

Lubuto Mumuni library

Honourable Mr. Patrick Ngoma, Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education – I will follow Ms. Meyers' greetings to the other distinguished guests here today and say all protocol observed.

I'm the Director of the British Council in Zambia – the British Council is the United Kingdom's agency for cultural relations; this means we create international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and build trust between them – and I'm very pleased, in this capacity, to represent the UK at this event. The British High Commissioner to Zambia, James Thornton, would have liked to be here and says his apologies – unfortunately he had a previous engagement in Lusaka today.

The British Council in fact already has a strong relationship with Nabukuyu - Nabukuyu Primary School is active in our global Connecting Classrooms programme, and is partnered with Friarage Primary School in North Yorkshire in the UK. This relationship is one of ten schools partnerships which are the fruit of a partnership with Matantala Rural Development Project - so I'm particularly pleased to meet Mr. Chona of Matantala and Mr. Njame of Nabukuyu Primary School here today.

I'm also here in a personal capacity – I'm a volunteer at Lubuto Ngwerere library in Lusaka – so I've seen at first hand how successful the Lubuto library model is, and how much it's appreciated by the main beneficiaries of the programme – the children who happily, enthusiastically, go to the library to engage with books, to read and hear stories, to improve their reading ability, to interact with each other and the library staff, and to learn about the wider world. So it's a great personal pleasure for me to see another Lubuto library being opened here in Nabukuyu. I'm sure this library will be equally appreciated by the children and the whole community.

The support of the UK charity Comic Relief has already been mentioned. Comic Relief is fantastically popular in the UK, and it raises millions of pounds every year from partners and directly from the British people - money which is used around the world to help development.

In Zambia, Comic Relief is supporting Lubuto Library Partners in improving access to quality education in Zambia through the Lubuto Library Model, with a grant of £592,000 - that's about six million kwacha - over a three year period. The British people, through Comic Relief, are very happy to be involved in the partnership that has led to the creation of the Mumuni Lubuto library here in Nabukuyu. On their behalf I thank Lubuto staff, and especially Jane Meyers - who had the vision and the determination to establish the Lubuto model - for the opportunity to be a part of this wonderful project. I wish every success to the Mumuni library, and I congratulate the people of Nabukuyu on this precious new resource for your community. I thank you.