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**BNNB Statement**

**November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024.**

### **Towards Economic Resilience and Building Sustainable Initiatives**

The Jesuit Center for Theological Reflection (JCTR) has recorded a reduction in the Basic Needs and Nutrition Basket (BNNB) which now stands at K10, 408.84 during the month of October, reflecting a K69.16 reduction compared to the month of September in Lusaka. The analysis revealed that the reduction was due to a decrease in the prices of commodities, such as bananas, which reduced from K22.24 per kg to K17.14 per kg. Other fruits (mangoes, oranges, apples) reduced from K35.33 per kg to K19.41 per kg. The reductions in other fruits were largely driven by the availability of mangoes on the markets, which are cheaper when available around this time of the year. However, it is important to underscore that while there has been a minimal reduction in the overall BNNB, the cost of living remains high for most households and is unmatched with the average income. Since household income is unmatched to the current prevailing cost of living, this compromises their ability to provide necessary basic needs for their families. In particular, the price of essential non-food items has increased, placing financial strain on households.

During the month under review, the Center observed that the cost of essential commodities has remained high, causing a constraint on consumer demand for goods and services. The slowdown in economic activities as a result of the prolonged hours of loadshedding continues to affect productivity. While the cost of living remains high, it is imperative that ongoing initiatives are responsive to economic shocks that affect the livelihoods of many people currently and in the future. The Jesuit Center for Theological Reflection therefore makes the following recommendations:

1. *Efficient Implementation of Emergency tariffs and Supply of Electricity:* JCTR commends the government for the approval of the emergency electricity tariff with reduced residential tariffs by 20% and 15% reduction for first commercial tariff band, which includes small and medium enterprises. The expectation is that this measure will be effectively implemented to ensure a

stable and predictable supply of electricity. Moreover, the reduction in residential tariffs will cushion households by allowing them to reallocate funds to other need areas and cushion SMEs allowing them to continue operating efficiently.

2. *Strengthening Social Protection through Transparency and Accountability:* The implementation of social protection programmes like cash-for-work should be implemented more efficiently to supplement vulnerable households with additional income to meet their basic needs. In this case, transparency is key in ensuring that such social safety nets reach the intended beneficiaries.
3. *Minimum Wage Review in light of the Cost-of-living Crisis worsened by the ongoing Drought:* The Ministry of Labour and Social Services (MLSS) should consider an upward adjustment of the current minimum wage to take into account the prevailing cost of living. In this regard, it is crucial that the Ministry carry out regular inspections to assess the application of minimum wages across different sectors of the economy.

The Center would like to encourage stakeholders to work together and employ collective action in addressing the cost-of-living crisis. For it through collaborative efforts, active citizen participation and promoting inclusive policies that we can ensure that every person lives a dignified life.

**For further clarifications, contact the Social and Economic Development (SED) Programme at the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) on 0955295881 and 0954755319. Email: [media.information@jctr.org.zm](mailto:media.information@jctr.org.zm) Martin Mwamba Road, Plot 3813 Martin Mwamba Road, Olympia Park – Lusaka. P. O. Box 37774 Lusaka – Zambia.**

Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR)

JCTR Repository

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Statements

Advocacy on Living Conditions

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# October 2024 Basic Needs and Nutrition Basket Statement: Towards Economic Resilience and Building Sustainable Initiatives

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Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection

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