

Caleb M Fundanga: Improving school infrastructure in Zambia

Remarks by Mr Caleb M Fundanga, Governor of the Bank of Zambia, at the Handover Ceremony of computers to Mumbwa High School, Mumbwa, 4 February 2010.

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The Board Chairperson, Mr Gracious Hamatala

Board Members Present

The PTA Chairperson, Mr Mwila Kabange

The Headmaster, Mr Kizito Kalonga

Distinguished Teachers

Students

Members of the Press

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an honour and privilege for me to be with you today as the Bank of Zambia makes this humble donation of 5 computers to Mumbwa High School. I am also glad because in some small way we are making a contribution towards ensuring a brighter future for the students.

Chairpersons, I am informed about the numerous challenges and difficulties, the school continues to face in its quest to produce high quality education to students. For instance, I am aware that there is a critical low level of books compared to the population of students in the school. Further, having been established 40 years ago, the School's infrastructure urgently needs to be rehabilitated. The refurbishment of infrastructure is not an easy task but in the able leadership of the Board Chairperson, I have no doubt that a solution will be found in good time. As we grapple with the ways and means of improving the school infrastructure, let me reiterate that the school need to maintain and protect the little infrastructure available. It is of paramount importance that the school put in place measures to avert rampant vandalism.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let me also mention here that the challenges I have just outlined are not only common to Mumbwa High School, but are experienced in many Government schools. We also realize that the Government has limited resources and cannot attend to the problems of every school in the country at one time. It is for this reason that the Bank of Zambia has continued to donate used computers to several schools around the country. In 2009, the Bank donated a total of 60 computers to various schools including Mumbwa High School, David Kaunda Technical High School, Information and Communications Technology Ladders, and St Francis of Assisi in Lusaka. We are hoping that through these donations the beneficiary schools will sustain and improve the academic performance while bridging the digital divide.

Further, a number of schools including our own Mumbwa High School do not have internet access to enable teachers carry out their research activities. In order to improve performance in class, we need to ensure that we enhance the capacity of our teachers. We must recognise that computers alone are not magic and neither should they replace chalk and blackboards, but they should and can be used as a tool to aid learning. Providing more computers at schools will do little without providing the tools that enhance teaching and research like internet. It is also pertinent that teachers obtain quality and professional training to harness and effectively utilise computers. I therefore urge you to consider enhancing computer literacy amongst your staff.

In an information age, knowledge and effective use of computers along with sound education will be the cornerstone of a vibrant, modern society. This is why our teachers are absolutely critical to the future of our economy. I have no doubt that supporting our schools in the manner that the Bank of Zambia is doing today will lead to stronger motivation and morale amongst our students and teachers alike. I am certain that we all desire a country where our

teachers and students are proficient in using computers and extract immense value from them. This should be the vision that we should all aspire.

Ladies and Gentlemen, In conclusion, I would like to urge all students present here today take an interest in using computers. Computers will assist you in your studies and make your lessons more effective, easier and enjoyable but they will not automatically make you a genius. The computer will open doors to communication, research and opportunities. Remember that the goal of computer literacy is for the user to become an explorer, and an active seeker of information which I hope you will be, with this donation. Seize what you have been bestowed with today. Guard against vandalism and use the computer facilities to ensure a brighter future for yourselves. This is important because in future while computer knowledge will perhaps not immediately get you a job, it will ensure that you are one step closer to being employed.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I also recognize the efforts of the former Students Association who have been soliciting for donations from various organizations. As former students we all have the responsibility of helping the school that has played a key part to what you are today. Let us continue to support our beloved school.

I thank you.