, the Ministry and TEVETA have agreed to award trade certificate to school learners in the following fields:
 - Bricklaying and Plastering
 - Carpentry and Joinery
 - Metal Fabrication
 - Electrical Engineering
 - Home Management
 - Food Production

The vocational curriculum which includes computer studies will start to be implemented in the secondary schools which have the personnel, facilities and

equipment. The first secondary schools to implement the vocational curriculum will be the existing technical schools (national and regional technical schools). The vision of the ministry is to make certain secondary schools specialist schools for Technology, Agriculture, Physical Education and sports, Performing and Creative Arts and Home Economics and Hospitality.

3. **Computer Studies** has been introduced as a subject at this level. The subject has been introduced in order to equip learners with essential skills necessary for them to have basic knowledge of computer;
4. Learners pursuing business studies at senior secondary school level will be required to study both commerce and principles of accounts. The studying of these subjects will adequately equip business studies learners with wholesome knowledge and skills of the business world. Finance and accounts alone is nothing without the knowledge and skills of economics and business administration and vice versa. The two subjects are interlinked and have similar competences, so, they need to be studied together.
5. **Zambian Languages** shall be offered in the new curriculum as a compulsory subject at the junior secondary school to be studied by learners pursuing the academic curriculum, but at senior secondary school level it will be one of the optional subjects; and
6. **Entrepreneurship Education** has been integrated in appropriate subjects at this level with emphasis on learners running small business projects in groups. The purpose of this education is to develop learners' creative and innovative capacities and thereby foster the skills and attributes which will assist them to be successful as employees or as entrepreneurs or employers in their own right.

Mr. Speaker

National and Global Concerns

Regarding the national and global challenges and concerns, the new curriculum has further incorporated.

Added are several cross cutting concerns; prominent among them are: comprehensive Sexuality Education, Life Skills Education, Financial Education, Anti-Corruption education, Drug and Substance Abuse Education, Environmental education and Road Safety Education.

Mr. Speaker

Allow me to inform the House that as a consequence of these curriculum reforms, the Adult Literacy curriculum and the Teacher Education Curriculum have been reviewed to re-align them to changed curricula landscape in the school system.

Mr. Speaker

Implementation of the New Curriculum

SUPPLEMENTARY READING MATERIALS

In order to consolidate the reading skills which learners acquire in the initial literacy teaching, the Ministry, working with stakeholders, has provided supplementary reading books in the seven local languages. Primary schools are being provided with Reading Boxes with assorted supplementary books in the local languages. The supplementary reading materials have been provided to primary schools with financial support from Room to Read, Read to Succeed, Time to Learn and UNZA's Centre for the Promotion of Literacy in sub-Saharan Africa (CAPOLSA) projects. Others are ZANACO, INDO-Bank, Kansashi Mine, Investrust and UNICEF.

RESOURCES

The Ministry will spend K8,500,00 to pay the Zambia Educational Publishing House (ZEPH) for the materials they are printing. For the works they have already done, they have been paid K2,900,000. This injection of funds has resuscitated Zambia Educational Publishing House (ZEPH). The Ministry has also allocated K113,000,000 for procuring of educational materials from private publishers to support implementation of the new curriculum.

DISTRIBUTION OF LEARNING AND TEACHING MATERIAL

The Ministry has distributed soft and hard copies of the new curriculum, National Literacy Framework and the syllabi to all the districts in Zambia. We have also distributed hard copies of Grade 1 term 2 Literacy text books in the seven local languages.

The Ministry has also distributed hard copies of Early Childhood Education syllabi and instructional materials to 300 early learning centres, countrywide. Other materials are still being printed and will be distributed before the end of this term.

Text books for content subjects for Grade 1, 5, 8 and 10 have been developed by private publishers and they are being made available to schools. The publishers are:

- Longman/Pearson Publishers
- Mwanjionera Publishers