

**EDUCATION SECRETARY'S REPORT TO ZAMBIA EPISCOPAL
CONFERENCE PLENARY – JANUARY 2006**

1. **STATISTICS**

Catholic Schools/Colleges – January 2006

Grant Aided High Schools	35
Grant Aided Basic Schools	37
Grant Aided Special Schools	09
Private High Schools	05
Minor Seminaries	04
Teachers' Colleges of Education	02(one under construction in Mbala).

Church involved in many community schools and skills training centers but no statistics available. Hopefully these will be captured in the Revised Catholic Directory.

GRADE 12 RESULTS – 2004

In 2004 the national average of those receiving a full School Certificate was 66.04%. The average in our Catholic schools was 92.42%. We owe a debt of gratitude to our school administrators and teachers for dedication despite the meager remuneration they receive.

2. **NORWEGIAN CHURCH AID (NCA)**

In April 2005 a Project Agreement was signed between Norwegian Church Aid and the Zambia Episcopal Conference. The purpose of the project was to provide funding to support the rehabilitation and provision of education materials to our education establishments. The amount received from NCA for 2005 was US\$156,300.00. 15 Schools from 7 Diocese benefited from the NCA grant in 2005. We have submitted a budget for US\$200,000.00 for 2006. It is hoped our partnership with NCA will be ongoing.

It is important that the Diocesan Education Secretaries be involved in monitoring the projects being undertaken in the various schools to ensure quality workmanship and transparency in the use of funds. Basic schools recently taken back by the Diocese and High Schools without a managing agency need a good deal of help. This funding has been a great help especially to our grant aided basic school many of which are in a poor state of repair. NCA demands strict financial and narrative reporting and it is important that we comply for the partnership to continue. Please note NCA does not deal with a diocese or a school but only with ZEC and the other mother bodies.

3. **FUNDING**

In the “*yellow Book*” Estimates and Expenditure 2005 grants to our High Schools were reduced by 68% of the released funding for 2004. Due to a meeting with the Minister and lobbying of members of parliament the grants were restored to 2004 level with a slight improvement.

Later it was discovered that no funds were included in the Book of Estimates and Expenditure for Education Secretaries offices for 2005. After much correspondence and visits to Budget office in Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Education a cheque for K155,000,000.00 was released in October. This was a great relief and makes the department financially viable once again. We have submitted a detailed budget for the running of the department for 2006 to 2008 which hopefully will be included in the annual budget for these years.

Schools, especially High Schools, have benefited greatly from Sector Pool Funding over the past two years. These funds are substantial and are to be utilized for specific projects as outlined in the schools’ Annual Work Plan and Budget. In 2005 the smallest amount allocated to our schools was K205,000,000 and the largest was K355,000,000.00.

We are grateful for the improved funding to our High Schools. However release of grants still very erratic.

However there is a cause for concern at the poor funding to our 9 special schools despite a substantial improvement in 2005. Currently a special school is getting a grant of K366 per day per pupil to run the school and feed the pupils practically all of who are boarders in our special schools. They too benefited from the Sector Funding. Highest received was K104,000,000.00 and lowest K33,000,000.

4. **RATES**

It is with a sense of relief that I report the closure of this issue. By Statutory Instrument No. 37 of 2005 gazetted on 29th April all grant aided schools/hospitals and clinics have been exempted from rates. I thank all who were involved in bringing a satisfactory conclusion to this important issue.

5. **TEACHER TRAINING**

Starting in 2007 the current Certificate programme being offered in Colleges of Education e.g. Charles Lwanga and Mongu will be upgraded to a three year diploma course certified by UNZA. However there is a problem of inadequacy of qualified lecturers in these colleges. The diploma course in COSETCO and Nkrumah will be extended to three years. Currently statistics show that only 15.3% of teachers in high schools have a degree. This is the minimum qualification requirement for a high school teacher. 85% of the teachers in High Schools are those trained to teach junior secondary classes. Most teachers in Basic Schools are not qualified to teach grades 8 – 9.

The challenge is to put in place a massive programme of upgrading qualifications to remedy the existing qualifications deficits. I feel our Catholic University needs to seriously consider what role it can play in upgrading teachers from diploma to degree. There is no doubt that there is a great need in this area, with only 15% of our current teachers in high schools who are graduates.

6. **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The content of the religious education syllabus in Basic Schools (Grades 1 – 7) is a cause of concern. However the Curriculum is now finalized and there is little that can be done. Perhaps we should consider having a supplementary R.E syllabus in our schools.

Currently the curriculum is being revised in preparation for the Primary Teachers' Diploma (3 years) to be introduced in 2007. Religious Education will be integrated under Social, Spiritual and Moral Education. I attach a copy of the Aims and Objectives of the course to give you a feel as to the content of the course. Again I feel our Catholic Colleges need to put a supplementary syllabus for R.E. in place to prepare our teachers adequately for their role as Catholic/Christian teachers in our schools. Religious Education per se is very skimpy in the proposed new syllabus.

7. **RELATIONSHIP WITH MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

A number of Ministry of Education officials have been pretty critical of grant aided institutions at a number of public fora.

- (i) The issue of “ownership and partnership” has been raised. It has been asked “How can the Church claim ownership of these schools/colleges when government provides the funding for recurrent expenditure and salaries?”
- (ii) Why should those teachers living in grant aided houses be paid housing allowance when most houses are built by government grants?
- (iii) Government putting pressure on schools to meet some of the conditions of service agreed between itself and unions.
- (iv) Complaints about the level of school fees being charged.

One would get the impression that the Ministry would like to renegotiate the relationship between grant aided schools/colleges as outlined in Statutory Instrument No. 43 of 1993. I recommend that we resist this. It is obvious that many ministry officials do not understand the difference between a grant aided school and a government one despite our best efforts to explain it to them. It is clear many are unfamiliar with the contents of the Statutory Instrument. It is also apparent that the current political climate is influencing the attitude of politicians and senior civil servants towards the Church and its institutions. They would like us to be implementers of unilateral decisions made by them affecting our schools/colleges other than treating us as equal partners.

8. STAFFING

(a) EXPATRIATE RELIGIOUS

Ministry of Education has once again suspended the employment and renewal of contracts of expatriate religious in our schools. Religious currently serving are in a limbo as their contracts are not being renewed. The reason being given is the number of young Zambian teachers who are unemployed. I have both written to and met the Permanent Secretary on this issue. I believe that proprietors and managing agencies should have the right to employ a certain number of expatriate religious in our own schools.

(b) RECRUITMENT OF TEACHERS

This exercise of recruiting Zambian teachers for our schools in the last two years has been chaotic to say the least.

Statutory Instrument No. 43 of 1993 states: “*Teaching staff shall be seconded or recruited for the aided educational institutions through the Education Secretary.*” This has been pretty well ignored by the Ministry and teachers have been posted to our schools without the involvement of the Education Secretaries. We are trying to rectify this serious omission so as to ensure teachers posted to our schools are those that will respect and uphold our ethos.

We do our best to be of service to schools/colleges. The level of efficiency at all levels in the Ministry of Education leaves much to be desired. I wish to thank the Conference and the staff at the Catholic Secretariat for their support and cooperation over the year. We are grateful for the progress that was made in 2005 but many challenges still await us.

BR. JOHN MEADE CFC
NATIONAL EDUCATION SECRETARY

13/01/06