

PRESS STATEMENT

29 January 2021

ZIMBABWE CSOs JOINS THE GLOBAL PROTEST TO #FIGHTINEQUALITY

The Fight Inequality Alliance in Zimbabwe joins the global movement to counter the excessive concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a small elite and achieve a just, equal and sustainable world. From the 23rd to the 30th of January 2021, the Alliance has created platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement and channel demands to duty bearers and solution holders for urgent actions to address entrenched inequality. These initiatives ran parallel to the Davos meetings of the World Economic Forum. This year's initiatives to address inequality were under the theme "People's Solutions Are #BetterThanDavos"

Members of the Fight Inequality Alliance in Zimbabwe include Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD), Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA), Poverty Reduction Forum Trust (PRFT), National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO), Transparency International Zimbabwe (TIZ), Centre for Disability and Development, Action Aid, Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA), Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU) and Women and Law in Southern Africa Zimbabwe (WLSA).

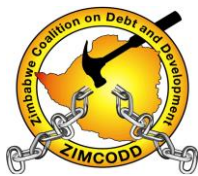
Global inequality has increased by 11 percent in the recent past. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) indicates that the richest 10 percent have up to 40 percent of global income whereas the poorest 10 percent earn only between 2 to 7 percent.

The COVID-19 pandemic has widened inequality gaps across gender, disability, regional, class, racial, generational and other divides. It has laid bare the disproportionate impacts of the pandemic on different groups leaving the majority poor worse off in a context of austerity, over taxation, weak social protection mechanisms and rampant corruption in the distribution of resources. In particular, lockdown restrictions constrain the informal economy which provides livelihoods for the working poor. Marginalised communities have struggled not only to protect themselves from infection but also to meet their

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basic needs for a decent livelihood and cannot afford lifesaving ventilators when required.

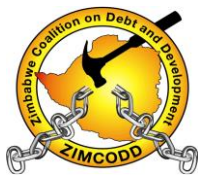
In Zimbabwe, inequalities are manifesting in many forms which include the disparity between private and public schools with those from private schools continuing to learn online whilst those from public schools are not learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The same rift of inequalities is being witnessed in higher and tertiary education where access to education in these times has become more limited to the privileged few due to the digital divide between the haves and the have nots.

Food insecurity and malnutrition in children have also become a pervasive public health concern for the country. Based on analysis of the Demographic Health Survey (DHS), the unequal distribution of household wealth and residence status plays a critical role in driving socioeconomic inequalities and worsening child food insecurity and malnutrition.

Glaring gender inequalities between men and women continue to widen. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequalities largely through increased unpaid care work by women especially in a context where public healthcare and social service delivery in general are overwhelmed.

Although governments and business failed to do a face-to-face meeting in Davos as has been the tradition, they are already debating on what the economic ‘recovery’ will look like after the pandemic. The following key demands underscore our collective demand for greater efforts to fight inequality:

- **Equity in access and distribution of COVID vaccines.** We demand a publicly available people’s vaccine that is distributed in a fair and transparent manner, and strategically funded to avoid further debt contraction or servitude to big pharmaceutical companies.
- **An end to austerity measures.** We demand increased public expenditure to improve healthcare and basic social service delivery with a priority focus on: universal public services, including health, water and education; universal basic income and gender just and disability inclusive social protection systems; and livelihoods protection for the working poor in the informal sector.



- **Debt justice.** We demand the cancellation of all opaque external debts and loan repayments and a moratorium on legitimate public debts to free up resources to meet increased public needs during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Tax justice.** We demand a just and equitable distribution of the tax burden through the introduction of a wealth tax to ensure that the richest pay a fairer share of the resources required to effectively address the costs of the crisis. We implore our government and other African government to stop giving out harmful tax incentives to Multi national companies.
- **Gender justice.** We demand that women and young girls must receive due recognition, redistribution and reward of the unpaid hours of care work, done by women, to keep households and economies going. The involuntary philanthropic work by women must be quantified and duly rewarded.
- **Climate justice and a just transition.** We demand increased support to enable climate impacted countries and communities to mitigate the impacts and build resilience against climatic shocks and impacts.

The fight Inequality Alliance will continue to raise awareness, facilitate citizen participation in democratic processes and strengthen Parliamentary capacity as part of collective efforts to fight growing inequality in Zimbabwe.

#forthemanynotthefew
 #pasinenhafu
 #phansingobuhwaba
 #BetterThan Davos