

  
Promoting Faith and Justice  
**BULLETIN**



## QUOTE

*"A beautiful life does not just happen. It is built daily by prayer, humility, sacrifice and hard work. Don't tell me about your God with your words. Show me about your God with your actions."*

P.O BOX 37774  
Lusaka Zambia.

JCTR OFFICES, 3813,  
Martin Mwambula Road,  
Olympia - Lusaka.

Tel: +260-211-290410  
Fax: +260-211-290759

Email:  
[manager.fj@jctr.org.zm](mailto:manager.fj@jctr.org.zm)  
and [m&i@jctr.org.zm](mailto:m&i@jctr.org.zm)

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# LETTER

## *From the Editor*

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Dear Readers

**Z**ambia's debt crisis has been in the headlines in the month of November. JCTR is concerned with this state of affairs because sovereign debt distress is a real existential threat to the provision of public service. As the social and economic impact of debt begins to manifest itself, it is the ordinary people who are going to bear the brunt of debt crisis. In the case of Zambia, debt distress will inevitably affect national budgetary allocation to the social sector, which has been declining in the last five years. Over the years, JCTR has untiringly been advocating for increased budgetary allocations to the social sector because this sector addresses directly the needs of the majority poor, vulnerable and marginalized. Social sector public spending is crucial for alleviating poverty and inequality and for saving lives and sustaining livelihoods.

Every time the Government is faced with declining revenue collections and diminishing fiscal space, the social sector is always the first to be dropped from the priority list in the perennial scramble for the limited resources. Debt crisis makes the work of advocating for increased budgetary allocation to the social sector very difficult, if not unattainable.

With Zambia officially defaulting on its debt obligations, there are numerous adverse macroeconomic impacts. With the default, the Kwacha is expected to further depreciate against the dollar. Zambia being a heavily import dependent country (particularly on imports of petroleum products, transport and communication equipment, electronics, fertilisers and pesticides, raw materials for manufacturing, food products, etc) makes

the country vulnerable to depreciation in currency as higher interest rates and lower credit rating will make it difficult to borrow and difficult to attract capital investment which the country badly needs to grow its economy to fight poverty and inequality. One of the adverse ripple effects of the depreciating Kwacha will be the rise in inflation. With the rise in inflation, we can expect to see a rise in the already high cost of living in Zambia, making worse the country's poverty levels.

Given the position we find ourselves in as a country, it is important to ensure that there is a holistic approach from all government ministries to come up with a prudent debt management strategy. It is also key for the Ministry of Finance to improve transparency through pro-active disclosure of information and regular reporting. In the light of the economic implications of sovereign debt default, the government must ensure adequate implementation of the medium-term Economic Recovery Programme, cushioning the poor and the vulnerable in society from the economic shocks. Further, the Government must continue to pursue an IMF program as this will ensure debt sustainability and improved debt management in the future.

As we come to the end of the eventful year of 2020, on behalf of JCTR team and on my behalf, we take a moment to wish you all a blessed Christmas and a peaceful new year. May 2021 bring new and social justice perspectives for all of us and economic justice for the people we serve.

*Alex Muyebe, S.J.*  
*Editor*

# 56 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE, YET CHAINED IN DEBT



## Summary of JCTR Webinar that took place on 22nd October 2020, ahead of Zambia's Independence Day

### Introduction

**T**he independence ideology and narration envision citizens living a dignified life through social, economic, political, cultural and financial development. However, the noble cause of living a dignified life is challenged by constraints to adequately fund the social sector and ineffective management of public resources like debt.

Zambians need to understand the historicity of debt, the relationship between debt and development, how to strategically find lasting

solutions, the role of citizens in the debt discourse, how to invest debt resources, management of debt resources and the debt sustainability parameters. The webinar mainly focused on the historicity of debt situation in Zambia and proposed some recommendations which would bring historical change in Zambia with respect to public finance management. Having acknowledged the incessant weakening fiscal fitness since the post-debt relief in 2006, it therefore becomes imperative to trace the root causes of the problem of debt burden in Zambia.

## The Cause of the Current Debt Problem

The root cause of Zambia's current debt problem owes to non-deliberative efforts for fiscal consolidation. The government has focused on capital projects, incessant borrowing, prized political appearance over economic reality, increased expenditures, governance and leadership challenges, borrowing to consume than invest and lack of custodianship from citizens, private sectors, civil society organizations and the government, yet with little focus on emancipating the poor.

## Debt, Infrastructural Development and Living Standards

To overhaul the raised challenges, Zambia should seek for development that improves the living standards and conditions of her people; this entails critically considering the social aspect of development which can translate into living standards of ordinary citizens. Secondly, Zambia should budget for stability and economic packages in order to attain fiscal consolidation. Further, after attaining some economic stability and fiscal consolidation, then the country should begin planning for infrastructural developments which would connect rural areas to trade and consolidation of social protection policies. Further, the infrastructural development should reduce poverty, foster economic growth and reveal improved living standards.

## Recommendations

To curb the problem of debt in Zambia, first, the general public and the governing bodies need to understand how debt works and the

ripple effects in the eventuality of debt resource mismanagement. Secondly, there is need for a legal framework which would guide and restrain the appetite for borrowing and can provide debt contraction mechanisms as well as a ceiling cap to public debt. Also, the government can come up with austerity measures and limit the spending to the available financial resources. Ultimately, the government ought to reduce borrowing.

All the discussed root causes, historicity and proposed solution should occur in the context of responsibility. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the Government through political will (Politicians), the Private Sector dynamism and Civil Service efficiency to find lasting solutions to the vicious debt cycle. The three categories provide a Triangle of Hope.

## Conclusion

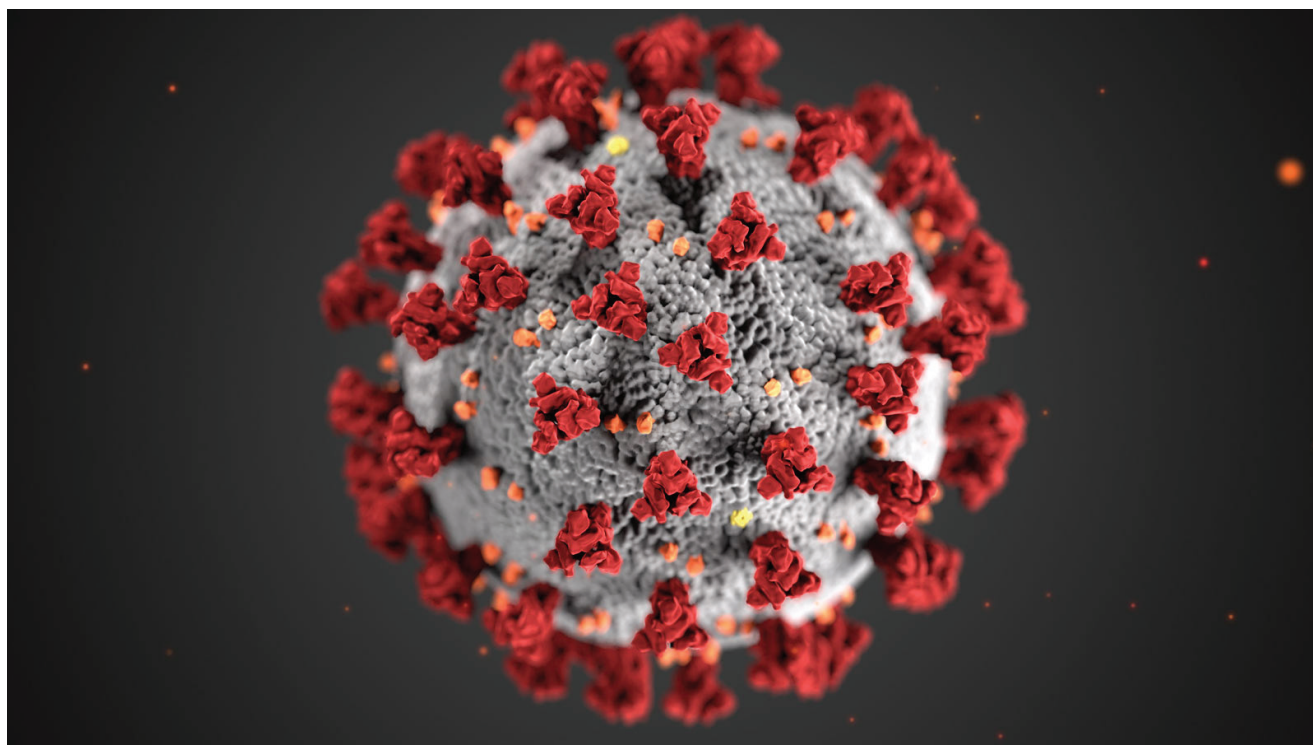
Finally, to achieve sustainable development, the current situation invites all development actors to play an active and critical role (Media, government, citizens, CSOs, Private Sector, traditional Leaders, Churches, etc.). There is need for the government to invest debt resources into projects which can grow the economy. Primarily, because economic growth is fundamental to eliminating poverty and improving the living standards and conditions of citizens.

*John Kunda Sauti, S.J.*

*JCTR Programme Officer*

*Lusaka*

# REFLECTING ON THE IMPACT OF COVID-19: A LIVELIHOODS PERSPECTIVE



**T**he COVID-19 story is one that leaves you in awe of how life can change in the blink of an eye. Indeed, no one could have anticipated the unfolding of events following the first record of the disease in Wuhan, China towards the end of 2019. The virus subsequently spread across the globe and was declared a world pandemic on 11th March 2020.

Admittedly, with over 18 million global cases and over half a million deaths, the pandemic has permanently marked history with impacts spanning various facets of human life. Subsequently, the focus of the global community has shifted to impeding and eventually halting the spread of COVID-19. Zambia has recorded close to 6000 confirmed cases with about 200 deaths, following the announcement of the first two cases on 20th March 2020. Of interest in this article is the impact

of the COVID-19 pandemic on the livelihoods of the poor and most vulnerable as seen through the lens of employment, cost of living and health outcomes in Zambia. Undeniably, the impacts of the pandemic present a setback to progress registered over the years towards eradicating poverty, enhancing equality and ensuring development for all.

## Covid-19 and Employment

In appreciating the impact of COVID-19 on livelihoods, a look at employment is instructive. Employment is an avenue for income earning for individuals and households. In view of COVID-19, at both international and domestic levels, measures have overtime been instituted with adverse impact on employment. Domestically, the Government instituted various measures to try and curb the spread of the virus. Some of the measures included the closing of bars, casinos and gyms and

the removal of street vendors. Additional measures included working from home under the campaign “stay home, stay safe.”

Internationally, as the cases of the pandemic increased, several countries instituted measures to try and contain and also stop the spread of the disease. Some of the measures included limiting or completely putting a stop to international flights. Lockdowns of cities and towns continues to be the norm. With domestic and international measures centred on restricting the movements of people, the impact on employment is observed. Firstly, a significant portion of the poor are absorbed in occupations that rely on people and customers leaving their homes and spending.

To make things worse, the sectors on which the poor and marginalised depend are already characterised by uncertain incomes, uncertain cash flows and little or no insurance protection to cushion against any loss in income. Occupations such as taxi drivers, domestic workers, bus drivers, restaurant and retail staff and food preparation jobs among others, were adversely affected. A significant proportion of these are underpaid, overworked, deprived of a number of benefits and unable to work from home.

## A Case: Covid-19 Brings the Hospitality Industry to its Knees

The hospitality/entertainment industry is but one example of what may be happening in various sectors of the economy as a result of COVID-19 and a closer look at the stories in tourism is therefore informative. For example, due to domestic and international travel restrictions coupled with the ban on public gatherings, the hospitality industry witnessed a significant reduction in its client base.

Management at a named lodge in Livingstone, informed employees that the lodge would only be able to pay 40% of salaries beginning April 2020 ultimately implying a 60% salary cut. Another case in point; in the South Luangwa National Park, the impact of COVID-19 on people that are working as safari guards, waiters, bar men, drivers, receptionists, front office personnel as well as the those whose businesses rely on the influx of tourists is noted. In the Capital City of Lusaka, places such as informal restaurants that are highly reliant on the influx of large numbers of people were affected by the “stay home, stay safe” campaign. With more people working from home, restaurants experienced notable losses in incomes.

Evidently, with the restrictions on face-to-face interactions, the hospitality industry has struggled to realise projected incomes and subsequently retain a number of employees. What is worse is that COVID-19 may linger longer than initially anticipated. The World Bank has already projected that in the post-COVID -19 world, recovering from the devastating impacts of the pandemic will be a long hard road.

## Indeed Health is Wealth

Compromised health outcomes due to COVID-19 also present additional livelihood challenges. While the virus is infecting all classes of people in society, the poor are envisaged to be affected most. Firstly, in the wake of COVID-19, there are additional costs occasioned by the pandemic such as on hand sanitisers, soap, masks and other hygiene products. Rising prices of various goods will strain income levels and make it difficult for the poor to afford essential COVID-19 prevention commodities.

Secondly, it is also clear that in this pandemic, certain groups may be at a higher risk of contracting

the virus. For example, with countries instituting lockdowns, the poor are unable to stock up adequate food and other necessities and may likely be more willing to leave their homes in search of food even in the face of a heightened risk of contracting COVID-19.

The poor already face other challenges such as accessibility to needed health care and failure to access health care may increase infections and possibly the death toll among society's most vulnerable populations and thus compromise livelihoods.

## Existing Challenges Exacerbated

The above noted livelihood outcomes due to COVID-19 are exacerbating the challenges that Zambians already face. Data from the 2015 Living Conditions Monitoring Survey (LCMS) estimates the national average monthly household income to be as low as K1, 801. Further, in view of COVID-19, the Ministry of Finance has estimated that budgeted revenue will fall short of target by close to 20% of the approved 2020 budget. This budget deficit will negatively impact on social sectors such as health, education and the much-needed empowerment schemes for the poor and vulnerable. This means that in the face of worsened livelihoods, the much-needed cushion may not be available given macro-economic challenges.

A case in point is the Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP); a key programme in the agricultural sector. Without financial support, small scale farmers' livelihoods and national food security may suffer significant setbacks. Related to incomes, prices of various goods and services will not remain unscathed by the pandemic. This rise in prices will compound the situation of households where incomes have either reduced or been lost completely. Households already struggle with

meeting the cost of basic needs as measured by the JCTR Basic Needs and Nutrition Basket (BNNB). High costs of such items will likely compel households to compromise on nutrition. Balanced nutrition, especially in terms of adequate vitamin, mineral and protein intake, remains key at household level as it enhances resistance against infections.

## Conclusion

As COVID-19 spreads, it will continue to impact on the cost of living at the backdrop of reduced incomes and unemployment due to the pandemic. While prevention strategies should continue, the need to also respond effectively to the impacts of the disease especially on the poor is paramount if Zambia is to rise above the pandemic. Evidently, the journey to recovery from COVID-19 will be a long and difficult one. The need to zero in on the impacts it has had and strategize how these can be overcome in ways that leaves no one behind is thus imperative.

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***Chama Bowa Mundia***  
***JCTR Programme Manager***  
***Lusaka***

# COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND EDUCATION INEQUALITIES IN AFRICA: A TEACHER'S REFLECTION

**I**t was mid-morning and I was busy delivering my second lesson of the day. I was looking forward to two more in the afternoon, when I heard noises and commotions at the school gate. It did not bother me at first given the location of our school, but as it grew louder I was concerned. On inquiring, I was informed that parents and guardians were thronged at the school gate wanting to pick their children. They were there because the government had announced an immediate closure of schools and other learning institutions for three weeks. This was a move to curtail the spread of covid-19 pandemic.

Although the school administration attempted pleading with them to allow us complete the day, the parents or guardians were adamant. They wanted to get their children home as soon as possible. Like most people, our parents too were terrified of the infection and the death rate of covid-19. Students in my class were picked one by one. This in a way disrupted the attention of the class and the flow of the lesson. At the end I had to discontinue the lesson.

Despite the fact that the closure of learning intuitions was foreseeable, most teachers and school administrations were not prepared for a lengthy shutdown. Our learners went home with barely no assignments. Personally, I was not worried much because I thought it was only for three weeks. But after three weeks there was no sign that the infection curve was flattening soon. The government extended the schools closure to one month. This made me worried. I felt that my students would miss out a lot and even regress.

Six months down the line, schools are still closed. I cannot help but wonder if our governments acted too hastily. In other words, did most countries in the continent consider the long term effects of

covid-19 in their planning? Were most sectors and more particularly education sector included in decision making? I think the education sector in most countries were not considered. By purporting this I do not mean to undermine the advantages of a quick and decisive action taken by governments to curb the spread of covid-19. It is a fact that Corona virus is deadly, it spreads very fast, it has no known cure, and our preparedness as a continent made us highly vulnerable. Thus, a quick move by most governments in the continent was based on good faith and a dictum that "prevention is better than cure."

My reflection, however, is not on whether various the steps undertaken by different governments are appropriate or not. Rather, I wish to purport that covid-19 pandemic which forced many learning institutions to adapt e-learning has intensified the already existing education inequalities in most African countries. I must warn the reader that my experience could be limited to high school education and Ethiopia where I am currently teaching. Thus, I would not know much about the impact of covid-19 pandemic on the pre-primary, primary, and tertiary education. Nonetheless, it is possible for someone to extrapolate this experience to his or her own country and to different levels of education.

## E-learning as Remedy

Realising that the infection curve was not flattening soon, most governments in the continent encouraged schools to opt for e-learning. As teachers, we had to prepare and send students notes, worksheets, assignments, and videos through school website, emails, and even social media channels.

Although e-learning has helped me keep some of my students engaged. I think it has also in exacer-

bated educational inequalities. On top of being a new phenomenon to many learners and teachers in the continent, I found e-learning quite demanding. I had to type the notes, make videos, worksheets, assignments, and teach online. To reach more students, I had to post these materials on different online platforms such as school's e-learning website, class telegram channel, and student's e-mail addresses. Despite the multiple platforms, I was able to reach roughly 60% of my students.

It is estimated that as of March 25, 2020, 184 countries had shut down schools and more than 1.5 billion learners had been affected. According to the UN, the closure of schools and other learning spaces have impacted 94% of the world's student population. Of those affected 99% are in low and lower-middle income countries. Commenting on the report, Antonio Guterres termed this as a generational catastrophe that could undermine decades of progress and exacerbate entrenched inequalities (United Nations).

Looking at aforementioned hustles and considering that I teach in a city's if not country's premium school, I cannot but think of 40% of my students whom I could not reach, the students in rural parts of the country, those with learning disabilities, those who come from economically disadvantaged families, the refugees, and the immigrants. Thus, I am convinced that lack of in-class learning and a switch to e-learning has widened the knowledge gap between the haves and have-nots, city dwellers and rural area inhabitants, boys and girls, 'normal' students and those with special needs, and other members of minority groups.

## E-learning for the Have-nots

Unlike the haves, the have-nots who constitute a large population in the continent lack three things necessary for e-learning. Firstly, most students who come from the lower strata of society lack the infrastructure for e-learning. They do not have gadgets or electronic devices such as smartphones and laptops. Those whose parents possess or can afford these gadgets most likely will not afford internet. A thing that is crucial for e-learning.

To try and address the infrastructural issue, some

governments have opted to broadcast lessons through television and radio programmes. This is really a laudable idea. More students can be reached at the same time. Nonetheless, the challenge is unlike in-class learning where students have more contact hours with teachers, these programmes are limited. A given class can only get few hours a day. Another problem connected with infrastructure is the availability and reliability of electricity. Most rural parts of our countries in Africa lack electricity. Thus, e-learning is unimaginable.

Secondly, most students in the continent do not have the luxury of a conducive environment fit for e-learning. E-learning requires a private and a quiet space which most families' lack. Most spaces at their homes are shared. Thus, most students find it hard to concentrate on class. I had occasions when siblings budged in while their sisters were attending a class. Even though it somehow provided an interlude, budging in often interrupted lesson flow and the concentration of other students. For other students, e-learning is cumbersome. They are unable to get immediate help when a need arises and the teacher is not available. Their parents are unable to help them with academic problems. Lastly, most students from disadvantaged communities lack time for studies. A lot is demanded from them when at home. Some have to help their parents to supplement family's income. Girls and boys are expected to help with house chores such as caring for younger siblings, taking care of animals, fetching water, farming and many other activities. Helping parents with house chores in itself is not a bad thing, actually, children are encouraged to. However, the challenge comes in when balance lacks. When students are more involved in these activities, they would not have time and energy to sit and attend online classes.

## What Should be Done?

Now that many countries are thinking of reopening schools, I feel it is an opportune moment that we deliberate on how we can help our students who have been affected academically by the covid-19 pandemic. We need to bridge the knowledge gap. This is a mammoth task that requires a collective and collaborative effort from all stakeholders

namely: teachers, school administrations, students, governments, non-governmental organisations, and other people of good will. I will attempt to propose how different stakeholders can contribute towards elevating education inequalities brought about by covid-19:

**Government:** Through its Ministry of Education (MoE) and other parastatals, governments should think of reopening schools and other learning institutions. In addition to the fact that covid-19 could be endemic, the more learning institutions remain closed, the wider the gap of education inequalities grows. Thus, governments should come up with realistic, affordable, and sustainable guidelines appropriate for the reopening schools. Secondly, they should not cut the budget for education rather, they should increase it. The government can cushion parents by providing students with text books, exercise books, pens, and other learning paraphernalia. Install hygiene and health facilities in schools. Change the academic calendar. Employ more teachers. Bail out private schools that are struggling.

**School Administrations:** Schools administration play a key role in implementing government directives. They should utilise funds and resources at their disposal for the benefit of students prudently and ensure that best guidance on health and hygiene are followed. Some parents may have lost their jobs due to the pandemic. This demands that the schools administration be lenient and understanding. It is true that schools need money to function. Thus, by being understanding and lenient they can listen to the struggling parents and come up with a fee-payment plan conducive for all. The schools administration can limit school requirements to essential items only. They can encourage teachers to organise remedial classes.

**Parents:** Parents should give teachers and schools administration the support they need. The best way to do this is paying school fees on time and being fully involved and interested in the academic progress of their children. They should provide their children with humble time and support they need. They can do this by exempting their children from some house chores so as to create time for studies.

**Non-Governmental Organisations:** This group plays a crucial role in making sure that the government is aware of issues and tries to bridge the inequality gap. In addition to their advocacy role, they can partner with governments, schools, and parents. NGOs can provide scholarships to the needy students, learning materials, and even help build health and hygiene facilities in schools. They assist in sensitising communities on the importance of education. The closure of schools left many girls vulnerable. Some girls may not come back to school due to early and unexpected pregnancies, marriage, gender based violence, or may have undergone genital mutilation. Thus, NGOs can help in providing psychosocial services to students.

**Teachers:** In this quest to bridge the knowledge gap, we the teachers are the drivers. We are the people who can assess and satisfy the knowledge disparity gap among learners. Thus, we should be attentive to the needs of our students, patient with them, available to clock more hours for a lesser pay, be easily accessible by learners, and be mindful of our language and sensitive to non-verbal cues emanating from students.

**Students:** They are the target group. They should be ready and willing to work extra hard. They should be available for remedial classes. They should speak out and courageous enough to express their thoughts and views to the teachers and school administration. They should be considerate of others and be ready to help others especially those who are struggling with a given subject matter.

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*Kemboi Silas Kipkorir, S.J.  
Addis Ababa  
Ethiopia*

# RE-IMAGINING ZAMBIA'S FUTURE BEYOND COVID-19

## Introduction

**A**lthough Zambia has an estimated population of 18.3 million, the country doesn't have 18.3 million problems. On the contrary, it has over 18.3 million solutions to its socioeconomic challenges. The object of this article is to reflect on the reshaping of Zambia's future in the evolving New World, which is being brought into being by the global coronavirus pandemic or COVID-19.

The outbreak of the disease in Wuhan, China, in December 2019 and its subsequent rapid global spread since March 2020 has made the future of our world, countries, and communities hang perilously in the balance. Very briefly, policymakers find themselves compelled to choose either virus-preventing stay-at-home policies or opening up their respective socioeconomic systems, and all this in a world where the economic outlook remains very uncertain, at least in the short to medium term.

Added to this that COVID-19 infections in sub-Saharan African countries have yet to reach their peak and the fact that the full and real extent of the pandemic might be masked by rudimentary diagnostic methodologies and techniques which do not reveal the full level of the infections. To put it in African parlance, in sub-Saharan Africa, Zambia included, COVID-19 infections are still cooking. The reality is that the disease has still to hit us with its full force. From what we can see, this pandemic will be with us for the foreseeable future and we are far from being on the other side of the curve. The worst, in our case, is still to come.

In fact we find ourselves in a catch-22 situation that will take bold leadership to unravel. Why? Because of the mutually conflicting or dependent conditions. Should Zambia continue with a prolonged stay-at-home policy and suffer the collective consequences of a looming economic disaster? Or should Zambia open up economic activity with the risk of having to face a spike in COVID-19 cases, something that would almost inevitably stretch our health sector beyond its capacity and lead to a public health crisis?



**Top Priority in COVID-19 mitigation measures is the saving of lives. In picture, Distribution of Food Hampers at Francis Xavier Parish in Lusaka**

It is an existential conundrum which nonetheless we have to face head-on.

My proposal is that Zambia resolves this catch-22 poser by opening up the country in four stages – while all the time accompanying mitigation efforts to contain COVID-19 while simultaneously and of priority saving lives first. This should be accompanied with stimulus initiatives by the Ministry of Finance and Bank of Zambia to resuscitate crucial economic activities. First, key economic entities and industries, such as agriculture, mining and manufacturing, could set the pace for opening-up; these would then be followed by the service and social sectors such as transport and tourism, after which would come education, and then the entertainment industry (provided all of these continued to meet specific health-protecting guidelines). These processes would require the timely supply of socioeconomic data triangulated between the Zambia Statistics Agency, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Finance and its sister Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industries.

## Education Sector

In the education sector, some learning institutions are operating online although several faced connectivity, accessibility and facility challenges relating to

the cost of internet provision. The closure of universities alongside secondary and primary schools and kindergartens was an inappropriate measure. Universities and colleges are centres for the production of knowledge and the discovery of solutions to local development issues; closing them in the same way as a kindergarten was to neglect their potential for contributing to the solution of the problems brought about by COVID-19. On the other hand a number of innovations, especially in the services sector, have been launched as a result of the pandemic. These have been long overdue, and we surely did not have to wait for a pandemic to make us realise that our personal presence is no longer necessary for us to access full basic services like enhanced banking, motor insurance, motor and road licenses/taxes, and other licensing services. COVID-19 has shown us which jobs matter in the crucial situations in life; if we do not learn from it, we are doomed to repeat the same blind mistakes and to move the country in a wrong direction. The evolving New World, which is currently gestating, demands shifts in focus and priorities. Zambia has no choice but to examine its own priorities and get them right. This will be a painstaking process that will require earnest national and personal reflection.

At the domestic level, economic and agricultural opportunities must be explored to promote household resilience against poverty, while at the national level Zambia needs a reorientation in its policy direction. For example, we can afford to close Parliament for several weeks, even months if necessary (as is the case at present), but we can never afford to

close Chainama Hills College Hospital. I am aware that this may be an extreme example, but there is a profound message in it relating to the urgent need to reconsider our national resource distribution mechanisms. Maintaining socio-sector spending is essential if we are to make long-term national gains. For the future, we cannot afford to enter the evolving New World with a laissez-faire attitude that is, with eyes and minds closed. The wise adage runs true, 'adapt or perish.' Zambia has to make pragmatic and structural changes to meet the evolving challenges with which the prevailing conditions are confronting the nation. We have no choice but to adapt to the new circumstances of our existence with real-life changes that will include, but will not be limited to, the harnessing of appropriate technology and innovation in the processes of producing goods and providing services. While many countries in the developed world are moving towards the utilisation of high-tech and Artificial Intelligence measures - all supported by a generous research and design budget - a majority of sub-Saharan African countries, Zambia included, continue with archaic technologies in their production processes.

## Analogue Systems

The time has surely come to embrace the fourth industrial revolution which operates on automation and cybernation. If we do not modernize our capabilities for harnessing natural resources and establish a coordinated market for services and goods on the continent and beyond, Zambia, and Africa in general, might find themselves beleaguered in the evolving New World. One thing that COVID-19 has brought out is that now is the time for Zambia and Africa to make the best of what we have. It is true that an economic downturn is brewing under our feet, stimulated by the way COVID-19 has inhibited production, spending, and consumption over the past few months. But as Zambia goes about opening up some socio-economic sectors, it is crucially important to adjust the country's fiscal framework in real terms to meet the new realities of the shifting ground. Clearly, this year national output will slump drastically, adding to our difficulties in responding to the devastating effects of the country's national debt burden. Notwithstanding this reality, we have every reason to face the future with confidence by putting our act together as a nation and embracing the future with our individual and collective creative and innovative



**Women and child headed households bear the full brunt of the COVID-19 Socio-economic Crisis**

abilities. COVID-19 containment and mitigation measures are certainly of the utmost importance, but they are not enough. We have to plan for the future of the country beyond COVID-19. This will entail making significant adjustments at the domestic and national levels, in the critical areas of innovation, production, consumption and general adaptation. Failing this, we will be courting chaos in the future. In a word, therefore, COVID-19 has reshaped our world and its future in an almost inconceivable way. Since, as human beings, we are self-reflecting creatures, one thing is clear: the new normal is here to



**Catholic Women's League (CWL) Partnering with ZAM COVID-19 Task Force in a Feeding Programme for Front liners**

stay; we will never again get back to the old normal. If we were to try to do so, we would have failed to learn some priceless lessons from this life-changing disruption in the routine of our lives.

## Shift in Focus

A theological reflection on this rupture is that like the plague that in the days of Moses took the lives of the first-borns of the Egyptians, so also a pestilence or pandemic of such immense proportions as COVID-19 demands an exodus, a movement away from our comfort zone, a shift in focus, a heightened consciousness, a new direction. We have to ask ourselves what God is saying to us and to Zambia in this situation and these circumstances. Hopefully, as a nation, we will do better than we did before COVID-19. Hopefully, we will respond with courage and not fear to this pandemic. Together and in unity we shall surmount all the problems of this dark moment of our history and time.



**ZAM COVID-19 Collaborating with Magis and Jesuit Novices in Packing Food Hampers and face masks earmarked for distribution to vulnerable and high risky Communities**

## Conclusion

Every indication is that this pandemic will be with us long into the foreseeable future. The better we adapt to living with it and adjusting our lives accordingly, the happier we shall be. Please do your public and civic duty by wearing a face mask while in public spaces or when using public or private transport; wash your hands frequently and carefully; avoid hand-shaking; and maintain a distance of one to two metres from other people. Finally, join me in offering trillions of salutations and thanks to all our front-line health workers who put themselves at risk as they struggle for the containment and mitigation of COVID-19. And to all our gallant fallen heroes who have died in the line of COVID-19 duty may you rest in the peace of the Risen Lord. "Greater love has no one than this that someone lay down his life for his friends."

*Andrew Simpasa, S.J.  
Chairperson of ZAM COVID-19 Response  
Lusaka*

# RECOMMENDATION 205 IN VIEW OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

## Introduction

**T**his write up presents a summary of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Recommendation 205 (R205) of 2017. The focus is on guidelines and objectives of the R205. The aim is to raise awareness on R205.

While countries, Zambia inclusive, look for ways of fighting and managing the novel Corona Virus (COVID-19) pandemic, the R205, though not directly, provides perspectives from which such a crisis can be addressed using the guidelines thus outlined in it. No single country knew or expected the emergency of COVID-19. It came upon the globe like the Biblical thief. If any country knew when COVID was going to come, then preparations were going to be made, following the guidelines in R205, as early as July 2017. However, now that COVID-19 is here, countries can still use R205 to prevent, mitigate and build resilience. COVID-19 has challenged the 'world of work.'

The new normal under the COVID-19 pandemic has invited both employers and employees to consider working from home through the use of technology. Not many employers and employees were prepared for such a situation. COVID-19 has also shown where the world is going in terms of work and the development of technology. The 4th industrial revolution is now with us and COVID-19 has in fact brought it within our reach and forced us to change and embrace it. Therefore, we do not need to be overwhelmed by COVID-19 especially when we consider the world of work and what we should do. As countries develop strategies to fight COVID-19, they should do so by taking into consideration guidelines provided by R205. The recommendation is all encompassing and only needs creative application to the current new normal which has been brought about by COVID-19.

## International Labour Organisation (ILO)

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has been in existence for 100 years now (1919-2019). During this period, member States (Zambia inclusive) have often called upon ILO to address many crises especially

those that have arisen due to conflict and disasters.

## Establishment of ILO

Following the First World War (IWW), in 1919, the world realised that lasting peace was dependent on social justice. With that realisation, ILO was established. The foundational principle for the establishment of the ILO was that "universal and lasting peace can only be established if it is based on social justice." Not long after the WWI, the eminence of the Second World War (WWII) was so obvious that ILO reinforced its response to crisis by adopting Recommendation No.71 on Employment (Transition from War to Peace). This was aimed at helping war-torn societies to reconnect with growth and development by focusing on key world of work issues and also finding effective responses to crisis.

## Effective Crisis Response

Over the years, ILO has dealt with consequences of crises through prevention, preparedness, mitigation and recovery by developing and testing approaches and tools. Along the way, ILO has gained experience of the critical role of job creation and decent work strategies in fragile situations. This has resulted into international consensus on the need to include employment promotion among the measures to be taken during humanitarian and development assistance for effective crises response.

## Recommendation No.205 (R205)

In June 2017, following a two year process of standard setting and tripartite consultations to revise and replace Recommendation No.71, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) adopted Recommendation No. 205 on Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience (R205). Let us see the difference between R205 and R71.

## How is Recommendation No.71 (R71) Different from Recommendation 205 (R205)?

Recommendation 205 or R205 expands the scope of Recommendation No.71 (R71). It includes internal conflicts and disasters, broadens and updates the guid-

ance on employment and several other elements of the Decent Work Agenda. It takes into account the current global context and the complex and evolving nature of contemporary crises as well as the experience gained by the ILO and the international community in crisis response over the last decades. It focuses on recovery and reconstruction in post-conflict and disaster situations but also addresses the root causes of fragility and takes preventive measures for building resilience. At the core of R205 are guiding principles and objectives and its scope.

## **R205 and Guiding Principles**

The core of R205 is that it offers guiding principles for taking measures to generate employment and decent work in crisis situations and presents a phased multi-track approach to promoting peace, preventing crises, enabling recovery and building resilience. R205 also provides guidance on international cooperation, coordination and coherence and calls on the ILO to play a leading role in crisis response centred on employment and decent work, focussing on employment promotion, labour market access and integration, capacity development and institution building in close cooperation with regional and international institutions. Thus far, let us briefly focus on each of the objectives, scope and guiding principles of R205 and their implication on COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Objectives and Scope**

Recommendation No. 205 (R205) offers guidance to Members on the measures they should take to create employment and decent work for the purposes of prevention, recovery, peace and resilience with respect to crises situations arising from conflicts and disasters, in our context, in the new world order, COVID-19 pandemic included. What do the terms disaster and resilience mean in R205?

### **Disaster**

By the term disaster, R205 means “a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity, leading to human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts.”

### **Resilience**

By resilience, R205 means “the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from

the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management.” Thus disaster and resilience defined, what is the scope of application of R205?

## **Scope of Application**

The application of R205 extends to all workers and job-seekers, and to all employers, in all sectors of the economy directly or indirectly affected by crisis situations. It also concerns workers and persons in volunteer work engaged in crisis response, including in the immediate response. Therefore, all these categories have an obligation to take interest and familiarise themselves with R205 especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. R205 has about fourteen (14) guiding principles on member states. However, this work only highlights some among the fourteen principles.

## **Guiding Principles of R205 on Member States**

Firstly Recommendation No. 205 calls upon Members to reflect on the 14 guiding principles in taking measures to prevent and respond to crisis situations. These principles recognise the need to promote full, productive, freely chosen employment and decent work, and to respect, promote and realise the fundamental principles and rights at work, other human rights and other relevant international labour standards. They emphasise the importance of good governance, social dialogue, national reconciliation and a just transition to an environmentally sustainable economy. Secondly, the guidelines highlight the need to respect national laws and use local knowledge, capacity and resources to provide effective responses. They affirm the need to compact discrimination on any basis and to pay special attention to population groups and individuals who have been made particularly vulnerable by the crisis.

Thirdly, the guidelines recall the need to ensure that any negative and unintended consequences are promptly identified and monitored, in order to avoid harmful spill-over effects on individuals, communities, the environment and the economy. They call for international solidarity, burden and responsibility-sharing and cooperation, and for close coordination and synergies between humanitarian and development assistance to ensure a harmonised response and to avoid the duplication of mandates. In the case of Zambia, this is where we have seen, in response to the COVID-19) the health sector and other sectors, government and private sector, have developed a multi-sectoral response. This is

encouraged in both disasters and pandemics like the COVID-19 but should be replicated even in other sectors of development. What approaches does R205 propose to member states to take?

## Strategic Approaches

R205 encourages Members to adopt a phased multi-track approach in implementing crisis response strategies, including immediate emergency measures and long-term measures. It offers practical guidance for designing and implementing crisis prevention and response measures in a range of policy areas, while acknowledging the diversity of national circumstances and priorities.

In particular, R205 elaborates on measures for employment and income generation and for sustainable enterprises, rights, equality and non-discrimination; education, vocational training and guidance; social protection; labour law, labour administration and labour market information; and social dialogue and the role of workers' organisations. It underscores the significance of applying a gender perspective in all crisis prevention and response design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation activities. Prominently, the Recommendation expounds on actions to prevent, mitigate and prepare for crisis in ways that support economic and social development and decent work. It particularly places emphasis on the need for strengthened international cooperation and increased complementarity between humanitarian and development initiatives, and it calls on the ILO to play a leading role in crisis response centred on employment and decent work.

## Job Creation in Crisis Situations

The Employment Intensive Investment (EII) approach offers a way of restoring the livelihoods of people in affected communities through wage payment schemes and skills development, and builds the capacity of local institution. In this approach, the focus is orienting infrastructure investments towards creating higher levels of productive employment, and improving access to basic goods and services.

## Decent Jobs for Youth in Fragile Situations

The effects of fragility on youth employment, in terms of both availability and quality of jobs, is such that young people who are already disproportionately affected by unemployment globally, fragility often means that it is even harder for them to gain access to employment opportunities, with lower quality jobs for those

who do find work.

## Cooperatives Recovery in Countries Affected by Fragility, Conflict and Disaster

What are Cooperatives? These are autonomous associations of persons uniting voluntarily to meet common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise. Cooperatives value issues such as self-help, equality, equity and solidarity. In light of the COVID-19, few cooperatives have come up in Zambia and they seem to be a way that is going to be a source of not only immediate income from youths but also provides an opportunity for future investments and provision of some form of social security. One such cooperative is the Kalumbila Multipurpose Cooperative Society Limited where youths can earn an income from investing in the transport, agriculture and mining sectors.

## Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW) in Situations of Fragility and Crisis.

The FPRW covers at least four areas which include (1) Freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining. (2) The elimination of forced or compulsory labour. (3) The abolition of child labour and (4) the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. These are clearly stated and stipulated in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work which was adopted in 1998. These rights are universal and apply to all people in all states – regardless of the level of economic development.

## Gender Equality in Contexts of Fragility, Conflict and Disaster Settings

This gendered division of labour in households and the economy means that many women have less access to economic resources including property, financial, inheritance and natural resources and are less able to control the resources and processes relevant to tackling crises. In disasters, for instance, women without land rights or who farm small plots are most vulnerable and may be forced off the land entirely.

## Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Employment

People with disabilities remain among the most hid-

den, statistically-invisible and socially-excluded groups in disaster and conflict settings. The first UN Flagship Report on Disability and Development on the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by, for and with persons with disabilities, includes the understanding of how people with disabilities are affected by natural disasters and armed conflict. Now with the emergence of COVID-19, it goes without saying that this category of people is equally if not most affected by the pandemic.

## **Education, Vocational Training and Guidance: Skills Development for Peace and Resilience**

Decent work gives people perspectives. To obtain a decent job, people need to have the right skills to find work, carry out the required tasks and stay employed. Skills development therefore plays a major role when it comes to creating sustainable peace and resilience by providing decent livelihoods and perspectives within the community. The COVID-19 pandemic has now even made the reality of skills gap and skills mismatch more prominent. In a situation of COVID-19, we are now facing, people should have skills that enable them to find decent work and earn an income. Most significantly, people, especially the youths, need to have skills that enable them to survive in situation of crisis or pandemic like COVID-19. It should be our hope that the skills gap report from the survey that is being carried out by the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security will include in it a section that addresses situations such as the COVID-19 and shows how resilience can be built.

## **Social Protection for Peace and Resilience**

In responding to crisis situations, R205 encourages members to ensure basic income security; develop, restore or enhance comprehensive social security schemes; and ensure effective access to essential health care and other basic social services; moreover, they should establish, re-establish or maintain social protection floors. These are very important especially for people who are in the informal sector who are usually the most affected. In situations like that of the COVID-19 pandemic, the absence of such services even becomes more prominent.

## **Labour Law, Labour Administration and Labour Market Information**

Labour administration, including labour inspection,

is already weak in many countries affected by fragility, and labour interests risk being overlooked in emergency situations. In these contexts, the rule of law should be restored and ensure protection for workers and a fair playing field for employers. The focus is on how processes of recovery may offer an opportunity to review and update existing labour law so that it will correspond better to a new and developing situation.

In lieu of the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw how the workers' and employers' representatives together with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security quickly went to the table through the Tripartite Consultative Labour Council (TCLC) to find ways of addressing the pandemic. Hence on 26th March 2020, the TCLC came up with guidelines for employers and employees on what to do during the COVID-19 pandemic. That was further followed by another TCLC meeting that produced the 7th May, 2020 Statutory Instrument No 48 which gave guidelines on application of exemptions. That in itself was a clear example of particular actions that are expected to be taken in a crisis situation. Although R205 is pre-COVID-19, its guidelines are very relevant to the situation.

## **Employment Services in Situations of Fragility, Conflict and Disaster**

Employment services bridge the gap between supply and demand for labour by improving the efficiency of matching jobs and skills in the labour market and improving the employability of the labour force, hence facilitating rapid transitions. The focus is on how Emergency Employment Services (EES) can assist workers who have been affected by crisis to find decent jobs, and at the same time can help the process of building emergency infrastructure and assistance delivery mechanisms. In the Zambian context, the emergency of the COVID-19 should actually point stakeholders who are involved in providing employment services to re-think their strategies and include in their activities that specifically seek to offer Emergency Employment Services (EES). This is both a challenge and an opportunity. It is a challenge in the sense that such services are almost non-existent. It is an opportunity for existing institutions that offer employment services to include emergency services. This also presents an opportunity for the entrance of new players who specifically may want to offer EES.

## **Social Dialogue and the Role of Employers' and Workers' Organisations.**

In situations of fragility or crisis, the participation of

the social partners is crucial as they can alert well in advance the concerns and the needs of workers and businesses so that they are better taken into account when crafting crisis response.

## **The Role of Workers' Organisations in Promoting Peace and Resilience**

Social dialogue and tripartism are of great significance in building peace, reacting to conflicts and to disasters and restoring tranquility. Social dialogue and tripartism make societies stronger as they facilitate consensus-building on all labour issues, contribute to the implementation of employment and social policies, to reaching agreements, and to making labour laws and institutions effective. This is even more important in this period of COVID-19. Both employer and employee are equally affected. The situation can thus not be addressed without recourse to social dialogue.

## **The Role of Employer and Business Membership Organisations in Conflict and Disaster**

The private sector, through its business networks, experience and resources, can support prevention and rebuilding efforts in conflict and disaster-affected zones. It continues to provide vital goods and services and contributes to rebuilding shattered economies and communities.

## **Building Resilient Infrastructure and Social Inclusion**

R205 encourages members to build resilience to prevent, mitigate and prepare for crisis in ways that support economic and social development and decent work. This can be done through risk identification and threat evaluation, risk management, and prevention and mitigation of adverse effects. In the context of COVID-19, most countries did not have enough time to prepare for the emergence of the pandemic. However, now that the pandemic is known and present globally, countries can, Zambia inclusive, begin to build resilience, prevent and mitigate.

## **Conclusion**

The Recommendation invites Members, when preparing for and responding to crisis situations, to make full use of existing bilateral or multilateral arrangements, including through the United Nations system, international financial institutions and other regional or international mechanisms for coordinated response.

Members are encouraged to use existing arrangements and established institutions and mechanisms but also to strengthen them, as appropriate; and to enable the systematic exchange of information, good practice and technology for peace promotion and crisis prevention and mitigation. Employment, decent work and sustainable enterprise should be central focus of crisis responses, in accordance with applicable international labour standards. The COVID-19 pandemic has in fact shown that such arrangements must be encouraged and need to be strengthened.

The Recommendation also encourages a stronger co-operation among International organisations, within the scope of their respective mandates.

The ILO should play a leading role in assisting members provide crisis responses based on employment and decent work and focusing on employment promotion, labour market integration or access, as appropriate, capacity development and institution building, in close cooperation with regional and international institutions. Crisis responses should be complementary, specifically humanitarian and offer support towards development assistance as recalled in the Guiding Principles, for the promotion of full, productive, freely chosen employment and decent work for peace and resilience.

**Brian Banda**  
**Labour Officer**  
**Ministry of Labour and Social Security**  
**Lusaka**

*This reflection is neither a representation of ILO nor the Ministry of Labour. The author is simply trying to share his reflections on R205 and seeks to raise awareness of the same. He recently engaged in a Massive Open Online Course on R205, Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience. One of the key objectives of the course was to raise awareness on R205. The author is passionate about the world of work especially decent work and the promotion of job opportunities especially for young people.*

# COVID 19 AND TOBACCO CONSUMPTION



## Introduction

**T**he pandemic has once again shed light on the fundamental importance of health to development, the global economy and every other aspect of human life, including social interactions. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the Secretariat of the WHO FCTC has intensified its efforts to support parties (countries) to the convention that are willing to work, to the extent possible, in creating a healthier environment for their citizens by implementing the WHO FCTC or the country specific domestications thereof.

Tobacco use kills more than eight million people globally annually and negatively impacts the lung health of countless others. While the science of COVID-19 is evolving, the limited evidence

available shows that smoking worsens outcomes for COVID-19 patients. And while the media has reported on research examining the relationship between tobacco use and the risk of contracting COVID 19, those studies are of variable quality and do not support a solid definitive conclusion.

It has been observed that COVID-19 fatalities are higher among people with pre-existing conditions including non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cardiovascular and chronic respiratory conditions, cancer, and diabetes. Tobacco use is the main common risk factor linked to all of these diseases.

South Africa, which has the highest incidence of COVID 19 infections and fatalities in the Southern African region took a sweeping stance by ban-

ning all cigarette sales earlier this year in an effort to contain and prevent the spread of COVID 19. Although, the tobacco industry has since pushed back through legal action, the South African government has stood its ground, which is commendable especially when one considers the combined effect of COVID 19 and tobacco related illnesses on the health system and overall economy.

## Tobacco Industry Interference

Another concern that has emerged with the COVID 19 pandemic is the increased interference by the tobacco industry in policy matters. The tobacco industry, as it has been stated in many high-level political fora, has an irreconcilable conflict of interest with public health.

Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC and its implementation guidelines require member states to protect public health from the vested commercial interests of the tobacco industry and of those who work to further those interests. The tobacco industry appears to once again be taking advantage of the vulnerable situation of many member states under the guise of philanthropy or corporate social responsibility through donations of money, personal protective equipment, ventilators and other resources, in an effort to make the industry look good and enhance its reputation. Here in Zambia specific tobacco companies have made donations of COVID 19 preventive materials and equipment towards the fight against the pandemic.

While it is recognized that governments may face a moral dilemma in these challenging times as there is an urgent need to save as many lives as possible with limited resources and capacity, the fact remains that tobacco companies have a clear record of working against public health interests.

The paradox is glaring - the tobacco industry produces and aggressively markets an addictive product that kills up to half of its users and increases the incidence of NCDs which worsen outcomes of COVID-19 patients, and at the same time offers

help to the government through meagre donations. The risk is that by claiming to provide support to governments during the pandemic, tobacco companies have an opening to then pressurize or interfere with government efforts to strengthen tobacco control.

## Need for Relevant Legislation

Considering the lives that have been lost both here in Zambia (over 154) and globally (679,000), as well as the implications on trade and financial markets there has never been a more appropriate time to support and protect the advances made in tobacco control including passing relevant legislation. The Tobacco Control Bill specifically addresses measures to prevent the tobacco industry from interfering in tobacco control policies by minimizing interaction with state actors and other policy makers.

## Conclusion

CTPD therefore, remains steadfast in its support and advocacy for the Tobacco Control Bill to eventually be passed into legislation. In the meantime the government is encouraged to strictly implement smoke-free environments; ban on all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship; and increasing taxes and prices on tobacco products which have been defined by WHO as very cost-effective measures to prevent and control NCDs. Furthermore, tobacco taxation increases revenues for governments (therefore addressing the issue of resource constraints), avoids future health-care costs and eases the burden on health-care systems.

*Chileshe G. Mange*  
*Researcher – CTPD*  
*Lusaka*

# WILL THE 2021 ELECTIONS BE FREE AND FAIR?

## Introduction

**Z**ambia is headed to the polls on 12th August 2021 to vote for a President and a running mate, Members of Parliament (MPs), Mayors, Council Chairpersons and Ward Councillors. Although there are more than 20 political parties, this election is a two-pronged election mainly between the ruling Patriotic Front (PF) and the major opposition political party, the United Party for National Development (UPND).

The third party that is currently heavily divided, the Movement for Multi-party Development (MMD) can only serve to “spoil” the outcome or aid one of the two major contestants especially at Presidential level. Each of the two parties is expected to do their best to emerge winner. This two-pronged race has been evident in the past two elections. In 2015, a total of 11 presidential candidates stood for elections. In 2016, nine candidates stood. What complicates the chances of the two competitors is the minimal difference between the winner and loser in the 2015 and the 2016 elections.

In the 2015 elections the winning candidate, Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu had 807,925 votes while Mr. Hakainde Hichilema got 780,168 votes with a difference of 27,757 votes. The voter turnout was a paltry 32.36%. In the 2016 elections, the winning candidate, Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu got 1,860,877 votes and Mr. Hakainde Hichilema got 1,760,347 votes. Mr. Lungu won by 100,530 votes. The voter turnout was at 56.45%. Given that the voter turnout in both elections was quite low, and that the 2021 election is likely to have a much higher turnout, all things considered, the stakes are very high. This coupled with a small margin between the two candidates in the last two elections, there is a 50-50 percent chance for either candidate winning the elections. But the major question, remains, will the upcoming elections be free and fair?



## Defining Free and Fair

Democracy is premised on people freely choosing leaders and policies of their choice. Such choices ideally are seen to be those that reflect people's aspirations, needs, and interests. The people place in trust, their power and authority to the chosen leaders to make decisions that are in their best interests. In a democracy, by voting for leaders, citizens indirectly make decisions for their own wellbeing. It is expected that once leaders are elected into positions of authority, they are empowered to make decisions on behalf of and for the general citizenry. This is mainly through laws, policies, plans, and mobilisation and utilisation of public resources. Citizens can only hold the leaders to account for the decisions they make.

This concept of democracy is what makes an election very important as it is mostly the only time when citizens make a decision that has impact on how well or badly they will be governed. But for this decision to be meaningful, citizens should be free to decide who to vote for. The choices should fairly reflect what they want without manipulation of the vote. A person needs to have all the relevant information to make a choice. The information should be about how the prospective leader aims

to lead the citizenry in a way that he or she shall reflect the interests of the citizens. It should be about policies, rules, plans, decisions that they envisage to make once elected. A person in the voting process (registering to vote, actual voting) should be free of coercion or manipulation. Coercion can be direct through threats and violence, or it can be indirect through lies and misinformation. Manipulation can be on the citizenry itself or on the electoral process from registration of voters to the voting day, the counting of votes, the announcement of the votes, and the resolution of disputes after results are announced. A fair election is one where there is a level playing field among the competing candidates and groups. One that is free of corruption and manipulation. One where one group does not hold undue advantage over the other.

## Five Reasons to Believe the Elections Might not be Free and Fair

In this article I highlight five reasons that can very easily make the 2021 elections not to be deemed to be free and fair. In many ways these reasons can be dealt with but if left unchecked, can easily lead to a chaotic election, one that will be heavily disputed.

## Electoral Processes before the 2021 Elections

In early 2020, the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) announced the revised electoral calendar (realigned calendar to the 2021 general elections) in which it was announced that there will be a one-month period for registration of voters. Many stakeholders highlighted the fact that the one-month period would be inadequate. In comparative terms, in 2015 and 2016, mobile voter registration took place from September to December 2015, and continuous voter registration at civic centres took place from September 2015 to February 2016. In a three-month period from September to December, only about 1,593,840 new voters were registered. And updates were done to about 1.5 million voters and we are talking about a register of voters that dates back to 2005. Later in the year in July and September of 2020, the ECZ

announced that every eligible voter (previously registered or not) will need to register afresh for them to vote in the 2021 elections. The target is to register about nine million eligible voters. In 2016, there were 6,698,372 registered voters.

The decision to carry out the voter registration in a limited period of one month has the likelihood of disenfranchising voters who may not be registered in this period. Further, re-registering persons who have voters cards will mean extra work to be done and it may be practically impossible for this to be done in one month. Apart from the practical and logical aspects of it, this decision is not backed by law. Both the Constitution of Zambia (Articles 46 and 229(2) (C) and the Electoral Process Act, No. 35 of 2016 (Section 8) provides for the registration of voters of a Zambian citizen who attains the age of 18. The Electoral Processes Act (Section 7) provides for the continuous registration of voters (which we are not seeing this year). It also provides for the compilation and maintenance of the Register of Voters (Section 14). None of the provisions in the Constitution nor in the Act provides for the deregistration of duly registered voters nor the doing away of the whole register of voters. Only those not properly registered (fraudulently registered or registered by provision of false information), and those that do not qualify to be registered as voters (not reached the age of 18, those who are no longer citizens or holders of a Zambian NRC) may be de-registered as voters under Section 10.

Although many stakeholders have highlighted the illegality of reregistration of voters (without which they will cease to be registered voters) and a number of youths and artists taking the ECZ to court challenging the decision to reregister registered voters, the ECZ has insisted on reregistering all eligible voters and that the period of registration will remain one month. The ECZ seems to bank on the online preregistration programme that was launched on 21st September 2020 to complement the one-month registration efforts that was supposed to run from 28th October 2020 to 30th November 2020.

It is important to note that the online registration programme itself is open to legal dispute as there is

no clear legal provision providing for online voter registration. It begs the question why the ECZ is adamant to go on this route despite the concerns (practical, logical and legal) that stakeholders have brought forth. It leaves citizens to speculate that these could be efforts that could be aimed at possible disenfranchising eligible voters from the opposition strongholds, and possible efforts at manipulating the election outcomes by determining in a systematic way who is registered as a voter and who is not.

## Bill 10 and 11th Hour Attempts to Change the Constitution

The Constitution Amendment Bill N.A.B. 10 of 2019 was introduced in Parliament during the Third Session of the Twelfth National Assembly in 2019. Although the process through which it was drafted was highly disputed as a product of the National Dialogue Forum, the contents of the Bill remain highly contentious. Clearly the Bill contains many retrogressive clauses to the current 2016 amended Constitution (e.g., bringing back deputy ministers, removing the secular nature of the State by deletion of its provision and incorporating Christian ethical values, changing the way Mayors and Council Chairpersons are elected away from a popular voter to be one amongst councilors, making changes in how debt is contracted away from parliamentary oversight, changes to how new provinces, districts and constituencies are created, etc.). Although the Bill contains a few seemingly good provisions, by and large these are nothing but a smokescreen for a few provisions that are aimed to advantage the ruling party in the upcoming elections in 2021. These are mostly the changes to the nomination process of presidential candidates removing the provision where a nomination can be challenged in the Constitutional Court (Section 11 of Bill 10 that seeks to repeal Article 52 of Constitution), allowing MPs and Ministers to remain in office way up to election day (Section 81 of Bill 10), and providing for a coalition to be made between the candidate with the highest number of votes with another party when no party attains over 50% of the votes cast (Section 101 of Bill 10).

The first provision is clearly aimed at protecting Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu's nomination so that it is not challenged before elections take place because debatably some believe that he is not eligible to stand in the 2021 elections. The second provision will help the ruling party to use government resources to campaign way up to Election Day thereby disadvantaging the opposition. The third could be perceived at dealing with a situation where the ruling party fails to get more than 50% of the votes in the first round. If Bill 10 is passed into law, this clearly would render the 2021 elections not free and fair. The relief now is that Bill 10 has now been shelved because it lost the vote in Parliament.

## The Novel Coronavirus and the Covid-19 Pandemic

The novel Coronavirus or the severe acute respiratory syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) was discovered in Wuhan, China in late 2019. The highly infectious virus causes the Covid-19 disease. From China in December 2019, the virus has virtually spread to all parts of the globe. Towards the end of September 2020, globally there were about 32 million cumulative Covid-19 cases with about 935, 000 Covid-19 associated deaths. In Zambia, where the first case was identified in March 2020, there are now (as of 24th September 2020) 14,491 cumulative Covid-19 cases and 217 Covid-19 related deaths.

In the early months of the cases of Covid-19, the Ministry of Health invoked the Public Health Act Cap. 295 of the Laws of Zambia and put up measures through Statutory Instruments 21 and 22 of which amongst others made the disease a notifiable disease, and facilitated management and control of the disease. This translated into limiting foreign travel, limiting gatherings, closing of public places (schools, bars, restaurants, churches, sporting arenas), introduced the wearing of masks, physical distancing, washing and sanitising of hands, staying at home and limiting some movements. Although most of these limitations have been relaxed by September 2020, the number of those contracting the disease is still increasing. Politically, the Covid-19 pandemic has been a panacea

for advantages to the ruling party in government. At the height of health regulations and limitations, the ruling Patriotic Front and some of its leaders continued to hold large gatherings and meetings often disguised in launches of new developmental projects (like roads/flyover bridges), monitoring development projects, court appearances, and holding of elections at local levels. Whilst all this was happening the opposition parties could not hold similar meetings, campaigns or elections. The Covid-19 coupled with the Public Order Act has virtually meant opposition political parties have had limited means to campaign or gather to strategies and mobilise. This in itself is a limitation to a fair playing field for the forthcoming elections.

## Lawlessness

One of the key tenets of good governance and a democracy is the rule of law. Rule of law simply means that first and foremost there are established and recognised laws and regulations (which Zambia has), and secondly that everyone is subject to the law. Not just that, it also means one has the freedom to be heard in a court of law when they feel aggrieved or seek clarification on the very laws. This entails that the Judiciary can competently and objectively carry out its duties without undue influence. In recent months, we have witnessed a situation where members of the ruling party and its leaders are not only above the law but some have even publicly boasted that they are the law. Arrests are selectively done. Court hearings seem to be nothing but a routine or cleansing ceremony for some. However, hard-core punishment is meted out for others who are not in good books with the powers that be. Those in the opposition are in constant threats of arrests even on hearsay or flimsy grounds. Those who hold divergent views to the powers that be are constantly living in fear of being harmed or arrested.

The media is in constant threat not to cover opposition political parties and not to host programmes critical of the ruling government and its elites. A number of media houses were either closed or attacked by cadres when they hosted an opposition political party leader. The public media houses have remained the preserve of the ruling party without

meaningful coverage of the opposition parties. Some of the media houses have been closed such as the Post Newspaper and Prime TV. A number of media houses had their licences revoked by the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) only to be reinstated later (e.g., Muvi TV, Komboni Radio and Itezhi Tezhi Radio). Court judgements that do not favour the ruling elite have largely been ignored or its ruling trivialised, like the Constitutional Court ruling on Cabinet Ministers to pay back the allowances that they got for staying in office after dissolution of Parliament in the run up to the 2016 general elections. Some court judgements are interpreted to favour the ruling elite even when those judgements do not clearly say what the interpreters want them to say, like the Constitutional Court judgement on what constitutes a Presidential term served in office.

The lawlessness displayed in recent months gives sad following as it could be interpreted to mean that those in the ruling party and their institutions can or could do as they want without any regard for the rule of law. The current decisions by ECZ, some regulations and limitations connected to the Covid-19 pandemic that had human rights violation connotations, all goes to show that rule of law can easily be brushed aside for a clearly defined agenda of government. If this lawlessness is allowed to continue, we could very easily see violence, systematic efforts at stopping the opposition to mobilise and campaign, eligible voters failing to register or reregister to vote, and efforts directed at arresting or tarnishing image of persons from the opposition in the run up to 2021 elections.

## Non-issue Based Campaigns

In basic logic, when you are presenting a claim or a position, it is expected that you supply good evidence or reasons to support that claim or position. Election campaigns can be said to be claims that many political parties put forth. For these claims or messages to be convincing to the electorate, it is expected that such are backed up by good reasons. Any person can make claims on what they will do once elected, but few can explain how they will meet those claims. An example of a common claim is one that once a certain party or person

is elected, they will bring about employment. But such a claim is hardly backed by good reasons of how it would be brought about.

Often in election campaigns we see lists of things that each party will do once voted, with hardly any evidence or reasoning on how these will be actualised. This is akin to someone going shopping with a long shopping list without any money to buy the things on the list. The campaigns that are based on what will be done or not done and how, are what we often refer to as issue-based campaigns. Competing political parties' battle for ideas, issues and how one set of issues is better or worse off than the other.

But in the run up to the 2021 elections, one sees a proliferation of personal based campaigns. Campaigns aimed at attacking the person rather than their campaign messages or issues that they raise. Logically this kind of bad reasoning (fallacy) is referred to as *ad hominem* (attacking the person rather than their argument or the issues they raise). The arguments based on tribalism, personality of person, looks of a person, or religion of a person, tend to border on this type of bad reasoning of attacking the person and not their arguments or claims that they put forth. The problem with this kind of reasoning is that, like all fallacies, it is quite attractive to people and can easily sway their thinking into forming voting patterns that have nothing to do with issues raised but the misinformation provided.

Earlier in this article, I mentioned that free and fair elections are premised on the idea that a person freely chooses a candidate of their choice having been given correct information on the issues that these candidates address that are consistent to their personal interests and aspirations. This freedom is further restricted by those who use public resources during the campaign period in distribution of goodies such as food packs and even hard cash to the electorates in the run up to an election. Of course, a good section of the citizenry will easily be swayed by such cheap tactics at manipulating the will of the people in choosing the candidates of their choice.

Unfortunately, poverty, illiteracy levels, low levels

of critical thinking skills could easily hamper a person's ability to sift through the chaff for real issues on which to base one's decisions. As is evident with high levels of poverty and some illiteracy levels, how can one be indeed free when little hand-outs can easily sway their choice, when threats can easily change their decision, and when misinformation can easily be taken as the truth?

## Ensuring the Elections are Free and Fair

As can be seen above, it is complex to ensure a free and fair election anywhere in the world but especially in a developing nation like Zambia where immediate short-term needs can cloud long term beneficial needs. Incumbency gives an upper hand to the ruling party in many respects from control of governance institutions, resources to mobilise and campaign, control on what laws and regulations to change or insist on as the country goes to the polls, what narratives to propagate in the media through the public media that has wide reach to all parts of the country.

But even with such an advantage, a generally free and fair election is possible if competing political parties are allowed freedom and latitude to campaign and mobilise themselves freely, if campaigns can remain issue based and devoid of manipulative messages, if access to the media including the public media is open to all, rule of law is maintained at all times, law enforcement agencies are allowed to operate independently and objectively, and all eligible voters are given enough time to register to vote and the freedom to vote without threats or coercion. All in all, there should be a level playing field and the electoral commission should have as its only mandate facilitating the will of the people to be expressed.

*Dominic Liche*  
*Senior Lecturer, University of Zambia*  
*Lusaka*

# SILENCING THE CADRE

## Introduction

A cadre in Zambia must be silenced and pacified, because a state of a cadre is now guaranteeing political and economic benefits. In a good governance system and well-ordered society, being a cadre is not a political category, as being a citizen. Being a cadre is analogous to being a Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Jain, Buddhist etc, these categories do not guarantee political and economic benefits in Zambia. However, according to cadres political and economic benefits is the cause of corruption, political violence, wasteful expenditures, poor procurement systems, political incompetence and low confidence in political leaders. Hence, how can we restore political maturation, competence, literacy, awareness and ethics?

## Contextualising the African Union's 2020 Theme

In 2020, the African Union (AU) proposed a theme responding to the goal, objective and demand of creating a conducive environment for development. Hence, the AU settled for "Silencing the guns" in order to create a conflict-free Africa, thereby, leading to a conducive economic, political, social, cultural development. Instantiating the theme to Zambia, though we need to silence the gun, I think the cadre has been louder, perhaps even louder than the gun, hence, for Zambia to create a conducive environment for economic, political, social and cultural development, we must silence and pacify the cadre. If the cadre is not silenced now, then, Zambians should anticipate, political violence, bad governance, corruption, poor procurement systems, wasteful expenditures and these are not conducive environment for development and economic growth. Therefore, contextualising the AU's 2020 theme, Zambia needs to silence the cadre. This is not to negate the moments of irresponsible use of guns on university and sec-

ondary school students as well as on cadres themselves.

## Who is a Cadre?

A cadre is someone associated with a group of an organisation and has the qualities and capabilities to organise, mobilise, train and lead people within an organisation, community or society. Therefore, a cadre is an agent of change, revolution, evolution, expansion of ideologies and development. However, in the Zambian context it is now a pejorative noun and often associated to people in a derogative sense as agent of violence, propaganda etc. In this article, cadre refers to a political cadre.

## Where did we go wrong as a Nation?

From the promulgation of multi-party system on 4th December 1990 through to 2008, a cadre was merely hired and fired without guarantee of political and economic benefits. Hence, cadres co-existed and changed camps within one campaign period. However, the 2008 Presidential by-election warped the occupation of the state of a cadre due to more financial resources, plenty party regalia, distribution of food hampers, promises of political positions and land if elected. Such situations lead to loyal members trusted politically even if not competent assuming political positions (Elvin Shava, Shingirayi Chamisa, 2018, p. 3).

The following six points elaborate the cause of the crisis.

**The language and promise of money;** the language and promise of money continues to delude youths, cadres and electorates. Young people are used as cadres to engage in violent acts because of promises of money. Hence, politicians use and abuse young people by giving and promising them money, and because of high poverty levels,

they agree since it is a source of income. However, this is not sustainable because people need stable sources of income, hence, the only way is to guarantee cadres economic and political benefits.

**Institutionalisation of the state of a cadre;** the state of a cadre has ended up having a hierarchy and structure and operates as a recognised institution. That is why we can notice cadres disturbing usual court proceedings, radio programmes, attacking police stations and gatherings of other political parties because it wants to exert itself as a recognised institute in the social structure. If this continues, then, there is no guarantee of a conducive environment for political and economic development.

**Hate and divisive speeches;** the use of hateful and divisive speech is against section 13 of the Public Order Act. On social media like Facebook, there are some hate and divisive speeches by cadres and some even threatening violence on other parties. This is because cadres are assured of economic and political benefits and being a cadre is now a form of employment. This needs attention and rectification if the nation desires some political and economic sanity.

**Polarisation of media;** we will continue on a wrong trajectory if the media houses do not play a critical role. Both private and public media houses are too polarised such that as citizens, we do not know where to get credible information. To the media houses, why accord time to cadres and party officials every day as content for the main news? The media houses should separate government agenda from political party agenda.

**Territorisation of political strongholds;** recent campaign strategies are about territories and tribal associations. This strategy has massified and pacified the masses such that co-existence is being threatened. We no longer hear the slogan of “One Zambia, One Nation.” Political parties should not make their strongholds as their territory such that they cannot tolerate people who belong to different tribes and political parties. We say “No to intolerance and violence.”

Introduction of populist politics; in the last decade, one can observe the paradigm shift from technocratic politics to populist politics. In populist politics, the emphasis is on being “a people person or voice of the people” and often serious matters are taken to the streets to lobby support. In this way, cadres are mostly mal-informed and take the matter to the streets as an exclusive yes or no to the proposal without critical analysis. In this case, one may cite Bill 10 as an example.

**Basing on the raised points of reflection,** it suffices that if the cadre is not silenced, then, the notion of a hope-filled future will remain fuzzy. This is because there will be political violence, occupation of political positions by cadres, wasteful expenditures, poor procurement systems, dubious land allocation, winning tenders, business support, polarised media and job opportunities for the less competent (Elvin Shava, Shingirayi Chamisa, 2018, pp. 1-3). Therefore, we went wrong when we perpetuated political incompetence and institutionalised the state of a cadre without political party cadre education and deployment parameters.

## Where to Now?

As a nation, we need to sanitise the political and economic scenes as well as creating a conducive environment for political, economic, social and cultural development. To achieve this, it will demand political will both from the government and the citizens.

## What role can the government play in silencing the cadre?

Firstly, the government should include the use, distribution and wearing of political party regalia in the Public Order Act. I know abolishing the distribution, wearing and use of political regalia would be an extreme view. I suggest limiting the wearing and distribution of political regalia to strictly three months, that is, from late-April to third-week of July of the year of election, so that there is two weeks before elections. The exemption to the use would be at party conventions. I suggest this because the regalia is one attire that fuel energies for

violence, a strong alliance and naïve loyalty. Secondly, the government may need to find strategies of enforcing the Public Order Act such that sections 10, 11 and 13 are remodelled to respond to silencing the cadre. Equally, all political parties should adhere and promote the Public Order Act.

Thirdly, the Electoral Commission of Zambia (EZC) may find relevant themes such as silencing the cadre. We are in a crisis and we need all avenues to ameliorate the situation and thematisation of elections in relation to social crisis may help.

Fourthly, the government through the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services should formulate deliberate policies which can depolarise the media houses. The media houses can be mandated to cover the government as a custodian of the people and not as a political party. We need a change in our narrative which will inform the masses critically. Fifthly, the government should introduce education for political parties on political attitude of cadres and further formulate a cadre deployment policy. On educating cadres, the desired outcome should be political competence, political literacy and political ethics (Endang Ahmad, Karim Suryadi, 2019, pp. 1-5).

Lastly, there should be efforts on de-institutionalisation of the state of a cadre. During the non-campaign period, the ruling and opposition parties do not need cadres. Hence, cadres should be on hired basis during campaign periods only.

## What Role can the Citizenry Play in Silencing the Cadre?

Active citizenry augment the government efforts. To augment the efforts, first, we, the citizens must not allow ourselves to be used as tools and agents of violence, hate speeches, tribal remarks, intolerance, propaganda etc. Secondly, our social institutions like churches, mosques, schools, community cooperatives, civil society organizations should find programmes which can educate their clientele on social pathologies without aligning themselves politically. These institutions should help form citizens with a critical consciousness and shift from indoctrination and naïve consciousness.

Thirdly, citizens should begin to participate actively in governance matters and hold their civic leaders accountable. People should realise that good governance is for the well-being of everyone in the country. Lastly, citizens should see and understand themselves as agents and custodians of change, development, peace, co-existence etc. Citizens should be creative and innovative, equally, the government should create a conducive environment for creativity and innovativeness.

## Conclusion

As we head towards 2021 general elections, the party to form government in 2021 and beyond should think of structures and systems which will silence and pacify a cadre. The pacification of a cadre can be done through political party cadre education, revisiting the Public Order Act and formulating a cadre deployment policy. Through this we can enhance political performance management, improved procurement systems and create political competence, literacy and ethics. By silencing and pacifying the cadre, we will create a conducive environment for economic and political development.

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*John Kunda Sauti, S.J.  
JCTR Programme Officer  
Lusaka*

# POLITICAL BUT NOT PARTISAN: UNIONS, CIVIL SOCIETY AND 2021

## Introduction

A healthy and vibrant civil society is necessary to animate the processes of democracy both during periodic electoral campaigns and, more importantly, in the time and space between votes. A well-functioning civil society can provide dialectical solidarity, connect people with the formal levers of the political apparatus, and create opportunities for that political apparatus to engage in a meaningful and ongoing dialogue with the people. Overall, an active civil society can promote the discussion and dissent, review and repudiation, co-operation and compromise so necessary for the authentic exercise of democracy between elections. In practical terms this will result in concrete initiatives and programmatic support for the various expressions of social, cultural and economic rights of citizenship, and is essential for the articulation and implementation of “pro-poor” public policies grounded in the preferential option for the poor.

## Catholic Social Teaching and Civil Society

The role that civil society plays – and needs to play – is well recognised in Catholic Social Teachings. As noted in *Rerum Novarum* “The purpose of civil society is universal, since it concerns the common good, to which each and every citizen has a right in due proportion.”<sup>1</sup> Additionally, as trenchantly presented in the commentary provided in *Compendium of the social doctrine of the Church* “[t]he Church’s commitment on behalf of social pluralism aims at bringing about a more fitting attain-

ment of the common good and democracy itself, according to the principles of solidarity, subsidiarity and justice.”<sup>2</sup> Finally, the Church, recognising the integral nature relationship of the “political community and civil society,” argues that:

[t]he State must provide an adequate legal framework for social subjects to engage freely in their different activities and it must be ready to intervene when necessary, and with respect for the principle of subsidiarity, so that the interplay between free associations and democratic life may be directed to the common good.

Therefore, as anticipation – perhaps even apprehension – is growing over the upcoming election in 2021, it is important to consider the role that Zambian civil society can and must play in the process of promoting and furthering the common good; certainly not in a partisan way, but definitely in a political manner. Unfortunately, however, practice does not always blend with theory. And this gap in translation appears to be the case in Zambia. Civil society is limited in its operational scope, and its input into the broader political sphere seems to be viewed as troublesome, perhaps even unpatriotic. The Patriotic Front government, for example, did not attend the 2019 convention on the economic and social state of the country, critical elements of the non-State media are under government scrutiny, and concerns have been voiced with the basic process of enumerating voters for the 2021 vote.

## The Zambia Congress of Trade Unions

Additionally, the Zambian Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), despite being what should be a core actor in civil society, seems to be reverting to a simple business unionism (focusing on jobs and wages in a particular worksite) rather than also promot-

<sup>1</sup> *Rerum Novarum* cited in the *Compendium of the social doctrine of the Church* (2005), p. 179

<sup>2</sup> *Compendium of the social doctrine of the Church* (2005), p. 179

<sup>3</sup> *Compendium of the social doctrine of the Church* (2005), pp. 179-180

ing social unionism (advocacy for more general rights and support for all citizens). Given the long and distinguished record of organised labour in advocating for concrete extensions of democracy this is a problem for sure. The organised working class – particularly in the mining and extraction sector – has had a significant impact on the social and economic development of Zambia. And while only a small percentage of Zambian workers were members of unions, their influence far exceeded their membership. However, organised labour currently occupies an uncomfortably ambiguous space in terms of working in counter-hegemonic partnership with broader civil society.

This is an increasingly common phenomena around the world, as the so-called logic of globalisation precipitates a race to the bottom and the “rights” of workers and other subaltern groups smash easily against the rocks of profit taking, “common sense” and austerity measures. In Zambia, I would argue the ambiguous role is related to a number of factors. These include neoliberal labour laws, a party system historically dominated by personalities and political elites as opposed to ideology and policies, the structural role played by copper in terms of the international mobility of capital and its relationship to the wax fruits of Corporate Social Responsibility, and government calls for restraint and that labour to be “reasonable” in their industrial demands. That being said, unions did play a role in increasing the political consciousness and sense of collectivity of Zambian workers and in

the dismantling of the economic colour bar in the mining field in the 1950s and 1960s. Labour was also actively involved in nationalist politics that were opposed to the blemish of Federation and led to the demise of the Central African Federation in 1963 and the transition to independence in 1964. Subsequently, though, a few years after independence, unions were limited by the operation of the United National Independence Party (UNIP) one party state, and attempts were made to thwart industrial legality, agency and autonomy by trying to integrate unions into the corporatist body of the state.

## Labour Vs State

However, in an understandable response to the limits of the one party state and global economic factors, the labour movement itself provided an ostensible champion of democracy in the person of Frederick Chiluba, the Chairman-General of the ZCTU. Yet upon attaining power with the upstart Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) Chiluba seemed more interested in maintaining his own perpetual political status rather than promoting the social and economic wellbeing of all Zambians, particularly for the masses surviving on the margins. Opposition groups – and even some influential MMD party members – seemed to gain a clear understanding of this point, particularly as President Chiluba attempted to override the Constitution and run for a third term.

This animosity was then underscored by the introduction of anti-worker neoliberalism in response to the demands of international capital, and the denationalisation of state enterprises. Michael Sata, smarting from the Presidential mantle not being given to him by Chiluba, used this growing anti-MMD public sentiment to form a new bloc which included both organised labour and people on the economic margins of society, and after a number of attempts Sata became President of the Republic in 2011.

Members of this bloc, understandably, expected to achieve some measure of benefit from the Patriotic Front’s victory, and hoped for the implementation of a spate of pro-poor and pro-worker policies.

4 I have contacted the ZCTU on a number of occasions to obtain information on what they are doing and failing to do in terms of broader political initiatives. They have not responded to my requests.

5 For a discussion of unions in the textile sector of economy see Andrew Brooks (2010), *Spinning and weaving discontent: Labour relations and the production of meaning at Zambia-China Mulungushi Textiles* Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol 36, No 1, pp. 113 – 132.

6 For example, in 2012 when President Michael Sata scolded public sector workers for threatening to strike and suggested that they were, perhaps, acting as a rearguard of the MMD. Appeals to “common sense” – both implicit and explicit – frequently serve to add an acceptable veneer to the continuation of injustice.

7 Jane Parpart (1980) *Corporate and black labour strategies in the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt, 1926 – 1933* Capital and Society, Vol 13, 1, pp. 54 – 75. For a more nuanced and comparative analysis of consciousness raising in the area, see Miles Larmer (2017)

However, after a brief honeymoon, citing the need for industrial wage restraint in tough economic times, if not irreconcilable differences, the marriage of convenience quickly ended. And organised labour remains out in the cold.

## Organised Labour Marginalised

Basically, when one looks at the role of unions in terms of potentially helping to set the public policy agenda, it appears that organised labour has been marginalised and only allowed to see the light during elections or when required for regime changes. Organised labour has certainly had some impact, but lately it has not played as large a role in counter-hegemonic civil society as it could have or, one could argue, should have.

This is particularly disturbing, given the fact that although unions tended to service their own economic interests in business unionism, they also performed an essential social function and served as the vanguard of politically transformative and widespread social change. Therefore, it seems clear that organised labour can and must play a key role in the animation of justice in society. As noted in the Compendium:

...unions have the duty of acting as representatives for the “proper arrangement of economic life” and of educating the social consciences of workers so that they feel they have an active role...in the attainment of the common good.

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Permanent precarity: capital and labour in the Central African copperbelt, *Labour History*, 58:2, pp. 170 - 184

8 Raja Singh (1984), *Trade union development in Zambia*, *Presence Africaine*, No. 131, pp. 15 - 23.

9 Miles Larmer (2006), “The hour has come at the pit”: Mineworkers’ Union of Zambia and the Movement for Multi-party democracy, 1982 - 1991, *Journal of Southern African studies*, Vol 32, No. 2, pp. 293 - 312.

10 Alastair Fraser (2017) Post-populism in Zambia: Michael Sata’s rise, demise and legacy *International Political Science Review*, 38, 4, pp. 456 - 472. See also Guy Scott (2019) *Adventures in Zambian politics: A story in black & white*

11 Esther Uzar (2017), Contested labour and political leadership: three mineworkers’ unions after the opposition victory in Zambia, *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol 44, pp. 292-311.

## Conclusion

The 2021 elections could serve as a means to help steer the focus away from the politics of personality and towards the creation of a society based on the values of pluralism, social inclusion, industrial legality, democracy and an equitable approach helping Zambians to meet their basic and higher order needs. Pro-poor public policy could then serve as a foundation for the actualisation of basic social and economic rights – truly actionable and attainable Constitutional rights - of citizenship for all Zambians.

And these rights would then ensure, among a raft of other things, the concrete provision of health care, adequate housing, education and access to clean water and sanitation. Intimately linked to that, the upcoming election also provides an opportunity to put into practice the core principles of the Catholic Social Teaching, such as giving priority to the common good, solidarity and subsidiarity, together with animating a remarkable gift of our faith, the preferential option for the poor. But this requires the maintenance and participation of a vibrant civil society, and also that unions step up and reclaim their place in this dynamic, beautifully messy but necessary democratic function.

**Timothy Wild**  
*Team Lead for the Community Social Workers*  
*Calgary - Canada*

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***“Democracy arises out of the notion that those who are equal in any respect are equal in all respects; because men are equally free, they claim to be absolutely equal.”***

***—Aristotle***

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# RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ZAMBIAN MINING SECTOR

## Introduction

**T**his article will focus on the mining industry in Zambia and the most recent developments in the Gold sector. It will discuss several key issues including the current challenges in the sector, Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines Investment Holding (ZCCM-IH) joint venture partnership with Karma Ltd, artisanal and small-scale Gold mining, legislation governing mining and non-mining rights, and Gold as a strategic resource.

## (a) What is Zambia's Mining History?

Zambia has a long history of mining spanning over 100 years. Over these years, several ownership structures have taken place. In 1969, the mining companies were nationalised to form the Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM). After nationalisation, copper prices started plummeting, oil prices increased and the effects of using mining as a sole revenue generation house started showing. Copper production dropped from 720,000 tonnes in 1969 to a mere 250,000 tonnes in 2000. This fall in production is attributed to the fact that ZCCM was a cash cow that was constantly milked without corresponding investment in machinery and production ventures.

There was a re-focus of management away from production for profit to production aimed at guaranteeing employment and the delivery of social services. In the early 1990s, there was an attempt

to liberalise the Zambian economy. This saw the privatisation of ZCCM assets and the licensing of more mining companies. The sector, in 2000, reverted to private ownership leaving the Government to retain the role of the legislator and regulator. However, it should be made clear that the privatisation of the mines was not the sole wish of the Zambian Government but rather, there was persistent pressure from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) for Zambia to undertake structural reforms to its mineral sector before it could receive any donor funding.

## (b) What are some of the Current Challenges of Zambia's Mining Sector?

Zambia is an attractive investment destination owing to several factors. Some of these include favourable geology and mineralisation of its deposits; political stability since independence; favorable fiscal incentives; social cohesiveness; and robust legislative and environmental framework.

It is important to note that the mining sector continues to be the anchor of Zambia's economy accounting for about 12% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 26% of domestic revenue, and over 70% of export earnings. The sector is also a significant source of employment contributing to over 50,000 jobs directly and indirectly. Despite 100 years of mining, Zambia is still faced with several challenges ranging from technical to financial. Some of these challenges include:

- (i) Lack of a mineral reserve reporting code;
- (ii) Lack of a mineral asset valuation code;
- (iii) Underfunded or poorly resourced Geological Survey Department (GSD);
- (iv) Lack of systems to authenticate geological information deposited by mining companies;
- (v) Inconsistency of mineral tax policy;

<sup>12</sup> A business unionism perhaps reflecting the perception of their being representative of a labour aristocracy, and of the need to act accordingly? See Jane Parpart (1984), The "labour aristocracy" debate in Africa: The Copperbelt case, 1924 – 1967, *African Economic History*, No 13, pp. 171 – 191.

<sup>13</sup> Compendium of the social doctrine of the Church (2005), p. 134



- (vi) Weak institutions and information asymmetry;
- (vii) Lack of excess profit tax instrument e.g. windfall tax;
- (viii) Illegal mining activities e.g. gold and copper mining sector;
- (ix) Lack of a mineral revenue sharing framework;
- (x) Narrowed tax base; and
- (xi) Inefficient tax instruments e.g. Value Added Tax (VAT).

### (c) What is the Current Status of Gold Exploration in Zambia?

However, since mining began 100 years ago, the sector has been mainly focused on exploiting the copper resource. This has led to under exploitation of other minerals such as Gold. More than 300 Gold occurrences have been reported throughout the country and some of these are currently being re-evaluated. There are about 21 districts that hold the Gold resource in Zambia including Rufunsa, Lusangazi, Mumbwa, Petauke, etc.

The recent discoveries of Gold are dotted around the country. This can be attributed to the fact that most of the Zambian landscape has not been fully explored for Gold. This leaves room for the Government to obtain geological data through intensified exploration by GSD. The geological information will go a long way in helping improve

decision making. We cannot begin to converse about Gold being a strategic mineral if we do not know the Gold resource both in tonnage and quality. We commend the step taken by the Government through ZCCM-IH to undertake exploration activities in Mwinilunga. However, there is a need to intensify exploration activities in other areas.

### (d) What is the Legislation Governing the Gold Mining Sector?

The Ministry of Mines and Minerals Development (MMMD) administers the overall extractive industries sector and is responsible for the development and management of mineral resources in a sustainable manner for the benefit of the Zambian people. According to the Mines and Minerals Development (MMD) Act, No. 11 of 2015 mining rights are defined to be exploration and mining licenses. Non-mining rights, on the other hand, are defined as the mineral processing license, gold panning certificate, minerals trading permit, mineral export permit, and mineral import permit.

The Mining License Committee (MLC) grants, cancels, and suspends mining rights. The MLC comprises all representatives as stipulated in Section 6(2) (a – f) of the MMD Act No.11 of 2015. In an endeavour to promote efficiency and limit bureaucracy, it is recommended that the Mining License Committee (MLC) under MMMD should include representation from the Ministry responsible for Wildlife and Tourism. To induce transpar-

ency, the MLC should have representation from Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

### **(e) How should the Gold Resource be used as a Strategic Mineral?**

The Government should employ a two-pronged approach to exploiting the Gold resource. This means that Gold should be used as a strategic reserve through the Bank of Zambia (BoZ) and at the same time, it should promote poverty reduction in host communities. The recent events seem to suggest that the Government is very inclined to using Gold as a strategic reserve. There is a need to expend energy in crafting systems that will ensure the members of host communities are uplifted from the current state of poverty. Poverty reduction can only be achieved if efforts gravitate towards building capacity in the artisanal and small-scale Gold mining sector.

### **(f) Is Artisanal and Small-scale Mining a Solution to the Gold Sector?**

Artisanal and small-scale mining can be defined as low technology and labour intensive mineral extraction and processing. It is increasingly being seen as a source of hope for many people who cannot get jobs in the formal sector. To this extent, there is a need to strategically grow this infant sector for the benefit of the Zambian people. We make a strong case for artisanal and small-scale mining in the Gold sector because this is the only way ordinary citizens will fully benefit from the resource. The multinational enterprise model we have advanced as a country since the privatisation of our mines has not worked well for us. Multinational enterprises continue to engage in illicit financial flows at the expense of the economic well-being of the country. There is a need to refocus our strategy in the Gold mining sector away from Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to the exploitation of our mineral resources through Government-citizen partnerships.

### **(g) Is ZCCM-IH Partnership with Karma Ltd Worthwhile?**

The ZCCM-IH joint venture partnership with Karma Ltd has sparked wide debate across the country. From the recent events, it is clear that the Zambian people have rejected this partnership. This has translated into ZCCM-IH being denied the social license to operate and partner with a Sudanese foreign-dominated mining company. Although this partnership seems to be one deal. It is important to stress that Zambians need to wholly or fully participate in the Gold value chain, from the time when Gold is mined to a time when it is processed and sold. This partnership should not only target rich Zambians but should also provide an opportunity for the poor to participate in Gold mining. The partnership between ZCCM-IH and Karma Ltd is at the mineral processing stage. ZCCM-IH should be fully aware that beneficiation processes such as mineral processing are the most critical in the Gold value chain. To this extent, there is a need for ZCCM-IH to partner with citizen driven companies. The University of Zambia, School of Mines, and Copperbelt University, School of Mines and Mineral Sciences can be encapsulated to induce technology and skills transfers.

### **(h) Does Zambia have a Game Plan in the Gold Mining Sector?**

The recent events seem to suggest that the country does not have a game plan that will transform Gold into a strategic resource. Government therefore should slow down and engage with various stakeholders to craft a formidable Gold game plan. The plan should gravitate around the artisanal and small-scale miners to alleviate poverty levels and induce macroeconomic stability through the Bank of Zambia (BoZ).

**Webby Banda**  
*Senior Researcher (Extractives) – CTPD*  
*Lusaka*

# JCTR LUSAKA NOVEMBER 2020 BASIC NEEDS AND NUTRITION BASKET

## (A) COST OF BASIC FOOD ITEMS FOR A FAMILY OF FIVE

Commodity	Price (ZMW) / Unit	Quantity / Month	Total (ZMW)
Mealie Meal (Roller)	92.00 25 kg bag	2 x 25Kg	184.00
Rice	113.50 5kg	4kg	90.80
Cassava Flour	12.46 1kg	6kg	74.76
(Sweet) Potatoes	14.80 1 Kg	4 Kg	59.20
Beans	60.19 1kg	3kg	180.58
Pounded Groundnut	38.96 1kg	1kg	38.96
Soya Pieces	52.58 1 kg	2kg	105.16
Beef	57.50 1kg	2kg	115.00
Chicken	73.23 2kg	5kg	183.08
Kapenta	216.93 1kg	1kg	216.93
Eggs	14.61 1 unit (10 eggs)	3 Trays (90 eggs)	131.50
Milk (Fresh)	9.93 500 ml	10 liters	198.57
Vegetables	460.58 40 Kg	40kg	460.58
Onion	9.67 1 Kg	4 Kg	38.67
Tomatoes	10.34 1 kg	6 kg	62.04
Banana	11.65 1 Kg	16 Kg	186.36
Other Fruits	5.96 1 kg	14 Kg	83.39
Cooking oil (2.5lts)	84.43 2.5lt	3.6lt	121.58
Salt	8.21 1 Kg	1 Kg	8.21
Tea	38.00 250g	250g	38.00
<b>SubTotal</b>			<b>ZMW 2,577.35</b>

## (B) COST OF ESSENTIAL NON-FOOD ITEMS

Commodity	Price(ZMW) / Unit	Quantity / Month	Total (ZMW)
Charcoal	159.00 90kg bag(s)	2 90kg bag(s)	318.00
Soap (Lifebuoy/Champion)	11.00 Tablet(s)	3 Tablet(s)	33.00
Wash soap (BOOM)	14.50 400g	4 400g	58.00
Jelly (Vaseline)	50.43 500ml	1 500ml	50.43
Electricity (medium density)	500.00 Month(s)	1 Month(s)	500.00
Water & Sanitation (med - fixed)	197.00 Month(s)	1 Month(s)	197.00
Housing (3 bedroom)	3,300.00 Month(s)	1 Month(s)	3,300.00
Sanitary towels	16.00 Pack of 10	2 Pack of 10	32.00
Toilet Paper (2ply)	5.78 Tissue(s)	6 Tissue(s)	34.71
Lotion (Dawn)	26.14 400ml	1 400ml	26.14
<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>ZMW 4,549.27</b>
<b>Total for Basic Needs and Nutrition Basket</b>			<b>ZMW 7,126.62</b>

## (C) SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS

Education		Transport (bus fare round )	
Item	Amount (ZMW)	Item	Amount (ZMW)
Grades 1-7 (User + PTA/year)	310.00	Chilenje - Town	24.00
Grades 8-9 (User + PTA/year)	600.00	Chelston - town	23.00
Grades 10-12 (User + PTA/year)	600.00	Matero - Town	20.00
Health		Fuel (cost at the pump)	
Item	Amount (ZMW)	Item	Amount(ZMW)
Registration (book)	2.00	Petrol (per litre)	17.62
Self-referral (Emergency Fee)	80.00	Diesel (per litre)	15.59
Malaria test	20.00	Paraffin (per litre)	15.39

## (D) A COMPARISON OF COSTS (IN KWACHA) OF BASIC NEEDS ACROSS ZAMBIA

Lusaka	Kasama	Mansa	Mongu	Ndola	Solwezi	Monze	Chipata	Mpika	Luanshya	Kitwe	Kabwe	Livingstone	Choma	Chinsali	Mazabuka
7,126.62	4,091.76	4,405.63	4,304.22	6,093.38	6,790.26	5,029.24	4,927.53	4,244.55	5,059.39	5,126.93	6,022.83	5,053.12	5,253.47	5,422.53	5,124.82

## Compositions of vegetables and fruits

Computation of vegetables consists of: Pumpkin leaves (9.8kg), Bondwe (2.8kg), Cabbage (18.5kg) and Rape (8.9kg).  
 Computation of fruits is from these varieties: Bananas, Mangos, Apples, Guavas and Oranges.

This survey was conducted on 27th November, 2020 by the Social and Economic Development Programme of the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection. Average Prices were calculated on the basis of prices gathered from retail outlets at Northmead, Shoprite (Cairo Road), City Market, Chawama, Chainda, Kabwata, Matero and Schools, clinics/hospitals, and filling stations around Lusaka. The November Basic Needs Basket is approximately US\$339 based upon the exchange rate Of K21.02 Other costs would include personal care, clothing, recreation, etc.

The cost of living for a family of five as measured by the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) for the month of November 2020 stood at K7, 126.62. This is a K66.31 increase from K7, 060.29 recorded in October. The increase in the basket is attributed to increase in the prices of food items such as beans which moved upwards by K71 from K109.86 to K180.58 for 3kg, vegetables increased by K30.39 moving from K430.19 to K460.58 per 40kg, kapenta increased by K25.53 moving from K191.40 to K216.93 per kg, bananas increased from K163.57 to K188.36 for 16 kg, Irish potatoes increased by K21.38 from K37.82 to K59.20, soya pieces increased by K15.28 moving from K89.88 to K105.16. For the non-food but essential items, the price of charcoal increased by K26 moving from K292.00 to K318.00. These price increases were however offset by price declines in some items. Cassava moved from K88.03 to K74.76 for 6kg showing a decline of 13.43 and chicken reduced by K10.48 moving from K193.56 to K183.08. From the non-food but essential items, the price of petroleum jelly reduced by K20.06 moving from K70.49 in October to K50.43 in November.

Food expenditures are not only a key national poverty indicator but also linked to dietary intake and nutritional outcomes for households. The increase in the price of certain food items may be as a result of an increase in demand for such foods as people switch from the more expensive foods to the less expensive ones. For example, households switching to buying more of beans as the price of chicken and beef increases thereby affecting diet diversity. Additionally, the scheduled fish ban for December 2020-February 2021 likely contributed to reduced supply (in anticipation of price increases during the fish ban period) leading to price increases in items such as Kapenta. With only a month left to the end of 2020, a critical reflection on our nation's state of affairs is a must. The nation's socio-economic context continues to be a challenging one. Albeit, opportunities even

in this narrative abound. COVID-19 cases as a proportion of total tests remain low with only 15 confirmed cases out of 9689 tests conducted on December 7th. Recovery rates also remain high standing at 96% of the 17,931 cumulative cases recorded as at 7 December 2020. Positive outcomes in this regard may impact positively on Zambia's tourism and hospitality sector. To top it off, the rains have commenced and projected to be favourable for the 2020/21 farming season. JCTR commends Government for the continued commitment to ensure the timely distribution of inputs.

This commitment in addition to other factors saw a bumper harvest recorded in the 2019/20 farming season with maize production standing at 3.4 million tonnes, 66 percent above the reduced outturn in 2019. However, the nation's key macro-economic indicators remain poor. The exchange rate of the kwacha to the US Dollar stands at K21 to US\$1 with serious repercussions for an import dependent nation. Additionally, year on year inflation for November 2020 as measured by the Zambia Statistics Agency stands at 17.4 percent. A challenging debt context characterised by rising interest payments also continues to compromise social sector outcomes. Particularly, Ministry of finance quarterly economic reports indicate lower than budgeted expenditure outturns for budget lines such as social cash transfer. As at the close of third quarter, social cash transfer recorded an expenditure outturn of only K115,000, a meagre 18.5% of the allocated amount for the first three quarters of 2020. This is in stark contrast to interest payments on debt that stood at K15,118,195 at the close of third quarter, a 94% outturn. JCTR therefore recommends the need to prioritise a debt recovery plan for Zambia given the undeniable negative effects of a rising debt burden on the Zambian populace. Adequately responding to our socio-economic challenges is dependent on addressing a constrained fiscal space.

*The JCTR BNNB is supported by*



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Annette Mulenga discussing the role of the church in fostering unity as we go to 2021 general elections with Bishop Simon Chihana@Loyola TV Channel 100



Fr. Peter Carroll with JCTR's Joseph Lungu discussing Child Safeguarding



JCTR BNNB Data collectors pause for a photo during the 2020 BNNB data collection review meeting



JCTR staff attending Mass during a staff retreat



Fully operational Mwaponi Clinic in Choma thanks to JCTR social audits

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Happy Independence Mother Zambia



@56 we look forward to improved livelihoods for all  
Zambians!



JCTR supporting Chavuma Council in forming a WDC in  
Sanjongo ward



JCTR ED, launched the CSO debt alliance on 30th November  
2020. The Alliance seeks to improve public debt management in  
Zambia



Participants at work during the JCTR held Youth  
Symposium on Debt and its effects on future generations



We continue to engage with Parliament through  
Parliamentary submissions on various topics

## **ARTICLES AND LETTERS**

We would like encourage you to contribute articles to the JCTR bulletin. These articles can be on any social, economic, political or educational, cultural, pastoral, theological and spiritual theme. A good issue of the bulletin really depends on your lively analytical exchange of views. The length of your article should be between 1000 and 1500 words. We also encourage comments on the articles in this or previous bulletin issues. Views for the improvement of the bulletin are also welcome.

So to contribute, please write articles or letters to the Editor- JCTR Bulletin by E-mail to [jctr.faithandjustice@gmail.com](mailto:jctr.faithandjustice@gmail.com) and [jctr.info@gmail.com](mailto:jctr.info@gmail.com)