



# TERMS OF REFERENCE (TORS)

## Model Frameworks on Debt Justice from a Social & Feminist Perspective For Advocacy & Lobbying.

**Deadline: 5 April 2024.**

### 1 Introduction

The Southern African Peoples Solidarity Network (SAPSN) intends to undertake research survey, covering Zimbabwe and Zambia. The survey seeks to develop a “Model Framework on Debt Justice from a Social and Feminist Perspective”. The model is to be used for advocacy and lobbying for more just and feminist debt relief negotiations and models in Southern Africa. The consultant(s) must be knowledgeable of the Zimbabwean and Zambian contexts having worked or lived in both countries. They must possess experience working with feminist movements with a bias towards African- eco feminism.

### 2 Background

Zambia and Zimbabwe are in debt distress and this is undermining government social service delivery and social protection expenditure. A situation that further widens the inequality gap between the different clusters of the economy. At the same time, women who constitute part of the vulnerable group have also been systematically affected and neglected as governments prioritize debt servicing over the social and economic welfare of women. To understand the effects of debt distress in Zambia and Zimbabwe it is imperative to unpack the debt challenges being encountered by Africa.

The composition of African debt has shifted dramatically. Previously, the majority of Africa's external debt was owed to government creditors, which included high-income countries and multilateral lenders such as the World Bank and the IMF. China and private creditors now account for a significant share of debt stocks, implying that increased debt is non-concessional. China has established itself as Africa's largest bilateral lender. In 2022, its governmental lenders own nearly \$63 billion of Africa's external debt, while its private lenders own more than \$24 billion. China's growing influence in the global economy is facilitated by its hegemonic ambition to shift the geopolitical dynamics to its favor. Using debt-trap diplomacy, China has moved in as a pseudo savior to African states who are in need of financial assistance. At the same time, African's country appetite for borrowing has led to unsustainable debt. This is due to shrinking fiscal space which has become a wicked-problem in majority of African states. Fiscal unsustainability has become the order of the day, leaving African nations with no other choice accept to borrow. Thus, there is need for African governments to attain fiscal sustainability which is a financial antidote to debt distress. Fiscal sustainability can be defined as the ability of a government to continue its current spending patterns, tax collection and other policies in the long run, and, in the process, avoiding solvency or default risks problems.



The latter relates to the ability to service debt from future revenue, without sacrificing the development and facilitative spending needs. Put differently, fiscal sustainability prevails if the present value of future primary surpluses equals the current level of sovereign debt.

Zambia's appetite for borrowing has further weakened social protection programs, that are critical in strengthening women's rights. Over the past five years, the public and publicly guaranteed debt has steadily increased, rising from USD 13.12 billion (50.9% of GDP) in 2017 to USD 26.16 billion (125.3% of GDP) in 2021.<sup>1</sup> The debt situation continues to undermine service delivery and undermine government expenditure towards women empowerment projects. Zimbabwe's debt is also unsustainable. The Public Debt Management Office (PDMO) revealed that total public and publicly guaranteed (PPG) debt was marginally up by 0.6%, in annual terms, to US\$17.7 billion as of the end of September 2023 from US\$17.6 billion as of the end of September 2022. Of the September 2023 total PPG debt stock, 72% (US\$12.7 billion) was contracted externally, while 28% (US\$5 billion) was contracted from the domestic market.

In addition, it is critical to note that, both countries have made bold debt resolution steps and it is because of such steps that the survey seeks to influence a just and feminist debt framework by interrogating the proposed debt resolution frameworks. For Zambia, several debt resolutions attempts were made and these include;

- Debt Restructuring Agreement with Bondholders: an agreement between the Zambian government and bondholders regarding the terms for restructuring Zambia's Eurobonds. This agreement aligns with the parameters of the Joint World Bank-International Monetary Fund Debt Sustainability Framework<sup>2</sup>. The agreement with Eurobond holders represents a critical milestone toward restoring debt sustainability and will help Zambia attract new investments, accelerate growth, and address urgent priorities.<sup>3</sup>
- State Creditors and China Debt Deal: After months of negotiations, Zambia has successfully agreed on new repayment terms with its state creditors, including over \$4 billion owed to China. This deal has been hailed as historic, although there were frustrations due to slow negotiations, with some attributing the delay to China (which Beijing denies).<sup>4</sup>
- China Joins Debt Resolution Mechanism: Zambia requested debt relief under the Common Framework, which links the Paris Club (a group of major creditor countries) and the G20's efforts to provide debt service relief related to the Covid-19 pandemic. China's participation in this mechanism is a positive step for Zambia's debt resolution.<sup>5</sup>

1. [https://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/MGD/INFFSept2022/Zambia Debt - Maryann Lumba Nkunika-Lwandamina En.pdf](https://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/MGD/INFFSept2022/Zambia%20Debt%20-%20Maryann%20Lumba%20Nkunika-Lwandamina%20En.pdf)

2. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/statement/2024/03/26/world-bank-group-statement-on-debt-restructuring-agreement-for-afe-zambia>

3. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/statement/2024/03/26/world-bank-group-statement-on-debt-restructuring-agreement-for-afe-zambia>

4. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-65997830>

5. <https://nation.africa/africa/news/relief-for-zambia-as-china-joins-debt-resolution-mechanism-3798492>

Since late 2022, the government of Zimbabwe has been actively engaged in a concerted process to resolve its official debt and clear its arrears with international creditors, including the African Development Bank (ADB). This commitment is crucial for the country's economic stability and growth. Two critical debt resolution steps have been taken and these are listed hereunder:

- **Structured Dialogues:** The Zimbabwean government has been holding a series of structured dialogue meetings with development partners and creditors. These dialogues focus on policy reform matrices related to economics, governance, and land tenure. The goal is to address debt issues and promote sustainable economic growth.<sup>6</sup>
- **IMF Engagement:** Zimbabwe has formally requested a staff monitored program from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and discussions with the IMF are ongoing. Development partners have welcomed this step and emphasized the importance of concrete actions moving forward.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, while both nations have made positive strides in addressing the debt question, it is imperative to ensure that all debt resolution process have a just feminist and gender dimension that advances the wellbeing and interest of women. Currently, maternal health and child health care in both countries are wanting. Public service delivery is in doldrums coupled with infrastructure gaps that facilitates unpaid care work. The effects of climate change in both countries have worsened the situation by further exposing women to unpaid care. To this end, there is need for a comprehensive debt sustainability plan and this underscores the need for the development of model frameworks on debt justice from a social and feminist perspective for robust advocacy and lobbying.

### **3 Objectives**

1. To ascertain the effects and implications of unsustainable debt on women and social services in Zambia and Zimbabwe.
2. To find social and feminist ways of managing public debt in Zimbabwe and Zambia.

### **4 Expected deliverables**

- A Survey report on the impact of debt on women and girls;
- A succinct social and feminist debt justice model that can be used for advocacy and lobbying.

### **5 Researcher (s) Skills and competences**

- Proven experience in undertaking complex multi-disciplinary research, utilising participatory methodologies including questionnaire surveys and interviews with a variety of stakeholders.

6. <https://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/zimbabwe-hosts-5th-structured-dialogue-debt-creditors-62905>

7. <https://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/zimbabwe-hosts-5th-structured-dialogue-debt-creditors-62905>

- Experience in governance, economics and service delivery issues.
- A relevant social science master's degree.

## 6 ***How to apply***

If interested in the above-mentioned opportunity, please submit your application including a motivational letter, CV and qualifications to [sapsnsapsn@gmail.com](mailto:sapsnsapsn@gmail.com) by **5 April 2024**. All applications received after the deadline will not be reviewed. Please indicate "Debt Justice Model Framework" in the subject line.

