

Press Release

30 September 2023

INCREASING CDF ALLOCATION IS NOT AN END IN ITSELF

Allocation to the Constituency Development Fund has continued to increase in the consecutive National Budgets in 2022 and 2023. In the 2024 National Budget the government proposes to increase further the allocation to K30,600 million per constituency. The idea of allocating resources to the communities is beyond reproach. The enhanced CDF (in both amounts and scope) has a potential of bringing about a huge economic transformation at the community level. However, in order for the enhanced CDF to achieve its intended objectives, the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) would like to bring to the nation's attention a number of challenges that must be addressed as a matter of urgency. The implementation of the enhanced CDF continues to face a number of challenges including the following:

1. Lack of transparency in the implementation of Zambia where community participation in public bid opening for contractors has been extremely low.
2. Low accountability in the implementation of CDF in Zambia as there has been low information sharing, especially monitoring reports.
3. Low community participation in CDF, where many do not participate in selecting community projects.
4. Low burn rates of CDF among constituencies, where these resources are still in the accounts of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (as of 2023, we are at 7 million disbursement of CDF 2023 allocations per constituency).
5. Weak CDF architecture to ensure CDF reaches the intended beneficiaries.
6. Numerous executive directives on the utilization of CDF resources, thereby, compromising community participation in CDF.
7. Weak mechanisms to monitor the database of the beneficiaries double dipping from CDF by belonging to multiple cooperatives and applying to numerous constituencies.
8. Political influence in the implementation of CDF, where CDF has been used as a campaign tool for politicians.
9. Capacity concerns at the Local Authority level (Limited number of staffs).
10. Poor management of cooperatives after receiving grants (cooperatives disbanding after receiving resources).
11. Lack of comprehensive audit to establish the value for money on all CDF resources.

The JCTR is seriously concerned with increasing the CDF allocation without first addressing the above highlighted challenges which evidently are impeding transparency, accountability and community participation in the implementation of CDF. Without addressing these challenges, CDF will continue

to be hijacked by politicians. This will derail CDF from achieving the intended goal of alleviating poverty and improving the living standards and conditions of people in Zambia.

The JCTR, therefore, recommends that for the enhanced CDF to meet its desired goal, the following must be considered:

1. Relocate the management and implementation of skills development and bursaries scope from the Local Authority to the Ministry of Education at the district levels. This is because the ministry has more capacities to implement this scope than the Local Authorities.
2. Relocate the management and implementation of empowerment (loans and grants) from the Local Authorities to the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises Development at the district levels. This is because the ministry has more capacities to manage loans and grants as witnessed with other initiatives like the Citizens Economic Empowerment Commission loans.
3. Leave the Local Authorities to manage the community project scope. This is because they have more capacities and knowledge on the Integrated District Plans (IDPs). This will boost implementation of CDF in contributing to the 8th NDP.
4. Invest in the development of an integrated monitoring and evaluation system that captures data of all the CDF related projects across all the constituencies in the country.
5. Set up a platform that encourages inter-constituency collaboration in the implementation of some projects such as purchasing and servicing of road construction equipment as well as encouraging cross-learning of good practices amongst the constituencies.
6. Undertake a comprehensive audit to establish value for money on all CDF resources allocated thus far.

For further clarifications contact the Faith and Justice (F&J) Programme at the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) on 0955295881 and 0954755319. Email: manager.fj@jctr.org.zm and media.information@jctr.org.zm. Martin Mwamba Road, Plot 3813 Martin Mwamba Road, Olympia Park – Lusaka. P. O. Box 37774 Lusaka – Zambia

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Advocacy on Socio-Economic Development

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