

Theme: Eliminating Harmful Social and cultural Practices affecting Children our Collective Responsibility

Good morning ladies and gentlemen, and my fellow African Children. My name is Seveliya Mwansa and I am 13 years old. I come from Kafue District, Lusaka Province in Zambia.

I am humbled to stand before you today as we commemorate the Day of the African Child. I am happy that this day is being remembered in Africa under the theme: Eliminating harmful social and cultural practices affecting children our collective responsibility. This is because of the many problems children are facing in Africa today.

Let me also say thank you to the organizers of this function for giving us an opportunity to meet as children from different countries to talk about issues affecting our lives.

As you may all be aware, this day reminds us of the children in South Africa that were killed as they protested against the poor quality of education they were receiving then. To our leaders, this day calls for fresh commitment towards protecting the rights of children.

Indeed it is time for us, our parents and leaders to take action against harmful practices like early marriages, child abuse, child trafficking, child labour, under-age beer drinking and others that are affecting children in Africa. When these are eliminated, us children will grow up to be responsible and take over from our parents in future.

Like our fellow children that protested in 1976, I want to urge my fellow children not to keep quiet about the wrong things happening in our communities including our homes sometimes. We need to speak out and talk with our leaders until our issues are addressed.

Unlike what happened to our friends in 1976, today we are happy that our leaders are here to listen to us. We are hopeful that our issues will not only be listened to but also acted upon.

I thank you.