

THE ECONOMY WE WANT

Policy Brief on Zimbabwean Citizens' Ideas on the Economy They Want.

CCJPZ

Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe



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HARARE

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List of Acronyms

AU	African Union
CCJPZ	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
LFCLS	Labour Force and Child Labour Survey
MCAZ	Medicines Control Authority of Zimbabwe
NDS1	National Development Strategy 1
OFAC	Office of Foreign Assets Control
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
SME's	Small to Medium Enterprises
TSP	Transitional Stabilisation Programme
UNSDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
ZCBC	Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference
ZHOCD	Zimbabwe Heads of Christian Denominations

1. Executive Summary

The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe (CCJPZ) as the social arm of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC) engaged different communities at provincial levels to collect their views on the economy they wish would enhance their lives. The engagements were based on the Social teachings of the Church (STCs). This was done through structured information gathering meetings and engagement workshops facilitated by CCJP Diocesan Commissions with the help of the Zimbabwe Heads of Christian Denominations (ZHOCD). CCJPZ took strict consideration to the adherence of COVID – 19 regulations such as social distancing, hand sanitisation, temperature checks and no entry for participants with no face masks. CCJP Diocesan Commissions with the help of the provincial Zimbabwe Heads of Christian Denominations mobilised and facilitated the information gathering meetings. The primary qualitative data collection involved Focus Group Discussions around key constitutional socio – economic rights issues. Secondary data was obtained through desk research. The key issues discussed were equality and non – discrimination, labour rights, right to education, right to health care, right to food and water, right of persons with disabilities, housing, employment, public transport system and road infrastructure. The major findings from the provincial citizen engagements were inefficiencies public health care sector, lack of resources in the public education sector, rehabilitation and construction of road infrastructure, unsafe and inadequate water (water shortages), neglect of the welfare of persons with disabilities, lack of formal employment, dependence on informal sources of income, unregulated growth of the informal economy, insufficient wages and salaries, increasing frequency of collective job action, limited capacity of the public transport system, wide spread demand of foreign currency for goods and services and insufficient food. This policy document provides citizen driven policy options and recommendations on the aforementioned socio – economic issues for the enhancement of national development strategies and budget allocations.

2. Scope of the Problem

The Zimbabwean economy is characterized by uncertainty emanating from a number of fronts. The monetary and fiscal authorities grapple with allocating very scarce resources to competing needs. There are policy inconsistencies especially on currency reform, where officially, the country has reverted back to the local Zimbabwean currency but the practice and push by economic factors have seen the economy re-dollarise largely to the United States dollar. This causes serious erosion on people's disposable incomes as well as compounding the vulnerability of pensioners, the elderly and young people including women. Coupled with that are shrinking and stagnating industrial capacity utilization, power shortages and high costs, crippling foreign currency costs on imports. The country cannot access multilateral finance from institutions like World Bank and International Monetary Fund because of country risk, non – payment of financial obligations as well as economic sanctions or restrictions. Below is an explanation on efforts being made at national level to correct market inefficiencies, inflation and under development. Hindrances to these objectives are also highlighted as well as suggested solutions.

Zimbabwe's economic strategy is hinged on Vision 2030, a 12 year program that is divided into three parts being the TSP (2018-2020) and two successive Five-Year National Development Strategies; NDS1 (2021-2025) and NDS 2 (2026-2030)

2.1. Objective of the policy brief

The primary objective of the research was to gather citizen's views on the economy they want and come up with recommendations to be used by CCJPZ through the Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office (CPLO) to engage with the Parliament and its different Portfolio Committees and other stakeholders.

3. Methodology

CCJPZ largely used the qualitative methodology where CCJP Diocesan Commissions, working with provincial members of the ZHOCD mobilised and facilitated socio – economic information gathering meetings, with a target of one hundred (100) participants for each meeting. The mobilisation strategy gave special consideration to women, youth and persons with disabilities. The agenda of the meeting was to collect and document citizens ideas on the economy they wish would enhance their lives and formulate a policy document based on these contributions for purposes of engagement with relevant stakeholders in the government of Zimbabwe, public and private sector.

Focus Group Discussions (FDGs) were used as the main form of data collection, the participants were randomly selected and placed in seven (7) groups each having an average of eight people. The groups were given prepared tasks to complete in the form of open ended questions based on a specific socio – economic right or issue whose baseline was the Constitution of Zimbabwe, particularly Chapter 4, the bill of rights. The questions or tasks were specifically designed and structured to kick start debate and discussion without leading participants in one way or the other. The FDGs participants were provided with copies of the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20) Act 2013 in their preferred vernacular language as a baseline and a flip chart for the recording of group findings. Each group was allocated 30 minutes to carry out their primary tasks/ answer their questions after which they would rotate and visit every other group where a stationary secretary would brief them on issues discussed by the group and allow them to ask questions and add their ideas, a method popularly known as the World Café. The groups would then present their findings and answer questions from the house and submit the flip charts for eventual documentation.

Lastly, an open house or plenary session was allowed to give participants the opportunity to discuss, recommend, raise, ask and answer questions on economic issues which were not covered in the group tasks such as public transport system, housing, employment, taxes and fiscal policy, prices of goods and services, national budgets, financial policy and national development issues. The minutes of the meetings were recorded by a group of three rapporteurs for each meeting who would consolidate their notes and produce an activity report which would then be consolidated with similar reports from other provincial meetings. These reports would finally constitute the totality of the primary research information that would be used to come up with the policy brief. Furthermore, secondary qualitative and quantitative research and review of existing reports on selected issues was used to complement the primary qualitative information and give informed policy options.

4. Research Findings

The following is an outline of the research findings, policy options and recommendations on citizens' ideas on the economy they want;

4.1. Employment and Decent Work

The COVID – 19 pandemic has seen a huge decline in economic activity and affected employment, many companies had to trim down their human resources resulting in many workers losing their jobs or having their salaries revised down. Job opportunities from the beginning of the pandemic were limited and no companies were hiring or operating to full capacity. However, the problem of unemployment in Zimbabwe has for long been a growing concern. The industrial sector has been constantly shrinking and according to the recently published NDS1 net job creation has always been negative since 2013. The Employment to Work ratio in 2019 was 36%, this rate means the country has a very low ability and capacity to offer employment to those who are able and ready to work, and the large proportion of the total population is unemployed. According to the 2019 Labour Force and Child Labour Survey (LFCLS) results, 2.9 million people constitute employed population age 15+ years and 34% of these are informally employed while 47% percent of the youth (15-35) population were not in employment, not in education and not in training. Unemployment has dire socio – economic consequences which overtime work against national development, as such, it is expected

that the National development Strategy 1 implementation makes use of lessons learnt from previous failures.

4.1.1. Employment and Decent Work Policy Options

The CCJPZ research has realised the need to create formal employment through the formalisation of the informal sector. This would increase formal employment in the country and reduce precarious employment. This option concurs with the NDS1 to raise formal employment from 24% in 2019 to 30% by 2025. However, plans to formalise the informal sector have been in existence for quite some time but the implementation has faced many challenges including the lack of practical alternatives to the informal manner of operating business. Implementation of NDS1 should first review and draw lessons from the previous failures of past economic blueprints and formulate a new strategy based on that baseline.

In implementing NDS1 consideration should be taken on the lack of detailed data and information on the actual size and scope of the informal sector in Zimbabwe. Therefore, a good starting point is the proper collection of data, consultation and participation of the informal sector in the process of formalisation.

Formal Employment creation also requires Small-to-Medium Enterprises (SMEs) empowerment through strategic enhancement of financial and fiscal policies. SME's are currently facing stiff competition from large corporations in the recently introduced Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) foreign currency auctions as bids placed sometimes exceed their disposable income capability leading to stagnation in growth. The government of Zimbabwe should offer tax exemptions to SME's to provide a cushion from the stiff competition by big corporates.

4.1.2. Recommendations on Employment and Decent Work

From the above findings CCJPZ recommends that:

- Salaries should be in line with the Poverty Datum Line (PDL), Consumer Price Index (CPI) and other economic indicators.
- NDS1 implementation on job creation through industrial boost should be monitored and evaluated regularly.
- Fiscal policies on SME's should be relaxed to allow growth as they already face challenges in acquiring foreign currency at RBZ auctions due to competition from big companies in their respective industries.
- The public sector should audit their capacity to employ and create spaces for employment.

4.2. Basic Education

Coupled with the current COVID-19 pandemic, the economic hardships currently prevailing in the country, such as low income, high income tax, use of foreign currency in a non-multicurrency state, hyperinflation and the fact that most Zimbabweans work in the informal sector with no job security and unstable income makes it difficult for citizens to afford basic education.

The COVID-19 pandemic saw the severe disruptions in the education sector. The students sitting for examinations in 2020 were among the most affected by the pandemic as they could not access proper learning and education resources and facilities. Unfortunately the mitigation measures by the state did nothing to address these inefficiencies and students have been forced to write examinations against popular advice.

The Constitution of Zimbabwe Chapter 4 Section 75 mandates the state to take reasonable legislative and other measures to make sure every citizen receives basic education. However, subsection (5) goes on to say "within the limits of the resources available to it," which gives the state room to be reluctant and unaccountable in making efforts to channel resources for the provision of basic

state-funded education.

CCJPZ research findings indicate that the new Competence Based Curriculum which was developed and finalised in 2015 and commenced phased implementation in 2017 under the then Minister of Primary and Secondary Education Hon. Dr. L. D. K. Dokora has been affected by inadequate training of teachers and lack of educational learning materials to implement the requirements of the curriculum. Prior to the introduction of the new curriculum, rural public schools already lacked resources and nothing has been done to improve conditions in rural areas for the smooth implementation. The curriculum also attempts to adopt Information and Communications Technology – ICT. However, the lack of ICT resources has presented a challenge in the uptake of the curriculum in both rural and urban areas.

4.2.1. Basic Education Policy Options

CCJPZ research noted that, the NDS1 outcomes on innovation and knowledge driven economy are specialised workforce; Increased Innovation for Industrialisation; and improved access and utilisation of advanced knowledge and technologies. The priority in the education sector should be rural areas where resources are limited and there is shortage of specialised workforce and advanced technologies.

According to the CCJPZ research, the state, in respect of the supreme law of Zimbabwe should subsidise school fees in public schools. A reasonable and agreed percentage of the school fees should be covered by the state to lessen the financial burden on citizens. The findings recommend that government should increase the number of students assisted under the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) programme for the orphans and vulnerable children with priority being given to rural schools.

The government of Zimbabwe and Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should ensure the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015 – 2022 is rigorously implemented, monitored and evaluated. The success of the new curriculum requires the provisions of adequate infrastructure such as ICT and Science laboratories, provision of learning materials on the new curriculum and continuous learning and education capacity building workshops for teachers on the requirements of the curriculum.

4.2.2. Recommendations on Basic Education

Based on the above findings on basic education, CCJPZ recommends that:

- Financial, human and ICT resources must be availed to support the implementation of the new curriculum in schools.
- The state should improve the welfare of public school staff through regular wage reviews and non-financial incentives that allow the increase in disposable income to avoid frequent strikes by school teachers.
- Infrastructure development in public schools with special attention to rural school facilities.

4.3. Basic Public Health – Care

The CCJPZ research findings show that most citizens distrust the Zimbabwe public health-care system and consider it unsafe for medical treatment. This distrust is a consequence of a number of factors namely:

Cost of Public Health-Care: Through the Abuja Declaration in 2001, African governments, including Zimbabwe pledged to allocate at least 15% of their annual budgets to the Health sector. It has been 19 years after the declaration and Zimbabwe's current 2020 budget allocation stands at 10%. This falls short by at least 5%. The proposed national budget allocation to health for 2021 is even at 13%. This research by CCJPZ shows that the major reasons why most Zimbabweans cannot afford the

cost of basic public health care is low income, unemployment, expensive medical drugs, medical aids do not cover all medical costs and very few people are eligible to be on medical aid as they are not formally employed. Citizens noted that they cannot get immediate medical attention prior to making a payment unless their condition is classified as emergent and in most cases patients are referred to private medical institutions for treatment where the cost of health care and medical drugs is high and pegged in foreign currency.

Public Health Care Facilities and Services: The CCJPZ FDGs on public health care in Zimbabwe revealed that there is serious depletion and deterioration of facilities and low quality/poor service delivery. This has even been exacerbated by the current Covid-19 pandemic. The issues range from overcrowding in wards, poor bedding, lack of sanitisation and hygiene in toilets and wards, obsolete medical equipment, poor food for patients and lack of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for health care workers, putting them at a very high risk of contracting and spreading of Covid-19. Rapid response emerged as one of the major factors affecting citizens right to basic public health care, due to lack of efficient ambulances, inadequate health care staff/personnel, slow casualty response and tiring procedures in getting access to basic health care services.

Cost of Medical Drugs: CCJPZ research findings reveal that medical drugs in Zimbabwe are too expensive for citizens, especially those in rural and/or marginalised areas. While prices in the public health sector are relatively lower than the private sector, the limited availability of the drugs means most citizens have to source them from the private sector. The private sector retails drugs in foreign currency making it difficult for citizens to access and afford them. The Medicines Control Authority of Zimbabwe (MCAZ) lacks a clearly defined framework for the pricing of medical drugs in Zimbabwe. This, in turn, opens up potential for high and unregulated prices for medical drugs.

Public Health Care Workers: Research shows that there have been frequent collective job action by public health care workers, citing poor working conditions and inadequate wages. This has affected citizens' access to basic public health care.

4.3.1. Basic Public Health Care Policy options

The proposed strategies outlined in the NDS1 under health care and wellbeing provide an answer to citizens' concerns over the public health care system in Zimbabwe and this concurs with CCJPZ findings. The following are additional strategies to achieving the NDS1 public health care and wellbeing outcomes;

Cost of Public Health Care: The state must make all possible legislative and other measures to increase the national budget allocation to public health care to at least 15% to bring it in compliance with the African Union (A.U.), Abuja Declaration of 2001. Furthermore,

The government needs to review the Terms of References for the Medical aid societies because the premiums are too high while the services are next to nothing and no one seems to be policing them.

Cost of Medical Drugs: NDS1, proposes improved access to essential medicines through a number of strategies which concur with our findings. However, the strategies do not include the strict regulation of medical drugs prices in both the public and private sector. The Medicines Control Authority of Zimbabwe (MCAZ) must develop a clear framework for the pricing of medical drugs. The framework should be developed in consultation with key stakeholders in both the public and private sector.

Public health care workers: The state should provide incentives for public health care workers such as housing loans, motor vehicle loans, free medical cover for them and their families and adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE's). This would motivate, increase the disposable income and

attract critical health care human resources.

4.3.2. Recommendations on Basic Public Health Care

Based on the above findings on basic public health care, CCJPZ recommends that:

- The state should fund the development or building of nearby health centres and mobile clinics in rural areas to increase accessibility of health care services.
- The provision of PPE's for health care workers to improve working conditions.
- Increase the availability of essential medical drugs in rural areas.
- Acquisition of technologically advanced and up to date medical equipment for public health care institutions.
- Enforce price regulations of medical drugs in the private sector.
- Increase wages for health care workers.
- Draw lessons from the success stories of other countries in the public health care system.

4.4. Labour Rights

Most workers in Zimbabwe are dissatisfied with their remuneration and working conditions, evidenced by the numerous demonstrations, strikes or collective job actions that have taken place in recent times.

Research done by CCJPZ reveal that the Labour Act [Chapter 28:01] PART XIII on collective job action sets out conditions under which collective job action is considered legal and the protection of both employee and employer during strikes and/or demonstrations. The rules set out in this section are indeed necessary to ensure the orderly progression of such events and to avoid unnecessary delays to production which could lead to revenue loss or endangerment of life or the rights of involved parties. However, the legislation makes it extremely difficult for employees to conduct lawful collective job action because of the frustrating bureaucracy involved, the process is ambiguous and not user friendly too much time is taken to process labour disputes in the courts. Applications to conduct a strike take long to approve and do not have a cap or time interval for which employees can carry out the strike if the cap is reached and passed without reply of acceptance or denial. Some citizens say they have general fear to protest and strike for better wages, salaries and working conditions as they are likely to lose their jobs or face intimidation long after the collective job action.

4.4.1. Labour Rights Policy Options

CCJPZ has found out that the process under which the petition to carry out collective job action goes through must be reviewed step by step. This will help to remove the inherent delays and bureaucracy to make the process more simplified and user friendly. There is need to introduce a time interval cap for the consideration of a petition to carry out collective job action. This would ensure accountability on the part of the responsible authorities in prioritising the petition and related issues.

4.4.2. Recommendations on Labour Rights

From these findings on labour rights, CCJPZ recommends that:

- The state should regulate the provision of proper working conditions in both the private and public sector.
- Raise awareness of labour rights and the Labour Act among workers in Zimbabwe.
- Regulate the proper contribution to workers medical cover.

4.5. Wages and Salaries

The CCJPZ research has shown that most working Zimbabweans are not satisfied with their remuneration which is not enough to cater for their basic living expenses. Public school teachers, nurses and doctors have all engaged in collective job action demanding better wages and salaries. The COVID – 19 pandemic has made the situation worse with most companies failing to pay their

workers due to revenue loss and some retailers hiking prices of products and demanding United States dollars albeit informally. The common demand all disgruntled workers are making is for wages and salaries to be paid in the United States dollar or the equivalent, however, the country has since de-dollarized and uses the Zimbabwean dollar as the official local currency. The National development Strategy 1 promises regular review of wage levels, this resonates with citizen's concerns, however, NDS1 is vague on actual comprehensive strategies for the regular review of wages and salaries.

4.5.1. Wages and Salaries Policy Options

CCJPZ has found out that the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, as part of making due diligence in the implementation of the NDS1, should come up with a strategic plan to constantly review wages and salaries. The implementation should consider options such as raising the tax free threshold on income and reducing income tax to increase workers' disposable income by modelling it according to current available data and information on economic indicators. There should be demonstrable use of the information produced by the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency in the regular review of wages and salaries.

4.5.2. Recommendations on Wages and Salaries

From these findings on wages and salaries, CCJPZ recommends:

- The creation of a structure or framework for the regular review of wages and salaries in relation to current economic indicators.
- The state should set reasonable limits for the minimum wage in the country across all industries to avoid underpaying.
- The encouragement of non-financial incentives in both the public and private sector.
- The regular audit of companies' wage structure across all industries to bring it in compliance with national policies.

4.6. Food and Water

CCJPZ research reveals that an estimated 5.5 million Zimbabweans living in the rural areas are food insecure and around 2.2 million of the urban population is also food insecure. Most Zimbabweans rely and are in need of food assistance. The agricultural sector which should be the backbone of the country's food security does not have the capacity to provide sufficient food and other factors such as unemployment, low wages and high inflation rates generally make it difficult for citizens to enjoy their right to sufficient food. In cases where food aid programs are implemented there is usually reports of unfair distribution. Food aid in Zimbabwe has, for a long time, been marred by political prejudice, the distribution is not on the basis of need.

The prices of basic commodities are increasing beyond the reach of ordinary citizens. The cost of living has more than doubled since June 2020. Citizens reported that in 2020 across the country they were critical shortages of basic commodities on the formal market particularly mealie-meal and in instances where such commodities are available, they are neither accessible nor affordable to the majority of the poor. In the same vein, the same scarce commodities were readily available at thriving parallel market where the goods are sold in USD. The beneficiaries of the price controls are therefore the speculators and dealers who are capitalizing on the shortages by importing the needed goods, which they sell at exorbitant prices. Rural people have been hard hit by the price increases as they are forced to pay higher prices than the urban population. Maize grain and maize meal prices are projected to remain significantly above average throughout the outlook period up to January 2021. Given these scenarios CCJPZ applauds the government on the proposed actions as outlined in the NDS1 on food security, which aims to reduce food insecurity from an estimated 59% in 2020 to 10% by 2025 guided by three national outcomes, which are increased food self-sufficiency, reduced food insecurity and increased incomes. Unemployment, low wages and high inflation rates generally make it difficult for citizens to enjoy their right to sufficient food. The Covid-19 pandemic

has reduced remittances from diaspora which most families were relying on. The high demand of foreign currency in the country means most retailers tend to charge slightly higher prices in the local currency to encourage customers to pay for goods in foreign currency.

On water the CCJPZ research has shown that throughout the country, the production of safe, clean and potable water has become one of the biggest challenges affecting citizens. Citizens raised concerns over the poor treatment of water supplied by local authorities which has exposed citizens to waterborne and other diseases. Most Zimbabweans use alternative sources of water, such as boreholes which are expensive to drill. The water fetching points are still very few, distant and service a very large number of households leading to water shortages, contamination of water and constant breakdown of boreholes due to overwhelming pressure. Overcrowding at boreholes and other water fetching points has exposed citizens to high risk of contracting the COVID – 19 virus.

CCJPZ has found out that most of the water infrastructure is obsolete and does not have the capacity to service the population with safe and potable water. NDS1 under infrastructure and utilities mentions water infrastructure as one of the priorities targeted for refurbishment and development with the goal of increasing access to potable water from 77.3% to at least 90% by 2025.

4.6.1. Food and Water Policy Options

The Constitution of Zimbabwe section 77 mandates the state to take reasonable efforts to ensure citizens have sufficient food and safe, clean and potable water. Therefore, the state must make sure that food aid distribution is conducted in a fair and non – partisan manner, giving priority to deserving and vulnerable citizens particularly in the rural areas where food insecurity is high.

The findings noted that there should be investment of funds in research and development in the agricultural sector. There is need to train and educate local farmers in advanced methods of agriculture which have been successful in other countries.

Local government together with the state should raise funds or partner with relevant stakeholders to drill more boreholes in communities. The boreholes must be distributed in such a way that each services a targeted number of households to prevent crowding and contamination of the water while providing easy access to avoid risk to the health and wellbeing of the citizens.

4.6.2. Recommendations on Food and Water

CCJPZ recommends that:

- The provision of temporary measures to alleviate water and food challenges while the implementation of NDS1 is taking flight.
- Drilling of boreholes in communities, the boreholes should be able to service clusters of households to avoid overcrowding and pressure at water fetching point.
- The subsidisation of basic food items, continuous review of food prices and enforcement of price control regulations to avoid private retailers who charge in foreign currency but pay tax in local currency.
- Provision of water purification chemicals.
- Supply free bulk water in high density areas where the water shortages are severe.
- Local government, in the immediate time frame, should channel collected revenue towards water treatment while NDS1 begins capacity building and infrastructure rehabilitation for the coming 5 years. The government should also support local companies in the production of water treatment chemicals.

4.7. Persons with Disabilities

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that there are about 1.8 million people with dis-

abilities in Zimbabwe, approximately 10% of the total population (WHO, 2011). According to an article by UNICEF, the 2013 National Survey on Living Conditions among Persons with Disabilities in Zimbabwe estimates that 7% of the total Zimbabwe population of 13 061 239 (Zimbabwe 2012 Population Census) are persons with disabilities. This proportion is significant enough to warrant the creation of national policy that empowers the respect, protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe enacted the Disabled Persons Act [Chapter 17:01] in 1992 and ratified, but not yet domesticated the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2013. Legislatively this shows the state has a willingness to accommodate disabled persons. However, these efforts only exist as framework and there is serious citizen concern over the lack of practical measures and national policy for the welfare of persons with disabilities in Zimbabwe. The Disabled Persons Act has not yet been aligned with the new Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20) Act 2013 aligned with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Since 1992, which is 28 years ago, when the Disabled Persons Act was gazetted, Zimbabwe has no national policy for persons with disabilities. It is worth mentioning that on the 13th of November, 2018, the motion of creating such policy was once put forward in parliament but the policy is yet to materialise.

Research findings by CCJPZ show that Persons with Disabilities in Zimbabwe are at the periphery of consideration when it comes to socio – economic rights, they are marginalised and impoverished. There is discrimination in job and economic opportunities, low and unstable income, difficulty accessing basic health care and basic education, lack of capital for income generating initiatives and lack of participation in national development processes. These negatively impacts their ability to enjoy their constitutional rights.

It seems funeral and medical policies provide that when a beneficiary turns 18 years of age they cease to be a dependent as they are considered an adult. Citizens have raised concerns regarding persons with disabilities as they remain dependent on family member(s) for their entire lives, depending on the characteristics of their disability.

4.7.1. Persons with Disabilities Policy Options

A comprehensive review and realignment of the Disabled Persons Act [Chapter 17:01] 1992 with the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20) Act 2013 and the UNCRPD. The ACT was created in 1992 and since then more than 2 decades have passed and data and research on persons with disabilities has advanced.

PWD's Quota in Parliament: The parliament of Zimbabwe should consider to set aside a quota for persons with disabilities in parliament, this would allow increased representation of their concerns, needs and contributions in a manner reflective of their proportion in the total population of Zimbabwe.

The creation of a standalone ministry for persons with disabilities is a valid argument that the government should take into consideration rather than making it a department under the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare as is the current situation.

National Persons with Disability Policy: The National Disability Board under the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare was tasked with the creation of policy for persons with disabilities but the process is taking longer than expected and the policy is long overdue. While the policy is still under development, consultation and participation of persons living with disabilities should be the main priority in every step of development of the policy. The policy should take into consideration the following issues;

Regulations for non-discrimination in employment, national budget allocation, special medical rehabilitation attention, data base for all persons with disabilities, acceptance and recognition, parlia-

mentary recognition (quota for persons with disabilities), accessibility of rights, special consideration on medical and funeral policies, reasonable accommodations, infrastructure and public transport system, free medication, habitation or housing and shelter and tax exemption on essential imports.

4.7.2. Recommendations on Persons with Disabilities

CCJPZ recommends that:

- The state should fund and encourage construction and development of infrastructure that is accessible to persons with disabilities, usually referred to as reasonable accommodations.
- The development of economic programs that empower and improve the self-reliance of persons with disabilities in both public and private sector.
- Paralympics should be encouraged in national sports, they are effective in improving the well-being and livelihoods of persons with disabilities.
- The improvement of access to information such as provision of brail material and other related devices and material that make it easy to disseminate information and interact with persons with disabilities.
- Specialised skills training and education facilities to encourage revenue generation and sustainable self-sufficiency.

4.8. Public Transport System and Road Infrastructure

The government has made significant efforts to revive the Zimbabwe United Passenger Company (ZUPCO) which provides relatively low and affordable transport to citizens. Strategies such as increasing the capacity of the public transport system by incorporating the informal and formal private transport operators into ZUPCO and acquiring more buses have been welcome, however, the public transport system is still extremely overwhelmed. The inadequacy of our public transport system is compounded by the lack of alternatives such as rail transport. Overcrowding and pressure for public transport has exposed citizens to COVID – 19 creating more avenues for the spread of the virus, this indicates the inherent risks of our public transport system to the health and wellbeing of citizens.

CCJPZ has noted that most roads in Zimbabwe are in a deteriorating state evidenced by potholes in highways and local roads. This has been characterised by lack of maintenance of local and intercity roads, poor roads in rural and urban areas, stray animals due to poor fencing making mobility and movement difficult across the country resulting in increased road deaths.

NDS1 proposes to support the bus and truck manufacturing industry by increasing the assembly production of buses from 16% in 2020 to 60% by 2025 and the provision of rail transport as an alternative to road transport. NDS1 also proposes to increase the number of kilometres of road network converted to meet STCC standards from 5% to 10% and increase the number of kilometres of road network in good condition from 14 702 km to 24 500 km by 2025. CCJPZ still eagerly awaits if this will be done, based on previously undelivered promises.

4.8.1. Public Transport and Road Infrastructure Policy Options

The government recently increased toll fees by more than 100% in November 2020, for example, light vehicles toll fees were increased from 45ZWL to 120ZWL. The Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development has other sources of income such as vehicle registration fees and license fees that add to the pool of revenue which can be channelled into road infrastructure development, thus the 5% increase in the number of kilometres of road network by 2025 suggested in the NDS1 is not adequate considering the state of our roads, toll fees and the time the government has until 2025 to improve the transport system. The government should consider increasing the pace of road infrastructure development during the NDS1 implementation period to increase the number of kilometres of road network by at least 20% by 2025 inclusive of new roads in rural areas.

There is need for public transport policy that allowed private players to bring buses that ply in urban areas as a means to decongest urban public transport demand. Only certified transporters should be allowed.

4.8.2. Recommendations on Public Transport and Road Infrastructure

CCJPZ recommends for:

- The increase of capacity to local players for the assembly of buses within the country.
- Strict follow up on the enforcement of road and traffic rules on major high ways.
- Channel more financial resources to both local and intercity road construction to speed up the NDS1 plans for the development of infrastructure and utilities within the five years ending 2025.
- Monitoring and Evaluation of road infrastructure development to ensure consistency.

4.9. Housing Delivery

CCJPZ has noted that the issue of decent and affordable houses remains a challenge in Zimbabwe particularly in urban areas. Citizens who were consulted by CCJPZ bemoaned the high cost of buying residential stands. The local authorities are not servicing stands resulting in citizens constructing in areas where they are no proper services such as roads, water and sewer. As a result of the high cost of rentals, residents have been forced to buy cheap land from land barons and cooperatives who do not have proper paper work resulting in the demolition of structures. In the same vein, structures in rural areas lack basic amenities such as toilets. Chigwenya (2019) further argued that housing policy has never taken the housing problem of the urban poor seriously because it took a piecemeal approach to the housing problem, which never took the housing needs of the poor into consideration. Therefore, the urban poor have been left out in the provision of houses by the local government and the state. The Government of Zimbabwe through NDS1, propose to prioritise citizens' access to affordable and quality settlements in urban and rural areas. NDS1 targets a cumulative of 220 000 housing units, for both rural and urban, to be delivered by 2025. The negative effects on Citizens from the previous operations on house demolitions should be taken seriously as lessons by the government. Before embarking on operation to demolish illegal structures, the government need to look at the dignity of citizens, particularly the resources used to construct the structures and negative effects demolitions have on school going children.

4.9.1. Housing Delivery Policy options

The government need to ensure that residential stands are only sold and allocated to people on the waiting list. The provision of enmities such as roads, water, electricity, sewer, proper drainage systems and recreation facilities should be done before land is allocated to citizens

4.9.2. Recommendations on Housing Delivery

CCJPZ recommends that:

- The government must engage citizens and raise awareness on all legislation and official procedure in the acquisition of residential stands.
- The state must increase the targeted number of housing units to be developed under NDS1 by 2025 from 220 000 units to a number that correlates with existing demand.
- NDS1 proposes that government will acquire 10 000 hectares of land for housing purposes. We recommend that the process for allocating this land to land developers be strictly regulated to protect citizens from illicit dealings by housing cooperatives.

5. Conclusion

Based on the above research and findings by CCJPZ the citizens have agreed that the NDS1 is a good document on paper. If the government focuses on economic, provide meaningful support to the vulnerable in form of sustainable and corruption free safety nets, investing in renewable sourc-

es of energy, improve its standing in the family of nations by abiding to the rule of law, protection of all citizens regardless of political affiliation and policy consistency, there is every reason to see the success of NDS1. The research by CCJPZ has shown that corruption, polarisation and politicization of state institutions are the main obstacles in the economy the citizens would want in Zimbabwe. Therefore CCJPZ recommends that the authorities need to adopt an inclusive approach or multi-sector approach in addressing economic issues. Every Zimbabwean including those outside the country (diaspora) should be given an opportunity to contribute to the economic development of the country. Very high taxes, policy inconsistencies, preferential treatment of certain sections and persons go against the desired outcome from the NDS1.

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