



Investing in people for social and economic justice in Zimbabwe

BREAKFREE

The Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development Newsletter

E- Newsletter Editorial

Greetings colleagues, welcome to our inaugural monthly electronic Breakfree Newsletter (e-break free). In the quest to improve our communications and information dissemination ZIMCODD has introduced this digital newsletter to keep in touch with membership and various stakeholders on a monthly basis. The newsletter will be distributed via email and the ZIMCODD's website (www.zimcodd.org). The printed quarterly breakfree will continue to be published and distributed after every four months as usual.

To make this publication as exciting and informative as possible we welcome contributions from the ZIMCODD membership. Articles or story ideas could be on social and economic rights issues in your areas, activities carried out that you feel are worthy sharing, innovations to advance the realisation of social and economic rights...etc.

Colleagues, let us get reading and writing to get the word out there!

Regards,
ZIMCODD Information Team.

Zimbabwe commemorates World Water Day



World Water Day Commemorations in Bulawayo

On the 22nd of March 2015 Zimbabweans joined the rest of the world to commemorate World Water Day under the theme 'Water and Sustainable Development'. The day came at a time when service delivery especially water provision in Zimbabwe is deteriorating to unprecedented rates with the majority of the urban dwellers facing acute water shortages. The World Water day has been observed since 22 March 1993 when the United Nations General Assembly declared the day as "World Day for Water". For the general public to show support, it is encouraged for them not to use their taps throughout the whole day. **Continued on page 2** ➔

Zimbabwe commemorates World Water Day

Continued from page 1

In Bulawayo ZIMCODD took part in the World Water Day celebration held on 23 March 2015 organised by the Bulawayo Water Task force composed of ZIMCODD, Ezimnyama Arts, BPRA, Ibhetshu Iika Zulu, DSV, CLS, NYDT, ZCIEA, DAZ, ZIMRIGHTS among others. There were also Cowdray Park residents as well as a representative of the Councillor of Cowdray Park.

In Harare ZIMCODD took part in a number of activities to commemorate the day, of note was the organisation's participation in the Harare City Council full council meeting held on Thursday 26th March 2015 at Town House's Council Chambers, these meetings are open to the public. ZIMCODD worked in collaboration with the Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA), Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and members of the Harare Metropolitan Residents Forum (HAMREF) to mobilise and contribute towards public attendance to the full council meeting. **Continued on page 3** 



The picture to the left shows Harare residents in the public gallery during the full council meeting asserting the Anti Prepaid Meter message.

Did you know?

- Zimbabwe public and publicly guaranteed debt was estimated at US\$ 8.396 billion by December 2014.
- The composition of multilateral debt as at 31 December 2013 - E.I.B (1.3%), AFDB (2.9%), IMF (6%), World Bank (4.9%) and others (3%).
- The 2015 national budget is \$ 4.1 billion and according to the Minister of Finance
- 92.5% of government's revenue is spent on recurrent expenditure, with wages gobbling 81.5% of income.
- As at September 2014 the PDL on a family of 5 stood at US\$ 502.9.
- According to the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency annual inflation shed 0.01 percent points on the November rate to minus 0.80% in December 2014. This means that prices, as measured by all items consumer index decreased by an average 0.80% in the last 12 months.
- According to the United Nations International Labour Organisation (ILO) Zimbabwe's unemployment rate is 54.2%
- Between 2011 and 2014, more than 4,600 companies had been shut, resulting in the loss of more than 55,400 jobs.
- According to ZCTU, 10 companies have closed shop this year, with at least 600 workers having been retrenched so far this year

Zimbabwe commemorates World Water Day


Continued from page 2

The public participation was organised as part of the World Water Day commemoration 2015 in Harare. The full council meeting was also taking place against a background of policy inconsistencies at the Town House over the issue of prepaid water meters. The political leadership had not clearly come out with a position whilst the technocrats were already announcing that the pre-paid water project was a go. The public participants at the meeting brought attention to the pressing pre-paid water meters issues through distribution of flyers and banner displays. The greatest impact of the intervention was that the mayor of Harare Cllr Bernard Manyenyeni had to make a statement that the council's position was not supportive for pre-paid water systems yet. The mayor also requested a meeting with the leadership of organisations involved in the water campaign, subsequently a meeting with the Mayor was held and the following organisations attended the meeting;

- Chitungwiza Resident and Ratepayers Association (CHIRRA)
- Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA)
- Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD)
- (National Vendors Union of Zimbabwe)

- Epworth Residents Development Association (ERDA)
- Zimbabwe Congress of trade Unions (ZCTU)
- Students Solidarity Trust (SST)

To buttress the Anti prepaid water meters message and momentum a press conference was called for on 27 March, this was held at the Media Centre offices in Harare. It was signed by Harare Metropolitan Residents Forum (HAMREF), Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD), Community Water Alliance (CWA), and the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU). National Youth Organisation (NAYO). The press statement outlined the residents' position NO TO PREPAID WATER METERS. The meters violates many fundamental rights including the right to water enshrined in section 77 of our new constitution.


The 2015 theme "Water and Sustainable Development" is relevant to the Zimbabwean context as water forms the backbone of livelihoods through health, industry production and agricultural activities. The theme also highlight water's role in the sustainable development agenda. 

ZIMCODD's RBZ Debt Assumption Bill campaign update

The last half of 2014 saw ZIMCODD being actively involved in raising public awareness, engaging with stakeholders like Parliament, Media and other Civil Society Organisations around the proposed Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) debt takeover by government. The Government gazetted the RBZ Debt Assumption Bill on the 13th of June 2014. The purpose of the Bill is to transfer the US\$1.3 billion debt incurred by the RBZ in the period ending on the 31st of December 2008 to Government.

ZIMCODD participated in the public hearings on the RBZ Bill that were conducted by the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Finance and Economic Development from the 15th-18th September 2014, members of the public and the ZIMCODD membership explicitly stated their disapproval of the proposed Bill because it worsens the Zimbabwean debt burden.

During the month of February 2015 the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Finance and Economic Development presented its findings to parliament and proposed adoption of the Bill. The presentation stirred a series of debates in the August House, it is worrisome to observe that there is a push towards the adoption of the Bill regardless of the people's voices. Public concerns have not been fully addressed as recorded in the Parliamentary Hansard reports of 17th February 2015, 5th February 2015 and 10th February. During the public consultative meetings conducted by the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Finance and Economic Development from the 15th-18th September 2014, members of the public wholly rejected the proposed Bill with some calling for an audit before its assumption. Below are links to the Parliamentary Hansard Report with detailed information on debate proceedings.

ZIMCODD continued engaging on the matter, on 27 February a statement was issued in The Herald reiterating the organisation stance on the proposed debt takeover. On the 5th of March 2015 ZIMCODD submitted a petition urging Parliament to reject the RBZ Bill. ZIMCODD got support from the following member organisations; [Continued on page 5](#) 

ZIMCODD's RBZ Debt Assumption Bill campaign update

Continued from page 4

- African Forum & Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD)
- Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA)
- Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR)
- National Youth Development Trust (NYDT)
- Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA)

On 18 March the Speaker of Parliament made a ruling dismissing the petition on various technical grounds. Some of the petitioning requirements given are practically time consuming and cumbersome to meet, for instance the need to have individual signatures of members represented by ZIMCODD, the requisition that a petition should have the recommendation of a Minister or Deputy Minister in request of a petition on a Money Bill, among others. For more detailed information about the Parliament's response follow this link:

ZIMCODD takes this opportunity to appreciate the work and support given by its individual and institutional membership, board members, development partners and secretariat around this critical issue. ZIMCODD believes that rejection of the petition does not close the matter, hence the organisation will continue engaging by exploring other avenues to sustain the debt debate and public voice.

ZIMCODD urges policy makers to respect the principles of public financial management as outlined under the 2013 Zimbabwean Constitution's Section 298 is that public borrowing and all transactions involving the national debt must be carried out transparently and in the best interests of Zimbabwe. There is also Section 300 that requires Parliament to enact a law that sets limits on borrowings by the State, the public debt and debts and obligations whose payment or repayment is guaranteed by the State. Therefore it is critical in the spirit of accountability and transparency for Parliament to fulfill these constitutional requirements and set the bedrock for good public financial management for the benefit of all Zimbabweans.