



Investing in People for Social and Economic Justice

ZIMCODD STATEMENT

ZIMCODD condemns corrupt use of COVID-19 Resources

Tuesday, 2nd March 2021

“Without strong watchdog institutions, impunity becomes the very foundation upon which systems of corruption are built. If impunity is not demolished, all efforts to bring an end to corruption are in vain”- Rigoberta Menchu.

Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) welcomes the arrest of the Principal Director of Epidemiology and Disease Control, Dr Portia Manangazira. Dr Manangazira was recently arrested on corruption charges related to the abuse of COVID-19 resources. The move by the judiciary is commendable as a positive stride towards the fight against corruption and should never go unnoticed.

It is alleged that Dr Manangazira illegally facilitated the recruitment and training of 28 family members as Community Health Workers and authorized the procurement of goods worth US\$280 529 without following due process. The abused money and fuel were part of the US\$796 675 disbursed by the Health Ministry for training of health workers. Her actions have detrimental effects on the government’s capacity to utilise scarce public goods in the nation’s best interests. Consequently, the majority of Zimbabweans will be denied life-saving vaccines, treatment, care and social protection.

The Auditor General’s Reports perennially unearths systemic corruption and mismanagement of public resources. Just last year, the former Minister of Health and Child Care, Obadiah Moyo was fired due to procurement related corruption scandals but up to today nothing has been done to set a bad precedent for other public officials. The magnitude of corruption and mismanagement of public resources extends beyond one Public Official. It has become a systemic issue requiring the wholesale reform of the way government conducts business. Stronger safeguards, monitoring and regulation against corruption are urgently needed.

ZIMCODD continues to call for transparency in the management of COVID-19 resources to allay fears and negative public perceptions on the use of the public funds earmarked to fight the pandemic. The lack of fiscal transparency and public accountability on COVID-19 resources results in a myriad of challenges ranging from flouting of procurement procedures, mismanagement of funds, deepening public mistrust in the government as there is lack of a public feedback mechanism. Since the onset of COVID-19 in Zimbabwe, ZIMCODD has embarked on a public expenditure tracking initiative titled the [COVID-19 Resource Tracker](#) to ensure greater levels of transparency and accountability as stipulated in section 298 of the supreme constitution.

The COVID-19 resource tracker seeks to increase public awareness on COVID-19 resource mobilization and expenditure, to identify and flag the areas of concern and impediments in resource flows. This statement, serves to reiterate to the public that the country indeed has the resources to fight COVID-19 as it has received over US\$500million from other governments, embassies and development partners to strengthen its COVID-19 response mechanism, according to our tracking efforts. However, the greatest hurdle to ZIMCODD’s resource tracking efforts is lack of access to

official information on COVID-19 resource expenditure thereby overreliance on media reports. This is despite the fact that the effectiveness of the country's response to the pandemic is largely dependent on transparent, accountable and prudent use of COVID-19 resources.

ZIMCODD therefore calls for the government to publish a comprehensive COVID-19 distribution matrix detailing all the resources received from development partners and those set aside by the government and how the resources have been used and/or distributed.

In the context of scarce resources, public officials entrusted with public resources are expected to do the utmost to safeguard COVID-19 goods and resources. Transparent, accountable and prudent use of COVID-19 resources is central to the success of the National COVID-19 Response Strategy and to curb corruption and resource leakages in Zimbabwe. Corruption must therefore be decisively addressed. As such, ZIMCODD recommends:

- The Office of the President and Cabinet (OPC) as the “metagovernance” institution should demonstrate the political will to eradicate corruption by seeing to it that the ZACC is fully capacitated to undertake its constitutional mandate without fear or favour.
- The ‘catch and release phenomena’ through which high profile figures have been let off without prosecution must cease. Prosecution of high-profile figures is necessary to set precedence and deter future corrupt behaviour including petty corruption by citizens.
- Access to information regarding public spending goals, targets, and expenditure on public resources should be increased through a regularly updated public Database of tenders, private contracts and payments and publication of monthly COVID-19 resource usage. A smart-public procurement which utilizes e-governance to deter under dealings must also be adopted.
- Reform of Public service recruitment processes is vital to insulate against nepotism and unfair recruitment practices for public sector employment.
- Stronger Parliamentary oversight and monitoring of major contracts and procurement processes must be legislated and facilitated across all government departments.
- Devolution of COVID-19 response mechanisms to the lowest functional decision-making structures must be initiated to enable scrutiny, transparency and accountability from the bottom – up.

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The views and perspectives expressed in this statement are wholly attributed to ZIMCODD.