

PRESS RELEASE

JUDICIARY OF ZAMBIA LAUNCHES CHILD JUSTICE WEEK 2024

Lusaka, 8th October 2024 – The Judiciary of Zambia, in partnership with the Child Justice Forum and key stakeholders, has officially launched Child Justice Week 2024 at Mulungushi International Conference Centre. Running from 7th to 11th October, the event, themed “Zambia at 60: Advancing Child Justice and Safeguarding Children’s Rights in an Evolving World,” aims to highlight the importance of a child-friendly justice system in Zambia.

At the launch, Acting Chief Justice, His Lordship Hon. Justice Michael Musonda, SC, underscored the critical role of the Judiciary in implementing the Children's Code Act, enacted in 2022. He emphasized that the Judiciary must ensure the effective application of the law, cautioning that failure to do so would undermine public confidence in the institution.

Two young parliamentarians, David Thole and Elijah Jere, from Kabulonga Boys Secondary School, presented their views on “The Voice of the Child.” They urged the government to raise the legal age for accessing tobacco and alcohol to 21 and proposed stricter penalties for businesses selling to minors. Additionally, they advocated for youth-focused rehabilitation centers and stronger community collaborations to promote healthier lifestyles.

The Honourable Minister of Justice, Princess Kasune, reaffirmed the government's commitment to advancing child justice. She, alongside a young girl who symbolically acted as Minister of Justice during the event, highlighted the importance of rehabilitation over punitive measures in the Children’s Code Act, noting recent reforms such as raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility to 12 years and prohibiting child marriages.

Hon. Lady Justice Mwamba Chanda, Judge in Charge of the Family and Children Division, emphasized that protecting children is a collective responsibility, and Child Justice Week 2024 offers a platform for collaboration to ensure every child in Zambia has access to justice.

Throughout the week, various organizations, including the Drug Enforcement Commission, Legal Aid Board, and Zambia Police, will showcase their contributions to child justice. Activities will include police orientation sessions, community football tournaments, faith-based seminars, school workshops, and online campaigns aimed at promoting restorative justice and children's rights nationwide.

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