



THE WEEKEND READER

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

KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MID-TERM BUDGET PRESENTATION

On Thursday the 25th of July, the Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion presented the 2024 mid – year budget and economic review. The 2024 mid – year review run under the theme “Consolidating Economic Transformation”. While the theme of the mid – year review is sound, it is critical to reflect on the budget performance for the first half of the year and determine whether the theme captures the reality on the ground or not by addressing the plight of the citizens.

The mid – year review highlighted the budget utilization statistics for the period under review. Only a total of 9 (nine) out of 39 (thirty-nine) sectors had utilized over 50% of their allocated resources and these are:

- Transport and Infrastructural Development 244.5%
- Zimbabwe Council of Chiefs 118.7
- Office of the President and Cabinet 91.7%
- Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion 84.8
- Local Government and Public Works 72.2%
- Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development 69.1%
- Public Service Commission 67.2%
- Zimbabwe Electoral Commission 55%
- Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage 54.7%

While the above sectors are critical in national development and growth it is imperative to note that, their services do not directly bring change and transformational impact into the livelihoods of the Zimbabwean communities in as much as social sectors do. It is worrisome to note that, the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare only utilized 6.8% of its allocated resources yet this is the ministry that is responsible for the administration of social protection services such as Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM), Health Assistance, Harmonised Cash Transfer (HCT) for the elderly and vulnerable groups and Food Deficit Mitigation Programme. The other social service ministries that utilized meagre resources are:

- Health and Child Care used 26.9%
- Higher & Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development 33%
- Youth Empowerment, Development and Vocational Training 34.9%
- Primary and Secondary Education 46.8%
- Women's Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises 37.9%

It is ironic, that at a time when government expenditure towards social service delivery should be accelerated due to the social and economic challenges as well as institutional and infrastructure gaps the ministries have only used a paltry of the appropriated resources.

In addition, using the findings from the 2024 Zimbabwe Livelihoods Assessment Committee (ZimLAC) Report it is evident that, national Human Capital Development is under threat. The report noted that, “Children of school-going age not in school on the following provinces, namely Matabeleland North with 25,2%, Matabeleland South 25,1%. Mashonaland East 20,2%, Mashonaland 21,5%, Midlands 21,6%, Masvingo 19,5%, Manicaland 20%. Nationally, 22,3% of school going age children were not in school at the time of the survey,”. Therefore, it would be prudent for the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare which administers BEAM to ensure that it aligns its expenditure pace with the needs and demands from the communities with respect to education.

Moreover, the expenditure pace of ombudsman and oversight institutions is a cause of concern. The Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC) has utilized only 37.2%, the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) 31.8%, the Parliament of Zimbabwe 24.4% and lastly Audit Office 8.6%. Oversight institutions are critical in promoting sound corporate governance that enhances transparency, accountability, responsibility in the utilization of public resources as well as deterring corruption and under dealings.

The mid – year review also shows that while Zimbabwe has significantly improved in budget and debt transparency, as indicated by the 2023 International Budget Partnership (IBP) Open Budget Survey (OBS) findings, the unsustainable debt continues to spike uncontrollably. Total public and publicly guaranteed (PPG) debt stock jumped massively by 19.8% to US\$21.2 billion at the end of December 2023 from US\$17.7 billion reported in September 2023. The total PPG debt stock equals 96.7% of the 2023 national output (GDP), and at least 80% of external debt is arrears and penalties. This depicts a low capacity to clear arrears and penalties to get new cheap lines of credit and will force indulgence in risky resource-backed loans (RBLs) and excessive domestic borrowing. Also, about 97.2% of total PPG debt stock is denominated in foreign currency, posing a significant risk to the durability of the local currency.

For a comprehensive analysis of the Mid – year Review, Debt Bulletin Analysis, and Budget Strategy Paper visit ZIMCODD website next week.

Opportunities

1. Cash Transfer Field Monitor X 3

FACT seeks the services of Cash Transfer Field Monitor (s). Details:

<https://vacancymail.co.zw/jobs/cash-transfer-field-monitor-x-3-60130>

2. Graduate Intern - Finance (Harare Based): <https://vacancymail.co.zw/jobs/graduate-intern-finance-harare-based-60100/>

3. Data and Linkage Assistant (Chinhoyi Provincial Hospital and Marondera Provincial Hospital).
Details: <https://vacancymail.co.zw/jobs/data-and-linkage-assistant-chinhoyi-provincial-hospital-and-marondera-provincial-hospital-60098/>

4. Communications & Documentation Officer (3 months cover)

Details: <https://vacancymail.co.zw/jobs/communications-documentation-officer-3-months-cover-60093/>

5. The ACT Ubumbano Solidarity Hub is scheduled for 15-17 October 2024 in Johannesburg, and activists, community organisers, leaders of faith institutions and non-profit organisations are encouraged to apply.

Details: <https://www.actubumbano.org/registration-solidarity-hub-2024/>



Are you passionate about Social & Economic Justice?
Do you believe in the movement for equality?

JOIN NOW!

Become a registered member of ZIMCodd today:
<https://rb.gy/ewz45>
Join our Mailing List by sending us your email address to stay caught up on our activities, weekly & monthly reading resources on the Social & Economic justice movement.

SCAN NOW TO BECOME A MEMBER!

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Young People's Coalition On Debt And Development
ZIMCodd

#Youth4Integrity pledge

Are you a member of the youth (18-35 years) with a passion for fighting social and economic injustice? Do you want to join the action for Integrity? Do You want to become an Integrity Icon? If your answer to any of these questions is yes, take the pledge today: <https://rb.gy/90gzgx>

Watch Episode 4 of our #Youth4Integrity Podcast: https://youtu.be/LqiyXGftufg?si=PVqghnNppxgoOcE_

Quote of the week: MP C. Matewu on the Mid-Term Budget Presentation

“Members of Parliament were not allowed to interrogate the statement by the Minister. This is a first, a shift from any accountability.”

Picture of the week: Panel at the recently held ZIMCODD Breakfast meeting on the Auditor Generals Reports. Present were Urban Council’s Association of Zimbabwe, CSO’s, Members of Parliament and Academia.

