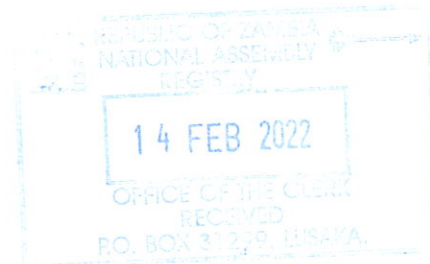




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8<sup>th</sup> February, 2022.

The Clerk to the National Assembly,  
Parliament Buildings,  
P. O. Box  
Lusaka.



Dear Sir/Madam

Re: The Need to Commission a Study on the Quality of Education for Children with Disabilities in Zambia

Reference is made to the above captioned

We, Disability Rights Watch (DRW), in conjunction with Zambia Association of Parents for Children with Disabilities (ZAPCD) here write to your office to commission a study on the quality of education for children with disabilities in Zambia.

We make this submission owing to the fact that the experience of DRW and ZAPCD in working directly with children with disabilities, both those enrolled in school and those outside the school shows that there is a large disparity between the quality of education delivered to children with disabilities in comparison to their peers without disabilities. We make this appeal to have this study commissioned as soon as possible because we observe that the situation is receiving inadequate attention from the concerned Ministry responsible for education.

Disability Rights Watch (DRW) is a non-profit organisation registered under the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ZAPD) as a Disability Service Organisation. Its core objective is to ensure the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, including the promotion of their inherent dignity, through strategic advocacy and to build the organisational capacities of organisations of persons with disabilities towards achieving an inclusive society. DRW uses the strategic partnership and collaborative approach to inclusion and development to achieve its goal. It was registered in 2011.

Zambia Association of Parents for Children with Disabilities is an organisation formed by parents of children with disabilities to advance the rights of children with disabilities and ensure the welfare of their parents is promoted and protected. ZAPCD advocates for the rights of children with disabilities among other fundamentals, access to quality inclusive education. It operates through Parents Support Groups to achieve inclusion within communities with full welfare support to the parents. ZAPCD was registered in 2002 under the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities.

We believe greatly that education is an equaliser and it builds the foundation for the consolidation of a bright future of every child including children with disabilities. Children with disabilities face a lot of stigma and discrimination right from the time they are identified as children with disabilities, whether at birth or at child development stage. This has disadvantaged them in many ways including: being concealed in homes by their parents or care givers; being exploited and abused by those who live with them and worse still being denied enrolment to schools.

If enrolled to any school, the children face a lot of difficulties including exclusion from sports and recreation; inaccessible learning materials like books, toys and computers and inaccessible school infrastructure. The infrastructure extends to school sanitation facilities which are completely unfriendly especially to girls with disabilities.

Furthermore, the teachers, especially those in mainstream schools do not have skills to handle children with disabilities especially those with visual impairments, those with hearing impairments and those with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities and those with autism with deafblindness and multiple disabilities. The Ministry of Education, for the information of your office last procured learning materials like Braille paper, writing frames and styluses as far back as 2007.

Therefore, we would like the designated Parliamentary Committee on Education and Social Welfare to institute a study to:

1. Establish the effectiveness of the National Policy on Education (1996) and the Education Act (2011) together with other laws like the Persons with Disabilities Act (2012) towards the promotion and implementation of inclusive education that allows the equal access, participation and achievement in education without any form of discrimination of children with disabilities;
2. Examine the teacher education programme at public colleges of education and universities on the extent to which they are professionally prepared to teach and handle children with disabilities in mainstream schools for the purposes of practically implementing and achieving inclusive education that will benefit children with disabilities both in academic and social development;
3. Examine the existence of adequate and appropriate learning materials for different categories of children with disabilities, including those children with intellectual disabilities, autism, deafblindness and multiple disabilities. This should also cover those schools based in rural areas;
4. Examine the appropriation and disbursements of funds to support the education of children with disabilities in both mainstream schools and segregated schools for learners with disabilities in as far as teaching and learning materials, boarding facilities and repair of assistive devices.
5. Examine any other challenges faced by children with disabilities in accessing education on an equal basis with other children.

The study should extend to examine the extent to which government supported children with disabilities during the COVID 19 restrictions which led to the closure of schools with government providing ICT for home learning for children without disabilities but not for children with disabilities.

With the above snap submission on the few, among many challenges children with disabilities face in the education system, we feel this submission should be treated as urgent in order to quickly address this matter. We look forward to your positive response.

Signed,



Wamundila Waliuya  
Director  
Disability Rights Watch



Astrida Kunda  
Programme Coordinator  
Zambia Association of Parents children with Disabilities