OPENING REMARKS

DIGITISATION OF SCHOOL FEE PAYMENTS

BETTY WILKINSON
CEO - FSD ZAMBIA

TUESDAY 11th FEBRUARY 2020

TWANGALE PARK
• Dr Jobbicks Kalumba, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of General Education
• Mr Lambertus Bart Hofter, CEO MTN
• Representatives from the Ministry of General Education, MTN and FSD Zambia
• Representatives of the media
• Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning.

I am delighted to be here today at this very special occasion. Allow me to recognise and thank you all for your new and ongoing engagement so that the national digitisation of school payments throughout Zambia comes to fruition. Special thanks to MTN Zambia for providing the resources to enable us to pilot the digital school fee payment in 20 schools and for making the process free for the first year.

The National Financial Inclusion Strategy has prioritised the digitising of person-to-government and government-to-person payments, with a specific focus on school fees. Digitisation of school fee payments is one of the first nationwide government digital payments projects in Zambia, after the FISP and weather index insurance digitisation for FISP participants in late 2019. FSD Zambia is very proud of all of you who are enabling this significant step. You join African leader Cote d’Ivoire in establishing this type of school fee payments system nationally.

Digitisation of school fees will enable an efficient, affordable, transparent and trusted payment system for both the government and parents, and
we owe it to every family to protect and enable the future of our children, and thus our nation. The introduction of a unique identification number for all students will also assist schools and the Ministry to track student documentation and results more effectively over time.

Ladies and gentlemen, digitisation of school fee payments will create accountability for both the government and parents. Everyone will be able to keep track of school payment records, and to reduce the loss or misplacement of receipts, bank deposit slips or other payment records within the school accounting systems and nationally.

Our collective commitment to make school fee payment processes simpler, easier, faster, and more accurate will enable Zambian parents and their families to make these payments with confidence, for schools to manage funds more easily, and for us all to ensure that more children and youth stay in school and learn.

To make this happen and successfully roll out across Zambia by the end of 2021 latest, we must maintain a high degree of collaboration, timely planning, and close attention and communication with each other. These are the first 20 schools. You are the champions. As we do this pilot, we will use our lessons and experience to roll out to more than 200 more schools across the country in the near future.

To our school accountants and personnel being trained on the digitised school fee payment platform this week, I hope that you will learn as much as you can, ask questions and tell us ways we can improve the platform to make it as user-friendly, fun and a go-to platform for yourselves and the
parents. This is a model for Zambia’s future. Since it is a pilot, things will go wrong and not work. Feel free to correct us and to advise us on how we can improve this and make sure the system is effective. And celebrate your successes too!

In closing let me wish you the best in this event, and in the work to come. Thank you for your creativity, willingness to engage, and making our nation successful in enabling payments for education.

THANK YOU