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26 February 2018

His Excellency, Cde ED Mnangagwa  
The President of the Republic of Zimbabwe  
Munhumutapa Building  
Harare

**RE: REQUEST TO PUT EVERY CHILD IN SCHOOL DURING YOUR FIRST 100 DAYS**

His Excellency,

We listened to your inauguration speech with intent and hope. When we heard you mention your prioritisation of social services such as education we were happy. You further mentioned that it was no longer business as usual for government departments and offices meaning you took note for years things were not as they should have.

On the 14th of December 2017 my organisation Tag a Life International Trust (TaLI) that has been working largely in Midlands, Mashonaland West and East, as well as engaging with advocacy issues nationally launched a campaign called 'Every Child In School - ECIS' campaign with many other Civil Society Organisation that work in Children's issues. On the same day we petitioned the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education to issue a circular to ensure that children from vulnerable communities especially in primary school get access to education. This is from the background that more than one million children are out of school and chief among the reasons is the inability by their parents to pay school fees. These children dropped out of school sometime and have not been able to go back. When they attempt to enroll, school authorities in government schools demand that parents pay a total amount of money required to enrol their children, which they may not have. This is synonymous with the status of our economy where you are inviting investors to create jobs, and because parents do not have jobs, they are unable to pay school fees for their children.

We petitioned the Honourable Minister of Primary and Secondary Education and he responded to us and told us that what our petition was asking for is what the minister was already doing. We felt discouraged as indeed there are a lot of children out of school. The statement by the Honourable Minister may be construed as insensitive considering we have so many vulnerable and orphaned children in our country.

One of the parliamentarians heard our calls and even asked the minister why there has not been an actioning on ensuring access to education by children on the 5th of January 2018 to which he responded that his Permanent Secretary would look into the issue. We then received this letter from the Permanent Secretary which told us that the ministry was 'continuing with same efforts' which to us means we may not see any children going to school anytime soon as the status quo has been that children are out of school.

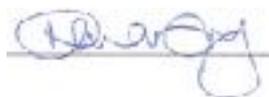
We therefore appeal to you His Excellency, as you are working so hard to get our country back on its feet, to ensure no-one remains behind. We request the following;

1. That we seriously put children at the centre of this dispensation and urgently put in place mechanisms like this requested circular to ensure that children have access to education, and that mechanisms are put in place to hold the school authorities to account in the manner in which they operate government schools. As CSOs we are ready to complement the government in providing monitoring of school authorities.
2. That the government of Zimbabwe respects the constitution rights of children including Section 75 of our constitution, and that we must not always wait for legal action to be taken for our government to act.
3. That in your last few days of the 100 days in office, you end with a bang by ensuring children's education is provided for through the release of this circular.

4. That the government ensures all ministries to embrace the tenets of the dispensation including Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education that requires speedy responses and trust engagement with citizens to take our country forward.
5. We provided the minister with some recommendations that we made from the time we launched this petition that; an 'Education Fund' be introduced funded by various sources such as an 'Education Tax' where citizens who themselves have benefited from the once great education to pay as little as 50c from their incomes towards this fund. We know you have been a great ambassador of "Zimbabwe is open for business" for external and global investors to come to our country to do business with us. For the extractives where these companies will benefit from our wealth of minerals and land, that they contribute contribute even a 0.05% of their income towards the Education Fund, and also for them to build schools around their communities of operation within their 5years of operation.
6. That this 'Education Fund' gets completely dedicated to learners welfare, school fees and infrastructure development, and not pay teachers or any government expenditures. Reporting of expenditure of this amount being publicly made each year to the citizens.
7. That the ministry urgently enacts laws that promote and protect children's rights to education according to our constitution such as an urgent alignment of the Education and Children's Act with the Constitution.

We are available for an urgent meeting with any government representative including yourself Your Excellency to discuss this issue.

We pray for the prioritisation of education in our country and hope that the president actions fast this issue for the poor to feel a taste of the new dispensation.



Yours faithfully

Ms Nyaradzo Mashayamombe on behalf of ECIS Platform.

CC:

-Minister Prof Mavima

-Education Parliamentary Committee

-Women's Parliamentary Caucus

Tag a life International (TaLI) , Zimbabwe National Council for the Welfare of Children (ZNCWC), Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ), Mambure Trust, Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), UDACIZA, Justice for Children (JCT), PROWEB, Female Students Network (FSNT), Forum for African Women Educationalists Zimbabwe (FAWEZI), Research Advocacy Unit, Higher Life Foundation, Education Coalition of Zimbabwe (ECOZI), Zimbabwe Women In Politics Alliance, Rebuild Sakubva (RESA), World Vision, Issues Pane Nyaya, Katswe Sisterhood, Zimbabwe Alliance, Girls and Women Empowerment Network Trust (GWEN), Zimbabwe Women In Politics Alliance, Shamwari Ye Mwanasikana (SYS) Citizen Participation Trust, Shanduko, Jointed Hands Welfare Organisation, Zimbabwe Activists Alliance, Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Parents for Handicapped Children Association.