



JESUIT CENTRE FOR THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION
3813 Martin Mwamba Road, Olympia Park
P.O Box 37774, 10101 Lusaka, Zambia
Email: admin@jctr.org.zm
www.jctr.org.zm
Tel: +260 211 290410 | Fax: +260 211 290759

BNNB Statement

October 2nd 2024 - Lusaka

Addressing the High Cost-of-Living through Inclusive Socio-Economic Policies

The Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) has recorded a reduction in the Basic Needs and Nutrition Basket (BNNB), which stood at K10, 478.04 during the month of September, reflecting a K191.29 reduction compared to the month of August 2024 in Lusaka. The analysis revealed that the reduction was driven by a decrease in the prices of several commodities. Kapenta, for instance, dropped from K407.51 per kg in August to K336.84 per kg in September. Similarly, the price of a 40kg bag of vegetables fell from K641.26 in August to K546.16 in September 2024, while the cost of charcoal declined from K402.67 in August to K376.67 in September 2024. However, **compared to September 2023, the Basic Needs and Nutrition Basket (BNNB) has risen by K1,331.98**, even as incomes remain stagnant and economic activities continue to be suppressed due to the ongoing energy crisis.

Furthermore, the Centre has observed a significant increase in prices of most food items in 2024. This requires attention from policy makers as it has implications on the food and nutritional security of many households in Zambia.

The high cost of living is primarily influenced by low food production on the supply side, a result of drought conditions, and by the economic slowdown on the demand side, driven by factors such as the ongoing energy crisis. In response, the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection recommends the following:

- The Ministries of Community Development and Social Services, with the support of the Ministry of Finance and National Planning, along with Cooperating Partners, should

“A JUST ZAMBIAN SOCIETY GUIDED BY FAITH, WHERE EVERYONE ENJOYS FULLNESS OF LIFE”

reintroduce or scale up the implementation of price shock-responsive social protection packages, particularly in urban areas.

- The Ministry of SMEs, Agriculture, and Local Government and Rural Development should enhance the participation of cooperatives in food production and manufacturing, focusing on regions with favourable rainfall patterns and food security.
- The Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Transport and Logistics must ensure the timely delivery of farming inputs to farmers across all districts for the 2024/25 farming season.
- In the medium term, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security should consider revising the minimum wage to align with the rising cost of living.
- The Ministry of Finance and National Planning, in collaboration with relevant agencies, should review the overall tax and non-tax system, with an emphasis on incentivising local businesses in key sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing, which produce essential goods. Tax incentives could boost production, reduce costs, and promote job creation.
- The government, through the Bank of Zambia, should focus on stabilising inflation by adjusting interest rates and managing market liquidity to curb inflationary pressures, address the rising cost of living, and mitigate the depreciation of the Kwacha.

It is clear that the challenges that lie ahead are significant. However, the government must remain resolute in pursuit of the most inclusive solutions and guarantee that every Zambian leads a life of dignity.

Issued by:

Ms. Lukwesa Musonda, Social and Economic Development Programme Officer

For media enquiries, please contact:

Mr. Bernard Mwaba, Communication and Digital Engagement officer. Email:

bernard.mwaba@jctr.org.zm. Mobile: +260973366244.

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Statements

Advocacy on Living Conditions

2024-10-02

September 2024 Basic Needs and Nutrition Basket Statement: Addressing the High Cost-of-Living through Inclusive Socio-Economic Policies

Musonda, Lukwesa

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