

Find solutions to youth needs, President Lungu challenges Ministers

President Edgar Lungu is concerned about the welfare of young people across the country and has since directed all Government ministries to work together and come up with workable solutions to address their needs.

Chief Government Spokesperson Dora Siliya says President Lungu wants all Government ministries to seriously engage young people and help find long lasting solutions to their challenges.

Ms. Siliya said it is the desire of President Lungu and Government that working with young people, everything possible must be done to meet their aspirations.

The Chief Government Spokesperson said Government is aware of the many economic challenges young people are currently grappling with which have made it difficult for them to continue with their small businesses among other economic activities.

She said the situation has been worsened by the outbreak of the coronavirus which has restricted movement of people including young business man and women.

Speaking during a brainstorming meeting with four (4) other cabinet ministers in her office this morning, Ms. Siliya said Government will ensure that it holds hands with young people so that they can go back to their normal businesses.

“Government has heard the concerns of our young people and is working hard to find solutions to help them. The President has directed all Ministries not to work in silos but together to address the challenges of our young people,” she said.

Ms. Siliya said Government is aware that young people need solutions and assistance now to help them sustain their livelihoods.

She said appropriate solutions to the challenges young people are complaining about will only come by working together with Government and its partners.

“We are aware that our youth want solutions like today. Let me assure them that we are alive and sensitive to their needs and we are doing all we can to help them come out of their current situation,” she said.

Among those who attended the meeting called to discuss possible solutions to some the challenges facing young people were, Fisheries and Livestock Minister, Professor Nkandu Luo, Gender Minister Elizabeth Phiri, Community Development and Social Services Minister Kampamba Chewe and Youth, Sport and Child Development Minister Emmanuel Mulenga.

And Youth and Sports Minister Emmanuel Mulenga has said his Ministry is optimistic that with approach Government has taken to harness potential areas of positive impact on young people, the future remains bright for them.

Mr. Mulenga said there is need for young people across the country to always choose dialogue as opposed to confrontation in airing their grievances because Government shares their concerns too.

He said he is happy that the Presidential directive has come after his ministry had met young people who have submitted a number of proposals requiring the attention of Government.

Mr. Mulenga said ministry will continue engaging the youth and help to find solutions to their challenges.

He said President Lungu and his Government wants to promote the participation of young people at various levels of society including Governance.

Mr. Mulenga explained that this was why Government wants citizens especially young people to seriously lobby their Members of Parliament to support Constitution Amendment Bill No. 10 when it is presented in parliament for second reading.

“Young people have made their submissions. One of such submissions is the need for inclusion in governance but we have people whose desire is to continue using them to throw stones a thing they cannot allow their own children to do. These people are the ones who are saying no to these progressive and serious ideas in Bill 10,” he lamented.

He challenged young people to see through the statements of those purporting to speak for them.

Mr. Mulenga said Zambian young people have in the past demonstrated that they are capable of speaking on their own without old people hiding behind their age bracket.

“One wonders what the motive of those old men and women who have continued to claim that they are young. When we were in school they said they were young, and many years down the line they are still calling themselves youth. According to the law, a youth is anyone who is below the age of 35,” he said.

At the same meeting Community Development and Social Welfare Minister Kampamba Chewe challenged young people to approach her ministry and obtain information on available empowerment programmes so that they can benefit.

Ms. Chewe said her ministry is currently pushing an all-inclusive wealth distribution agenda and has various windows through which young people can participate and benefit.

She said young people should develop a culture of reading and acquiring important information from credible sources as opposed to social media which she said is in most cases laced with misinformation.

“My Ministry has various programmes through which young people can benefit but the problem is that instead of obtaining correct information from the right sources, our young people opt to get this information from social media and in most cases this information is misleading,” Ms. Chewe said.

She cited programmes such as Emergency Cash Transfer as those in which young people can register and benefit.

She said all empowerment programmes government was implementing required the interest and commitment of young people.

Meanwhile, Fisheries and Livestock Minister Nkandu Luo has challenged young people to change their mindset from quick money to resources that can steadily multiply and change their lives for good.

Prof. Luo said for young people to transform into serious entrepreneurs, there is need for them to consider venturing into sectors such as livestock and its value chain and aqua-culture.

She said such ventures are seemingly slow but lucrative and will require them to be serious and patient.

Prof. Luo said her ministry has all the necessary facilities and resources to help those willing to go in the sectors.

“Young people should venture into resources that can multiply and so they need a serious mindset change so that we can have a paradigm shift from quick money to serious entrepreneurship,” she said.

And Gender Minister Elizabeth Phiri advised young people to always seek the route of dialogue as opposed to antagonism when aggrieved.

Ms. Phiri said solutions to the challenges of young people can only be found when they engage in constructive dialogue with Government and not taking to the streets.

“As a mother I feel sad when our children refuse to us and rush to the streets because there is no answer there. Answers can be found if we choose to sit around the table and engage in frank discussions,” she said.

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