



Republic of Zimbabwe

**SPEECH BY HON. MINISTER OF PRIMARY AND
SECONDARY EDUCATION**

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**AT THE LAUNCH OF THE 21st CENTURY
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AT
LUSITANIA SCHOOL**

Let me start by acknowledging the Headmaster of Lusitania School, The Board of Governors, His Excellence the Portuguese Ambassador to Zimbabwe Dr Ricardo Pracana, Directors of Direct E-Learning International, Ministry Officials and school heads present and esteemed guests invited to this occasion. Your presence is greatly appreciated.

I am delighted to be part of this important occasion where we have all gathered to launch a 21st Century compliant learning facility at this school which includes:

1. Broadband Interactive Smart Boards per Classroom
2. Flexible World Class Classroom Furniture
3. A state-of-the-Art Computer Lab with Classroom Management Software
4. Training and Certification of Teachers with ICDL
5. Student International Skills Certification Program and,
6. Parents and Community ICT training

Our quest for 21st century education which is fit for purpose is not in doubt as already articulated by His Excellence the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Cde. E. D. Mnangagwa. Let me hasten to say that developments at this school resonate well with our drive for ICT enabled education across our entire school network in Zimbabwe. The Overall Global Agenda for Children Learning in the 21st century is that, in order for the world to survive and prosper in the new century, people will need to learn more and learn differently. A child entering the new century will likely face more risks and uncertainties and will need to gain more knowledge and master more skills than any generation before. ICTs have proven to give children these capabilities.

In our drive for the digitization of the education sector in Zimbabwe, we are motivated by the much-publicized benefits offered by emerging technologies that possess the power to transform the learning and teaching environment in our schools. However, we also acknowledge as a ministry that migrating to ICT enabled platforms is accompanied with some notable challenges which require collaborative efforts with all our partners and other stakeholders. The determination and focus of my ministry will however ensure that all barricades to the ICT agenda for the education sector are resolved. Lusitania School and Direct E-Learning International have proven here that it is possible. Let's therefore embrace safe and sustainable ICTs into teaching and learning.

The Updated Competence Based Curriculum being implemented by my Ministry emphasizes multi-literacy, multi-tasking, life-long learning, and a competency-based education for our learners with greater focus on practical competences necessary for life, critical thinking, problem solving, leadership, effective communication and team building skills. 21st Century Learning environments and technologies act as a catalyst for an inclusive and quality education that the Government is committed to. Technology has become a necessity in education. Preparing students to use technology has in that regard become an unavoidable reality.

As I have already indicated, safe and sustainable technologies offer resounding benefits to learners in Zimbabwean schools that include higher concentration, enhanced social interaction, expanded horizons, improved cognitive abilities, more fun while learning, learners being given an early

sense of direction coupled with skills for the future and provisions for the differently enabled child made more possible than ever with technology. It is therefore worth underlining that today's students must be taught 21st century skills like creativity, problem solving, communication, and analytical thinking to compete in the global and increasingly digital marketplace.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for education set targets for 2030 that include, among others, full access to high quality schooling from early childhood through secondary, equitable access to affordable technical, vocational and tertiary education, and more investment in education facilities to improve learning environments. Meeting these challenges will require continued and expanded public and private commitment of resources and leadership efforts to encourage innovation and technology, and a consideration for the role of the private sector in achieving these education goals. As government we recognize Lusitania school and their stakeholders for their commitment to creating a modern learning environment that I encourage other schools to prioritize in their development plans. My ministry will continue to promote such partnerships for digital innovation and sharing of global best practices for the benefit of the education sector in Zimbabwe.

We therefore call on other schools to emulate Lusitania Primary School in setting up 21st century compliant learning environments in order to shorten learning curves for students, to accommodate different learning styles, to increase comprehension, to complement learning with real time experiments and simulations, to enhance deeper and thorough subject coverage, and to reignite interest in learning. Children learn faster when having fun, children

want to be in an environment that encourages learning such as brighter classrooms, colourful furniture and interactive devices.

As government we thank Lusitania Primary school for taking the bold step in transforming the learning environment at this school. This provides a notable springboard for the achievement of vision 2030 goals and targets set by the Government of Zimbabwe.

I wish to thank you for the invitation and I now have the honour of declaring your **21st Century compliant Learning Facility** officially opened.

I thank you!

Tatenda!