

Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection



Promoting Faith and Justice

# BULLETIN



## QUOTE

**"God is truly on the side of those who work for social justice, especially when we accompany that work with the giving of the Gospel!" - Joni Eareckson Tada**

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# LETTER

## *From the Editor*

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Dear Readers,

January is complete and 2024 is well underway. Our New Year's resolutions are beginning to face the reality of this year's challenges. Perhaps one of our chief concerns as February commences is the high fuel price, driven in part by a punishing exchange rate of K27 to the US dollar. There is talk about the exchange rate edging ever closer to the psychologically significant rate of K30/USD. This movement of depreciation is a contributing factor to the high costs of living which we are experiencing in Zambia at the moment.

In this edition of the JCTR Bulletin, one article highlights the impact of this high cost of living on the poor, preventing them from accessing basic necessities like food and water. The government has a duty to its people to do what it can to address the root causes of this high cost of living. The author suggests that by nurturing transparency and accountability, our political representatives can help to strengthen their response to this cost of living crisis.

Highlighting the value of accountability, another article in this edition raises the question of suspension of Members of Parliament. At the end of 2023, the Speaker of the National Assembly suspended around 19 MPs. While one can debate the legitimacy of this suspension, one cannot ignore the impact. The author argues that this suspension weakened the voices of the opposition and independent MPs in the National Assembly, allowing a period of monopoly by the ruling party. In a multi-party democracy, such weakening of representation at the level of the National Assembly much give us pause. Are we as voters happy with these dynamics?

Which brings us to the theme of this edition of the JCTR Bulletin, namely, citizen participation in Zambia's democracy. If we as voters are not happy with the high cost of living, or with political dynamics which threaten to negatively impact the practice of political accountability, we need to know that we can act. It is not necessary to wait for elections to make our voice

heard. In fact, it is our civic duty to engage.

With this in mind, there are articles in this edition which emphasise the importance of the work civil society does, as CSOs engage with government as partners in development and encourage citizens to do the same. Civil society has a significant role to play in helping citizens be more aware of their ability (and duty) to dialogue with the government about such crucial matters as the national budget allocation, the state of local government, and the administration of the Constituency Development Fund.

An important aspect of citizen participation in democratic processes is the representation of marginal voices. The perspectives of women and youth need to be expressed and valued. However, perceptions of women in society may work to diminish their role in governance positions, and could tragically result in their contribution to the democratic conversation being minimized. Additionally, considering that youth constitute over a third of Zambia's population, the dialogue with youth perspectives remains a crucial ingredient to a healthy and truly representative democracy in Zambia. This Bulletin shares an article which promotes the successful integration of the insights which women and youths can bring to our public debates.

We need to build a society in Zambia where citizens can feel empowered enough to engage with their political representatives. Citizen participation in democratic processes is a civic and moral obligation. As Ela Bhatt, an influential Indian activist and lawyer, has noted: poverty is a passive form of violence. When we do and say nothing, we are actually giving our social consent to this state of affairs. Our non-response has a violence all of its own. Let us respond, then, to our high cost of living crisis and make our voices heard through our democratic platforms.

**Grant Tungay, S.J.**  
*Assistant Editor*

# NAVIGATING CHALLENGES: THE HIGH COST OF LIVING IN ZAMBIA AND THE CALL FOR ACTION



## *Introduction*

**A**s we welcome the new horizons of 2024, reflections on the living conditions in Zambia unveil a stark reality — a challenging landscape marked by astronomical living costs, particularly for those grappling with poverty. The intricate interplay of inflation, soaring commodity prices, and diminished incomes has not only posed economic hardships but also raised profound concerns about the dignity and livelihoods of a substantial portion of the Zambian population.

A critical assessment of Zambia's economic landscape reveals that the estimated national average monthly earnings stood at K5, 342.00, with males earning a higher average of K5, 474.00 compared to females whose average was K5, 052.00. Urban areas reported higher average earnings of K5, 802.00 in contrast to the K4,055.00 average earnings in rural areas. The Living Conditions Monitoring Survey of 2022 produced by Zambia Statistical Agency, underscores the severity of the situation, indicating that 60% of the population is

currently entangled in the web of poverty.

## *Impact on Basic Needs and Dignity*

At the core of this struggle lies the challenge of accessing basic resources, with access to food and water being crucial. Elevated prices, especially concerning essential food items, are amplifying the precarious nature of the dignity of Zambians and their livelihoods. The deprivation of these fundamental resources, a violation of the intrinsic dignity bestowed upon individuals by God, paints a grim picture of the daily reality faced by many.

With an average income standing at K5, 342.00, most of the work force employed in the informal sector earning much far less. Wage for the non-unionised workers is the case in point. The high cost of living has left many struggling to make ends meet. According to the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR), the cost of living for a family of five in Lusaka in the month of December 2023 stood at K9, 157.41. This is way above the income of the larger section of the society and it means that most households are struggling to meet their basic needs.



## Regional Disparities

The JCTR's comprehensive analysis of 16 towns reveals a stark contrast in living costs. Chinsali and Kasama emerged with the least expensive baskets at K5, 067.78 and K4, 820.18, respectively. These variations underscore the regional economic disparities in Zambia calling for targeted interventions. These interventions will need to be skewed towards arresting issues surrounding the high cost of living in urban areas.

Disparities in the cost of essential food items for the average household of five (5) as at December 2023 remained comparatively similar. In Lusaka for example, essential food items stood at K3, 458.10 compared to Kasama's at K3, 109.94 (a difference of K348.16). Housing, however, was indicative of huge regional disparities, with the average 3 Bedroom house standing at K3, 820.00 in Lusaka and K2, 968.00 in Solwezi, compared to K905.00 in Mongu and K886.00 in Kasama.

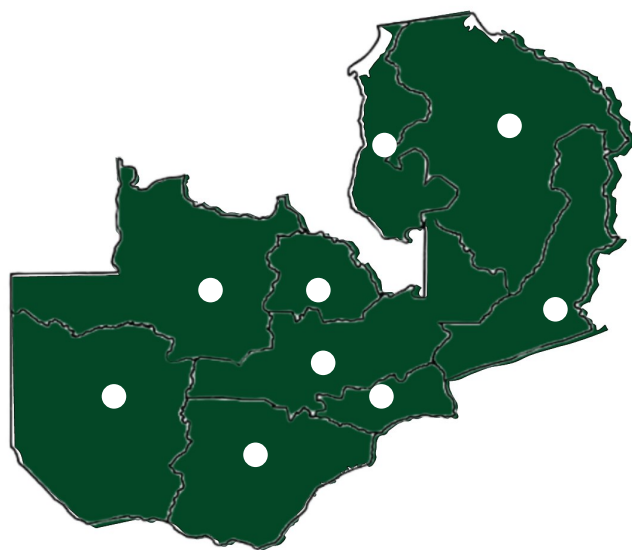
Realistically speaking, the cost of housing can never fall too drastically as accommodation proves to be a fixed asset whose value only increases. The cost of nutrition, however, speaks of perishables whose value depends greatly on environmental factors, availability and seasonality alike – this much (the cost of nutrition) is where intervention is needed.

## Impact of Inflation on Food Prices

The year 2023 witnessed significant challenges to the cost of living, notably marked by substantial increases in grain and mealie meal prices. Maize grain, a staple in Zambian households, reached a staggering K280 for a 50kg bag. Concurrently, mealie meal prices skyrocketed, with a 25kg bag of roller meal trading at K229. These price hikes, driven by inflationary pressures, fuel price fluctuations, utility cost variations, and exchange rate instability, have far-reaching consequences on transportation and production costs, causing concern, particularly among vulnerable communities.

## Conclusion

Amidst these economic challenges, there is an urgent need to address poverty from an income, cost of production and retailing perspective. The JCTR in its December 2023 Basic Needs and Nutrition Basket (BNNB) statement emphasised the necessity of sustainability in social protection programs, advocating for evidence-based research. To tackle the rising costs of living, it is essential for the country to combat double dipping, to minimize politicization, to enhance transparency, and to ensure accountability in the governance systems.



Navigating through the country's economic uncertainties calls for sustainable solutions. The '*Fighting Inequality*' project by the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection stands as a beacon of advocacy for decent living standards. By addressing the root causes of poverty, fostering transparency, and embracing evidence-based approaches, Zambia can pave the way for a more equitable and sustainable future. It is time to collectively work towards economic resilience that uplifts every citizen and ensures a dignified life for all – irrespective of age, sex, race or social standing.

**Bernard Mwaba**

**Communications and Digital Engagement Officer**

**JCTR—Lusaka**

# PROLONGED SUSPENSION OF MPs DENT THE FUNDAMENTAL ROLE OF THE LEGISLATURE



## Introduction

**T**his paper argues that prolonged suspensions of Members of Parliament from the National Assembly of Zambia (NAZ) seriously undermines the fundamental role of MPs to represent the wishes, wills and desires of the people in constituencies. The people being represented by MPs must not be taken as a ransom for the conduct of the MPs or the decisions of the National Assembly. This is because, whenever an MP is suspended, citizens and later on, the members from the constituencies suffer the brunt. Furthermore, prolonged suspension raises the risk of impeding the National Assembly of Zambia to adequately represent the people of Zambia through consensus building and seriously providing oversight on the dealings of the executive. In the context of the representative role of Members of Parliament, MPs perform functions like enacting legislation, approving the Budget (appropriation of funds), providing oversight over the Executive and generally providing citizen representation.

Notably, the National assembly draws these mandates from articles 62 and 63 of the Constitution of Zambia, which stipulates that the role of the Zambian Parliament is to represent citizens, through their elected Members of Parliament, to make laws, to approve the National

Budget, and to oversee the performance of Executive functions. Currently, Zambia has a weak opposition from an opposing political party, who are not meeting their mandate of providing checks and balances (see numbers by representation in Parliament).

Therefore, prolonged suspensions create a possibility of further weakening the voice of the opposition political parties, fast tracking Bills through the legislature rubber stamping executive commands (for those that need simple majority, except the Constitution amendment bill and provisions under article 66(2b) of the Constitution of Zambia).

The article analyses the suspension of 19 MPs (17 MPs for 30 days, while 2 MPs for 14 days) in the context of its impact on the representational role of MPs. Furthermore, it reflects on the future of the National Assembly of Zambia. How will it look politically? What is the impact of suspending many MPs for a prolonged period? What alternative platforms will be available for people to be represented? How will the Interest groups execute their mandate? How will the August house resist political interference? And more importantly, how does the National Assembly ensure that the people being represented are not held ransom by the conduct of MPs or decisions of the Speaker?



Who were the Suspended MPs?

This section reviews the identity of the suspended MPs by virtue of their link to the National Assembly and not their personal identity (i.e name of MPs). Early November 2023, the Speaker of the National Assembly of Zambia, suspended 17 Members of Parliament for 30 days starting from 07<sup>th</sup> November to 06<sup>th</sup> December 2023 (14 belonging to Patriotic Front and 3 being independent MPs). Among the suspended MPs, some are already on suspension, meaning they will only serve the suspension after completing the running suspension. The justification for the suspension is that MPs incited Honorable Christopher Kang’ombe to defy the Speaker’s order to leave the house by converging around him. On the other hand, two (2) Patriotic Front MPs were suspended for two weeks, leading to 19 MPs suspended.

The majority of the suspended MPs belong to the leading opposition political party in the current session of the National Assembly of Zambia and an additional three independent MPs. This situation has caused numerous debates in the country. Certainly, the suspension of multiple Members of Parliament belonging to the same political party for a prolonged duration (30 days) is not a novel phenomenon, as may be cited by Hon Cornelius Mweetwa’s s argument that MPs suspensions are normal (this is in a case where 30 UPND MPs were suspended for 30 days for absconding a Presidential address in March 2017 on National values and principles). However, the current suspension sparked novel

debates largely because of the concern on the future of the NAZ

The Membership of NAZ and the Suspended MPs

Currently, the National Assembly of Zambia has the following representation of the Members of Parliament by political party affiliation. According to Article 68 (2) of the Zambian constitution, the National Assembly of Zambia shall consist of one hundred and fifty six (156) directly elected MPs on the basis of a simple majority vote under the first-past-the-post system (FPTP) and not more than eight nominated members by the President of the Republic. Besides the 156 and 8 elected and nominated Members of Parliament respectively, parliament also consists of the Vice President, the Speaker and the first and second deputy speakers.

The United Party for National Development (UPND), the Patriotic Front (PF) and the Independent have 50.9% (85 MPs), 34.7% (58 MPs) and 7.8% (13 MPs) respectively. Further, the Party for National Unit and Progress (PNUP), nominated MPs and the National Assembly of Zambia have 0.6% (1 MP), 4.8% (8MPs) and 1.2% (2 Members – Speaker and 1<sup>st</sup> deputy speakers) respectively, bringing to a total of 167 Members of Parliament. Therefore, by suspending 19 Members of Parliament, it implies the house remained with 148 MPs (167-19 = 148).

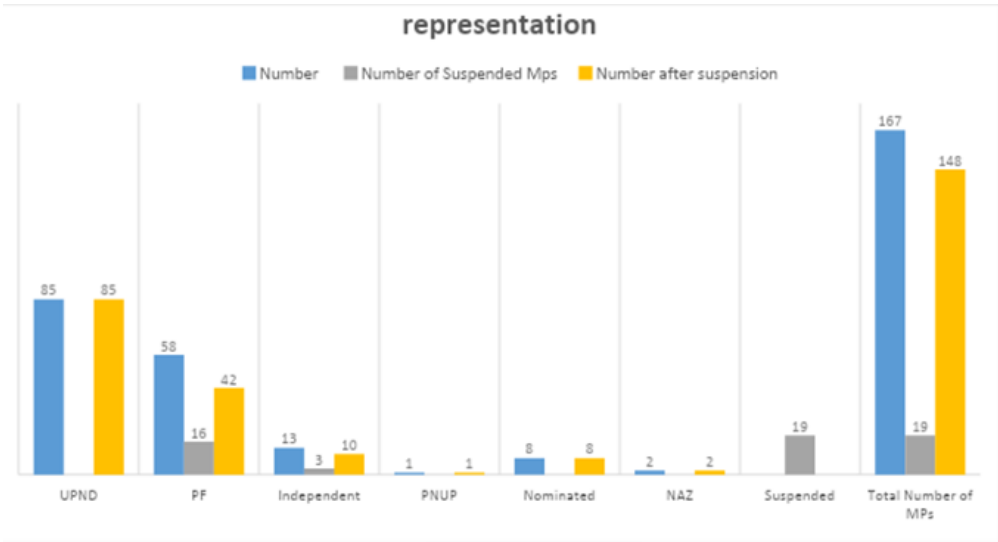
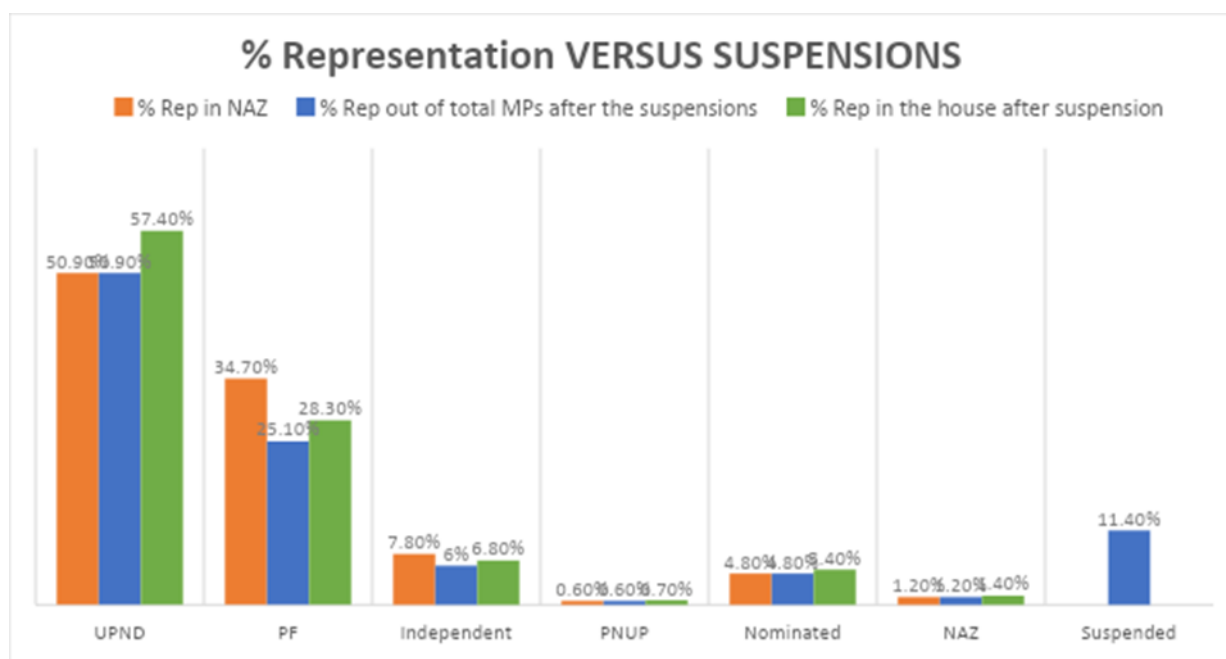


Table 1 illustrates the numbers of MPs and their link to the National Assembly of Zambia.



*Table 2: Showing the % variations emanating from the MP suspensions*

### In-depth Understanding of the Suspensions

Prolonged suspensions of Members of Parliament have serious implications on the quality of the representation of the wishes, desires and wills of the ordinary citizens (country wide) as well as the concerns of the people in the particular constituencies. The warrant of the suspensions of 19 MPs raised serious debates, especially in the light of court cases surrounding internal disputes of the Patriotic Front political party. Some of the disputes surrounded the legitimacy of the political party Presidency and the appointment of the leader of position in parliament. On the sidelines of those debates, the suspension of the 19 MPs contains interesting implications for the legislature, dispensing its democratic duties. Some of the challenges included:

- Weakening the voice of the opposition in Parliament:** The Patriotic Front has 34.7% representation (58 MPs). By suspending 16 PF MPs, it entails the representation of the PF drastically being reduced to 28.4% (42 out of the 148 MPs remaining). This implies that the main opposition in Parliament reduced to 28.4%. The percentage reduction has serious implications for opposition MPs, where one may be in a situation of intimidation, fear or a lack of moral support from colleagues.

- Weakening the voice of the independent MPs:** Currently, the independent MPs represent 7.8% (13 MPs). By suspending 3 MPs for 30 days, the representation of the voice of the independent MPs reduced to 6.8% (10 independent MPs out of the 148 MPs remaining). The percentage reduction has serious implications for independent MPs, where one may be in a situation of intimidation, fear or easily being bought by the political party in ruling.
- Ruling Political Party Monopolizing NAZ:** Currently, the UNPD MPs account for 50.9% representing a total of 85 MPs. By suspending 19 MPs who do not belong to the UNPD, it meant that the UNPD representation increased in percentage from 50.9% to 57.4%. Furthermore, there are 8 nominated MPs by the President, who, in principle, belong to the UPND. These increased their representation from 4.8% to 5.4%. In principle, this brought UPND representation to 62.8% with about 93 (85 elected and 8 nominated MPs).

### Implications or consequences of the suspensions

The suspension of the 19 MPs has serious implications for our democracy for the following reasons:



- **Weakening Budget seating debates:** Currently, the National Assembly is seriously debating the proposed 2024 national budget. The debates have passed the general policy discussions and the heads are being debated. With weak opposition in Parliament, there is the risk of approving the budget without deeper scrutiny. Especially, noting the budget approval is by simple majority. The suspension of 19 MPs has a bearing on the outcome of the budget approvals and furthermore, the implementation of the budget in fiscal year 2024.
- **Weakening the representation of the people:** representation is an integral role of MPs. In many constituencies of Zambia, the populations are over 100,000 people represented by an MP. Therefore, by suspending 19 MPs at once, it means that over 1,900,000 (rounding off to 2 million) people will not be represented for the next 30 days. This is contrary to the spirit of the National Assembly where the wishes and desires of ordinary citizens must be represented. The National Assembly is a sacred space for deep representation of the people or not political interests.
- **Negatively affecting the quality of oral questions and answer sessions with the vice President:** Some of the Members of Parliament who were suspended would have had questions for the Vice President. By suspending 19 MPs, it means that the majority of the MPs who will be present will be from the same political party as the Vice President, who will not necessarily ask questions about accountability. This is likely to reduce the quality of the oral questions during the Vice President's session.
- **Impeding the freedom of the Parliament:** the freedom and liberties of the National Assembly proceedings largely depend on the democracy of numbers expressed through voting for or against a motion. By suspending 19 MPs, especially those in opposition political parties, it means that the

numbers of MPs to table motions and support motions have drastically reduced, thereby tilting the tables towards the political party in ruling as well as reducing the possibilities of serious motions.

- **Negatively impacting the Oversight role:** noting that Members of Parliament toll along party lines (because of the whip system), the oversight role will be compromised. The NAZ has a role of providing oversight on the dealings of the Executive. By suspending 19 MPs belonging to opposition and Independent candidates, it means that very few MPs will provide oversight (only about 53 MPs). This creates a serious situation which threatens to impede transparency and accountability in the dealings of the Executive.



- **Politicization of the National Assembly:** the current suspension of the 19 MPs has left the voice and presence of the opposition in the National Assembly crippled. This means that motions that need simple majority can easily be passed by virtue of the MPs belonging to the political party in ruling being more than the combined membership of all political parties and Independent MPs (UPND has 85, plus 8 nominated, while the opposition has 42 PF, 10 Independent, 1 PNUP adding to 53). In this case, parliament has degenerated into absolute majoritarianism when it comes to matters relating to simple majority voting. Therefore, the UPND can easily pass a motion without any resistance and that opens a Pandora's box degenerating the National Assembly into a political platform solely for the political party in ruling.

- **Fast tracking of Bills:** Currently, the National Assembly of Zambia has many Bills to deliberate on (e.g the Access to Information Bill etc). Ordinarily, the MPs vote on a simple majority basis (after 3<sup>rd</sup> reading), the Bill is sent to the President for his assent. However, there are instances where the National Assembly needs a two-third majority. Firstly, when there is a Bill to amend the Constitution. Secondly, according to article 66 (2b) of the Zambian Constitution, the two-thirds line is revoked when the legislature wishes to pass the Bill, without amendment (considerations from the President) by a vote supported by at least two-thirds of the Members of Parliament. On the other hand, during the second reading, if a Bill receives more Noes than Ayes, it means it would drop off and would never be presented to parliament during that session. In the light of the suspensions, it means that currently the UPND has more control over the Bills that can be assented to the President or those that can be dropped off. In a way, the suspension of 17 MPs for 30 days and 2 MPs for two weeks, especially those belonging to the opposition political parties, risks lowering the resistance to fast tracking Bills.
- **Disjointing the Pressure/Interest Groups from the NAZ:** Interest groups are linking institutions between the Government and the community members. This is done through engagements with policy makers at community or national levels. Therefore, by suspending huge numbers, it entails that even NAZ Committees are affected by numbers and therefore limited to participate in activities of interest groups at national level (NAZ Committee representation). Additionally, it is likely that most MPs who will attend the interest group engagements will be from UPND, thereby obscuring diversity. Furthermore, conversations with interest groups concerning legislative reforms or advocacy pertaining to legal and legislative reforms risks degenerating into mere academic exercises.

## The Future of the National Assembly of Zambia

In the light of the above analysis, the future of the National Assembly of Zambia is at crossroads. Largely, this is because there is weak political party opposition management in Zambia. In principle and constitutionally, Zambia is a multi-party democratic system. However, in practice (since the 2016 elections), there are generally two competing political parties. If this trajectory continues, there is a higher likelihood of having a political party with absolute majority in the National Assembly of Zambia (more than two-thirds majority). And this will open the legislature to serious vulnerabilities of rubber stamping executive deals, struggling to provide oversight on the executive dealings, seriously compromising the representative role and heavily being influenced by political party issues (both the ruling and the opposition).

Additionally, it needs to be emphasized that the National Assembly of Zambia has a primary mandate of ensuring the wishes, desires and wills of the people are represented (through the budget and legislation). In order to achieve this, consensus building is fundamental. However, if the trajectory of prolonged suspension of MPs continues, consensus building will be more politically aligned, thereby threatening the successful carrying out of the cardinal mandate of the National Assembly. In this regard, the National Assembly will either be representing the ideologies and wishes of the political parties or become self-interested and neglect the principle rule of representing the citizens of Zambia (knowing that all of us cannot be in parliament, we solely rely on our Members of Parliament to represent us).

Also, citizens or constituency members will be held ransom to the behavior of the Members of Parliament in the August house. In principle, the MPs will be punished by the National Assembly, while in reality the citizens and the community members are the ones who will bear the brunt of an MP being absent from Parliament. On the other hand, MPs belonging to the opposition will take



for granted representing the people in the constituencies and regress into representing their political opinions or affiliations. This is one of the immediate challenges that must be taken care of (dilemma of representation). Ultimately, the people being represented must not be held ransom to either the behavior of the MPs or to the decisions of the National Assembly.

## Recommendations

In the light of such development, the following are some of the recommendations that could safeguard the future of the National Assembly of Zambia:

- Provide the suspended MPs a procedure of appearing before the Privileges and Absence Committee to exculpate themselves. According to Standing Order 190 (4), the committee must assist the Speaker in considering matters relating to the privileges and discipline of members. Looking at the number (19 MPs) and the nature of the MPs (Political Party affiliation and Independent members), it is recommended that the matter be guided by the Privileges and Absence Committee. This will bring harmony in the running of the business as well as enhancing the objectives of the National Assembly of Zambia. This will help to depoliticize the National Assembly of Zambia.
- Allow for the court procedures to conclude, so that a leader of the opposition can be given due credence. Currently, the Patriotic Front Party are having internal leadership challenges which are under court for consideration. Therefore, the National Assembly must allow the court proceedings to conclude, so that the leader of the opposition is well recognized. This will allow for adherence to the democratic governance principle of Separation of Powers.
- Currently, walkout protests are the only means for the Members to protest. The Government and all non-state actors/actresses must consider new forms of MPs to air grievances without resorting to violence or easy walkout protests. The walkout protests continue to undermine the aspect of representation as a key role for the National Assembly of Zambia. There must be platforms for MPs to still contribute to the National Assembly.
- Review and amend Standing Order 205 (j), which states that a Member commits an act that, in the opinion of the Speaker, constitutes gross disorderly conduct. This leaves room for misinterpretation. Rather than leaving it to the opinion of the Speaker, the recommendations must come from the Privileges and Absence Committee.
- Suspend the Members according to Standing Order 209 which stipulates the duration of the suspensions. If it is the case that all the 19 Members have contravened more than twice, then, the duration is warranted. However, each Member must be given duration of suspension according to the stance on number of contravening, rather than suspending Members as a group.
- Suspensions as a disciplinary measure must be reformatory rather than punitive. The language in the Standing Orders takes the language of punitive justice. Punishing MPs is punishing the people they represent. There is a need for the National Assembly to review the Standing Orders to ensure that the approach is more focussed on reform than punishment. This will enhance the quality of representation in the National Assembly as well as the oversight role of the MPs.
- Make suspension periods simultaneous, rather than concurrent. In the case of Hon Banda (Petauke MP), by serving concurrent suspensions, it entails being away from the August house for almost 2 months. Serving suspensions as concurrent is counter intuitive to the principle of representation. It is recommended that suspensions must be served simultaneously and not concurrent, in order to safeguard the principle of presentation.

*John Kunda Sauti*  
*Faith and Justice Programme Officer*  
*JCTR - Lusaka*

# CIVIL SOCIETY IS A CORNERSTONE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT



## INTRODUCTION

Good governance is critical for the development and prosperity of any nation. In Africa, the role of civil society in promoting good governance has become increasingly important, given the challenges faced by many governments on the continent. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are crucial for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), for democratization, for the defence of human rights and for the protection of the environment. They hold governments and businesses to account and help to make sure no one is left behind by development.

The concept of civil society goes back many centuries in Western thinking with its roots in Ancient Greece. The modern idea of civil society emerged in the 18th Century, influenced by political theorists from Thomas Paine to George Hegel, who developed the notion of civil society as a domain parallel to, but separate from, the states. Over the past decade, there has been renewed interest in civil society, as the trend towards democracy opened up space for civil society and the need to cover increasing gaps in social services created by structural adjustment and other reforms in developing countries. The key features of successful civil societies which

emerge from various definitions include the following: a separation from the state and the market; formation by people who have common needs, interests and values like tolerance, inclusion, cooperation, equality and development; and formation through a fundamentally endogenous and autonomous process which cannot easily be controlled from outside.

The experience of developing countries highlights a wide range of such organizations, from large registered formal bodies to informal local organizations, the latter being far more numerous and less visible to outsiders. These include traditional organizations such as religious organizations and modern groups and organizations, mass movements and action groups, political parties, trade and professional associations, non-commercial organizations and community based organizations.

However, care must be taken to ensure that civil society is not equated to non-government organizations (NGOs). Broadly speaking, NGOs are a part of civil society, though they play an important and sometimes leading role in activating citizen participation in socio-economic development and politics and in shaping or influencing policy. Civil society is a broader concept, encompassing all organizations and associations that exist outside the state and the market.



## **Role of Civil Society in Good Governance**

Corruption, maladministration, nepotism, and poor accountability have reached unprecedented levels within the African continent. Consequently, this has impeded the successful and adequate provision of public services and by extension, has hampered socio-economic development and good governance. Undeniably, the entrenchment of civil society is vital for democratic purposes and the consolidation of good governance. Civil society is widely recognized as an essential third sector, as its strength has a positive influence on the state and the well-being of people. Civil society is an important agent for promoting good governance through transparency, effectiveness, openness, responsiveness and accountability.

Civil society enhances good governance through policy analysis and advocacy, as well as by regulation and monitoring of state performance and the action and behavior of public officials. Additionally, CSOs also build social capital and enable citizens to identify and articulate their values, beliefs, civic norms and democratic practices. They also mobilize particular constituencies, particularly the vulnerable and marginalized sections of masses, to participate more fully in politics and public affairs. Finally, through their development work, they improve the well-being of their own and other communities.

Civil society plays a critical role to ensure that governments are held accountable in the provision of public services and utilization of national resources. Accountability is typically based on three elements: responsibility, answerability and enforceability. Responsibility entails that those in positions of authority have clearly defined duties and performance standards, which enable a transparent and objective assessment of their behaviour, whereas answerability demands that public officials and institutions present logical and articulate justifications for their actions and decisions to those affected, such as the general public, voters and other institutions. On the other hand, enforceability requires public institutions to

implement mechanisms that measure the degree to which government officials and institutions abide by established standards, and that enforce sanctions on officials who do not comply and, when needed, ensure that the proper corrective and remedial action is carried out. The three elements of accountability are not mutually exclusive, but interlinked. It is thus paramount to have a vibrant civil society to be able to achieve these.

## **CONCLUSION**

Civil society plays a critical role in promoting good governance through advocating for citizen participation, transparency, and accountability in government decision-making, as well as monitoring and reporting on government actions and outcomes. Additionally, civil society organizations play a critical role in promoting social justice and protecting human rights. Civil society organizations in Zambia face many challenges, including limited access to funding, restrictive legal and regulatory frameworks, government repression and intimidation, and a lack of trust from the public. Despite the challenges, there are many opportunities for civil society to continue promoting good governance in Zambia. These include advancement in technology, collaborative partnerships with government and other stakeholders, increased public awareness and participation, and strengthening of legal and regulatory frameworks. In order for civil society to fully realize its potential in promoting good governance in Zambia, it will be important to address the challenges facing civil society organizations and to build on the opportunities available. This will require a multi-faceted approach that involves collaboration between civil society organizations, governments, and other stakeholders, as well as a commitment to strengthening democratic institutions and promoting citizen participation in decision-making processes.

*Micomyiza Dieudonn'e  
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# THE NEED FOR CIVIL SOCIETY TO PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE PROCESSES



## Introduction

Democracy requires a complete and comprehensive participation of citizens. However, it has been a common practice by some to use their opportunity to vote in general elections as their only input towards governance, without participating effectively in holding public officials accountable between these elections. However, civil society has been playing a valuable role in deepening democratic practice by highlighting, empowering, and mobilizing citizens to take part in governance processes. Civil society has been prominent in the governance and development sector, such that when it is strong and active, it contributes positively to the development and maintenance of good governance. Therefore, it is cardinal for civil society to participate in national and local governance processes to make democracy more meaningful and inclusive.

## Governance

Governance involves institutions, systems, structures, processes, procedures, practices, relationships, and leadership behavior in the exercise of authority in the run-

ning of public affairs which promotes people's socio political and economic development (Kauzya, 2003). It is practiced at all levels and requires the involvement of citizens as beneficiaries.

The participation of citizens in the governance processes connects them to higher tiers of government and supports their meaningful contribution to democratic process at all levels. As has been noted (Klugman, 1994), local governments act more in accordance with the needs and priorities of local communities in close partnership with them.

Governance needs to be good and legitimate. Good governance involves the exercise of authority given with the participation, interest, and livelihood of the people as the driving force. This is not solely a government matter, but envisages a number of different relationships in which various actors at all levels play different roles; roles which can be conflictual, but can also reinforce and complement one another, as they seek to satisfy the interests and needs of the community (Kauzya, 2003).



## Civil Society

Civil society is the arena, outside of the family, the state, and the market, which is created by individual and collective actions, organizations and institutions to advance shared interests (CIVICUS, 2008). It embraces three principles regardless of cultural context and these are; participatory engagement, constitutional authority, and moral responsibility. Civil society isn't about profit making but about public interest (WHO, 2002). However, it has been argued that recent practices undertaken by civil society demonstrate an over reliance on donor driven support to operate in areas of monitoring and influencing people driven reforms (Ahmad, 2008).

## Civil Society's Significance

The importance of civil society in governance cannot be overemphasized because it raises awareness by equipping disadvantaged groups to effectively participate in governance issues (Elemu, 2010). Therefore, it's an essential ingredient of a responsive democratic governance and sustainable human development.

Civil society seeks a voice in development planning, budgeting processes, and holding governments accountable in the allocation of local resources and tracking the use of resources (Thindwa, 2006). For instance, the emergence of civil society in Zambia has been one positive factor in encouraging pluralism, accountability, diversity and minimization of political patronage (Habasonda, 2010).

Civil society promotes the public interest by undertaking initiatives, from civic education to the empowerment of citizens. Studies across the globe show that civil societies have made magnificent contributions to enhanced citizen engagement in public policy processes (Idumange, 2012). It is less bureaucratic, hence more effective in educating the populace to positively influence public participation in governance. However, the availability for civic action is dependent on several factors, including financial interests, political interests and capacity to dialogue between government and citizens.

Civil society fosters citizen participation which facili-

tates inclusiveness, cohesiveness and speeds up problem-solving through citizens-led interventions. Public participation effectively helps citizens to manage their affairs in a way that is accountable (West, 2014). Therefore, involving citizens in decision-making processes encourages better planning and citizen ownership leading to transparency, improved accountability and public resource management for good policy outcomes supporting good governance (Herian et al. 2012).



Civil society has the capacity and space to support social accountability processes, thereby embracing enhanced citizen engagement in governance processes. This is because accountability depends on the existence of autonomous centers of social and economic power that act as watchdogs over activities of politicians and government officials (Jenkins, 2001). Civil society establishes itself across various geographical areas to enhance social accountability and to mobilize more efficiently. Therefore, using its widespread networks, it has greater impact by making it easy to influence change in sensitive areas, such as accountability and transparency in governance (Ahmad, 2008). It is a general outcome that when citizens get empowered, they are most likely to participate in public discussions and processes by communicating their views openly in the governance processes.

Civil society helps governments by ensuring that the interests of society are more comprehensible and manageable. It also mediates conflicts, resisting arbitrary and undemocratic actions by the state. For instance, in Zambia it was the civil society in 1990 that forced the head of state to amend his policies following a heightening of social and political tensions (Mumba, 2010).

Civil society provides space for dialogue and political consciousness to provide a counter weight to the power and excesses of government.

### **Civil Society Fosters Social Accountability**

Challenges of social accountability may include the challenge of ensuring that the voices of the poor and marginal groups are not dominated by powerful groups. Civil society can provide building blocks for credible evidence, access to information and engaging in negotiations to promote governance where citizens are empowered to hold public service holders accountable through monitoring performance and demand for transparency (Ahmad,2008).

Social accountability as an approach towards building accountability relies on civic engagement (Malena et al,2004). Citizens or civil society can contribute directly or indirectly towards building accountability through initiatives such as advocacy campaigns, public demon-

strations, public expenditure tracking, citizens report cards and investigative journalism, among others, to support governance processes.

### **Conclusion**

Local and national governance processes involve several stakeholders and it is very important to acknowledge that all of them need to be strengthened to meet the requirements of an effective and responsive governance system. As one of the actors, civil society is characterized by strong, aggressive and diverse community-based groups and networks that seek to promote inclusion. This inclusion strengthens social accountability because it provides synergies between citizens and the state, which provides a conducive environment that enhances governance.

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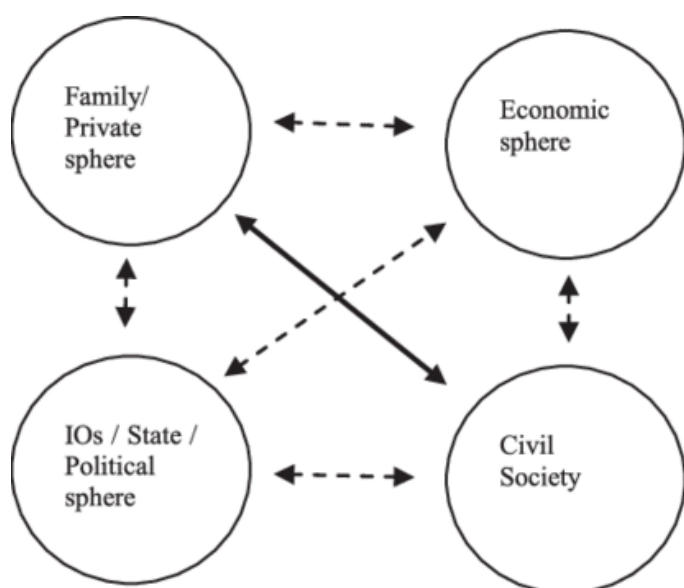
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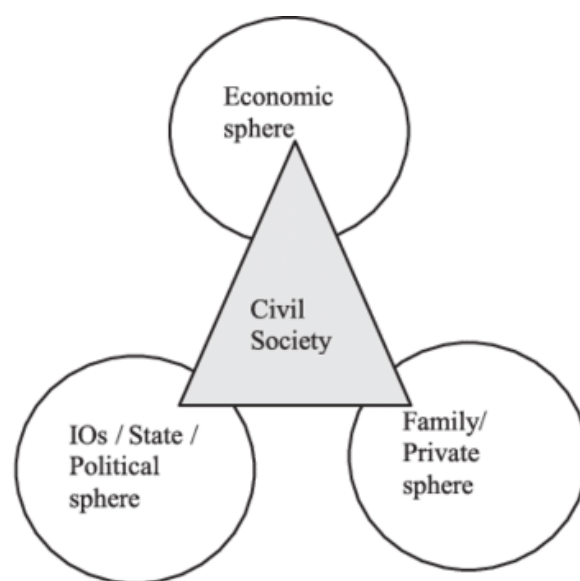
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### *The position of civil society*



*a. Civil society as a sector*



*b. Civil society as an intermediate sphere*

**Good governance involves the exercise of authority given with the participation, interest, and livelihood of the people as the driving force. This is not solely a government matter, but envisages a number of different relationships in which various actors at all levels play different roles.**

- Hansel M. Mweetwa



# THE NEED FOR CIVIL SOCIETY TO PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE PROCESSES



## Introduction

Members of civil society are critical in national and local governance processes as they are key stakeholders in development agendas. They play a key complementary role in nurturing efficient and effective governance through ensuring that no one is left behind or excluded in reaching decisions and in their implementation. They also play a critical role in new skills development which results in improved governance at national and local levels. In some instances, the presence of civil society organisations within governance systems and processes results in an influx of resources that are sometimes disbursed towards direct or indirect improvement of service delivery, as noted by the International Federation of Accountants [IFAC], (2012). This article will outline three key contributions of civil society organisations to democratic processes.

## Definition of Civil Society

To begin with, civil society can be defined as a collection of non-profit making and voluntary organizations that “provide services, goods and practical help as their primary function,” and which are not political according to Evers (2013). On the other hand, governance can be defined as a process of making and enforcing decisions in an organisation or entity, according to Bevir (2012).

The Institute of Company Secretaries of India states that governance also includes ethics, risk management, administration and compliance (2019). Thus, with this aforementioned definition of the civil society, one can assert that this sector is evidently inseparable from governance systems and it is key in promoting efficiency.

## The Participation of CSOs in Governance Processes

The participation of civil society organisations in national and local governance processes is of primary importance since it opens doors for usually excluded members of the society in decision-making and enforcement. This means that in the presence of civil society actors, chances of inclusion for the majority are increased, especially in national and local governance processes. The IFAC Policy (2012) defines this as ‘public interest’ and ‘ethical behaviour.’ As Evers notes, this is especially so, because of the greater demand for checks and balances in equality and in representation (2013).

Hence, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs argues that civil society enhances representation in governance processes. Their work ensures that otherwise vulnerable and marginalised members of society such as women, children and the disabled are fairly represented and considered in everyday decisions made and enforced.

## **The Inclusion of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities**

If members of the civil society sector ensure that everyone is taken aboard in governance processes, the beneficiaries of this work include youth, women, gender, and persons with disabilities. The contributions of these groups are crucial to a well-rounded democracy. There are CSOs who represent these groups who work tirelessly to ensure their representation. They at times advocate for inclusion of a fair number of the abovementioned groups into arms of government such as parliament, local authorities and into the executive. In the end, this results in a reduction of biased and inconsiderate decisions and policies.

## **New Skills Development**

Civil society organizations enhance access to new skills development. They assist governance structures through training of key personnel such as Members of Parliament and Councillors in areas like leadership and monitoring and evaluation. As noted by Raj Isar, in some instances, organizations in this sector support programs that governance structures are involved with by hiring experts or giving them resources to do pilot projects for learning purposes (2011). This increases excellence and efficiency in national and local governance.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, civil society organizations play a huge role in enhancing governance processes. This may be through advocating for greater representation of minority groups in these processes. This work benefits especially women, youth and persons with disabilities. It is also through the development of skills and the support of projects which governance structures are involved with. It may also be that CSOs assist these structures through providing resources that can enhance service delivery and citizen engagement. That is, they capacitate arms of government to provide their respective services efficiently and also to interact and interface with the people effectively. Civil society organisations, especially interest-based civil society organizations, play a positive role in security when their views and aspira-

tions align with the principles of respect for rule of law, protection of human rights, and a commitment to non-violent democratic politics, according to the Toolkit for Security Sector Reporting (2020). This is sometimes through advancement of ICT equipment to national, government and local authorities for effective service to the people. In some cases the organisations support the national and local authorities with vehicles to reach out to people at public hearings which culminate in formation of Bills, by-laws and Acts. Whatever their involvement, CSOs contribute greatly to making governance processes better, more efficient, and more representative.

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# SAFEGUARDING CDF IS SAFEGUARDING YOUR OWN DEVELOPMENT



## Introduction

Community members must be protagonists of their own development. Through the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Zambia, community members can find local solutions to their problems. Some of the problems in communities include poor water and sanitation systems, poor road networks, lack of market shelters, limited health service infrastructures (no maternity annexes and in some areas no health facilities), and limited education facilities (limited classroom space, no schools, lack of desks, no houses for education facilitators). The implementation of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) aims at alleviating poverty and promoting community development.

This article argues that CDF will only have a meaningful impact in communities once community members begin to safeguard CDF. Therefore, safeguarding CDF is safeguarding our own community development. Importantly, this can be done by community members making their voices heard on CDF, monitoring community projects on CDF, and participating in social accountability.

## The Vision of the Constituency Development Fund

Ultimately, the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) aims at alleviating poverty, promoting community development, as well as uplifting and improving the living standards and conditions of people in their communities or constituencies. The underlying philosophy of community development in Zambia hinges on the agenda of decentralization. The decentralization agenda focuses on ensuring that decisions concerning management of public resources are made at the lowest local level; in other words, the people experiencing the challenges must be as involved as possible in the decision-making process. This emphasizes that community members must actively participate in decisions around CDF implementation.

For instance, the 2022 CDF guidelines prescribe that community members at ward level must participate in CDF community project identification so that the projects must respond to local problems. Equally for the loans and grants, which remain merely a means to achieving some Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) like ending poverty (through CDF job creation), ending hunger, empowering women and youths etc. In principle, the CDF seamlessly fits into the whole scheme of



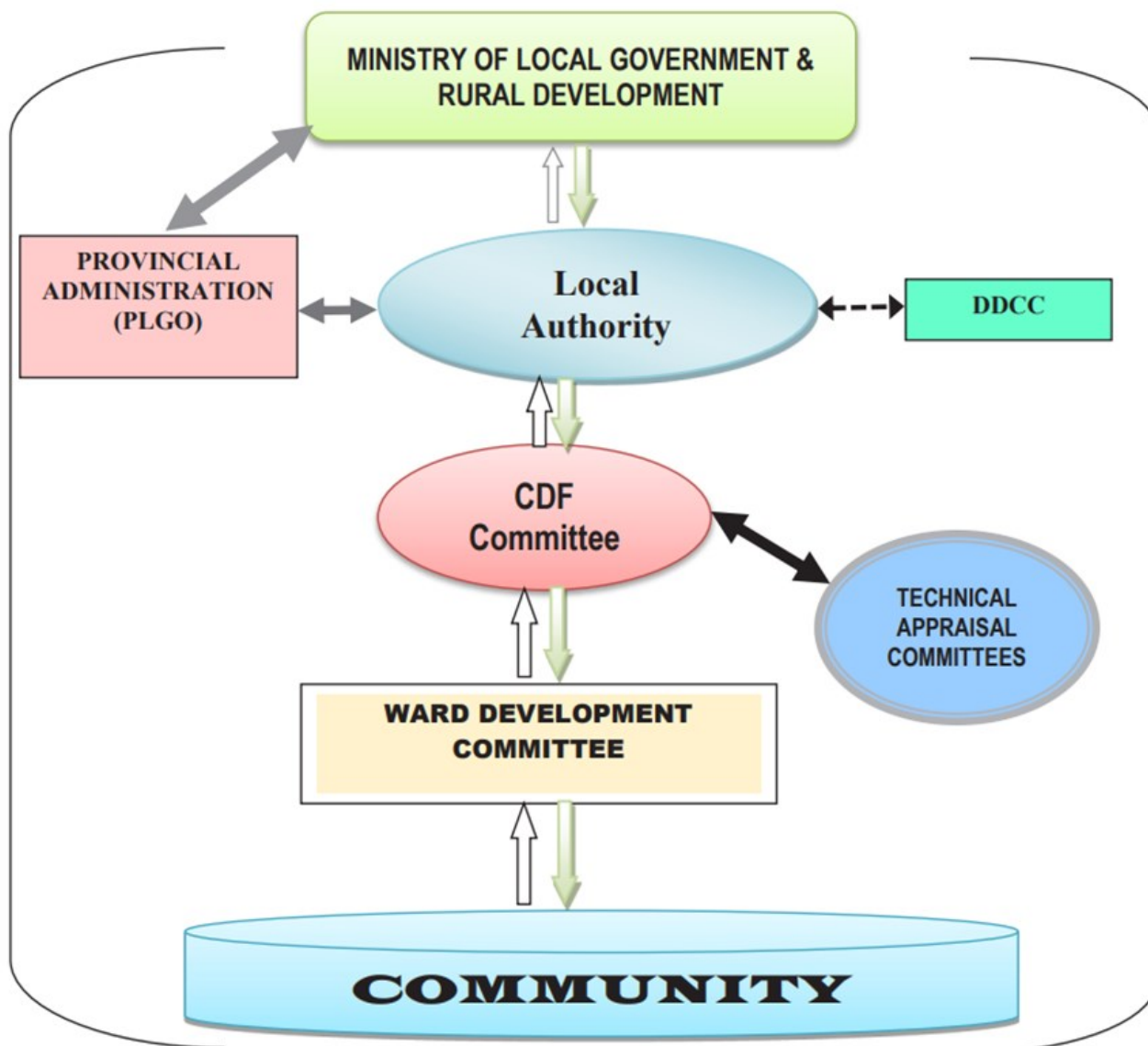


Figure 1: Sourced from 2022 CDF Guidelines

The objective of the CDF, which is to alleviate poverty and foster community development, resonates with the religious perspective on promoting human dignity through development.

*“Today we see people trying to secure a sure food supply, cures for diseases, and steady employment. We see them trying to eliminate every ill, to remove every obstacle which offends a person's dignity. They are continually striving to exercise greater personal responsibility; to do more, learn more, and have more so that they might increase their personal worth. And yet, at the same time, a large number of them live*

*amid conditions which frustrate these legitimate desires”*

### Promoting Development is Promoting Peace

Human dignity is the epitome of all developmental discourse in societies. From the book of Genesis, we learn that God created mankind in his image (Genesis 1:27). It is from this inherent image of God in each person that we derive our human dignity. Therefore, the end of development is to promote human dignity for all. Drawing insights from the papal encyclical called ‘Popularum Progressio’ (on the development of peoples) which was published on 26 March 1967, we learn that development is the new name for peace.

*“The progressive development of peoples is an object of deep interest and concern to the Church. This is particularly true in the case of those peoples who are trying to escape the ravages of hunger, poverty, endemic disease and ignorance; of those who are seeking a larger share in the benefits of civilization and a more active improvement of their human qualities; of those who are consciously striving for fuller growth”.*

*“(64) When we fight poverty and oppose the unfair conditions of the present, we are not just promoting human well-being; we are also furthering human's spiritual and moral development, and hence we are benefiting the whole human race. For peace is not simply the absence of warfare, based on a precarious balance of power; it is fashioned by efforts directed day after day toward the establishment of the ordered universe willed by God, with a more perfect form of justice among people”.*

**- Populorum Progressio**

## **The Benefits of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF)**

Ever since CDF was established in 1995, it has demonstrated numerous positive elements, hopes and benefits for the community members. Some of the positives include:

### **1. Promoting accessibility to Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR)**

The hallmark of CDF is to alleviate community poverty. Similarly, the foundation of ESCR is to promote world peace and justice. Now, the concept of peace in this context traverses the confines of understanding peace as the absence of war. Why? This is because, you can have a situation where there is no war, but people are struggling to access basic services like education, health, clean environment, water and sanitation and they would be wallowing in poverty etc. Some schools of thought understand ESCR as positive rights. Primarily because they give responsibility to the Government to provide basic services and needs. This, then, seamlessly fits into the CDF implementation because CDF is an avenue for the Government to progressively realise access to ESCR. Furthermore, the CDF can also provide support in terms of the quality of social service provision like education, sanitation, water, health etc. It is through

such facilities that people enjoy access to the ESCR. And that is why, when we conduct social accountability in the implementation of CDF, we are implicitly asking ourselves, “Is CDF helping to achieve the progressive realisation of ESCR?” In terms of social accountability, attention is paid to the quality of service provision as well as building the capacities of community members to hold duty bearers accountable for their utilisation of public resources.

Through CDF, the access that community members have to healthcare, education and water and sanitation has improved. In some communities, we have witnessed the construction of laboratories, classroom blocks, procurement of desks, water reticulation systems, accommodation for teachers and nurses, ablutions, upgrading of roads etc. This has been a positive benefit of CDF since its establishment and the hope is that the enhanced CDF will scale up access to ESCR.

### **2. Enhancing economic emancipation of women, youth and community members**

The enhanced CDF, as envisaged by the 2022 CDF guidelines, has broadened its scope to include empowerment. Through this expanded focus, some community cooperatives who have accessed the funds have economically emancipated themselves. This is being done through projects like poultry farming, gardening, agriculture etc. This, in turn, has resulted in an increase to the household income. This is a positive development of CDF because it is reducing community poverty and is contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. This enhanced CDF must be supported to ensure increased accessibility of CDF empowerment among women and youths in rural communities.

### **3. Enhancing social service delivery**

Through CDF, we have witnessed some improvements in the quality of the social service delivery (education, health and water and sanitation). CDF has been an instrument in improving social service delivery through road constructions, houses for teachers and nurses as

well as taking social services closer to the people.

#### ***4. Enhancing infrastructure development at the Local Level***

Through CDF implementation, we have witnessed community infrastructure development like bridges, schools, health facilities, markets, roads etc. This is a benefit because the completion of these projects has helped to uplift the dignity of the people in the communities. In some communities, women have decent health maternity services, in some other cases children do not have to walk longer distances to access education.

#### ***5. Allowing community members to participate in the project selection process***

Consulting the CDF guidelines, and mindful of the aspirations of the 2023 National Decentralization policy, it is evident that people (community members or citizens) must be protagonists of their development. This is being done through community members participating in the selection of projects. This is important because it helps community members to identify local solutions to their local problems. Furthermore, this enhances community ownership and stewardship of community projects.

#### ***6. Enshrining CDF in the Constitution and other pieces of legislation***

The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) is enshrined in article 162 of the Constitution of Zambia (2016 amendment). Furthermore, there are other subsidiary laws like the Constituency Development Fund Act No. 11 of 2018 which facilitate the implementation of CDF. By having a legal and legislative framework for CDF, it creates an avenue for standardization, as well as promoting accountability and transparency.

#### ***7. Ward Development Committees as the entry point to CDF***

The implementation of CDF through instructing WDCs to mobilise community members and select community projects is a benefit. This is because it gives an opportunity for WDCs and community members to provide oversight on the implementation of CDF in their communities. If well executed, this would be a robust mech-

anism for providing monitoring at ward level as guided by the 2022 CDF guidelines.

#### ***8. Delegating the approval of CDF projects to the Provincial Administrators***

This is important because it has reduced the time it would take to approve CDF projects by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. Going forward, it would be ideal to further delegate the authority to approve projects to the districts. This would greatly reduce the time it takes to approve and implement CDF projects.

#### ***9. Consistently budgeting for CDF***

In the recent past, the Government has consistently budgeted for the CDF allocations per constituency. This is a benefit because Local Authorities, Community members and WDCs can adequately plan using CDF.

#### ***10. Local Authorities prioritizing community projects that started as community led projects***

In some constituencies, there are projects that started as community initiatives. For example, there are communities where community members could have started constructing a school. Following the building's successful commencement, the constituency would take over the project for its completion as well as supplying desks for learners. This is positive because it gives an opportunity for continuation and completion of community projects (prioritization) as well as improving the learning conditions and standards of children.

#### ***Raise Your Voice***

Civil Society Organisations, Faith Based Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations, the media, as well as politicians, have over the years played their role in contributing to community development by raising their voices. Now is the time for community members to raise their voices in order to safeguard CDF. For community members to make their voices heard, they need not protest, but they can actively participate in CDF meetings. In this way, they can provide their critical perspective. They can enhance accountability and transparency, while monitoring CDF implementation.





## Conclusion

The Constituency Development Fund gives an opportunity for community members to be protagonists in their community development, because community members can develop local solutions to their local problems. This resonates with numerous Sustainable Development Goals which aim at improving the living standards and conditions of people. From the analysis, it is evident that CDF has numerous benefits and positives.

However, for that realisation to materialise, community members ought to safeguard CDF through raising their voices, participating in community project identification

meetings, conduct social accountability and participate in CDF community monitoring. The community members must take a serious interest in CDF (attending meetings, asking for information, holding duty bearers accountable etc) and not leave the decisions to Political leaders and duty bearers. In the CDF discourse, duty bearers and the Government are merely facilitators of development.

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**“ Now is the time for community members to raise their voices in order to safeguard CDF. For community members to make their voices heard, they need not protest, but actively participate in CDF meetings. ”**

# MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND YOUTH IN GOVERNANCE IS ESSENTIAL FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY AND GENDER EQUALITY



## Introduction

**P**articipation of all citizens in formal political processes is fundamental for democracy. When a section of the population is deprived of the right to vote or is disengaged, the representativeness and legitimacy of these processes is undermined. Inclusive citizen participation in public affairs is not a new concept. Many countries have wide-ranging initiatives that promote citizen involvement in governing and decision-making processes. From budgeting processes to water management and environmental protection programmes, citizen participation is regarded by some as a crucial mechanism in the pursuit of a sustainable and democratic process.

However, the participation of youths and women in democratic systems has been very limited. On the one hand, the participation of youths frequently provides fuel to political violence. On the other hand, women are often used as tools of entertainment by being dancers and singers at key political events. Significant obstacles to youth political participation occur at different levels and in different areas, including structural, individual, and organizational ones.

Additionally, gender equality and the balanced participation of women and men in political and decision-making positions is a human right, and an essential component of sustainable development. However, the traditional perceptions on the role of women in society have had a negative influence on how many women are considered for leadership positions, nominated to run for office, and on how many female candidates actually win elections. These perceptions were discussed by Julia Gillard, the former Australia Prime Minister, who stated in an interview that continuing biases are brought to bear in the evaluation of women and it is easily assumed women are too soft for leadership, or too emotional or hysterical.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development highlights youth as “critical agents of change” and prioritizes them across its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and SDG 16 specifies commitment to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.” As such the goal is important for all stakeholders working on youth political empowerment.



## Role of Youths and Women in Democratic Systems

Young people play a significant role in democratic societies. They are agents of change and have been involved in various political movements throughout history, such as labor organizing, civil rights activism, and anti-war protests. The participation of young people in democracy promotes their engagement and awareness in politics. The younger generations are often viewed as apathetic and disinterested in politics, but this is far from the truth. In reality, young people hold political views and opinions that impact their lives and the future of their society.



Through active participation, young people can voice their opinions, concerns, and ideas in the political process, gain knowledge on public policies, and develop a sense of responsibility towards society. This, in turn, helps to foster their engagement and awareness in politics, which is critical to ensuring the sustainability of democracy. Moreover, the contribution of young people in the democratic process enhances the effectiveness of democracy. The youth hold a unique position in society, as they represent the future decision-makers and leaders. As such, their participation in politics brings diversity of ideas, values, and perspectives to the table. This is important, as democracy relies on the representation of diverse perspectives to ensure effective policymaking and decision-making. Young people bring forth new energy and creativity to the political process, offering innovative solutions to address the various challenges faced by the society. Therefore, the inclusion of young people in the democratic process enhances the effectiveness of democracy. Additionally, the participation of

young people in democracy ensures a better future for society.

The youth are often the most affected by the policies and decisions made by the government. Therefore, their participation in the democratic process ensures that their voices are heard when decisions are made. This, in turn, leads to policies that cater to the needs of all the citizens, including the youth. Furthermore, the engagement of young people in politics encourages them to develop a sense of responsibility towards society, and motivates them to be active citizens. As young people gain political knowledge and experience, they become better equipped to participate in society. This, in turn, leads to a more informed, engaged, and responsible citizenry, which is critical in building a better and more sustainable future.

Moreover, the full and equitable participation of women in public life is essential to building and sustaining strong, vibrant democracies. Accordingly, the meaningful participation of women in national, local and community leadership roles has become an important focus of global development policy. Still, some may ask why it matters if women become political leaders, elected policymakers or civil society activists. Why does the world need more women involved in all aspects of the political process? The political participation of women results in tangible gains for democracy, including greater responsiveness to citizen needs, increased cooperation across party and ethnic lines, and more sustainable peace.





Women's participation in politics helps advance gender equality and affects both the range of policy issues that get considered and the types of solutions that are proposed. Research indicates that whether a legislator is male or female has a distinct impact on their policy priorities, making it critical that women are present in politics to represent the concerns of women and other marginalized voters and to help improve the responsiveness of policy making and governance.

There is strong evidence that as more women are elected to office, there is also a corresponding increase in policy making that emphasizes quality of life and reflects the priorities of families, women, and ethnic and racial minorities. Women's political participation has profound positive and democratic impacts on communities, legislatures, political parties, and citizens' lives, and helps democracy deliver.

Women's engagement is crucial and it is important to recognize that women are not a homogeneous group. Depending on whether women are younger or older, educated or uneducated, live in rural or urban areas, they have very different life experiences that lead to different priorities and needs. Moreover, not every woman elected to parliament or another legislative body will place women's issues or rights at the forefront of her agenda. Women's representation is not the only fac-

tor, but it is a critical factor for the development of inclusive, responsive and transparent democracies.



The participation of young people in democracy is essential. It promotes engagement and awareness in politics, enhances the effectiveness of democracy, and ensures a better future for society. Therefore, it is crucial for governments, political parties, and civil society organizations to promote youth participation in the democratic process by providing platforms and opportunities for young people to express their views, engage with policymakers, and participate in decision-making. As stated by Franklin D. Roosevelt, "We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future."

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*JCTR—Lusaka*

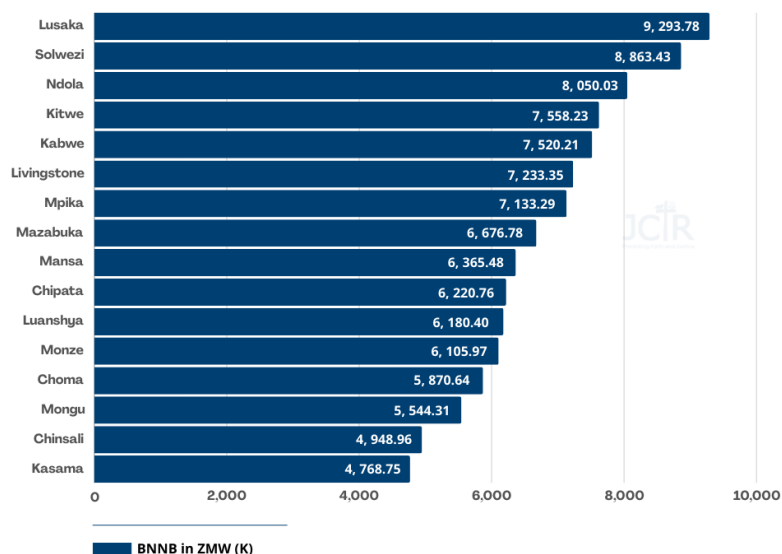
There is strong evidence that as more women are elected to office, there is also a corresponding increase in policy making that emphasizes quality of life and reflects the priorities of families, women, and ethnic and racial minorities. Women's political participation has profound positive and democratic impacts on communities, legislatures, political parties, and citizens' lives, and helps democracy deliver.

*- Micomyiza Dieudonn'e*

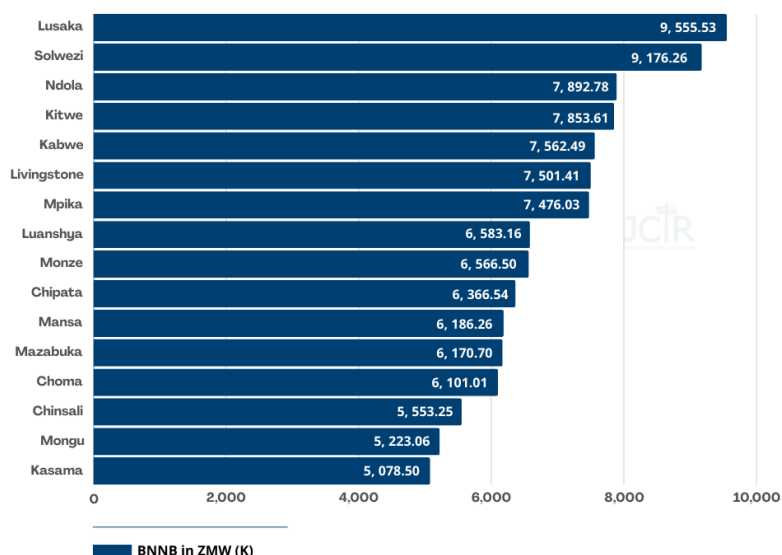


# THE BNNB, OCT — DEC 2023

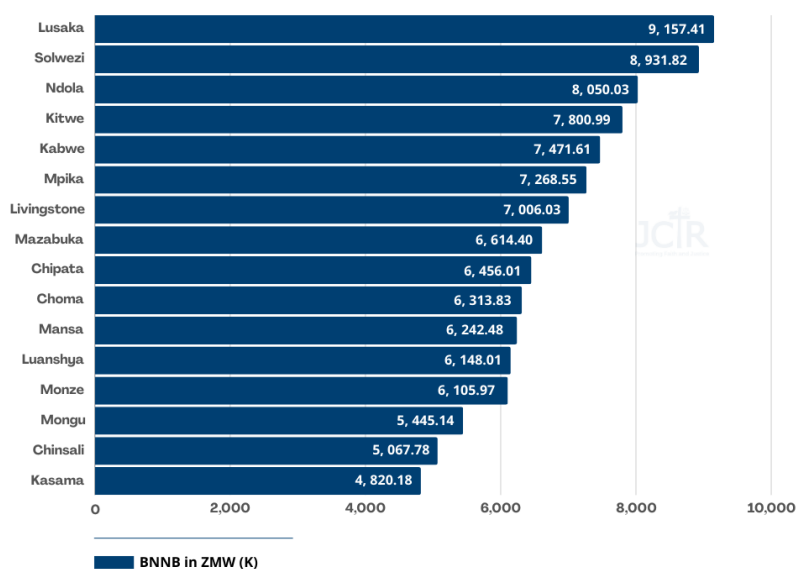
## COST OF LIVING TRENDS - OCTOBER 2023



## COST OF LIVING TRENDS - NOVEMBER 2023



## COST OF LIVING TRENDS - DECEMBER 2023



# PHOTO FOCUS



October

JCTR participates in the inaugural launch of the Debt and Development Academy at the MS Training Centre for Development Cooperation in Arusha, Tanzania.



JCTR joins forces with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Zambia and CSPR Zambia for a dynamic public forum focusing on "Economic and Social Policy Options to Mitigate the Cost of Living in the 2024 Budget."



With support from ActionAid Zambia, JCTR implements a project titled 'Enhancing Transparency and Accountability in Public Finance Management and Institutional Governance Systems' in Livingstone, Southern Province.





# PHOTO FOCUS



November



Fr. Grant Tungay presents to the 29-member Civil Society Organisations' Access To Information Coalition as it convened to strategise its position on the then Access to Information Bill scheduled for approval.

JCTR participates in the Access to Information Bill public discussion forum facilitated by Chapter One Foundation during which Minister of Information Hon Cornelius Mweetwa (second from left) was honoured guest.



JCTR hosts a half-day stakeholder engagement with representatives from the NAZ, ZamStats, Energy Regulation Board- ERB, ZIPAR, BOZ and more discussing poverty in Zambia.



# PHOTO FOCUS



December

JCTR hosts a stakeholder consultative meeting exploring innovative ways of enhancing transparency and accountability in Public finance Management (PFM).



With support from FCDO, JCTR and Diakonia implement a monitoring exercise in Kabwe on the Constituency Development Fund. Pictured are staff members with community members in the outskirts of the town.

JCTR staff pose for a photo to wish all happy festivities prior to an industrial break.



## ARTICLES AND LETTERS

**We would like to 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 depends on your lively and analytical exchange of views.** Should you choose to write to us, **the length of your article should be between 1,000 and 1,500 words.**

We also encourage comments on the articles in this or any previous bulletin issues and views for the improvement of the bulletin are also welcome.

**To contribute, please write articles or letters to the Editor-JCTR Bulletin, by email, to:**  
jctrbulletin@gmail.com and  
com.digitalengagement@jctr.org.zm




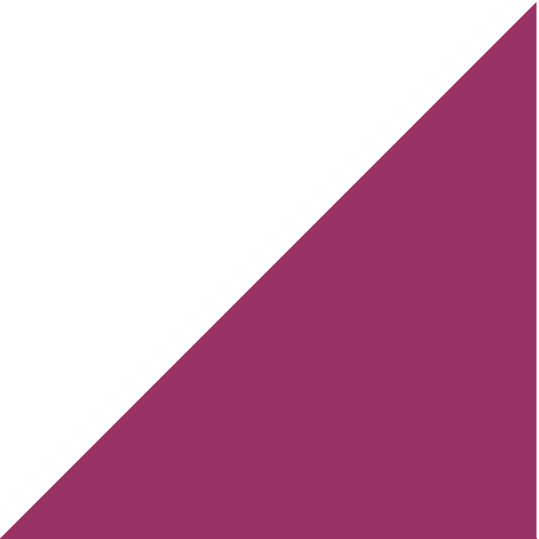


## **MISSION STATEMENT**

“To enhance justice and equality for all, particularly the poor and vulnerable through the promotion of Christian Values, empowerment and provision of policy alternatives.”

## **VISION FOR JCTR**

“A leading, prophetic, well-resourced think tank that speaks and works for the poor and marginalised.”



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