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Investing in human development is key to maintaining a healthy and skilled population, which is vital to economic growth and development. **Enhancing human development entails the expansion of programs, policies and activities that safeguard the rights of all persons to attain their highest potential through the provision of services such as education and health care among others.** Government through the Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP) has prioritised investment in the education and health sectors to guarantee equitable access to services and development. Further, its focus is aimed at enhancing the quality of human capital, accelerating economic growth and promoting job creation.

Access to quality education and skills training

The Government has scored unprecedented achievements in all the eight subsectors within the education sector namely; **Early Childhood Education; Primary and Secondary School Education; Youth and Adult Literacy; Teacher Education; Skills Development; Science, Technology and Innovation; and University Education.** Government has also put up additional policy measures to ensure that the girl child has equitable access to education through the **School Re-entry Policy** and the implementation of various empowerment programmes such as the campaign to end child marriages. Some of the most notable achievements include the following:

Early Childhood Education

- Establishment of over **2,386 Early Childhood Education Centres** countrywide, enrolling over **80,000 children.**
- Government has trained and recruited over **1, 350 Early Childhood Education teachers.**

General Education

- Government is **making basic education accessible** across the country through the provision of free education from grades 1-7.
- Government is implementing the **Home Grown School Feeding Programme** in primary schools across the country to ensure children from grades 1-7 have improved nutrition while accessing free basic education.
- The **School Feeding Programme** has over **2,200 schools** benefitting with about **1,127,000 children** accessing meals daily.
- Government has introduced the **Early Grade Reading Assessment and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment** at lower levels to improve literacy and numeracy acquisition.
- It has also continued to upgrade community schools into primary schools.
- Further, it has improved provision of basic education through the construction of **118 schools as well as the upgrading of 220 Basic Schools**.

Secondary Education

- Government has reduced school fees for Government schools for both day and boarding schools. For boarding schools, the fees have been reduced to an amount not exceeding **1000 per term and day schools to K150 for rural areas and K200 for urban areas**.
- There has been an increased number of schools **totalling 8,754 with enrolment of 3,691,486 learners and a net enrolment rate of 94.3%**. It has also continued the upgrading of the remaining 1,800 basic schools into secondary schools.
- Further, there has been **rehabilitation** of all old secondary schools constructed during the First Republic.
- Production and distribution of mobile laboratories and computers alongside other teaching-learning materials.
- Provision of state-of-the-art **science, mathematics and computer laboratories in schools**.
- Over **14,000 girls in rural areas** are being sponsored to access secondary school education, through the **'Keep Girls in School' Project**.
- Government has introduced Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a compulsory subject.
- It has continued the construction of school infrastructure including classrooms and teachers' houses especially in rural areas.
- There is continued professional development of teachers and enhanced provision of training of mathematics and science teachers at diploma and degree levels.
- It has introduced the Skills Development Levy.

Tertiary Education

To enhance the skills and education of the labour force, government has made tertiary education and skills training programmes accessible by implementing the following:

- Government has **upgraded five colleges into universities, namely Chalimbana, Palabana, Kwame Nkrumah, Mukuba and Kapasa Makasa**.
- Ongoing expansion of student accommodation facilities at the University of Zambia (UNZA), Copperbelt University (CBU), Mulungushi University and Evelyn Hone College. It is earmarked to create **9,600 bed spaces**.

- Increased the number of public universities from three to seven with more campuses currently under construction.
- Forging of a robust partnership with private firms and individuals leading to the establishment of more privately owned universities currently amounting to 40.
- Strengthening of vocational career pathways through continued support to around **30,000 university and TEVET students under the Loans and Scholarship Board, TEVET Bursary Skills Development Fund and the Support to Science and Technology Project.**
- Rehabilitation works are underway in various trade schools.
- Sustained the Fast-Track upgrading programme for teachers in Mathematics and Science.
- Establishment of the **Centre for Nuclear Science and Technology.**

The School Re-entry Policy

- In line with ensuring girls attain their highest potential, the Government is implementing the **School Re-entry Policy which has seen many girls who fell pregnant go back to school.**
- Between 2017 and 2020, **27,647 girls** benefited from this policy.

Ending Child Marriages

- In order to address child marriages, the Government has adopted a National Strategy to end child marriages with a view of building a Zambia free from child marriages by 2030.
- To this effect, Government launched a nation-wide campaign in 2013 **by engaging traditional leaders to act as agents of change.**
- Guidelines have since been formulated in **10 chiefdoms** and children have been withdrawn from marriage and sent back to school.

Provision of Health Care Services

Access to affordable and quality health care is a critical pillar in ensuring sustainable development and growth of a productive labour force. Government has made various strides to providing equitable healthcare services through the following:

- i. Provide a strong and effective health system through expansion of access to health care services.
- ii. Attain universal health coverage.
- iii. Reduce doctor to patient ratio.
- iv. Modernization of health care systems.

In this regard, the following has been achieved in the health sector:

- At the onset of the COVID-19, Government realigned the 2020 budget to provide more resources to health care system in order to effectively respond to the pandemic.
- In the 2021 National Budget, the health sector was allocated **K9.6 Billion, an increment from K9.4 Billion in 2020.**
- The overall maternal mortality ratio has reduced from **398 in 2014 to 278 in 2018 for every 100,000 live births.**
- Government has managed to reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS. The HIV prevalence rate among women and men aged 15 to 49 years has decreased since 2014 **from 13.3% to 11.1% in 2018.**
- The country has recorded a reduction in the incidence of tuberculosis cases from 376 in 2016 to 346 per 100,000 people by end of 2018.

- To improve provision of healthcare services, Government has recruited over **23,000 health workers since 2017**.
- A total of **439 health posts and 24 mini hospitals**, including Chinsali and Kalindawalo General Hospitals, have been completed and are now operational.
- Levy Mwanawasa Hospital has been upgraded from a 120 to 850 bed capacity.
- 276 health posts have been built and are operational from the targeted 650 in 2012.
- **240 in-patient bed capacity** at the Cancer Diseases Hospital has been completed and is operational.
- National health training institution completed at Levy Mwanawasa hospital with capacity to churn out **3000 health personnel**.
- Selected health facilities have been upgraded to first level hospitals; these are Matero, Chipata and Chilenje clinics.
- Completion of the **expansion and refurbishment of Maina Soko Military Hospital**.
- To enhance equitable access to health care services, Government introduced the National Health Insurance Scheme.
- **540,000 employees** have been registered on the National Health Insurance Scheme and more than **126 healthcare facilities** have been accredited to the Scheme.

Conclusion

Government has scored in the provision of health care and education through its investment in both infrastructure and human capital. In the education sector, **the upgrading of schools at primary and secondary levels will guarantee more children the right to access education services**. Likewise, extending loans and bursaries to support more students in institutions of higher learning is evidence of its commitment to growing a highly skilled labour force. **Government's campaign to end child marriages and the implementation of the School Re-entry Policy will ensure that girls have equitable access to opportunities in order to fairly compete with their male counterparts and participate across all developmental spheres**. Furthermore, investment in the health sector can be seen through a **reduction in the doctor-patient ratio**, the expansion and modernization of health facilities and provision of health coverage to all members of society through the National Health Insurance Scheme. These are critical areas of investment in the attainment of universal health coverage and provision of access to quality and affordable health services.



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