

Goodall, World Bank, hail Mzuzu Academy project

BY FRANCIS TAYANJAH-PHIRI

FINANCE Minister Goodal Gondwe and World Bank Country Manager Timothy Gilbo on Saturday said meaningful development in the country would only be achieved through good investment in quality education.

The two were speaking during a visit to Mzuzu Academy project site and later during a fundraising dinner for the same project.

"I am very impressed with the facility, more so considering that the completed first phase of classroom blocks and laboratories were constructed in less than one year, this has moved me," said Gondwe after touring the site alongside Gilbo.

Some Malawians staying in the United States conceived Mzuzu Academy project, a local Trust, on January 16, 2003.

The concept, according to Trust President Anna Msowoya Keys was initiated after noting the need for an academic institution in the North that would provide international curriculum.

"We felt that not all Malawians can afford to go to Kamuzu Academy or St. Andrews, so we felt we should come up with a school that can afford intelligent children access quality education as provided in those other reputable international schools," said Keys.

Describing the project concept as noble, both Gondwe and Gilbo said what Malawi needed was not just education,

but quality education.

"Education is extremely important for development; one would even say it is a priority. But let me stress that it's not just a question that we as a country should achieve large numbers of those that complete [and pass] JCE or MSCE, no, what we must stress to achieve as a nation is quality education," said Gondwe.

He said that since universal education was introduced in the country Malawi has recorded high number of secondary schools, mostly community ones, yet it had not done well on excellence in education.

"The issue now is that as a nation we must strive for excellence because it is precisely what is needed for Malawi to develop. That is why as

government we support initiatives such this," said Gondwe.

Speaking earlier, Gilbo said investing in education was investing in the future and he advised the country to support such initiatives like the Mzuzu Academy.

"It is impressive that the project did not wait for support from government or World Bank – this is a project worth emulating by all Malawians. My congratulations to the initiators of the project and its Board," said Gibbo.

According to Msowoya the first phase of the project has consumed US\$400,000 (about K58 million which was donated to the Trust by an American Lawyer, Richard Taylor who is based in Arizona State.

Still the project would need K36 million to erect two hostels, a kitchen and ablution block so that it opens next year for its first intake, according to project Architect and Manager, Judith Luhanga.