



# THE WEEKEND READER

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

## 2024 ZIMBABWE NATIONAL BUDGET BITES

A national budget is a policy document which carries the government's purposive course of action for the year. It is at the apex of policy implementation as it gives breath to various government policies through the provision of resources. To this end, this reader analyses how political considerations and mechanisms affect policy choices, budget allocations and expenditure. The digest presents the 2024 Budget Bites to inform citizens on the performance of the 2023 budget and proposed resource allocations in the annual budget. The digest unpacks the dynamics and vested interests in resource allocation using the proposed 2024 budget. The analysis helps citizens determine how different policy actors advance their interests in the distribution of public resources. The digest ends with questions which demand answers that have potential to bring about transformation in the allocation, disbursement and utilisation of resources.

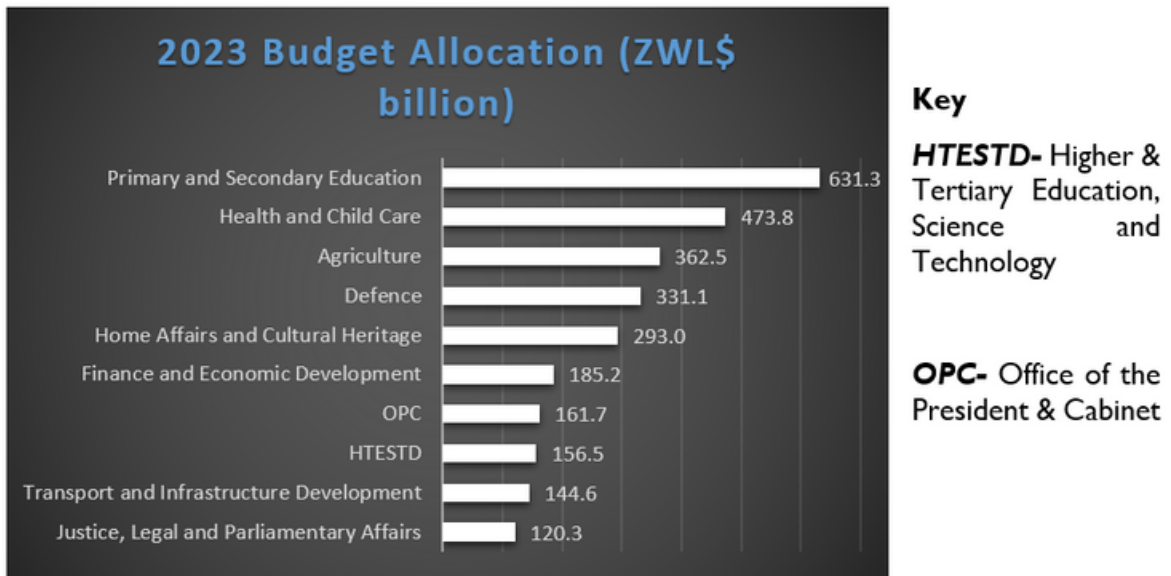
### Budget Performance

- As of September 2023, the total budget spending was 275.7%.
- Every vote, with the exception of the Auditor General's office (96.4%), exceeded its allocated amount.
- The top ten spenders utilize between 300% and 200% of their allotted funds.
- The lowest ten spenders utilize between 96% and 154% of the funds they are allotted.
- The budget overrun might have possibly necessitated by inflation adjustments and the 2023 elections.
- Thus, a total of ZWL 7.9 trillion was the expenditure outrun as of September 2023. A figure that is beyond the revised budget for 2023.
- Therefore, the Minister of Finance is legally expected to seek a condonation from Parliament for the excess expenditure.

### 2023 Top 10 Budget Allocation vs Utilisation by Sector

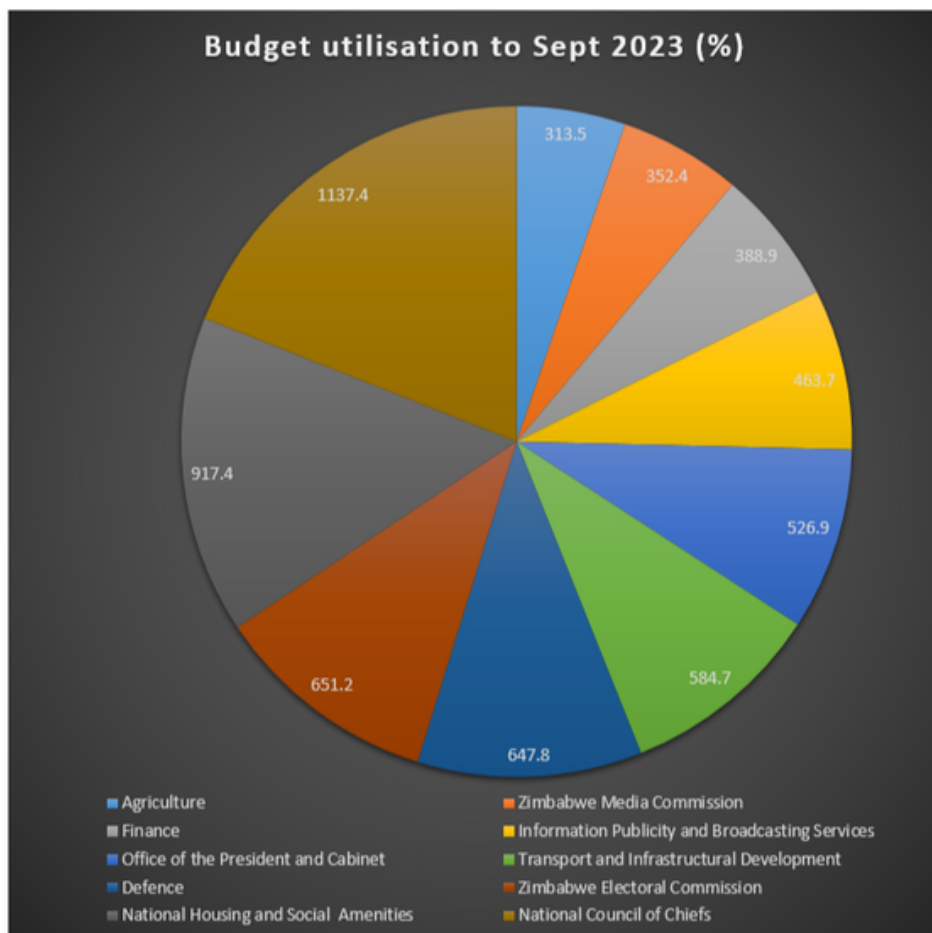
- It is interesting to note that, the National Council of Chiefs (NCC) was at the apex of expenditure. Why this might have happened is a question of personal analysis and opinion.
- The expenditure matrix is surprising as NCC was not even part of the 2023 top ten of sectors allocated more resources. It was found in the bottom ten resource allocation by sector.
- Only five of the sectors that were in the top ten allocations are found in the top ten of sectors which utilized more resources. These are Defense, Transport and Infrastructural Development, Office of the President & Cabinet, Agriculture and Finance.

Top 10 Allocation by Sector



Source: Compiled by ZIMCODD From The 2023 National Budget

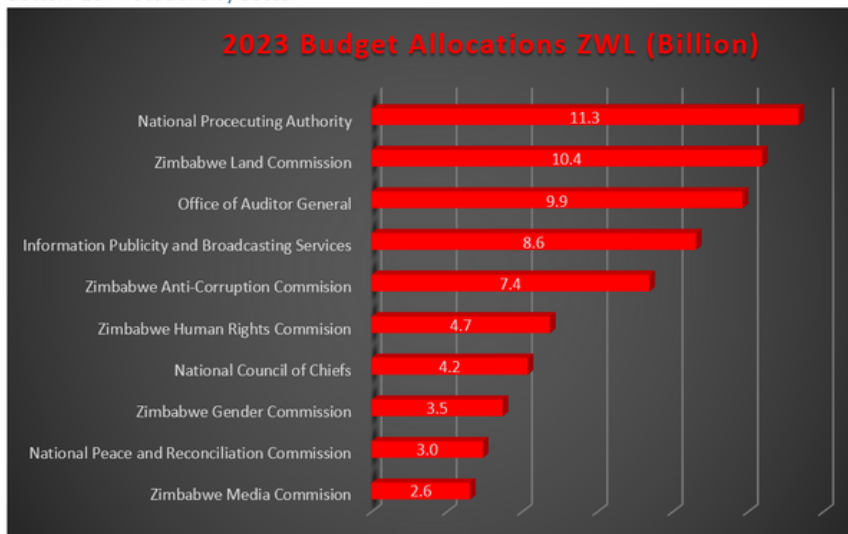
Top 10 Utilisation by Sector



Source: Compiled by ZIMCODD from the 2024 National Budget

## 2023 Bottom 10 Budget Allocation vs Utilisation by Sector

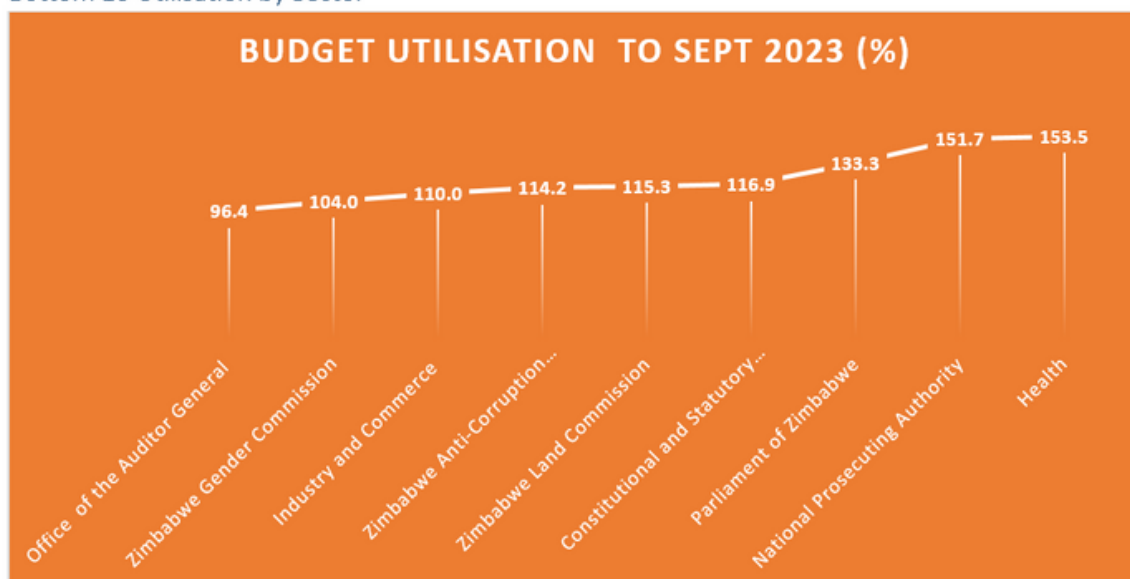
Bottom 10 Allocations by Sector



Source: Compiled by ZIMCODD from the 2023 National Budget

- Zimbabwe Media Commission, Information Publicity and Broadcasting Services and Zimbabwe Electoral Commission which were part of the bottom ten of sectors allocated less resources, are among the top ten of sector which over utilised their resources.
- This tempts one to ask a series of questions that strives to understand why it is so easy for Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to overrun their budgets:
  1. Is it a case of underbudgeting or failure to plan?
  2. Could it be a case of utter impunity and disregard of the Finance Act?
  3. Could it be that there is a lacuna in our laws to deal with such matters?
  4. What are the parameters for budget overruns?
  5. Is there a limit to which MDAs can spend beyond what has been approved by Parliament or it's an open cheque?
  6. This tempts one to ask a series of questions that strives to understand why it is so easy for Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to overrun their budgets:

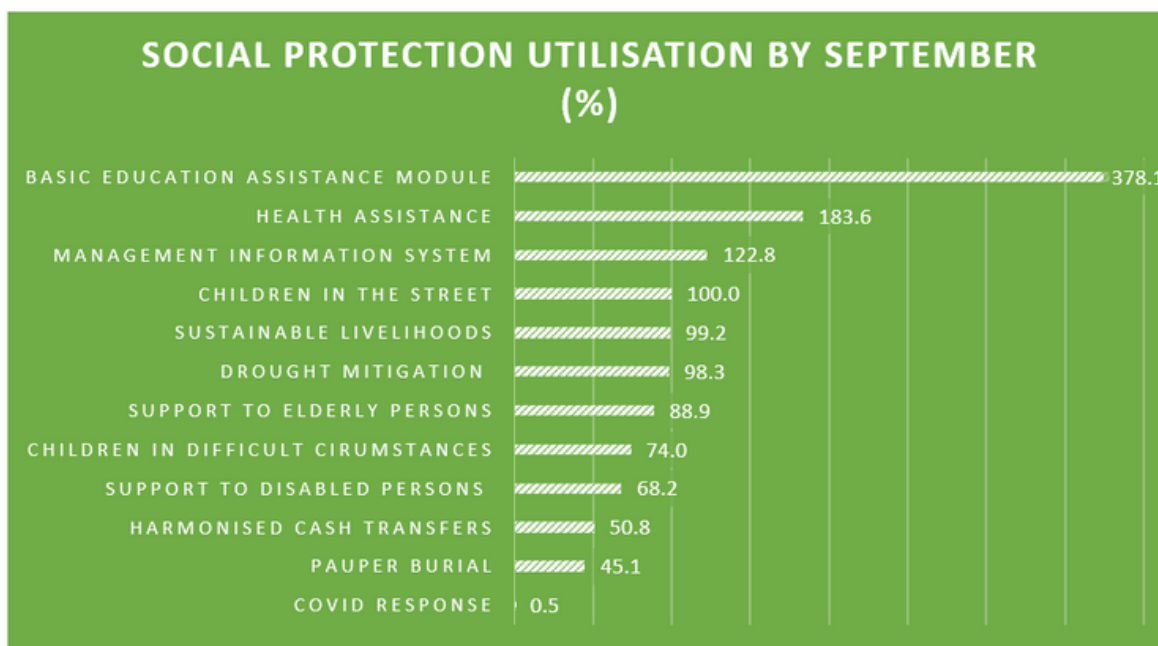
Bottom 10 Utilisation by Sector



Source: Compiled by ZIMCODD from the 2024 National Budget

- It is worrying to note that health sector is among the sectors that are found in the bottom ten.
- This is despite a myriad of infrastructure gaps yearning for optimum financial utilisation.
- At the same time, the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) and the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission which are supposed to be an ombudsman, watchdog institutions are undermined to carry out their mandate.

## 2023 Social Protection Utilisation

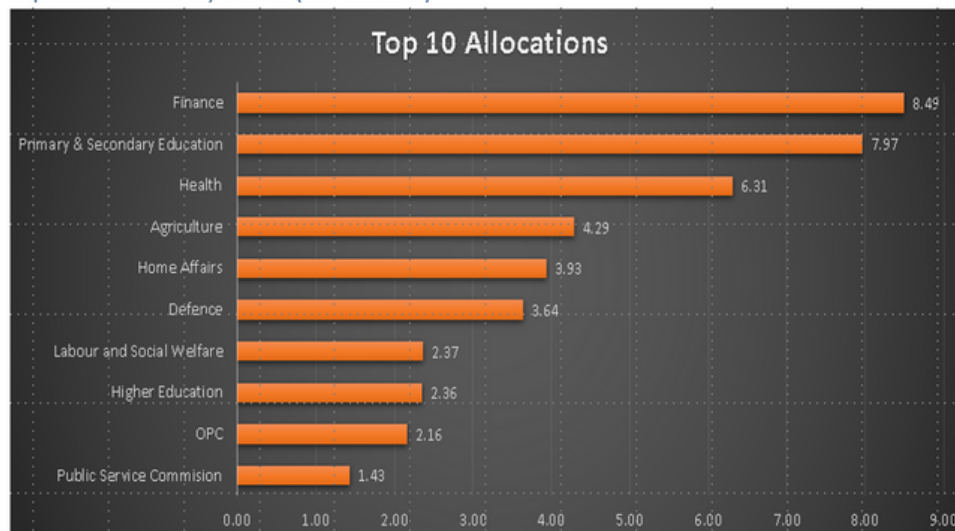


**Source:** Compiled by ZIMCODD from the 2024 National Budget

[ZIMCODD Analysis of the Mid-Term Budget Statement](#) shows that the government was almost exhausting the resources allocated for social protection. A testament to the fact that the government is allocating meagre resources which does not meet the services required for social protection.

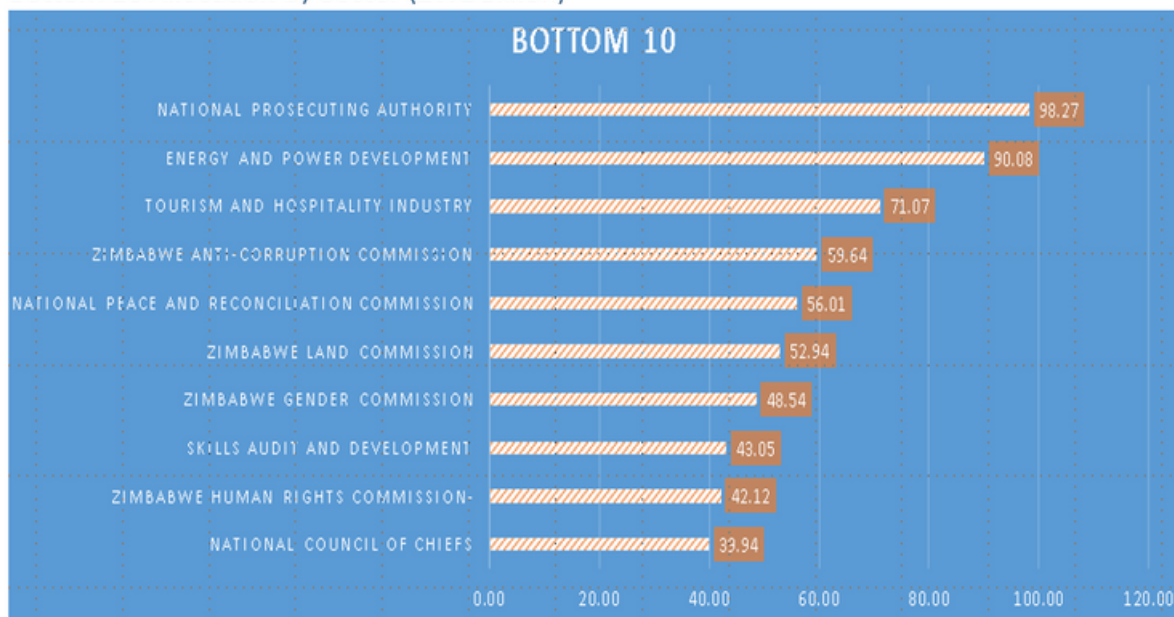
## 2023 Social Protection Utilisation

Top 10 Allocation by Sector (ZWL Trillion)



**Source:** Compiled by ZIMCODD from the 2024 National Budget

Bottom 10 Allocation by Sector (ZWL Billion)



Source: Compiled by ZIMCODD from the 2024 National Budget

\*Note here that the biggest spender of 2023 sits at the bottom of the 2024 national budget allocations.

## 2024 Budget Allocations vs International Benchmarks

| Sector                                | International commitment             | % Total budget 2022 | % Total budget 2023 | % Total budget 2024 |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Education</b>                      | 20% Dakar Declaration (2000)         | 13.4%               | 14.02%              | 17.75%              |
| <b>Healthcare</b>                     | 15% Abuja Declaration (2001)         | 14.9%               | 10.5%               | 10.84%              |
| <b>Water &amp; sanitation</b>         | 1.5% Ethekwini Declaration (2008)    | 0.20%               | 3.17%               | 1.17%               |
| <b>Transport &amp; Infrastructure</b> | 9.6% AU Declaration (2009)           | 6.5%                | 3.2%                | 14.6%               |
| <b>Social Protection</b>              | 4.5% Social Policy for Africa (2008) | 2.1%                | 1.12%               | 4.12%               |
| <b>Agriculture</b>                    | 10% Maputo Declaration (2003)        | 13.3%               | 8.05%               | 7.39%               |

Source: Compiled by ZIMCODD from the National Budget Statements

## Conclusion

Trends in budget allocations and spending give rise to some key questions begging answers from policy communities.

- Were the 2024 budget allocations influenced by the nature and manner used to conduct the budget consultative forums and public hearing?
- Does the top 10 MDAs recipients in the 2024 national budget and top 10 utilisers in the 2023 national budget really reflect national priorities?
- Who sets and decides these 'national priorities? Is there national consensus on the 'top government priorities?
- Are there political interests vested in resource allocation through budget process?
- Could it be that priorities of incumbent governments are self-serving and meant to consolidate power and status quo?
- Is democracy so skewed that at voting citizens relinquish all power and decision making to authorities to make decisions on resource allocation entirely at their discretion?

- Do citizens have means and power to challenge or reverse resource allocation decisions by the executive or remain at the mercy of elected and appointed officials in this regard?
- Should allocations be performance based?
- Is the budget in sync with the National Development Strategy 1?

An attempt to answer these questions would help one understand the political dynamics surrounding public resources in Zimbabwe.