

NO TO VIOLENCE: DEPUTY YOUTH MINISTER

YOUTH FORUM

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Youth Development, Indigenization and Empowerment, Honorable Tongai Matutu, has encouraged Zimbabwean youths to shun violence and instead engage in productive and progressive activities. Hon. Matutu said this at the International Youth Day Celebrations held in Chiredzi at Tshovani Stadium over the weekend. The celebrations were hosted by the **Youth Forum** as part of its efforts to see total youth empowerment and participation in national processes.

"This year's theme of Dialogue and Mutual Understanding for Sustainable Development implies that there should be dialogue and understanding amongst the youths from different backgrounds especially of different political affiliations. Whenever there are differences, people should discuss them and come up with solutions that lead to the development and empowerment of the youth".

The minister also pleaded with youth civic organizations to 'name and shame politicians who use youths for violence purposes either to remain in power or to gain power.' "When a young person uses violence as a means to a certain politician's end, you are not helping that politician but you are tarnishing their image" said the Minister amid ululations and whistling from the more than one thousand youths who gathered for the event.

Hon. Matutu also spoke on the National Youth Policy and said his ministry was in the middle of reviewing the document and encouraged the youths to input their views for the new policy they want to

come up with. He said the policy is of benefit to all youths hence the need for all youths to participate in the drafting of the policy and also in analyzing the document before it is passed into a law.

He challenged the youths present to make full use of the National Youth Fund by presenting viable and solid business proposals to his ministry. "I challenge you all to present to me a project and prove that the

only thing lacking is capital for it to take off and I will assist you with the necessary funding." He lamented the fact that youths are presenting half-baked and half-thought projects to his ministry hence the delay in the disbursement of the funds. Hon. Matutu urged the youths to stop being 'idle youths' and encouraged them to be proactive and help develop the nation.

He also spoke on the National Youth Service and said it is the prerogative of young people to input on how it should be done as the idea of bringing it back as negotiated in the Global Political Agreement was done in the absence of the youths. He also said the Ministry had established vocational training centers and these will be unveiled to young people in the near future. He also lamented the HIV/AIDS scourge that has killed many youths and encouraged the young people to at least use protection. He said in any trade, there are certain tools that are essential for safety in the activities involved, hence when people indulge in sex, there is need to use protection in the form of condoms.

The Minister finally encouraged young people to register and vote and decide the future and destiny

"... There should be dialogue and understanding amongst the youths from different backgrounds especially of different political affiliations. Whenever there are differences, people should discuss them and come up with solutions that lead to the development of the youth"

of our country. He said instead of youths engaging in violence during elections, they should find ways of encouraging their peers to register and vote so as to become the decision makers as youths constitute a large proportion of the nation's populace. This was in line with the **Youth Forum's** current "*Youth Go Register and Vote*" Campaign that aims at adding one million

young voters to the voters roll before the next election. The **Youth Forum** distributed literature and T-Shirts that informed youths on the registration and voting processes. The youths of Chiredzi appreciated the initiative and said the literature was easy to understand and very informative.

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