

**STATEMENT MADE ON BEHALF OF H.E AMBASSADOR ANDREW KIHURANI
DURING THE NAFASI SAWA SUMMER EVENT AT VILLA METTLEN, 3074 MURI
B. BERN ON 14TH AUGUST 2022 AT 1400 HOURS**

Members of the Board of the **NAFASI SAWA CHILDREN** Foundation

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon

I wish to first thank all of you for inviting me to attend this event where the sale of paintings, is one of the activities aimed at supporting the Albert Schweitzer School based in Kisumu, Kenya.

As we are aware, the Albert Schweitzer School was established in 2019 with a view of enabling orphans and half orphans the opportunity to attend primary school and get a good education - the only chance to escape poverty.

Education is one of the most powerful things in life. It gives us an understanding of the world around us and offers us an opportunity to use that knowledge wisely.

Irrespective of race, creed or gender, education makes it possible for people to stand out as equal, to have the same opportunities as other persons in the society, from different walks of life and overall makes it possible to overcome barriers.

As we can all recall, in September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to transform the world and one of the goals of the Agenda is Quality Education.

As Nelson Mandela, late President of South Africa once put it “***Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.***” It is for this reason, that I am pleased to join you today in this noble effort to assist the children of the Albert Schweitzer School in Kenya.

Unfortunately, millions of deserving children are deprived of quality education especially early in life, when it matters most for a stable foundation, due to lack of financial means.

The Kenya Government has had a desire to provide Free Primary Education to Kenyan children of school going age from independence in 1963. Education was

declared free for children in class one to four in 1974 and for the entire primary school cycle in 1978.

Unfortunately, following the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPS) through advice from the multi-lateral lending institutions in the 1980s, the government was forced to revoke the free education reforms and parents were required to contribute to their children learning.

In 2003, the Kenyan government rolled out free primary education in Kenya by providing funds for tuition and materials for all the children in public schools. This enabled all the children to be enrolled in schools which strained the available infrastructure.

In 2010, the Kenyan constitution was promulgated and provides that every child has a right to free and compulsory basic education. According to the Basic Education Act of 2013, it is mandatory for any Kenyan parent to enrol them for primary and secondary education.

Nearly 1.5 million additional children joined primary school since the introduction of the free primary education (FPE). However, while the implementation of the FPE brought a lot of praise, it has also brought to light the need for improvement of access to education that was and still is there in the country. Many school going age children are still out of school due to numerous challenges stemming from a combination of various factors including societal such as poverty, child labour, deaths of parents and education related challenges such as lack of schools, inadequate facilities, lack of teachers, furniture etc.

The government has endeavoured to address these challenges. For instance, through the manufacturing of school desks programme aimed at employment creation, releasing of funds in the 2021/2022 Financial year towards funding additional classrooms nationwide and giving of bursaries to children from poor families. However, due to limited resources, the bursaries are always inadequate, and the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic also disrupted all the sectors locally and globally.

As the government works towards improving the school environment in view of the challenges, there is a need for all well wishers and partners to help where they can. That is why we are here today to support the pooling of efforts, to see how some additional children from underprivileged backgrounds can be assisted to access quality education.

I'm told that the Albert Schweitzer School is supported through sponsorships of the children and there is a high demand for admission by the needy and vulnerable children which cannot be met owing to capacity limitations and rising food prices. The staff are also constrained to turn away many deserving cases due to limited admission spaces which is very painful to hear about.

I have also been informed that the school purchased additional land and plans are underway for the construction of a secondary school from next year and hopefully later also introduce a vocational training institution for offering technical skills in the fields of sewing and mechanical training.

It is important to ensure that the momentum for supporting the running of the school is maintained. The task ahead is not easy but where there is a will, there is a way. It is my hope and prayer therefore, that means can be found to support all the deserving children through expanded scholarships so that their dreams for the future are realized.

I wish to commend the Board of the Nafasi Sawa Children's Foundation for coming up with various innovative ways to fundraise. I wish to also contribute towards this worthy cause, by making a small contribution of CHF 200 towards it.

Let me conclude by thanking you for everything that you are doing to light the fire of the children of the Albert Schweitzer School in Kenya, that will shine the way forward in their lives.

As a son of Kenya, I appreciate each one of you for the sacrifices you are making this afternoon and in future, to see to it that a child in Kenya achieves or accesses quality education. Thank you for your efforts to help these children on their journey towards becoming responsible people in future.

Thank you and God Bless Kenya,

God Bless Switzerland,

God Bless our relations!