

BREAKFREE

The Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development Newsletter
www.zimcodd.org.zw



2014 2nd edition

Investing in people for social and economic justice in Zimbabwe



Mabvuku residents hard hit by water shortages. **Page 2**



Zimbabwe cotton sector on the brink of collapse. **Page 4**



ZIMCODD's High Schools debate rolls into action. **Page 4**

ZIMCODD to Host the 2014 SADC People's Summit.



2013 SADC People's Summit which was held in Malawi

Grace Chikodzi-Kaseke

The Southern African People Solidarity Network (SAPSN) was formed in 2000 drawing on many years of layered cooperation between people's organisations in countries of Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). The aim was to consolidate and deepen that cooperation in order to strengthen people's organisations in all the countries of Southern Africa and to reinforce their combined influence and impact on inter-governmental economic and social policies and programmes, and the political practices of governments in the region. These aims have pursued through a wide range of SAPSN workshops, seminars, conferences, publications, research and campaigning activities over the years since 2000.

Organizing the People's Summits which are held parallel to the Annual SADC Heads of State Summits is a

significant and established part of SAPSN's role. The gathering in of hundreds of representatives of mass movements, grassroots, and community based organizations (CBOs) and Non Governmental Organisations (NGO's) that work closely with them, has become a significant feature in the building of popular regional cooperation. Since the first summit held in Windhoek, Namibia, in August 2000, the range and numbers of popular organizations and activists gathering from all the countries of SADC has increased steadily. Some three hundred participants came to Maseru, Lesotho in 2006. More than four hundred came to Lusaka, Zambia, and Johannesburg, South Africa was graced by five hundred participants in 2008.

Zimbabwe will this year host the 2014 SADC People's Summit ahead of the SADC

Heads of State and Government meeting to be held in the resort town of Victoria Falls. More than 2500 participants from community based groups, social movements and civil society organizations from all corners of the region are expected to grace the event. The People's Summit which is scheduled to be held on the 15th and the 16th of August in Bulawayo at the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZITF) Grounds will bring together ordinary citizens from the regional bloc under the theme

"Reclaiming SADC for People's Development: SADC Resources for the SADC People"

The People's Summit is convened by the Secretariat with the SAPSN Focal

member in the host country being the host organization. Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) as the SAPSN focal point for Zimbabwe will be hosting the 2014 event. ZIMCODD will be responsible for mobilizing local civil society and social movements to help address the challenges facing the nation ahead of the summit.

The summit brings together ordinary SADC citizenry who use the Summit to voice their concerns on issues that affect their day to day lives under the current globalization wave.

The Summit deliberations will include, but not be limited to the SADC Peoples' Declaration being submitted to the SADC Heads of State and disseminated throughout the SADC Focal points of the member countries in the region as we help operationalise the ideals and best practices for the SADC region.

DID YOU KNOW?

- According to Global Financial Integrity, Zimbabwe has lost a cumulative US\$12 billion in the last 30 years through illegal financial flows while Africa lost an estimated US\$1,4 trillion in the same period
- The continent loses between US\$30 –US\$40 billion every year through illegal financial flows.
- Zimbabwe's external debt is hovering around US\$9,9 billion against the 2014 budget of US\$4 billion.
- Amongst the 7 mining companies in Manicaland only Mbada Diamonds has managed to declare publicly, though not wholly its mining revenue.

INSIDE

- ZIMCODD to Host the 2014 SADC People's Summit.
- Tax evasion crippling Zimbabwe's economy
- People must develop alternative water supplies-HARA
- Pre-paid water meters rejected
- ZIMCODD's High Schools debate rolls into action
- Land Grabbing in Checheche: Impacts on Small Scale Farmers
- Zimbabwe cotton sector on the brink of collapse
- ZIMCODD's Matobo rural livelihoods assembly elects new committee
- A glimmer of hope for Mutare residents
- ZIMCODD Social and Economic Justice Ambassadors (SEJAs) 'Success Stories'

Tax evasion crippling Zimbabwe's economy



By Tinashe Gumbo

Zimbabwe is a resourceful country especially in the mining sector whose majority wallows in abject poverty. It is trailing other countries in terms of socio-economic development yet it could be in a position to finance the bulk of its needs from these resources.

The country has lost a cumulative US\$12 billion in the last thirty years through illegal financial outflows ranging from secret financial deals, tax evasion and illegal commercial activities according to the Global Financial Integrity (GFI). This figure is part of an estimated US\$1, 4 trillion that was lost

by the African continent in the same period. Therefore the continent loses between US\$30 and US\$40 billion every year despite the inflows to Africa remaining very low. Africa has become a net lender of resources to the whole world.

Illicit financial outflows involve financial resources that are illegally earned, illegally transferred or illegally utilised. Zimbabwe has not been spared from this global and continental challenge as it is estimated that cumulatively, Africa lost US\$865 billion between 1970 and 2008 through illicit outflows. Estimates at country level indicate that losses in Southern Africa

were mainly driven by Zimbabwe, South Africa and Angola among others. The transactions are alleged to be as a result of under-pricing, overpricing, mis invoicing and making fake transactions, often between subsidiaries of the same multinational companies.

Corruption has also contributed to revenue losses in Zimbabwe. It is more than just bribery to a public official but it ultimately undermines faith in the rules and systems that are supposed to promote the public interest. Tax evasion should be considered as a form of corruption as it allows sections of society to bypass accepted norms and provides one set of rules for

the rich and well-connected people and another set for everyone else. Politicisation and corruption in the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) also affect the effectiveness of the institution in its role of revenue collection as some Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) officials are suspected to be accepting bribes in return for reduced tax payment with some Chief Executives paying themselves huge salaries that are not subjected to the tax system.

The taxpayers' resources have also been used to service the country's external debt at the expense of the vital social services like health, education and service delivery. Zimbabwe's external debt is currently hovering around US\$9,9 billion.

Zimbabwe offers various tax incentives to attract international companies including the extractive industries. They include tax exemptions and tax holidays, tax deferrals, de facto control of some national infrastructure, ultra-low royalty rates and excessively generous access to water and land among other natural resources. In most cases, this

is done without any consideration to human and environmental impact with contracts usually negotiated and signed between the multinational companies and the governments without the involvement of the ordinary citizens and their parliamentary representatives'. ZIMRA administers these tax incentives which have imposed the tax burden onto the shoulders of the ordinary taxpayer.

The issue of tax competition by countries has led to yet another challenge the world over that is the problem of secrecy jurisdiction, commonly known as tax havens. A tax haven is a country that offers foreign individuals and businesses little or no tax liability in a politically and economically stable environment. It also provides little or no financial information to foreign tax authorities. Individuals and businesses that do not reside in a tax haven can take advantage of these countries' tax regimes to avoid paying taxes in their home countries. It is suspected that Zimbabwe is also losing a lot of potential taxes through this as the various multinational companies especially in the mining sector

have not been transparent in their dealings. Examples of the countries that offer low tax rates thereby fulfilling the tax haven tag are Mauritius, Seychelles, Switzerland, Cayman Islands, Luxembourg and Jersey.

The informal economy often involve unrecorded, unaccounted for and statistically difficult to verify activities making it challenging to include the sector into the system of national accounts. Zimbabwe's untaxed or under taxed small to medium enterprises remain outside the tax bracket. The government estimates that there is more than US\$7, 4 billion that is circulating outside the mainstream economy. ZIMRA is struggling to include the informal sector into the official tax remittance system. Most productive activities that are taking place in the sector go untaxed. The government needs to give incentives like property rights protection, provision of proper space for doing business, infrastructural development and financial and services support as a way of motivating the informal sector to voluntarily pay tax

Continued on page 3

A glimmer of hope for Mutare residents



Figure 3: Residents forced to queue for water which has become a precious commodity

Edison Dube

The water crisis which has been affecting the residents of Mutare will soon be a thing of the past as the Hobhouse water project which has the capacity of supplying water in Dreamhouse and Dangamvura is almost complete after the intervention of UNICEF to fund the project which had been put on hold in 2011 due to Mutare City Council's financial constraints.

This move comes as a relief to residents of Dangamvura

and Dreamhouse who have been facing water woes for several years.

However, Morningside and Darlington suburbs' water situation remains unresolved and residents don't know when the situation will be addressed, as they are still forced to wake up in the wee hours of the morning to fetch water which is a precious commodity in that part of the city. Students at Chirovakamwe Primary School have not been spared as the school is running without toilets due to lack of water

.The school has a students enrolment of 1200 and most of them are alleged to be living in fear of a disease breakout as some toilets are facing imminent collapse due to old age. During the recent MDATA outreach project which was attended by some of the ZIMCODD members, residents expressed their unpleasant experiences over the water woes bedevilling Mutare and called on the city council to act swiftly in addressing the crisis.

People must develop alternative water supplies-HARA



Figure 2: Mabvuku residents hard hit by water shortages

Israel Mabhoo

WATER has become a scarce commodity in many suburbs in Harare, with some parts such as Mabvuku, Tafara, Kuwadzana and Budiro going for weeks without adequate supply, a situation that has compelled the Harare Residents Alliance (HARA) to make calls for people to develop alternative water supplies which are safe for consumption, since Harare City Council has failed to address the water situation in Harare and the dormitory town of Chitungwiza.

HARA questions the current press reports that Harare's potable water is now safe for consumption and calls for more independent water bodies to test the water and publish their findings.

The organisation is against the commodification of water at individual and industrial levels saying if continued without any redress would reflect negatively on the Council's ability to supply water to all its areas under its jurisdiction.

The growing trend of making water-a resaleable commodity

as witnessed by other firms which are now selling bulk water to residential and industrial units is against the people.

The water taskforce, which is a grouping of residents associations also bemoaned the Harare City Council's unfair billing which they said has to be transparent and called on the council to decentralise its billing system as ratepayers and residents were losing a lot of money by having to travel to Rowan Martin Building to have their accounts updated.

Pre-paid water meters rejected

Clarity Sibanda

Social movements and residents of Bulawayo's Cowdray Park's suburb have rejected the proposal by the Bulawayo City Council (BCC) to introduce pre-paid water meters, labelling the move a violation of their fundamental right to water.

Addressing policy makers and residents who had convened to commemorate the World Water day held in Cowdray Park on Saturday, ZIMCODD regional board member Mr. Percy Mciyo denounced pre-paid water meters saying they are a fast solution to make poor consumers pay the full cost of service delivery.

"Prepaid water meters pervert demand management because when you are unable to afford the charge you are simply cut off, leaving the poor consumers with the bare minimum of water for their daily consumption because they are unable to afford the water they need.

"Prepaid water meters violate the right to water and oppose what is enshrined in Section 77 of the Zimbabwean Constitution that every person has the right to safe, clean and potable water, but with pre-paid water meters poor families will be forced to use unsafe water sources once they lose their ability to pay."

Bulawayo Progressive Residents Association (BUPRA) representative Environment Secretary, Mr. Austin Nkomazana accused the Bulawayo City Council (BCC) of failure to



Percy Mciyo

consult residents on the proposed water metering "s pilot project to kickstart in the Hlalani Kuhle area.

"We are rejecting the proposal by the Council to introduce water meters, a tool used under private contract in order to secure profits for the

shareholders, not the access to water by us.

"Most of us are living under the poverty datum line, which has been exacerbated by the closure of many industries; hence pre-paid water meters will put us at risk of contracting water borne

diseases since we won't afford to buy water due to lack of funds".

With prepaid water meters, consumers will have to buy credit units, in which failure to do so would result in one being disconnected. The Council argues that the installation of water meters had the potential of increasing the city's annual revenue base to \$41 125 million annually from the current \$29 157 million as well as improving the consumer metering and billing system. ZIMCODD and likeminded organizations argue that the country's vast natural resources must fund the deteriorating social services such as water in the spirit of the constitution and international conventions.

YOUR RIGHTS IN THE CURRENT CONSTITUTION OF ZIMBABWE

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS	PUBLIC FINANCE MANAGEMENT
Section 64: Freedom of profession, trade and occupation	Section 298: Principles of public finance management
Section 65: Labour rights	Section 299: Parliamentary oversight of State revenues and expenditure
Section 73: Environmental rights	Section 300: Limits of state borrowings, public debt and State guarantees
Section 75: Right to education	Section 301: Allocation of revenues between provincial and local tiers of government
Section 76: Right to health care	Section 302: Consolidated Revenue Fund
Section 77: Right to food and water	Section 303: Withdrawals from Consolidated Revenue Fund
Section 80: Rights of women	Section 304: Charges upon Consolidated Revenue Fund
Section 81: Rights of children	
Section 82: Rights of the elderly	
Section 83: Rights of persons with disabilities	

Land Grabbing in Checheche: Impacts on Small Scale Farmers



Cotton farmers at a Zimcodd Workshop discussing Land grabbing

T. Chisaira and N. Chibesu

The rise of the Green Fuel bio-fuel industrial complex in Chisumbanje and Checheche, about 467 kilometres from Harare has brought massive suffering upon the local farmers as their fields are being taken over to make way for sugar-cane plantations with no one being compensated.

The farm land left for farmers is usually not favourable for growing cotton and maize and some farmers recently had their crops mowed down to make way for the company's roads, a move that has thrown food security in the area into a quandary with residents expressing dismay over a paltry amount of \$20-60 given to them as compensation for a piece of land.

ZIMCODD has received reports that Green Fuel is set on acquiring 40 000 hectares of land, which is tantamount to taking all the land with communities around the plant raising concern over this alleged move. If these rumours are anything to go by, the farmers will be displaced and this will affect their means of survival. Students will also be forced to enrol in other institutions, thus affecting their studies.

Green Fuel private Limited is a

joint-venture between the Agricultural Rural development Authority (ARDA), Billy Rautenbach's companies, Macdom Investments and Rating Investments.

Land Grabbing in itself involves the capturing of decision making power over land and other associated resources like water or forests, in order to control the benefits of its use and this phenomenon became more prevalent in Zimbabwe since the introduction of capitalism under colonialism with legislations like the Land Apportionment Act. In the modern day land grabbing is being caused by the rise in food prices, demand for bio fuel and the growth of the agro-industrial complex as well as the entry of banks to use land as currency.

There is acute need for actions such as coalition building to fight land grabbing in areas like Chisumbanje and in peri-urban areas like Goromonzi and Seke. The government and international community need to seriously implement the "Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security".

Tax evasion crippling Zimbabwe's economy

Continued from Page 2

to the government. With proper support to the informal traders that operate Harare's Mupedzanhamo Market, a lot of revenue will be created.

The mining companies have not been transparent and accountable in their contribution to Zimbabwe's revenue. Though Mbada Diamonds has taken a step in trying to enhance transparency and accountability, through a statement it published indicating that it has surpassed the \$1 Billion dollar threshold in total revenue within 4 years of

operations, it is important to note that the statement did not clarify on the exact taxes paid as there are many tax heads. Government advances were also not indicated and the statement failed to show production and export volumes of the diamonds.

The Minister of Finance complained that in 2013 no dividends from diamond sales were remitted into the state coffers. Out of the seven mining companies namely: Anjin Investments, Diamond Mining Company, GyeNyame, Jinan Mining Private Limited Kusena, Marange Resources and Mbada diamonds, it is only

officials to curb tax evasion. The government's capacity to provide social services has been crippled. Thus multinational companies and other tax evaders are undermining development and exacerbating inequality and poverty in Zimbabwe. They disadvantage smaller domestic firms and ordinary taxpayers who comply.

ZIMCODD believes that domestic resource mobilisation is more sustainable and predictable than foreign aid that comes with conditions and perpetuates Zimbabwe's indebtedness. It is therefore critical for Zimbabwe to work towards improving its domestic revenue collection strategies. The country's tax laws continue to suffer from loopholes that facilitate tax evasion despite the new amendments to the Income Tax Act.

Mbada Diamonds that has managed to declare publicly its mining revenues.

Tax evasion has led to poor performance of the government. Taxpayer funds have to be redirected from developmental projects towards employing expensive foreign tax experts to train tax



ZIMCODD's Matobo rural livelihoods assembly elects new committee



Figure 4: from right, Khonzani Mlala, Patrick Dube, Chelesani Mdlongwa (Chair), Pastor Portia Ndllovu, Sinikiwe Dube, Raymond Sibanda, Kwanele Dube

Nomalanga Ncube

In 2013, ZIMCODD launched the Matobo rural livelihoods project to empower and develop the Matobo farmers capacities to negotiate for fair pricing, demand their social and economic rights through the formation of strong producer associations to discuss their general livelihoods issues. Through the Civic Participation in Economic Development programme (CPED), the farmers in Matobo District ward 19 were trained on ZIMCODD thematic areas covering social and economic rights, debt management, tax justice, aid effectiveness, trade justice and their land rights in the new constitution.

On Tuesday 24 June 2014, ZIMCODD facilitated the election of a new rural livelihoods assembly committee in Matobo dominated by small scale irrigation farmers who mainly grow maize and vegetables.

The committee which is chaired by Chelesani Mdlongwa comprises of 7 members of whom 2 are men and 5 are women.

Matobo farmers face challenges of unfair trade practices and have expressed dismay over the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) which sets low buying prices with no regard for input costs. They also bemoaned lack of

capital to purchase inputs as they spoke on the difficulty in accessing government-donated inputs.

During the workshop farmers expressed dismay over authorities who were sending students away for not paying school fees. They managed to engage with the authorities to reconsider the matter of sending children home for non-payment of fees.

Farmers welcomed the new partnership with ZIMCODD and said they are looking forward to the Khangela Emuva / Cheuka meeting with their political representatives. Matobo ward 19 Councillor, Henry Ncube also graced the event.

Zimbabwe cotton sector on the brink of collapse



Figure 5: Mr Gwekwerere, a ZIMCODD member interacts with farmers during a field day in Gokwe

Pretty Chavango

While a Zimbabwean civil servant earns around \$500 monthly which they feel cannot cover food, electricity, water, school fees and transport bills, in an economy where one hardly has surplus to save you will find out that there are others who not only find it hard to save but cannot even meet day to day expenses and are in debt. While the civil servant cries foul over \$500 a month the local small holder cotton grower is forced on a meager +/- \$400 the whole year!

Cotton farmers sparked outrage at low crop prices saying it was better to either diversify or quit farming altogether. At a farmer's stake holders workshop hosted by the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) – a social and economic justice coalition whose vision is sustainable socio-economic justice in Zimbabwe through a vibrant people based movement.

Farmers spoke out on producer prices not matching breakdown costs, a lot of money is used in inputs, at the end of the day it is not enough to cover costs. Mr Naison Mutsananguro a small scale farmer from Checheche, Chipinge spoke on the various challenges they face which include being barred from holding community based meetings in their communities as they are not registered, he also highlighted how the current \$0.40c pegged price for cotton is peanuts as it doesn't even cover costs.

"Cotton farming is making us poor, we cannot send our children to school or even access health facilities", he said.

Mutsananguro highlighted how farmers are not engaged in the pegging of prices and are unaware how the international market operates as the price is just announced to them by the cotton buyer with no room for negotiation, he urged Government to follow up on companies through intermediary boards like the Agricultural Marketing Authority (AMA) and monitor the pricing of cotton. It was also noted that free farming is yet to be recognized as free farmers are asked to pay a fee in order to sell their produce, being told to practice contract farming which according to farmers doesn't benefit them as the payment earned is returned to companies to pay for borrowed inputs taken at the beginning of the farming season.

Farmers feel they are being cheated out of their monies as they are given expired chemicals which don't kill pests.

Contract farmers also complained that the Cotton Growers Association (CGA) give out inputs at a very late stage sometimes mid-December yet the farming season starts early October causing a hurried late crop and signing of contracts without analyzing of clauses which might later be of disadvantage to them.

Ishmael Gwekwerere of Gokwe south who is also the Chairperson of Small scale cotton Growers Association (SSCGA) commended ZIMCODD for helping farmers engage with Agricultural Marketing Authority (AMA) and its operations.

He spoke on how their association works to help other farmers improve, "We groom contract farmers to practice free farming, it will however take time for more farmers to engage in free farming because of poverty as they are dependent for inputs" he said.

Female farmers have their own unique challenges apart from the common ones. Eliza Mhlanga Kuchera from Chipinge spoke on how she had hoped farming would bring independence so the rural women will not depend on their husbands for anything but due to poor cotton prices, this has become impossible.

It was also highlighted that selling points are too far and female farmers are at risk of theft or rape on their way home.

AMA representative Mrs Zitsanza spoke on how they are advocating for a transparent level playing field between buyer and seller to ensure fairness and urged farmers to report misconduct, the free farmers are covered in the statutory instrument and are free to sell to the registered buyers in their area. Investigations on fake chemicals were underway. The cotton industry is supported by the government, and around 200 000 small holder farmers are employed in the cotton industry and these play a crucial role in developing the country" Zitsanza said. ZIMCODD Director Ms Patricia Kasiamhuru urged engagement with policy makers for sustainable implementation of development schemes.

The stakeholder meeting was aimed at reinforcing the capacity of small scale farmers and producers to gain knowledge and training on tax justice.

Government and global economic policies and how these directly impact upon livelihoods.

ZIMCODD's High Schools debate rolls into action

Clarity Sibanda

The Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) launched the High schools and tertiary institutions debates and public speaking gala in 2011 in Harare and Bulawayo held annually. The debate engages students in high schools and tertiary institutions on issues pertaining to public finance management and social and economic rights. It is a platform for the young leaders to debate on policy matters and develop their capacities to

analyze policies and offer alternatives.

The debates and public speaking gala falls under ZIMCODD's Civic Participation and Economic Development (CPED) which seeks to build on and strengthen the mobilization of citizens from grassroots level and champion socio-economic development.

Prior to these debates, students are involved in evidence based research in the selected topics and this falls under the organization's

Policy, Research and Advocacy Program (PRAP). The advocacy element is key in making the necessary engagements with policy makers. All the issues raised are subsequently consolidated to a communiqué presented to policy makers to influence the policy making from the bottom.

The 2014 debate and public speaking gala ran under the theme: The utilization of National Resources for Social and Economic Development. The case for Debt

ZIMCODD Social and Economic Justice Ambassadors (SEJAs) 'Success Stories



Figure 7: Tariro Chikwanha



Figure 8: Joseph Rose



Figure 9: Dorothy Bhebhe

She joined ZIMCODD in 2004 as one of the Social and economic justice ambassadors representing people living with HIV in the organization's HIV/AIDS sector. In 2007 after being inspired by ZIMCODD, she went on to form an organization which was registered as a Trust in 2008 as the Dynamic Realizable Effort to Sustain and Maintain Success (DREAMS). The organization that works with people infected and affected by HIV and AIDS, whose membership currently stands at 312.

Mai Chikwanha was recently appointed in the Quality and improving committee at the Chitungwiza General Hospital where she represents People Living With HIV and Aids (AIDS). Her appointment is a commendable move in the fight for social and economic justice.

He has been one of the leading water campaigners in Mabvuku community where water is a scarce commodity. Rose was a vibrant representative of the Harare Water Taskforce which is convened by ZIMCODD and comprises of the Harare Residents Alliance (HARA), Chitungwiza Residents and Ratepayers Association (CHIRRA), Community Water Alliance (CWA) and the Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA). His concern on the welfare of the ordinary people in society saw him being elected as the Mabvuku/Tafara Councillor during the 2013 harmonized elections and we believe he will continue taking the residents' plight to the highest echelons.

Dorothy Bhebhe is one of ZIMCODD's founding members who was also the organisation 'Southern region Chairperson'. Her vigorous gender activism as the Executive Director of Ubuntu Women's Information Access Centre (WIACS) and ZIMCODD SEJA saw her being elected as Bulawayo Metropolitan Province (MP) in 2013. Mrs Bhebhe has so far met with her constituency under ZIMCODD's Look Back Cheuka/Khangela Emuva platform to discuss development issues for her community. We believe MaBhebhe will continue representing the organisation in its fight for social and economic justice in parliament.

Cephas Gwayagwaya



Figure 10: ATRDT Chairman Cephas Gwayagwaya making a presentation during the Debt and Extractives dialogue workshop organised by ZIMCODD in Mutare

He is amongst a pool of SEJAs in Mutare who has used his experience as a ZIMCODD member to fight for the rights of families displaced by mining companies in Chiadzwa. Gwayagwaya is the current chairperson of the Arda Transau Relocation Development Trust

(ATRDT) and has been quoted in the media several times, expressing grief and calling for the government to address the issue of unfulfilled commitments made by diamond mining companies which relocated villagers from Marange to Odzi.

Management, Extractive Industries and Tax Justice. On 7 June, 73 participants drawn from 8 High Schools within Bulawayo and 2 from Matabeleland South convened at the Bulawayo School of Tourism and Hospitality and debated on the year's theme. Tertiary students assembled at Lupane State University's 3rd Avenue on Friday 13 June, an event attended by at least 40 students drawn from 8 tertiary institutions.

Debating on the issue of Prepaid water meters being proposed by the City councils, the tertiary institutions' affirmative group noted that the introduction of water meters would infringe their Constitutional right to water, as most sectors would be affected leading to the closure of some industries, thus increasing the percentage of unemployment rate which is hovering around 80%. On the issue of taxation, students implored the government to channel revenue collected from tax for the betterment of society and bemoaned the corruption cancer which has created a wide gap between the rich and the poor.

In Harare, 80 high school students drawn from 7 schools participated in this year's 3rd



This combo shows the ZIMCODD National Chairperson, Mr Joy Mabenge handing over an award to one of the best public speakers and students following proceedings during the ZIMCODD 2014 Debate and Public Speaking Gala



edition which was held at Queen Elizabeth Girls High School on Saturday 14 June. Debating on the topic, "This house believes that a lot of companies in Zimbabwe are looting natural resources and failing to pay tax", Churchill Boys High School students said the country has the largest diamond deposits and other sought-after minerals such as lithium and if channelled for a better cause, the revenue would improve the lives of many people. They bemoaned companies that have created tax havens saying this was crippling the economy. Students also called on the government to introduce a system of free universal education and health care funded by taxation as they alleged that education of poor quality is tantamount to no education at all, hence revenue collected from tax has to fund the sector to realize social and economic justice in

Zimbabwe. Assessing from 2011, these debates have increased awareness on issues of Social and economic Rights among students especially the right to education, healthcare and the right to water and these learners have become part of a large pool of activists who are going to articulate issues at community level. Students are the future policy makers therefore it is through such platforms that would build a greater understanding of the national socio-economic issues helping them spearhead discussions and implementation of socio-economic policies that are people centered. From 2015, ZIMCODD seeks to hold the debates gala at national level. Winners will be chosen at regional level with rural schools also involved. Policy makers will also be part of the debates so that they respond to issues raised by the students.