

**Speech by Honourable Lela Mohamed Mussa at the Opening of the
7th Annual Joint Education Sector Review Meeting
Madinat Al Bahr, Mbweni, Zanzibar April 16th, 2024**

Honourable Deputy Minister of Education and Vocational Training, Zanzibar

Honourable Members of the House of Representatives,

Executive Secretary of the Zanzibar Planning Commission,

Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training,

Deputy Principal Secretaries; Administration and Academics of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training,

University leaders

Chairpersons of the Boards of the Ministry of Education Institutional Boards,

Former (retired) Leaders,

Directors,

Development Partners,

Representatives of Civil Society Organizations

Private Education Providers

Parents,

Teachers and Students,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All protocol observed

Assalamu Alaikum,

Dear participants, first and foremost, we must thank the creator of heaven and earth, the lord of all beings in the world, for enabling us to participate in this seventh conference of the Joint Education Sector Review in good health and peace that prevails in every corner of our islands. Indeed, it is by his almighty power and will that we are part of this conference today. Furthermore, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have gathered at this conference. Despite having significant responsibilities in your institutions, you have managed to spare time to participate in this education sector review meeting. Recognizing the importance of this conference, some stakeholders who were unable to be here in person have decided to join us online. This demonstrates your readiness to support the Government's efforts in strengthening the education sector in our country. On our part, as the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar, we appreciate

your contributions, and we promise to continue collaborating with partners and stakeholders to ensure that our children obtain quality education.

Dear participants, for the past seven years consecutively, this conference has been an important platform that provides an opportunity for various stakeholders in the education sector to participate in discussions to assess the sector's progress over the past year and to prepare for the future of the sector for the coming year. Recognizing the significance of this conference, the Government has never hesitated to hold these meetings annually since we started for the first time in 2018. The continuation of these meetings is a clear indication of a government that adheres to the principles of good governance in leading and bringing development to its citizens in various areas, including the education sector. This is evidenced not only by your participation through various groups including Politicians, Development Partners, Civil Society Organizations, Government Institutions, Teachers, Parents, and Students, but also by the opportunity available in this conference to contribute to various themes with a high level of openness. This culture of openness has helped the Government to pick fundamental issues and work on them, and therefore, in one way or another, we must admit that these meetings have been a best platform that stimulates the successes of the education sector that we witness.

Dear participants, in 2022, the international community began a journey of changing our education systems, a plan that was agreed upon together at the '**Transforming Education Summit**' held in New York -the United States of America. In that meeting, nations from every corner of the world committed to a single purpose: to review their education systems to meet the needs of sustainable development. In response to this international call, the United Republic of Tanzania, recognizing the importance of linking education with the challenges of the 21st century, announced its intention to begin the journey of educational reforms in five major areas. Zanzibar, as part of the United Republic of Tanzania, supported this pledge with firm steps. In that same year of 2022, the Government through the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training formed a Ministerial Taskforce to properly review our education system and to be able to recommend areas that need reform. It is worth acknowledging that this task was carried out with great professionalism and resulted in various recommendations divided into eight main areas of reform. This achievement is something to be proud of, especially since these eight reform areas directly align with the five areas Tanzania has committed to the international community to work on in making changes to our education.

Dear participants, although we have sincerely made pledges and promises for education reforms, the journey to achieve these reforms is long. The implementation strategies that we have set do not represent the end of reforms, but the beginning of a journey that requires the dedication of each one of us. As custodians of this reform agenda, we are responsible for ensuring that bureaucracy does not hinder the implementation of these recommendations. Instead, these recommendations must be translated into practice, and their impact observed in classrooms and society at large. Our goal is to ensure that the education provided in Zanzibar aligns with the needs of the 21st century by producing youth who are capable of thinking deeply, solving problems,

and competing in the global job market. We believe that by preparing young people with skills and knowledge, we contribute significantly to the economy of our country and thus achieve the goals we have set in the 2050 Zanzibar Development Vision. It is in this context that we have decided that this conference will focus on the theme “Transforming Education for Sustainable Development”. With this theme, we will have the opportunity to reflect together on the steps we have taken since the beginning of our journey of transformation, to recognize the challenges that face us and those ahead of us in implementing these reforms, but ultimately to develop strategies that will enable the effective implementation of these reforms.

Dear participants, on the part of the Government, we have been able to take various steps in achieving the goal of building our education system in a way that reflects our needs and those of the world in general. We are all witnesses that at the level of pre-primary and primary education we have started using a new curriculum that aims to build our children's skills and knowledge rather than just understanding. Moreover, at the level of secondary education, we have begun piloting the new curriculum at the Mwanakwerekwe Secondary School. Because reforms are not limited to lower levels, higher education institutions in the country have begun the process of reviewing their curricula to align with the government's intentions. It is our expectation that the implementation of these new curricula will create a solid foundation for achieving the goals of reforming our education systems.

Dear participants, it is obvious that implementing these curricula, along with the entire concept of reforms, requires modern and sufficient infrastructure. Recognizing this and considering the challenges we face, such as overcrowding in classrooms and schools operating in shifts, the government is determined to eliminate the double-shift system to enable our children to receive education in better environments. In the three years of the leadership of Dr. Hussein Ali Mwinyi, the President of Zanzibar and Chairman of the Revolutionary Council, the Government has succeeded in building a total of 2273 classrooms along with 2189 toilets. Along with the construction of classrooms, the Government has also been able to build laboratories, dormitories, and teachers' houses. It is our hope that this pace of infrastructure strengthening will help overcome this challenge within a short time. Moreover, in ensuring good management of education delivery in the country through the recommendations you provided at the AJESR meeting last year, the Government has succeeded in building special District Education Offices. A total of seven District Education Offices have been built in the West B District and North A District for Unguja and for Pemba; Wete, Chake Chake, and Mkoani Districts. The Ministry has planned to complete the construction of four other offices so that each District will have its office. These are major reforms in the education system, and everyone should be proud of this step.

Dear participants, while efforts to strengthen infrastructure continue, on the other hand, the Government is in the final stages of completing the Zanzibar Education Sector Transformation Plan (ZESTP) that will be implemented over a seven-year period until 2030. The completion of the plan will provide an opportunity to effectively monitor the

implementation of the agreed recommendations. And through this platform every year, participants will have the opportunity to assess the implementation of this plan through the indicators that will be set. Through this plan, the government has placed a strong emphasis on skills development for our students. Consequently, vocational education and training will play a significant role in the implementation of this plan. We expect to witness significant construction of vocational colleges and technical schools. Other priority areas in this plan will be highlighted during its presentation at this conference, where you will have the opportunity to receive firsthand information. I have been informed that the education sector transformation plan will be one of the key presentations at this event. Moreover, the Government recognizes that along with having this plan, it is necessary that the review process of the Education Policy and Act be completed to prepare a better environment for the implementation of this plan. In recognition of Recognizing the importance of this issue, the Government, in collaboration with Development Partners, is in the final stages of completing the draft of the Education Policy which will align with the recommendations outlined in the education reform report.

Dear participants, you can all attest to the extent of the government's commitment, in practice, to achieving education reforms for the future of our generations and the country as a whole. Therefore, it is your responsibility on this platform to reflect on areas you believe have not been adequately addressed and advise us on the best approach to implementing these recommendations. Let's proceed with this understanding, acknowledging that education impacts everyone and every aspect of our lives, making it a collective concern. The diverse representation of groups here today serves as evidence of this." We expect you to share and exchange the experiences gained during visits to various educational institutions in March, along with the presentations at this conference, to facilitate deliberations that will catalyze the implementation of educational reforms in the country."

Dear participants, before concluding my speech, I would like to take this opportunity to assure you that we will continue to collaborate closely in ensuring that the education sector is further strengthened. This collaboration will not end here at this conference but will spread to every area that involves the development of education in our country. I thank you once again for joining us at this important conference. Moreover, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the organizing committee for the excellent work they have done in making this meeting a success. I also wish all participants success in our discussions. I hope that this meeting will be highly successful and will provide significant recommendations for enhancing our education sector. **With these few remarks, I declare the seventh Annual Joint Education Sector Review (AJESR) meeting of Zanzibar for the year 2024 officially open!"**

Thank you for listening