

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

ON

RELEASE OF GRADE 9 EXTERNAL AND GCE EXAMINATION RESULTS

BY

THE MINISTER OF GENERAL EDUCATION HON. MABUMBA, MP

Mr Speaker, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to render a ministerial statement on the examination results for Grade 9 external examination and the General Certificate of Examination (GCE).

Mr Speaker, I wish to inform the nation that the Ministry of General Education has completed processing both the 2019 Grade 9 external examination and the GCE results. These two external examinations were designed to give opportunities to those who wish to improve their grades after they did not do well in their first attempt. Those who write the Grade 9 external examination have an opportunity to combine their results with their previous results, and then proceed to Grade 10, while those who sit for the GCE examination widen their career opportunities for either tertiary education or employment.

Mr Speaker, I will begin with the Grade 9 external examination results and then proceed with the GCE examination results. Let me now present the highlights of the 2019 Grade 9 external examination. A total of 83,640 candidates entered the 2019 Grade 9 external examination, out of which 38,935, which represents 46.5 per cent, were boys and 44,705, which represents 53.45 per cent, were girls. Out of the 83,640 who entered the examination, 79,690 candidates, which represents 95.2 per cent, sat the 2019 examination, of which 37,123, representing 46.5 per cent, were boys and 42,567 candidates, which represents 53.4 per cent, were girls. Candidature increased by 22,524, which represents 26.9 per cent from 61,116 candidates in 2018 to 83,640 candidates in 2019.

Absenteeism reduced from 5.7 per cent in 2018 to 4.72 per cent in 2019. The reduction in the number of candidates who absented themselves from the examination is an indication of how

serious the candidates took the examination and a reflection of the desire of our people to improve their education.

Mr Speaker, I assure the House and the public that the Government, through the Ministry of General Education and the Examination Council of Zambia (ECZ), will continue to provide such opportunities to people. In terms of performance, 55,721 candidates, which represents 69.92 per cent, passed the examination out of the 79,690 candidates who sat the examination, representing an increase of 8 percentage points from 35,688 candidates, which was 61.94 per cent of candidates who passed the examination in 2018. A total of 23,969 candidates, which represents 30.08 per cent, failed the examination. When disaggregated by gender, 10,658 candidates, which is 44.47 per cent of the candidates who failed, were male, while 13,311 candidates, which represents 55.53 per cent of the candidates who failed, were female. Comparisons within the genders revealed that the failure rate among females was higher at 4.78 per cent compared to that of their male counterparts which was 4.65 per cent.

Sir, subjects were grouped in four categories, namely social science and business studies, natural science, physical subjects and literature and languages. When compared across subject groupings, the highest mean score was recorded in the literature and language grouping (*Ki Kaonde* language) at 49.77 per cent, while the lowest mean score was recorded in natural science mathematics at 20.21 per cent.

Mr Speaker, allow me to turn my attention to the 2019 GCE examination results. A total of 127,456 candidates registered for the examination, of which 42,060 candidates, which is 33 per cent, were male, and 85,396 candidates, which represents 67 per cent, were female. The number of registered candidates reduced by 0.6 percentage points from 128,156 candidates in 2018 to 127,456 candidates in 2019. Out of the 127,456 registered candidates, 118,753 candidates, which represents 91.31 per cent, sat the examination, of which 38,281, which represents 32.24 per cent, were male and 80,472, which represents 67.76 per cent, were female.

It should be noted that the trend of having more female than male candidates for the GCE examination has been consistent since 2014, when the GCE examination was separated from the School Certificate Examination.

Sir, the absenteeism rates at national level was 6.8 per cent, representing an increase of 0.25 percentage points from 6.58 per cent in 2018. There was a higher rate of 8.98 per cent among male than female candidates, which was at 5.7 per cent in 2019.

Mr Speaker, a total of 96,019 pupils, which represents 80.9 per cent of candidates, obtained GCE certificates, representing a decrease of 13 percentage points from 94 per cent in 2018. Of the 96,019, a total of 31,682 candidates, which is 33 per cent, were male while 64,337, which represents 67 per cent, were female. When compared within gender, 79.9 per cent of males obtained a GCE certificate as compared to 80.8 per cent of their female counterparts.

Sir, in terms of candidates who obtained a credit or better, the best pass rates were in practical subjects at 68.3 per cent, followed by literature and languages at 47.07 per cent, social sciences and business studies category at 33.83 per cent, while the natural science category was the least with a pass rate of 14.9 per cent.

Mr Speaker, on the other hand, 22,734 candidates, which represents 19.14 per cent, failed the examination. The national failure rate in 2019 increased by 13 percentage points from 6 per cent in 2018. Of the 22,734 candidates who failed, 6,598, which represents 29 per cent, were male while 16,136, which represents 70.9 per cent, were female. Within gender, failure rates were higher for females at 20.05 per cent than for males at 17.24 per cent.

Sir, in conclusion, allow me to make the following announcements before I end my statement:

- (a) despite the teething issues experienced, the School Based Assessment (SBA), which was introduced as part of the various examination reforms that the Ministry of General Education is implementing effective this 2019, worked well. The

system was supported by the SBA Online Marks Transfer System (OMTS), which was developed by the ECZ;

- (b) members of the public can access results through Short Message Service (SMS) Results Release System (SRRS) provided by the ECZ. After two weeks from the date of announcement, members of the public can access the statement of results online by visiting the ECZ website. Details about how to access the statement of results will be given by the ECZ through print and electronic media publication;
- (c) in line with the demands of the Smart Zambia initiative, the ECZ shall not print any statement of results. Schools or individual candidates will be able to download the statement of result free of charge. However, all statements of result must be verified by the ECZ before being used for any official purposes. The public must, however, note that the ECZ shall continue to print certificates for all those who successfully obtained them;
- (d) during the conduct of the 2019 Grade External and GCE Examinations, five and eighty-eight cases of examination malpractices were reported respectively. The cases were in the form of smuggled unauthorised materials into the examination room, assistance, impersonation, collusion and copying. The cases will be handled by the council and its committees in the scheduled meetings. It is important to note that unlike in the previous years, there was no reported case of leakage during the conduct of the two examinations;
- (e) the ECZ has already opened systems for registration of candidates for the 2020 examinations. Those who may not have done well in this examination and others who wish to take the opportunity to improve their grades are encouraged to approach examination centres and register as soon as possible;

(f) in line with decentralisation policy of the Government and in an effort to bring examination services closer to the people, the ECZ opened its Chipata office to the public on 14th October, 2019. This is an independence gift by the council to the people of the Eastern Province. This comes after the council opened service centres in Lusaka in 2014, Kitwe in 2016, Mpika in 2017, Mongu in 2018 and now Chipata. I am reliably informed that offices will be opened in Livingstone before the end of 2019 and Kasama before 31st March, 2020.

Sir, the ECZ plans to have service centres in all ten provinces before 2021, so that those who would be requested or required to verify their certificates will do it in their provinces, as opposed to what we had in 2016 where everybody came into Lusaka. I wish to commend the ECZ council chairperson Prof. Frank Tailoka, all the councillors, management and staff of the ECZ for this commendable innovation.

Mr Speaker, as I conclude, allow me once more to applaud the officers in the Ministry of General Education and the ECZ that were involved in conduct and management of the 2019 Grade External and GCE examinations for the successful examinations. I wish to warn the perpetrators of examination malpractice that the Government is going to ensure that the credibility of public examinations is sustained. As a result, the Government is working to amend the Examination Council of Zambia Act to ensure that the penalties are deterrent enough.

Sir, I call upon all stakeholders to consider examinations as a national assignment and do everything possible for the 2019 Grade 7, 9 and 12 examinations to ensure that we do not have the leakages which we had last year.

I thank you, Sir.