



THE WEEKEND READER

"Your Weekly Read on Debt, Development & Socio-Economic Justice"

ZIMCODD HOSTS THE 2023 NATIONAL TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS DEBATES

The Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) successfully convened the annual National Tertiary Institutions Debates from 1st August 2023. The debates are being held under the theme, "Towards a just energy transition in view of the discovery of lithium and other minerals". Debating teams that are participating include the National University of Science and Technology (NUST), Mutare Polytechnic College, Midlands State University, Africa University, Manicaland State University, Women's University, Mutare Teachers College, and Mary Mount Teachers College. The ZIMCODD debate project was initiated in 2012 and it has evolved into a fully-fledged SADC regional competition that starts at the national level. The debates include young people in shaping policy around the extractives sector while building a strong sense of social and economic justice amongst young people. The 2023 debates will also take a deliberate approach to discuss taxation as the main pivot that anchors Domestic Resource Mobilisation (DRM) in Africa and beyond. As the Southern African Development Community (SADC) People's Summit is fast approaching (16-18 August) and the debaters will join other SADC countries to call for a UN Tax Convention. The debates will contribute to shaping discourse on extractives, mobilizing tertiary students towards the 2023 SADC People's Summit debate and public speaking gala set to take place in Angola, Luanda.



A debater asks, 'Should lithium be exported in its raw form?'

The first rounds of the debates were anchored on the resolution to ban the export of raw lithium by the Zimbabwean government. The teams analysed the basis of this decision, its impact on the mining industry and the lives of ordinary Zimbabweans. As lithium has become one of the world's most sought-after minerals in the 21st century, the debate could not have come at a better time. These were some of the key observations that were made by students during the proceedings:

- The ban on the export of raw lithium negatively impacted small and medium-scale local miners who have been left with piles of the mineral as a result.
- The lack of technological advancement and a strong economic base limits the country's ability to process raw minerals which further contributes to the country losing out on billions of potential revenues.

- Africa has been on the receiving end of trade injustice which incapacitates its ability to build industry as it continues to export raw minerals to the Global West.
- Africa, Zimbabwe included, need to embark on projects that will centralise the processing of raw minerals so it can produce better products that will create jobs and boost local economies.
- Lithium will, in the coming years, become one of the most on-demand minerals because of its importance in clean energy and information technology. The country, through government policy and practice, needs to create a conducive environment that will encourage and sustain investment.
- The UN Tax Convention could help reduce IFFs if operationalized and improve DRM in Africa.

The second and final round of the competition was on the need to finance climate change mitigation measures through the system of climate reparations. According to expert environmentalists, every person could wake up dead in 2050 if the climate crisis is not averted. This makes climate change one of the most important conversations in the world right now, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa which bears the brunt of harmful environmental practices by the Global West.



The Mutare Teacher's College team discusses their strategy

Key points and observations

- Climate reparations are a system that will seek to quantify in monetary terms the damage done by countries such as China and the United States to Africa, which has only produced 3% of all carbon emissions for close to two decades. Climate reparations will therefore be a form of justice for the harm inflicted on developing countries by developed countries.
- A global coordination to climate change will assist in the exchange of pertinent information. This is particularly important between Asian and African countries as the former has done very well in ensuring that its infrastructure is well adapted against climate change and imminent disasters. Therefore, the latter could benefit from this pool of knowledge.
- Africa needs to invest in pro-active mitigation and adoption strategies against climate change that include but are not limited to flood breakers instead of always being caught unawares by climate disasters which have become more rampant.
- A just energy transition worldwide will be essential to reducing carbon emissions.

The winning teams are set to compete with other regional debaters and stand a chance to represent youths during the SADC People`s Summit in Luanda Angola from the 16th to the 18th of August 2023. The regional debates will provide a platform for tertiary institution students from across Southern Africa to debate various challenges faced by Southern African countries in dealing with corruption, tax injustice, inequalities, and Illicit Financial Flows. These regional debates will inform discussions during the SADC Peoples Summit in Angola. Furthermore, ZIMCODD endeavours to compile proceedings from the 2023 debates into a “citizen Hansard”. MUST emerged victorious at the Bulawayo-Gweru combined sitting. The Manicaland instalment of the debates is being held today while the Harare (final session) is set for Tuesday 8 August 2023.

OPPORTUNITIES



Registration Form - <https://forms.gle/jJPPSFjALJ84Bxcb9>
 Register a session- <https://forms.gle/fD3ZbrEUGk5JtV7G8>



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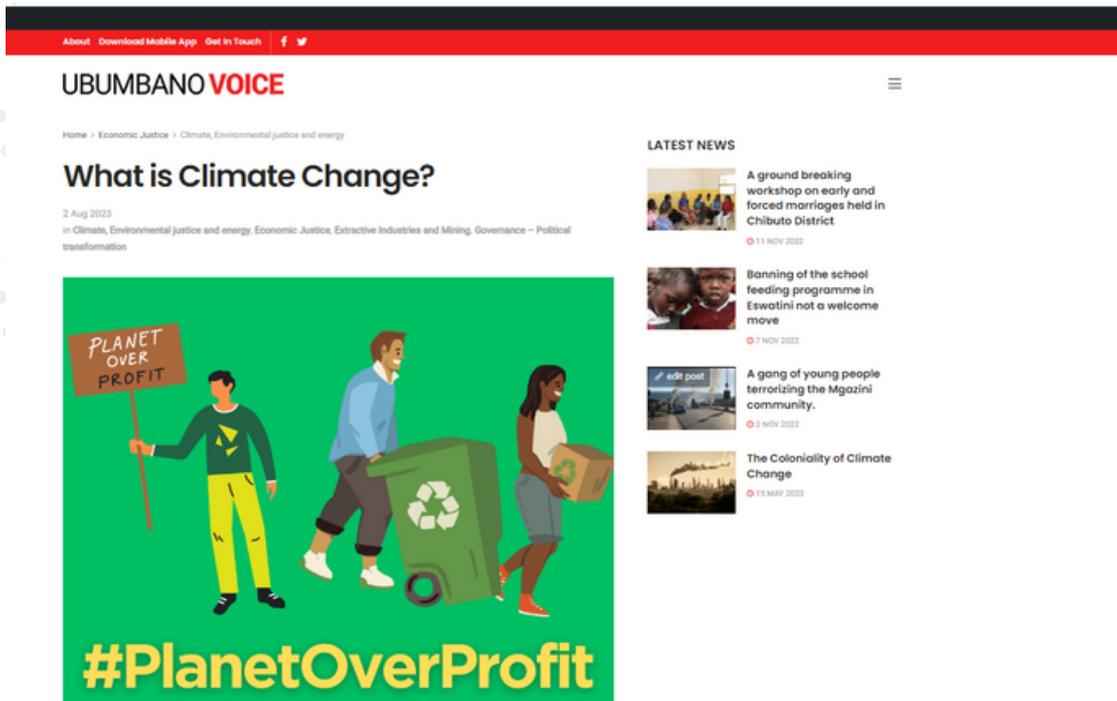
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