



## WEEKEND READER - 8 NOVEMBER 2019



### Effective Social Service Delivery: Responsibility of both Duty Bearers and Rights Holders

Water shortages are a topical issue across the towns and cities of Zimbabwe, for instance, the City of Harare relies on water infrastructure dating back to as far as 1952. "As we all know, the water infrastructure in Harare was built in 1952, so the infrastructure as we speak now is old and dilapidated." The Harare City Council Information and Publicity Committee Chairperson, Councillor Barnabas Ndira told delegates at a ZIMCODD organised Annual STAP Convention for Social and Economic Justice Ambassadors (SEJAs) and Residents Associations (RAs).

The shocking revelations come at a time when the city council is alleged to be soaked in a wave of corruption hindering effective public service delivery

in the Sunshine City. This has seen the water crisis rising to unprecedented levels, deteriorating health services, dilapidated infrastructure and erratic refuse collection. The Global Liveability Index (GLI) of 2018 ranked Harare the "sixth least liveable city in the world out of 140 nation cities due to instability, inadequate infrastructure and a poor healthcare system."

Local authorities are not spared from the macroeconomic challenges facing the economy. Councillor Ndira bemoaned the lack of foreign currency for inability to import water treatment chemicals. The politically motivated blame game that has always existed between the council and the central government has always been considered the major stumbling block for effective public service delivery as the city fathers excuse themselves and shift the blame to the government and the Reserve Bank for failure to allocate enough foreign currency to the City of Harare. However, citizens strongly feel that poor

service delivery is a true manifestation of austerity measures being implemented by the government and as such, the current challenges require a broad-based approach with citizens at the centre of policy making. In this respect, the 2020 national budget making process at both national and local level are important entry points to address the deficiencies in public finance management.

Despite the inefficiencies which are inherent across local authorities, SEJAs and RAs are making strides to resolve public service delivery issues. In Hwange, Parliament of Zimbabwe hid to the call by the Greater Hwange Resident Trust to transfer responsibility over the management of water from ZIMWA to the Hwange Local Board after dismal failure to deliver the service to residents of Hwange.



The Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development brought together duty bearers and rights holders under one roof in order for them to engage, dialogue and jointly develop a plan of action for addressing poor public finance management, corruption, poor service delivery, misappropriation of funds and lack of access to information.



**Political polarisation undermines effective public service delivery**

On another note, Honorable Felix Mhona, Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Budget, Finance and Economic Development said that it is critical for duty bearers to set aside their political differences if national development is to be realized.

“At one stage, we need to also put our political differences aside and focus on the national issues, which are very important.” said Honorable Mhona. Honorable Mhona was responding to questions raised by participants on why the parliamentarians are failing to work together to address the shortcomings of the national budget process.

Mhona’s sentiments come at a time when Parliament’s oversight role in economic governance is heavily compromised by political polarization where the legislators fight to protect the interests of their political parties looking at

developmental issues from po-

litical lenses. This heavily impacts on public service delivery as inefficiency is exacerbated by poor public resources management fueled by parliament’s failure to hold the executive and other duty bearers to account.

There is however a ray of hope, as parliament is currently seized with Devolution Bill which is aimed at addressing most of the public service delivery concerns including frameworks for resource allocation at provincial and local authority levels. Citizens are encouraged to exercise their constitutional right and actively participate and provide necessary input to the bill to ensure improved service delivery. Citizen voice and accountability are critical elements of good governance and ensuring public transparency and effectiveness in public service delivery.

The Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development hosted an Annual STAP Convention for Social and Economic Justice Ambassadors and Residents Associations in Harare on the 7th of November 2019 with the aim of providing a platform for the two groups to share and exchange ideas, initiatives and ex-

periences towards strengthening citizen oversight in the management of public resources. The convention presented an opportunity for direct citizen engagement with policymakers and duty bearers to demand redress of specific social and economic issues of concern. In attendance were councillors and Members of Parliament who interacted with the participants on various critical socioeconomic issues. ZIMCODD believes that an empowered citizenry has the capacity and right to contribute to decisions that affect them. Within the structures of ZIMCODD are vibrant Residents Associations and Social and Economic Justice Ambassadors who are empowered to monitor and demand accountability from rights holders on fiscal transparency and accountability.

**What’s Hot...**

“Ensure transparency, accountability in using public funds” GOVERNMENT should show commitment towards combating corruption through ensuring transparency and accountability in the administration of public funds, the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (Zimcodd) has said. [“READ MORE”](#)

“Govt fires 77 striking doctors” GOVERNMENT has fired 77 doctors who have been on strike for better conditions for over two months while disciplinary action against the other medical professionals on industrial action is still ongoing. [“READ MORE”](#)



