



# PUBLIC RESOURCES MANAGEMENT SITUATIONAL REPORT

OCTOBER 2022



**ZIMCodd**  
ZIMBABWE COALITION ON DEBT & DEVELOPMENT



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# 1. Introduction and Background

The October Public Resource Management Situational Report (PRM SitRep) examines the use of public resources in Zimbabwe. Public resources have played a critical role in national development and growth across the globe as they are integral in building state welfare which is prerequisite for an inclusive developmental state. Public resources in Zimbabwe entails minerals, water bodies, roads, recreational facilities to mention but a few. Nevertheless, the administration of these resources has generated debate among the citizens who seek to hold the government to account to its fiduciary responsibility. Allegations of public resources abuse have continued to gain traction with rent-seeking, corruption and tenderpreneurship at the apex of the factors promoting resource abuse. Thus, in order to come up with an astute and comprehensive study, a survey was undertaken in 57 districts across the country and actionable recommendations were prescribed based on the findings raised.

## 2. Purpose

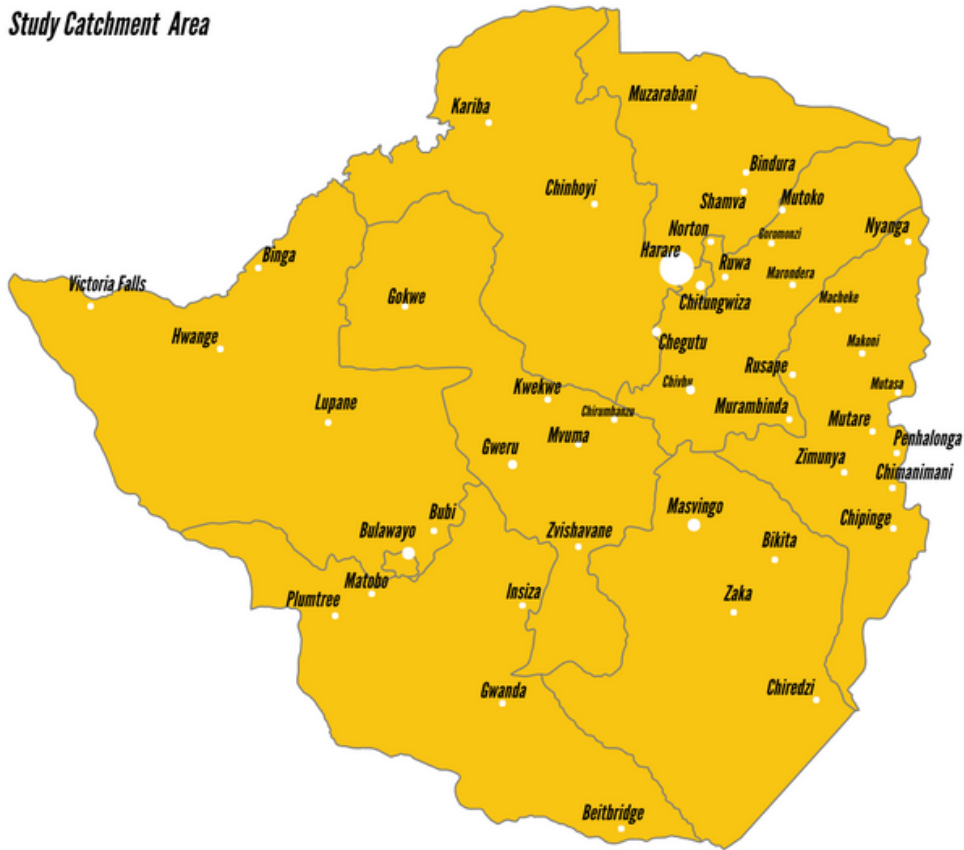
The PRM SitRep seeks to satisfy the following objectives:

- 1) To bring to light how public resources are utilised.
- 2) To present citizens' perspective on the utilisation of public resources through Human Interest Stories/cases.
- 3) To assess public service delivery under the prism of Gender Responsive Public Service Delivery (GRPSD).
- 4) To promote participation in economic governance from local to central government.
- 5) To proffer actionable recommendations that can promote national development and growth.

## 3. Methodological Framework

The PRM SitRep utilised mixed method research including a survey, observation, key informant interviews and focus group discussions to generate alternative policy recommendations informed by the findings, Human Interest Stories (HIS) were used to reinforce study findings. The research areas comprised of fifty-seven (57) districts as illustrative in Figure 1 below which shows study catchment area.

## Study Catchment Area



Source: Primary Data Compiled by ZIMCODD



## 4. Public Resources Management Situational Context

The systematic exclusion and alienation of Persons with Disability (PWD) both at subnational and national level has reached alarming levels with the government's Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare being accused of raiding the Disabled People's Fund (DPF) without Treasury's knowledge.<sup>1</sup> The actions by the Ministry are not only shocking but worrisome as they exposed government's insincerity in addressing the plight and agony of PWD. The DPF was established to promote the welfare of disabled persons by providing financial resources for rehabilitation, training and engaging in income-generating and employment creation projects. Nevertheless, there is a huge discrepancy in the utilisation of the DPF as the funds are not being used according to the national budget prescription and this constitutes abuse of public funds. It is also against the principles of good public finance management and good governance which detects that permission has to be sought from Parliament before public funds are diverted. The actions by the government also expose the hypocrisy around "leaving no one behind" which is the foundation of Vision 2030.

In addition, public procurement remains a thorn in fiscal management in Zimbabwe with the public sector becoming a haven of tender scandals. Public procurement is an issue that has raised several questions around the efficiency of the Procurement Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (PRAZ).

<sup>1</sup> Govt raids Disabled People's Fund - NewsHawks ([thenewshawks.com](http://thenewshawks.com))

This is because, tenderpreneurship has become the order of the day in government departments. A testament to the urgent need of structural reforms. Grindale Engineering Services, a company that won a lucrative US\$87 million tender for the construction of Vungu Dam in Silobela (Midlands Province) falsified information and circumvented set procurement and tendering processes.<sup>2</sup> This development is a reflection of weak tender screening on the part of ZINWA and PRAZ. On another note, Bikita Rural District Council (BRDC) is alleged to have engaged a private company owned by its Chief Executive Officer Peter Chibi and the head of the finance department to run two commercial entities and enforce traffic by-laws at Nyika Growth Point on behalf of the local authority.<sup>3</sup> This situation that exposes how conflict of interest undermines effective public procurement. All these issues orbit around the need for robust and effective institutional reforms at PRAZ as its compromising is now costly to the nation. The compromising of PRAZ has grave effects on public finance management as it functions as a conduit pipe of resource leakages. Therefore, if the government is sincere about attaining an upper middle income economy status by 2030 it must initiate robust institutional and structural reforms in the public sector coupled with optimum political will.

The country also bleeds public resources through funding of party functions as parastatals are being obliged to fund and sponsor the 7th ZANU PF National People`s Congress. It is believed that, each parastatal will spend between US\$ 3000 and US\$ 6000 on the congress. Zimbabwe has 107 state enterprises and parastatals and this means that approximately US\$321 000 and US\$642 000 will be generated. ZIMCODD condemns the abuse of public resources as this is against the principles of Public Finance Management. It is sad and worrying that at a time when the health sector is in ramshackle and decrepitude the government finds it fitting to loot public resources for partisan business. This resonates with human nature (greedy, brutish and nasty) and underscores the need for effective checks and balance.

The Minister of Finance bemoaned the impact of sanctions on the Zimbabwean economy highlighting that the country has lost about US\$40 billion in the last 22 years. He claims that the embargoes have retarded the country`s social and economic development, leaving the majority of citizens wallowing in poverty. However, analysis of granular detail shows that the sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe are largely targeted at certain individuals, families, and companies affiliated to them. Zimbabwe`s economic challenges are largely domestic than they are foreign if one is to evaluate the impact of public debt, corruption and illicit financial flows. The government statistics show that the country is losing at least US\$1.2 billion annually to gold smuggling alone. In 2016, the government introduced Command Agriculture, a scheme that went on to blow at least US\$3.5 billion of public funds. These funds would have been adequate to transform the agriculture sector together with its value chains. The public debt continues to burgeon yet authorities are failing to provide quality and affordable public services and state-of-the-art infrastructure to aid economic growth and development.

2. US\$87m tender scam unearthed - NewsHawks ([thenewshawks.com](http://thenewshawks.com))

3. Bikita RDC in another corruption storm - NewsHawks ([thenewshawks.com](http://thenewshawks.com))

As such, there is the opinion that sanctions are being used by the government as a scapegoat to cover up its inefficiencies. It is high time that the authorities start to strengthen institutional and regulatory frameworks to curb massive leakages of public resources. There is also a need to intensify domestic resource mobilization as opposed to reliance on resource-backed loans which are risky as they carry a high rate of interest and have asset forfeiture risk in case of debt default.

The shortage of teachers remains a major challenge in the education sector. According to the Minister of Public Services, Paul Mavima Zimbabwe has a deficit of approximately 45 000 teachers. The teacher to pupil ratio has reached astronomic level and a sad reality that undermines the quality of education and threatens national human capital development which is integral in building national competitive advantage. The deficit of teachers has remained problematic in Zimbabwe since the emergence of the New Millennium which saw the genesis of economic meltdown. The economic hardships associated with the emergence of the New Millennium led to the mass exodus of teachers and other critical skilled professionals to other countries. Therefore, recruiting more teachers is never an antidote to the deficit in the education sector rather, the government must address the economic, social and political question of the day.

## **5. Public Resource Management Survey Findings**

Zimbabwe is one of the most unequal societies in the world with regard to income, gender, socio-economic status and the distribution of key social services. Wide inequalities exist in education, health, employment, income and socio-economic status between different population groups. According to the 2020 Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index (CRI) Report produced by OXFAM and others; Zimbabwe is in the top 50 most unequal countries in the world. Such inequalities are attributable to the unequal distribution of public resources which continue to systematically disadvantage certain groups of the society and particularly the marginalised and vulnerable groups. The inequalities are evident across the country as there are visible and significant differences in development between provinces, districts and genders. This background calls for prudence, responsibility, equity and accountable use of public resources. Further, reducing the rampant inequalities calls for practical strategies and person-centred approaches to public resources management to deal with human needs in specific communities and to increase efforts to expand access to public services. This section assesses the management of public resources by the lower tiers of government in fulfilling the government's fiduciary responsibility in fifty-seven districts in Zimbabwe.

5. Limpopo Health MEC defends her statement on Zimbabweans placing strain on healthcare system - SABC News - Breaking news, special reports, world, business, sport coverage of all South African current events. Africa's news leader.

6. Measles outbreak in Zimbabwe kills 157 unvaccinated children | CGTN Africa

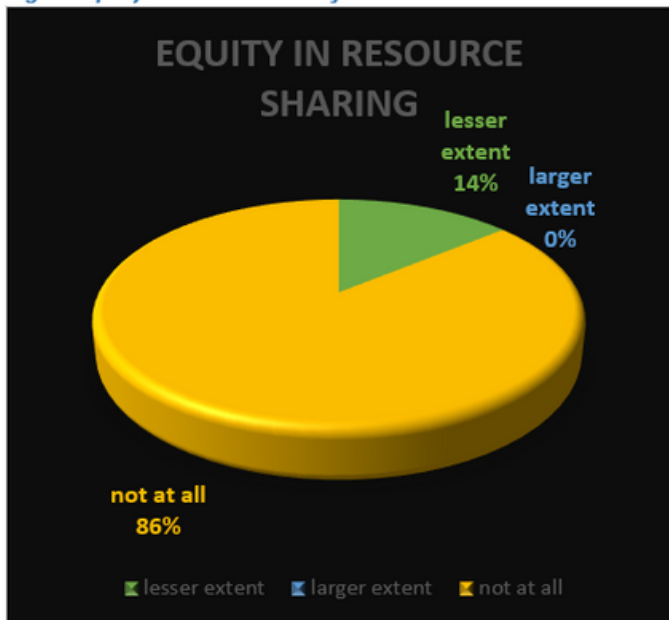
7. Medieval Timeline 476 AD - 1453 - Important Events of the Medieval Period (medievalchronicles.com)

8. Women cry foul over unpaid care work - Newsday Zimbabwe

## 5.1 Equitable distribution of public resources

The equitable distribution of public resources at the local level requires that it be based on key principles of equity, efficiency and affordability. It therefore implies that when allocating public resources, there is need to consider factors such as population, the need and demand for services, the current distribution of facilities and services. However, a snapshot of the 57 districts testifies to the persisting inequities in resource allocation.

Fig 2: Equity in Distribution of Public Resources at local level



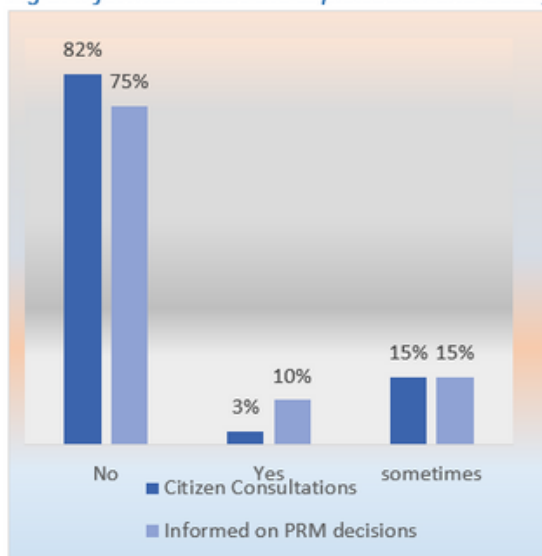
Source: Data Compiled By ZIMCODD

Survey results show that in 49 districts (or 86% of surveyed districts), public resources are not equitably distributed while in 8 districts only (14%), public resources are equitably distributed, although to a lesser extent. As far as equity is concerned, public resource distribution and expenditure still faces many challenges. Some of these challenges include the geographical distribution of public resources between and within provinces. Therefore, reforms in resource allocation and distribution are critical to ensure equitable resource distribution.

## 5.2 Citizens Involvement in Decisions to do with Public Resources

Resource allocation decision-making processes have a major impact on sub-national resource patterns. In order to promote equitable distribution of resources within the province and district, citizens ought to play an important resource allocation decision-making role, by actively participating and establishing guideline budget allocations to their districts based on the relative needs of those districts.

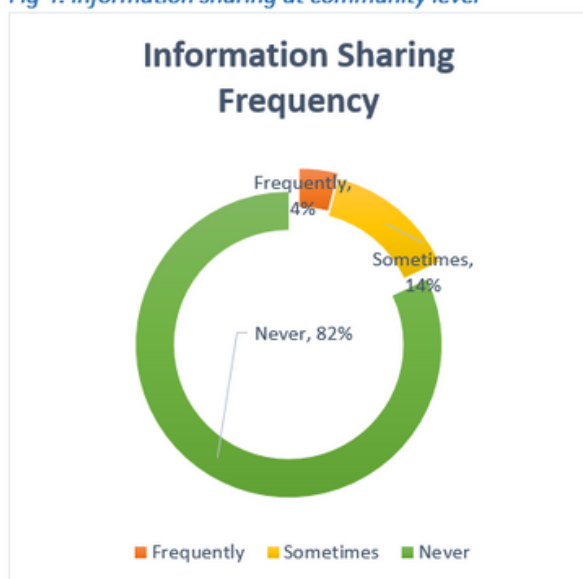
Fig 3: Informed about the Exploitation and Use of Public Resources



As in the August and September situational reports, the survey found out that 82% of the surveyed districts (47), citizens are not consulted while in 15% they are sometimes consulted and only in 3% of the sampled districts, citizens are consulted when public resource decisions are made. On citizen involvement, in 75% (43) citizens are not involved in PRM decisions while in 15% of the districts, citizens are sometimes involved and in 10% of the districts, citizens are involved when PRM decisions are made at local government level.

## 5.3 Access to Information on Public Resources

Fig 4: Information sharing at community level



Source: Data Compiled By ZIMCODD

Section 62 of the Constitution guarantees the right to access to information held by the state. This implies that public resource management information should be made accessible by all citizens at both central and local government level. The October survey however found out that that in 47 districts (82%), local authorities never freely share information on public resource management while in 8 districts (14%), local authorities sometimes share public resources information and in just 2 districts, (4%) local authorities are frequently sharing PRM information.

Given the foregoing ZIMCODD calls on the need for local governments to institute practical measures to strengthen transparency and accountability in public resource management through providing access to information.

## 5.4 Access to Budget Information

Access to budget information is central to good public resource management as it enables citizens to exercise their voice, to effectively monitor and to hold their government to account. It empowers and equips citizens for their social accountability role as it positions them to enter into informed dialogue about decisions which affect their lives, to monitor and determine how public resources are used. The month of October saw most local authorities conducting 2023 budget consultations within their jurisdictions. It is however worrisome to note that citizens continue to be side-lined in budget making processes or are engaged just to tick a box. The cases below are illustrative:

### **Case: Shrinking of democratic and civic space in Gutu, Masvingo.**

*Gutu has recorded a high rate of political violence and cases of shrinking of civil society space. The year 2022 had a lot of events being politically violated and politicized. During the 2023 Gutu rural district council budget consultations the ward 33 consultations which were held on 20 October at the council's hall witnessed the politicization of the event. The residents were intimidated and the consultation was an event to rubberstamp the dominant muscle group agenda.*



*The Chairman of the Gutu Residents Association reported to u residents how the consultation was not inclusive and accommodative to the views of the people. Party supporters were wearing regalia which are unconstitutional at public hearings. The council officials carried on with the proceedings not minding the unfair ground for participation of individuals from various groups and other political parties. This indicated the shrinking of democracy whereby freedom of speech and expression was violated; going against the Constitution of Zimbabwe.*

### **Poor attendance at the Masvingo budget consultations**

*Poor attendance has blemished Masvingo City Council's 2023 budget consultation meetings that took place in the second week of October and were carried out in a huff as the majority of residents were not aware of the process that was done at short notice. The Council commenced the budget consultative process on Thursday October 13th, 2022 in a bid to capture residents' inputs, but some of the meetings were forced to a screeching halt and postponed after less than 10 residents turned up in some wards that have at-least 3000 residents.*

*About 10 residents attended the ward 10 consultation meeting on Sunday, 16 October 2022, forcing the council to postpone the meeting to a date yet to be announced. In ward 4, at Runyararo Primary School, only 25 residents attended the meeting and less than 10 attended ward 2 meetings forcing the city fathers to postpone. Residents have blamed council for ambushing them at short notice by extending an invitation barely 12 hours before the meetings. The invitations were sent on unofficial social media WhatsApp groups.*

### **Low youth turnout for ward consultation meetings**

*Ward 29-Magwegwe North and West faced poor attendance at the city budget consultation meetings, saying residents were displaying an indifferent attitude towards key ward issues such as sewer burst. The local authority has been holding 2023 budget consultations with residents and other stakeholders. A meeting convened for Ward 29 residents on Sunday 23 October at Mthimkhulu Primary School, where Mqobi B. Dube told the residents and the city council representatives that the fact that the consultation is being attended by only 2 Youths and 25 adults is a cause for concern because we have a population of 18,673 and the attendance in this meeting was very bad.*

S. Moyo, another resident, stated the challenge that is being faced is emanating from the short notices given by the local authorities. In this instance, the announcement and notice were sent at short notice, but as the people of ward 29, there is need to continue to engage as these consultations are key in how we manage and how much is needed for our ward in terms of our budget for 2023. Consultations gives us an opportunity to have an input on what projects or programmes should be of priority. S. Moyo also took the opportunity to call for transparency and accountability when it comes to ward retention funds.

## 5.5 Natural Resource Governance Issues

Natural resource governance continues to attract negative ratings despite government's ambition of attaining an upper middle-class economy by 2030 and US\$ 12 billion mining vision by 2025. The findings from the survey indicates negative regression across all natural resource governance variables. Sustainable mining variable had 22% from 25% recorded in the previous month, community empowerment projects recorded 33% from 36% recorded in the previous month, employment opportunities for locals was rated 30% from 34% recorded in the previous month and value addition and beneficiation received 19% from 22% rated in the previous month. The findings of the survey show a huge discrepancy between government pronouncements and policy evaluation.

Fig 6: State of Development in Mining Host Communities



Source: Data Compiled By ZIMCODD

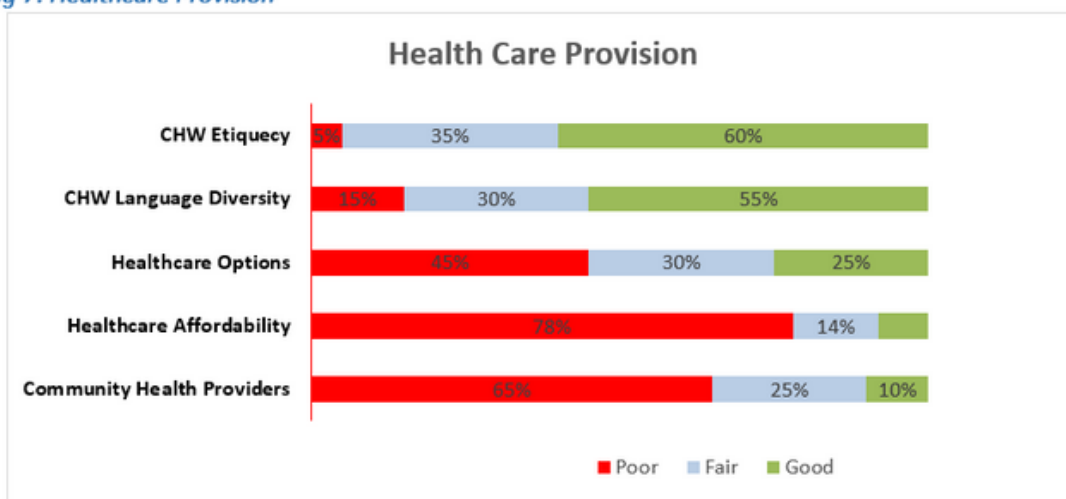
## 6. Social Service Delivery Findings

The moderation of the inflation rate witnessed in recent months, if sustained, provides great relief to poor households who spent most of their incomes on food. Stable prices will reduce pressure on their already constrained budgets thus enabling them to afford other crucial services like education and health care. As such, this section provides survey findings from the examination of the state of public services across the nation.

### 6.1 Availability of Home Health Care Providers

In Zimbabwe, the majority poor do not have access to the essential health services they need. Generally, a combination of economic, social and geographic barriers compounded by a shortage of healthcare workers prevent people from accessing primary healthcare. As such as part of the primary health care teams, community health workers (CHWs), can help fill this gap.

Fig 7: Healthcare Provision



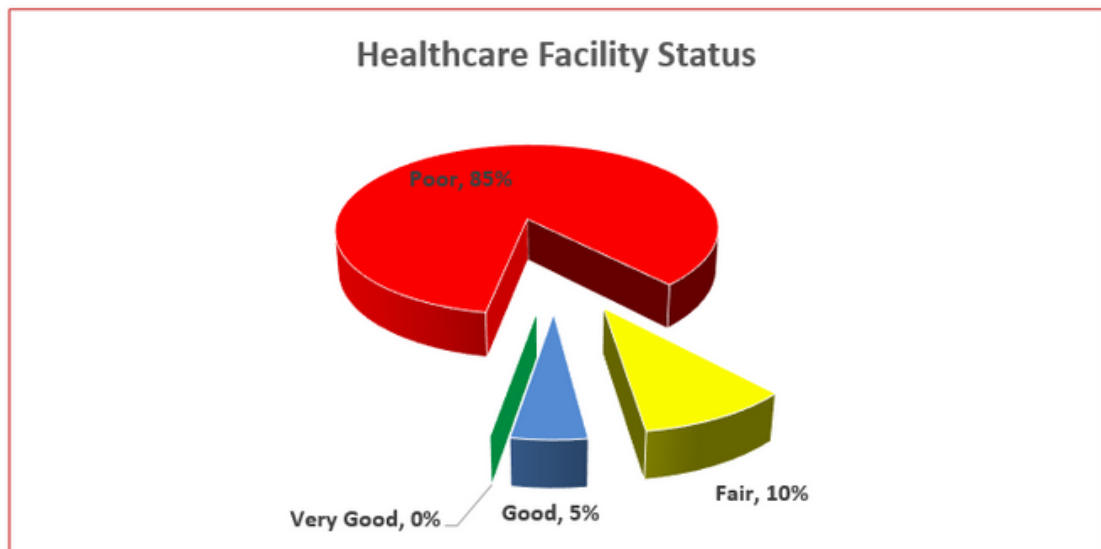
Source: Data Compiled By ZIMCODD

However, the survey established that community health care services are largely deteriorating with 65% of districts reporting it as poor. The government funding for CHW is plummeting with many areas now solely reliant on donor support. Overall, the survey established that healthcare costs are rising along with other sectors of the economy.

### 6.2 Quality of Health Care Facilities

The Abuja Declaration on health compels signatories to allocate at least 15% of budget votes to the public health sector. The public sector is also expected to increase health capital expenditures, especially in rural and marginalized communities to address prevailing healthcare inequality.

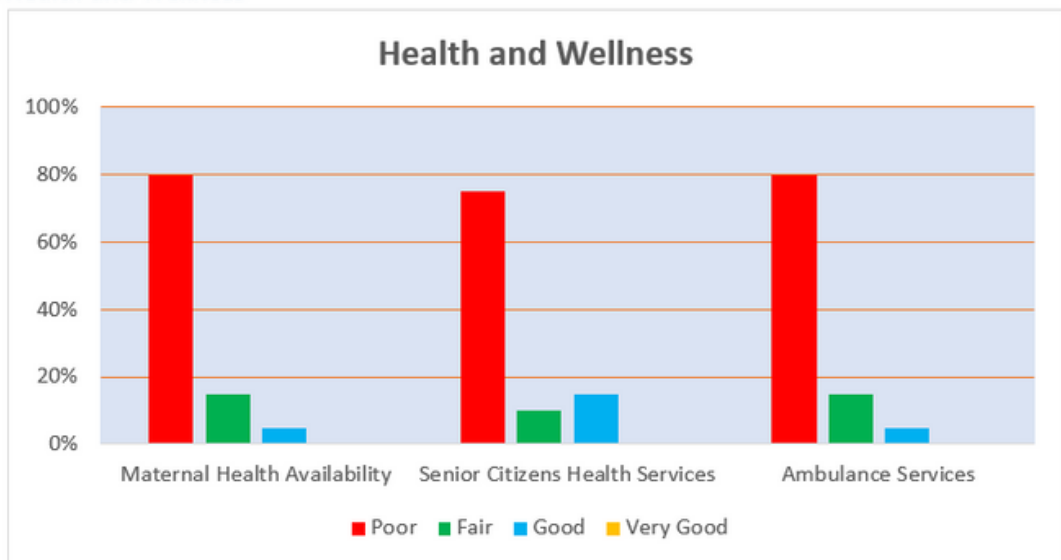
**Fig 8: Healthcare Facility Status**



Source: Data Compiled By ZIMCODD

The survey results show that 85% of the 57 districts surveyed across Zimbabwe have poor healthcare facilities. The bulk of budget resources earmarked for the public health sector are gobbled by wages and salaries for health personnel. Despite persisting exchange rate fragility, the Treasury is failing to timely disburse the funds before the erosion of real value.

**Fig 9: Health and Wellness**



Source: Data Compiled By ZIMCODD

80% of survey respondents indicated that maternal health care services are plummeting as in some instances expecting mothers are forced to bring their own materials. Due to poor remuneration, the morale of health workers is plunging. For instance, it was reported that after being neglected by health workers, a woman gave birth in a toilet at Glen View Polyclinic in Harare<sup>4</sup>. The survey also found poor ambulance services and senior citizens' health care delivery.

4. <https://www.newsday.co.zw/letters/article/200001796/letters-quality-maternal-healthcare-remains-a-pipe-dream>

### **Case: Reopening of Mkoba maternity wing on the cards, Gweru**

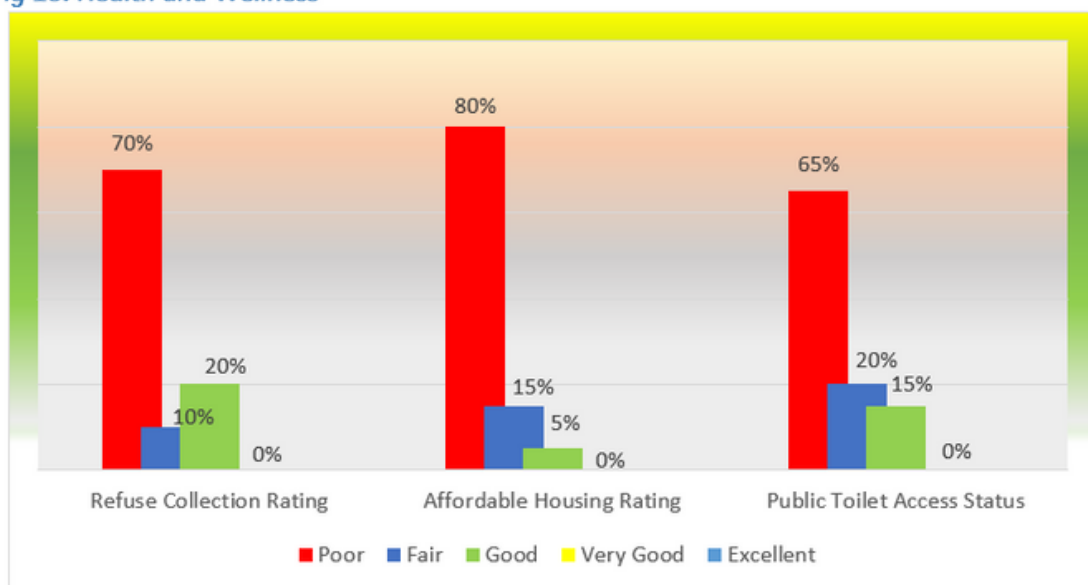
In response to the ZIMCODD situational report of August 2022 which highlighted the closure of the Mkoba 1 maternity wing due to a shortage of midwives, Gweru City Council (GCC) has decided to reopen the wing following an outcry by the public. This development was revealed by the GCC Public Relations Officer (PRO) who said plans to reopen the wing will commence in the coming months. "Yes, the maternity ward closed in 2009 due to a shortage of midwifery nurses and we have plans to open it. After we are done refurbishing it, we will also look for adequate staff" the officer said. The closure of the council clinic had resulted in serious congestion at the remaining polyclinic that services expectant mothers of the populous Mkoba area. There is a clear indication of a shortage of staff at the clinic as evidenced by long queues every week.

Engagements with Mkoba residents showed that some women are giving birth on their way to the clinic. "The maternity wing should open because due to the distance some women lose their babies, certain issues like health should be given priority," said an informant who chose to be anonymous. Latest statistics show that the nation is experiencing the highest child mortality rate with 458 children dying per 100,000 live births. The director of the Gweru Residents Forum, (GRF) Charles Mazorodze emphasized that the wing of the clinic must be opened to ease pressure at the Mkoba polyclinic. Meanwhile, in Mvuma, a woman died while giving birth due to the negligence of the nursing staff at Mvuma Hospital who delayed attending to her.

## **6.3 Access to Safe Sanitation and Social Amenities**

Generally, safe sanitation is fundamental to protecting public health. As such, governments should strengthen these systems to reduce the burden of sanitation-related diseases. This can be done by ensuring public access to safely managed sanitation and wastewater treatment.

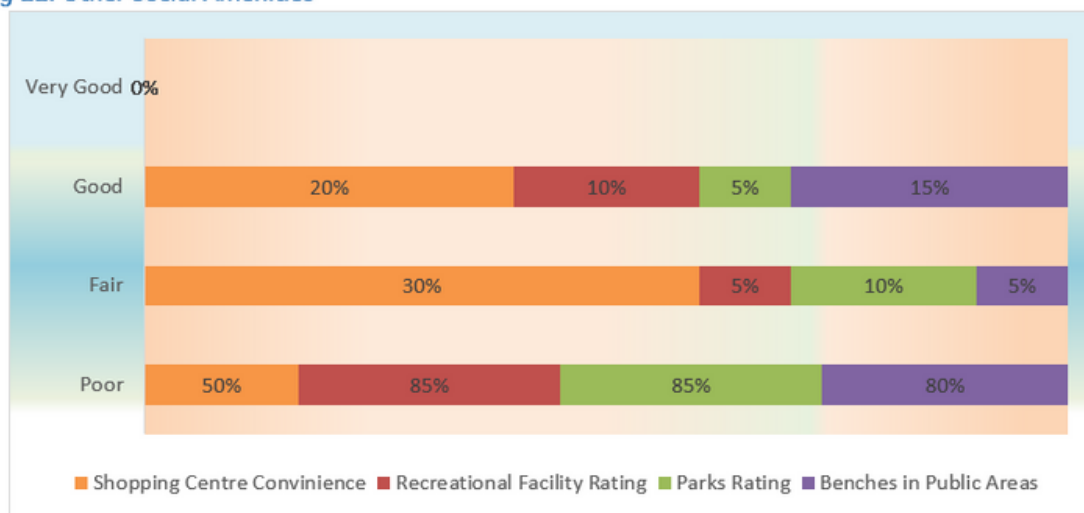
Fig 10: Health and Wellness



Source: Data Compiled by ZIMCODD

Despite the importance of safe sanitation to the environment and the public, many Zimbabweans are failing to access clean drinking water, sewage disposal and lavatory systems. According to the survey results, 70%, 80% and 65% of districts experienced poor refuse collection, public housing and toilet access respectively which poses severe health hazards.

Fig 11: Other Social Amenities



Source: Data Compiled by ZIMCODD

In real estate, amenities are features such as location, outlook or access to a park which enhance the desirability of a residential area. Others also point out that there is a strong connection between the quality of social amenities and the well-being of residents. Hence, these amenities bring a sense of community identity and belonging to a society. However, social amenities are deteriorating across the country as shown in the figure above.

### **Case: Council repairing toilets in Sakubva, Muchena area**

*In a drive to keep pace with the anticipated urban renewal, Mutare City Council has embarked on upgrading and repairing the sewer systems starting with the Muchena Area, one of the oldest locations in Sakubva. The initial structures were built decades ago to accommodate a few people who would have moved to the city searching for jobs. With the rapid expansion and population growth, the ablution facilities were no longer adequate to accommodate the rising urban population. Without adequate social services, Zimbabwe cannot attain United Nations (UN) sustainable development goals (SDGs). It is, however, shocking to note that the Council has been failing to resuscitate ablution facilities when it continued to collect revenue from the residents. The free-flowing sewage from burst sewer pipes ended up polluting water sources. Fortunately, the Muchena community residents successfully pushed Council to start revamping the old pipes in order to improve the reticulation system which is currently characterized by frequent blockages. The works have begun to avoid health hazards as shown in the figure below.*

5. [https://economytimes.indiatimes.com/amenities-play-an-important-role-in-offering-quality-living/articleshow/22229530.cms?utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](https://economytimes.indiatimes.com/amenities-play-an-important-role-in-offering-quality-living/articleshow/22229530.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)

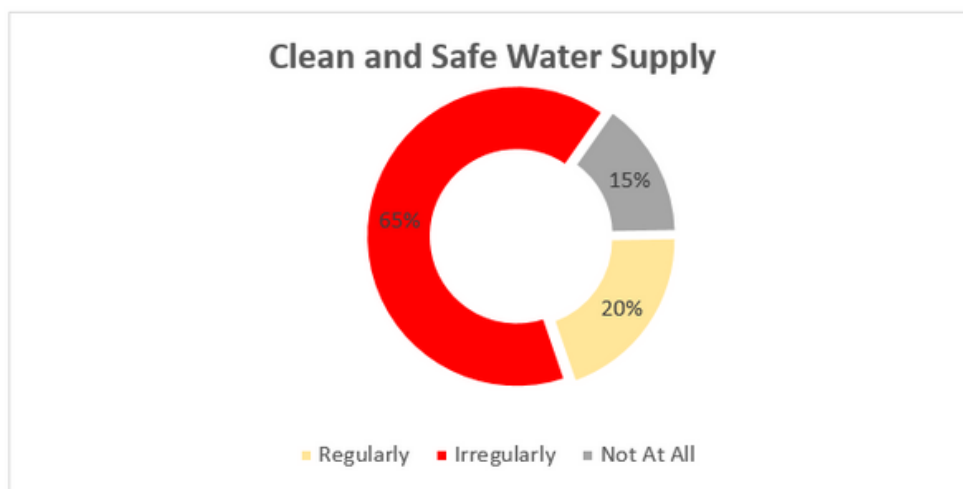


Image: Council workers laying sewer pipes

## 6.4 Water Supply

For human beings, water is necessary for life and without access to clean water, diseases and illness come into the situation. Because water is such a vital part of human existence, it should be obligatory that government take bold action to ensure that clean water is provided to all of its citizens.

Fig 12: Availability of safe, clean and portable water



Source: Data Compiled by ZIMCODD

### **Case: Water and sanitation issues improved in Sasame, Gokwe**

Gokwe's Sasame Constituency has been facing a severe water crisis especially in rural areas where people usually travel between 8-13 km to ferry water daily. Fortunately, for residents in Ward 13 and Svisvi who attended ZIMCODD Radio Listening Clubs (RLCs) in June, these water woes have become a thing of the past. As part of their RLCS trainings focus was on service delivery and this enabled residents to discuss the persistent water crisis, poor road network, dilapidating medical facilities and poor schools in the area.

Resultantly, the residents forwarded their grievances to their Councillor Georgina Chirongoma. Through these engagements, the Sabaranda dip tank water supply has significantly improved and it is now easy for residents to fill the <sup>10</sup>dip tank. The improvement of water supply at the dip tank has meant that the control of ticks is going to be very effective, clean and portable water to drink is also now available. All this was made possible by the Masakadza Veterinary team, farmers, residents' associations (RAs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working together.



Addressing the water crisis has greatly helped farmers, residents, and livestock. Approximately 2 346 families will benefit from this new source of water which will also support about 2 678 cattle through dipping sessions to avoid deadly ticks.

### **Case: Rusape town at Cholera risk**

Poor sewer management by the local authorities in Rusape has caused a high risk of cholera. Sewer pipes in R section, one of the oldest suburbs in Rusape, have not been replaced since they were installed during the colonial era. This has led to several sewer bursts. Furthermore, insufficient water supplies in areas like Wards 1, 4 and 6 have left several young girls and women with no choice but to source water from unprotected. This has left communities open to cholera; is an infectious disease that causes severe watery diarrhoea, which can lead to dehydration and even death if untreated. Moreso, sewer ponds are located less than 10 meters away from residential areas, thereby promoting flies that can transport cholera bacteria. In Rusape there was an outbreak of cholera caused by a lack of basic hygiene, and the local government which failed to solve the sewer burst leading to an outbreak of diseases. Below is a picture of sewer bursts.





*In conclusion, local authority project funds destined for the upgrading of sewer systems were illegally diverted. This meant that funds meant for communal development ended up benefitting individuals instead of assisting the community and attaining the project goal. Such practices, however, undermined transparency and honesty standards and leads to mistrust by the public and community at large. The practice of having communities engage in a public discussion can effectively increase and help minimise instances when the local government betrays the trust of the community as a whole. Reports were made concerning the sewer problem yet the council failed to show up and stop the spread of disease*

## 6.5 Road Networks

A good road network is of vital importance to make nations grow and develop. In addition, providing access to employment, social, health and education services make a road network crucial in fighting poverty. Roads bring communities close together thus stimulating economic and social development.

Fig 13: State of Local Roads



Source: Data Compiled by ZIMCODD

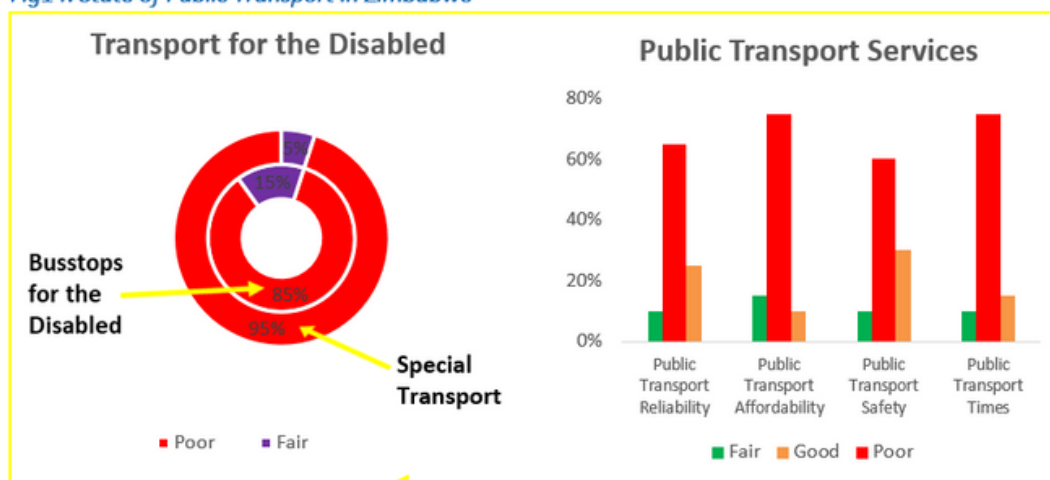
Since 2019, the government has been repairing crumbling road infrastructure under an initiative dubbed the emergency road rehabilitation programme (ERRP). However, due to limited fiscal space, the initiative has registered slow progress to date. In the month under review, authorities openly admitted that the existing road network and bridges have outlived their lifespan and are now a threat to the public.<sup>6</sup> The survey results depicted in the figure above confirm that roads are in a bad state across the country.

6. <https://newsday.co.zw/thestandard/local-news/article/200002363/zim-roads-bridges-have-outlived-lifespan-govt>

## 6.6 Public Transportation

Public transportation is important because it allows people with different physical abilities to access various destinations like schools, jobs, or shopping centers. Also, efficient mass transit improves the economic circumstances for businesses, households, and governments by cutting costs like fuel and time and enhancing public health.

Fig14: State of Public Transport in Zimbabwe



Source: Data Compiled by ZIMCODD

The survey results show that Zimbabwe's economy is sluggish, registering slow to negligible growth in macroeconomic terms partly because of inefficient transportation of factors of production and final products. The mass transit systems are not also friendly to people with disabilities.

## 6.7 Engendering Public Service Delivery in Zimbabwe

This section approaches public service delivery as a gender and human rights issue focusing on the relationship between gender, human rights and governance issues pertaining to public service delivery examined through the lens of local case studies from selected rural, peri-urban and urban areas. The observance of human rights, including socio-economic rights, participation rights and non-discrimination rights, is critical to good governance of domestic and productive public service delivery. Communities in and around Zimbabwe continue to encounter service delivery challenges which poses a threat to the health and sanitation of residents, and more especially to women. In spite of the legal recognition of the right to water and sanitation, the government has failed to live up to this obligation in practice. The human right to water and sanitation is yet to be enjoyed by Zimbabweans at large, as water challenges continue to plague the nation. The human right to water and sanitation is both a right in and of itself and a condition for the realization of other rights, most importantly the right to food, the right to health, the right to life, the right to a healthy environment, the right to education, the right to participation, and the right to gender equality. The right to water encompasses sanitation services. Such services include the availability of public ablution facilities.

The unavailability of public ablution facilities is widespread across Zimbabwe. Gender-responsive budgeting is essential both for gender justice and for fiscal justice. It seeks to ensure that the collection and allocation of public resources is carried out in ways that are effective and contribute to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. It should be based on an in-depth analysis that identifies effective interventions for implementing policies and laws that advance women's rights.<sup>7</sup> Strengthening meaningful participation of women and girls by making water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) management gender-responsive, meaning women and girls take active and meaningful participation in decision-making would go a long way in ensuring that water services are indeed gender responsive.

Access to healthcare services is constrained, this has resulted in brain drain, with many healthcare workers moving abroad in search of greener pastures. Public health remains a critical element for human survival:

*Case: Public health for residents in and around Budiriro in Harare is compromised as the main poly clinic remains understaffed. Babies are now receiving immunization late because the nurses cannot immunize them all on time as there are few nurses to attend to all babies due to high demand. The same rings true for patients and expecting mothers. This leaves a backlog which they are now failing to cover up. Long queues for baby immunization are the order of the day at the clinic and the nurses are failing to handle the numbers. Many people are being turned away unattended. Other challenges encountered at the facility are the lack of capacity for women to give birth via caesarean section, there are no adequate waste bins to cater for the clinic's population and sinks in the post-natal are not working. This is further compounded by frequent power cuts which disrupt service and insufficient equipment for the clinic to run effectively.*

Data indicates that government spending on primary health care as an indication of domestic pro-poor spending on local level health systems and pro-poor population health interventions is very low in Zimbabwe.<sup>8</sup> Insufficient health facilities and lack of access to healthcare, particularly maternity related care has resulted in many avoidable and unnecessary deaths. The abovementioned poly clinic serves the whole of Budiriro and nearby residents, a clear testament of the results of poor healthcare financing through the health centre's incapacity to serve the public. Although this is one example, similar challenges are being faced at clinics and hospitals all over Zimbabwe. The same predicament has been a reality for residents of Mkoba in Gweru; however, Gweru City Council has committed to reopening the wing following an outcry by the public. This development was revealed by Gweru City Council (GCC) Public Relations Officer (PRO) Vimbai Chingwaramuse who said plans to reopen the wing will soon commence. This remains to be seen and if it does reopen, it is a step in the right direction towards the fulfilment of the right to healthcare.

7. <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/focus-areas/women-poverty-economics/gender-responsive-budgeting>

8. <https://equinet africa.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/EQ%20Diss124%20Health%20fin%20%20and%20COVID%20%20Jan2022.pdf>

## 7. Conclusion

The abuse of public resources in Zimbabwe has remained a cause of concern with party state conflation being entrenched in the governance structure of the country. In 1984, one of the founding members of ZANU PF, RG Mugabe stated that, in the future they shall be no difference between the party and the state, because ministers derive their power from the politburo and not cabinet. An assertion that left many people astonished as this is against the rudimentary principles of democracy. In this regard, a culture of siphoning public resources for party function continues to flourish. Further, the regression in ratings in the mining sector derails the US\$ 12 billion mining vision. The health sector is in ramshackle due to archaic and infrastructural gaps. Major highways have become death traps while the teacher's recruitment which was done remains insignificant in addressing the shortages of teachers.

## Recommendations

- **Debt audit:** There is a need to undertake independent audits of both central and local government debt. These audits will inform the scale and nature of the country's debts and become a building block to popularize discussion about the legitimacy of certain debts and whether they should be repaid. Furthermore, authorities should revamp their public debt management processes to establish and execute strategies that ensure that the public's financing needs and payment obligations are met at the lowest possible cost and consistent with a prudent degree of risk. This is key to avoid unsustainable debt levels which are anti-growth and crowds-out public service delivery.
- **Strengthen legal and regulatory framework:** Sound legal and regulatory frameworks are critical in promoting transparent, predictable and non-discriminatory processes. This framework matrix covers issues related to the laws, regulations and policies passed by governments including stakeholder participation and input into the decision-making process; the impact or lack thereof of these government efforts on citizens; and mechanisms for citizens to provide feedback.
- **Social reform:** This is a movement that seeks to change the social and political views of marginalized groups. They involve marginalized groups and activists in an effort to change political policy while bringing public awareness to pertinent issues through peaceful protests, amended legislature, and the media. The social reform policies include women, child, & environmental rights, social services & safety nets (public school, housing, health systems, safe water & sanitation).
- **Devolution Framework:** The country needs a devolution framework which further separates and clarifies division of tasks, functions and responsibilities between the line ministry and the local authorities to facilitate smooth implementation. Central government must also enhance autonomy and revenue generation capacity of local government including measures to optimize collection of revenue by local authorities to support devolution programs.

- **Adoption of the Politics Administration Dichotomy:** There is need for the government (system as a whole) to adopt the concept of Politics Administration Dichotomy not just in the administration of public resources but the entire governance system.
- **Mines Monitoring System:** The Ministry of Mines must see to it that an effective monitoring system of mining companies is put in place to guarantee the wellbeing of mining host communities. At the same time, the Ministry of Health must strive to rejuvenate service delivery in the health sector.
- **Gender Responsive Budgeting:** The government must do more to ensure that the needs of women and girls are met and that their rights are protected. Gender responsiveness, particularly in the context of socio-economic rights, is a precondition for sustainable development. This can be achieved through gender-mainstreaming in policies and strategies. It is therefore imperative that government undertakes to narrow gender gaps and ensures that strategies are put in place to guarantee gender considerations in the formulation and implementation of policies where public service delivery is concerned:
  1. The extent to which the government prioritises health in its domestic budget spending must be in accordance with Zimbabwe's commitment to the Abuja Declaration which committed them to allocating 15% of domestic government spending to health.
  2. The level of financial protection provided must ensure that health costs do not present as catastrophic or impoverishing expenditures especially towards women.
  3. In order to achieve sustainable, people-centered development and the fulfilment of socio-economic rights, women must be fairly represented and accounted for.
  4. There is need to employ a gender-responsive budget to ensure gender-equitable distribution of resources and the contribution of equal opportunities for all.
  5. The State, as mandated by section 17 of the Constitution, must take practical measures to ensure that women have access to resources on the basis on equality with men.