

CSOs SPEECH AT THE EDUCATION SECTOR PLANNING LAUNCH

AUGUST 9TH 2016

Distinguished Guest of Honor, Second Vice President being represented by Honorable Minister Haroun Ali Suleiman

Honorable Minister of Education and Vocational Training Mrs. Riziki Juma Pembe

Distinguished Heads and representatives of various ministerial departments, institutions and natnl/international organizations, schools and communities

All participants, planners, organizers of this great event

Assalam Alaykum and Good Morning

My name is Khadija Shariff from Milele Zanzibar Foundation and I am here today to speak on behalf of all CSOs in the education sector.

First and foremost I would like to thank Almighty Allah for blessing us with this unique opportunity and privilege of being here together this morning prepared for this momentous task ahead of us of planning for education for the next 5 years.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the MOEVT Zanzibar for inviting education CSOs to participate fully in this important occasion of which we have been anticipating for a long time.

Civil society organizations across the globe have contributed significantly towards national and international development and progress. They are situated to provide support to governments in the delivery of a variety social services as well as economic development. Within the education sector, these CSOs deliver direct programs or services such as development of infrastructure, training teachers and school management committees, advocating for educational rights and mobilizing community engagement and support of education. These CSOs also provide relevant research, expertise and advice to improve delivery of quality education.

Here in Zanzibar, it is no different. CSOs in Zanzibar began through the Societies Act No. 1995 and other national legal instruments which encouraged and provide opportunities for citizens who have common aims and interests to form organizations in order to strengthen citizen engagement in all social and economic sectors. Within the Education Policy of 2006 are strategies which encourage CSOs to become involved in order to assist in the attainment of quality education for all Zanzibaris.

Honorable Guest,

The education sector is among the leading sectors developing skilled professionals who will contribute to the nation's future progress and development. CSOs in Zanzibar have contributed towards educational development in different ways and at different levels. Within the past 20 years, CSOs have made a huge and positive contribution within the education sector. I would like to just mention a few:

- 1) **Madrassa Early Childhood Program Zanzibar** has been able to mobilize communities to initiate over 80 pre-primary community schools which have prepared over 50,000 students with foundational skills necessary to transition to standard 1. In addition, more than 2000 pre-primary teachers have been trained and are now teaching children.

- 2) **Milele Zanzibar Foundation** has in the past 2 years been able to build or finalize the construction of over 80 classrooms or learning facilities in 12 schools and renovation of additional 160 classrooms thus reducing the shortage of classrooms and ensuring students are able to learning in safe and conducive environments.
- 3) Also **Forum for African Women Educationalists** has been able to support over 800 vulnerable students, especially female students, with bursary, organize science camps and competitions and mainstream gender sensitivity in teacher training and curriculum.
- 4) **Zanzibar Teachers Union** has a long standing history of advocating for teachers rights and interests and organizing teacher professional development.
- 5) The **Bookwriters' Association** have been developing contextually and culturally relevant textbooks for Zanzibari students.
- 6) **Zanzibar Association for People with Developmental Disabilities (ZAPDD)** has been able to collaborate with MOEVTZ to implement inclusive education since 2004 wherein over 2500 teachers have received inclusive education training.
- 7) **Community Development committees** have been actively involved in constructing classrooms, especially in the villages.
- 8) **School Management Committees** have been playing an instrumental role in supporting management of their schools.

Distinguished Participants,

We CSOs are currently embarking on a strategy to improve our contribution towards the education sector by formulating a network of all CSOs involved in the education sector. The Zanzibar Non-State Actors Network (ZANEN) aims to be a platform for information sharing and engaging in critical discussions on education sector issues for CSOs in general. It also plans to liaise, advise and inform the government of evidence based best practices, strategies and innovations coming from the CSO sector. Finally ZANEN aims to advocate for and influence policies, plans and practices in the education sector under one common and unified voice. ZANEN intends to register officially and we call on all education sector CSOs to come and join our efforts.

Distinguished Participants,

Although we praise the government for its many great achievements in recent years, however, we CSOs feel there are still many challenges that continue to prevent the attainment of quality education in Zanzibar. The examination results alone force us to face these facts. Although statistics show an increase in pass rates for Form 2 students every year, at the same time we note an increase in failure rates annually for Form 4 students from 2005 to 2014. Also, the alarmingly low pass rates from this year's Form 6 exams have left many parents and the community in general in a state of shock and dismay. Beyond just looking at exams, we must ask ourselves whether learning is really taking place in the classroom. Are teachers spending adequate time teaching? Are all student's intellectual, psychological, physical and socio-economic needs met or being considered in the school or classroom setting? Are teachers getting enough support, motivation and incentives to be able to do their job effectively?

There are many issues to consider. We note that there are key components of the Education policy of 2006 which have yet to be implemented and other policies which are not reflected but which need to be urgently considered. For example, a lack of a single authority to recruit and manage teachers or a teacher service commission, a lack of teacher education and continuous professional development

strategy, an incomplete decentralization strategy and an ineffective financing and financial management system are among the policy issues which must be given a very close eye when planning for the next 5 years.

We are facing many challenges, however we must remain hopeful, because as we can see from all of those present in this room WITH collaboration, commitment, cooperation and the willingness to work hard to improve the quality of education- we have all of the right ingredients to succeed in preparing our children to be actively engaged professional citizens positively contributing to the betterment of our nation. Citizens are expecting to see major changes in the education sector especially in the curriculum which will prepare their children to build the necessary life and professional skills to help them not only pass exams but also to excel in life beyond the classroom. All of these challenges will need to be addressed in the plan we are all here to prepare now. If we are able to apply practical solutions through public and private partnerships we may be able to bring about change rapidly and effectively.

Finally, we would like to express our sincerest gratitude for this opportunity to participate in this collective, collaborative and consultative planning process for the next 5 years. We plan on contributing every step of the way from planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating this plan. We ask to continue to get the opportunity to provide advice, share our experiences, skills and resources where needed. We are confident that the more the government continues to consult and collaborate with Civil Society, the greater our chances for our common goal of quality education for our citizens and nation as a whole to be attained.

Thank you very much once again for this wonderful opportunity. I wish you all a productive and successful planning process!