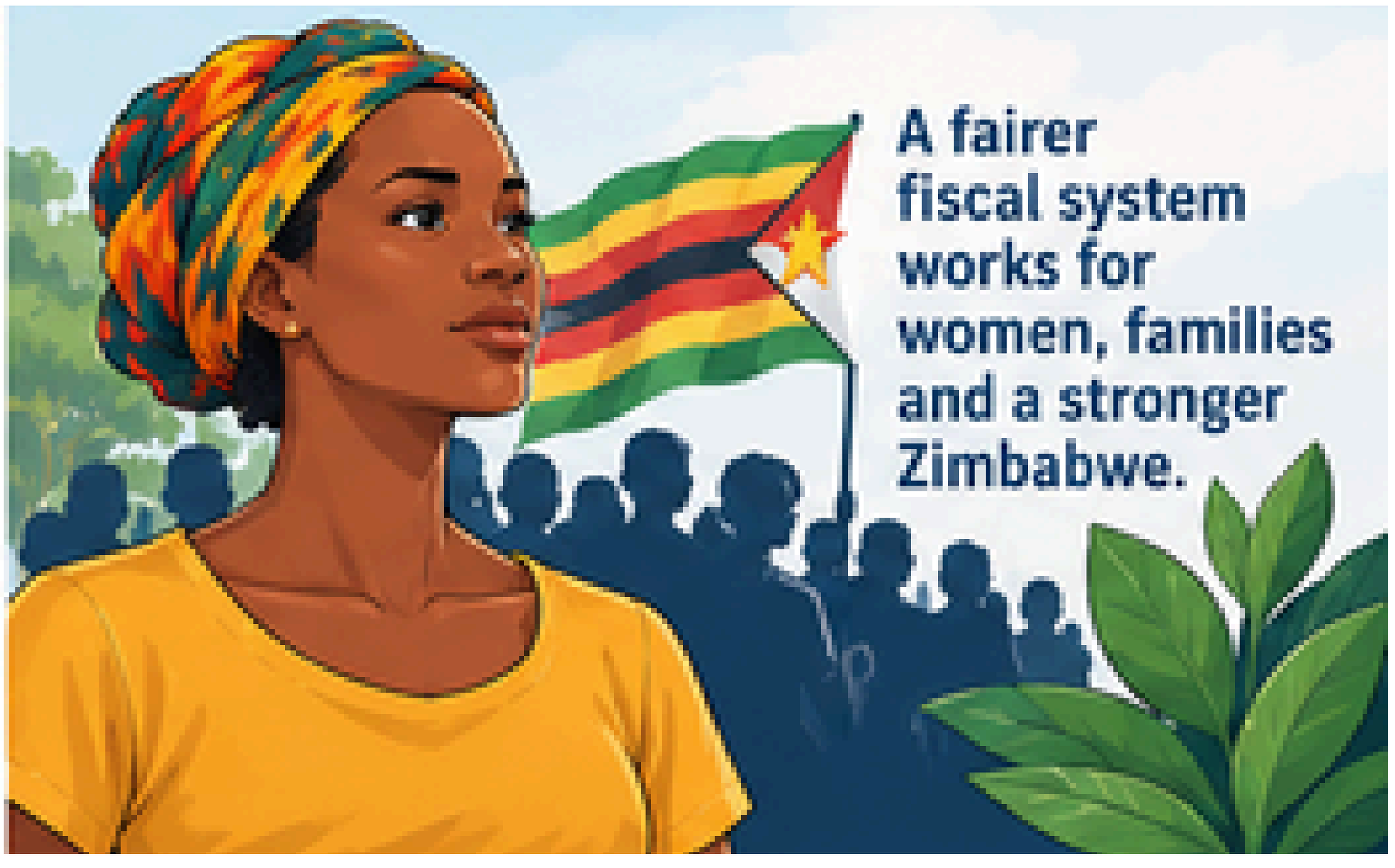
WEEKEND READER

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

30 OCT 2026

A Socioeconomic Justice Analysis of the 2027 Pre-Budget Seminar Presentation



Introduction

On 28 October 2026, Finance Minister Prof. Mthuli Ncube presented Zimbabwe's economic outlook and 2027 budget priorities, highlighting achievements such as low inflation, increased mineral exports, higher manufacturing capacity utilisation, stronger foreign currency reserves, and a projected current account surplus. While these indicators suggest economic resilience, a closer examination raises concerns about whether fiscal resources are being directed towards citizens' welfare or towards debt repayment and infrastructure development.

Key Issues Raised

1. Despite Zimbabwe recording strong economic growth and a Gross National Income (GNI) per capita of US$4,070, the benefits of this growth have not been equitably shared across the population. Approximately 70% of citizens continue to live below the Upper Poverty Datum Line of US$793.20 per year, highlighting persistent inequalities and demonstrating that positive macroeconomic indicators have yet to translate into meaningful improvements in the living standards of ordinary Zimbabweans. The analysis argues that macroeconomic gains largely benefit a small segment of the population, while the majority continue to experience poverty and economic hardship.
2. The Government highlighted the decline in inflation to below 5% as evidence of economic stability. However, questions remain regarding the consistency and credibility of official statistics. For example, the Minister's assertion that inflation reached 687% in 2024 appears inconsistent with inflation figures publicly reported by ZIMSTAT during the same period. Such discrepancies raise concerns about the transparency, reliability, and consistency of the data used to assess economic performance and guide public policy. Moreover, while inflation has slowed, this does not mean that prices have fallen. Rather, it indicates that prices are increasing at a slower rate. The prolonged period of high inflation rate of 687% significantly eroded the real value of salaries, wages, pensions, and household savings, leaving many citizens worse off. As a result, the benefits of inflation stabilisation have yet to translate into a meaningful recovery in purchasing power, and many households continue to struggle to meet the rising cost of living.
3. The most significant concern is the Government's ZiG36 billion fiscal surplus generated between January and September 2026. Rather than expanding social services, the surplus was largely used to repay outstanding debt obligations. At the same time, spending on key social sectors remained significantly below budget, with Social Protection utilizing only 8% of its allocation, Health 33%, and Primary Education 35%, while Infrastructure spending exceeded its budget allocation by reaching 108%. This disparity suggests a clear prioritisation of infrastructure projects over critical social services. The analysis argues that the Government had sufficient resources to fund critical social programmes but deliberately prioritised creditors over citizens, leaving key programmes such as BEAM and Pfumvudza underfunded.
4. Government attributed low budget utilisation to exchange rate effects. However, the uneven spending patterns, particularly the overspending on infrastructure and administrative expenditures while social sectors remained underfunded, suggest deliberate policy choices rather than technical limitations.
5. While Government announced a Six-Pillar Drought Response Plan, the analysis notes that there is no clearly ring-fenced budget allocation to implement it. Furthermore, planned grain reserve targets are expected to be reached after the peak hunger period, raising questions about the effectiveness of the response.
6. Tax Burden Remains Regressive. Consumption taxes such as VAT, excise duties, and customs duties account for 43% of Government revenue, placing a disproportionate burden on low-income households. At the same time, the booming mining sector contributes relatively little through royalties despite generating most export earnings.

7. Debt Transparency Remains Weak Although Government reported making debt repayments, no comprehensive debt servicing schedule was presented. With public debt standing at US$21.8 billion, stakeholders remain unable to assess the full impact of debt obligations on public spending. Evidence suggests debt servicing continues to crowd out social expenditure, with Government spending more than twice as much on domestic debt payments as on social benefits.

Conclusion

The analysis concludes that Zimbabwe's fiscal challenges are not primarily caused by a shortage of revenue, but by policy choices regarding resource allocation. Despite having sufficient fiscal space to increase spending on health, education, social protection, and drought preparedness, the Government appears to have prioritised debt servicing, arrears clearance, and infrastructure development. Consequently, the central question for the 2027 Budget is not whether resources are available, but whether public spending will be aligned with constitutional obligations and the welfare needs of citizens.

Recommendations

1. Prioritise Social Sector Financing Increase budget allocations and expenditure for health, education, and social protection programmes to ensure compliance with constitutional obligations and improve citizens' welfare.
2. Balance Debt Servicing with Human Development Adopt a more equitable fiscal strategy that balances debt repayment and arrears clearance with investments in poverty reduction, social services, and livelihoods.
3. Enhance Transparency and Accountability Publish comprehensive debt servicing schedules, Treasury Bulletins, and consistent economic statistics to strengthen public trust and parliamentary oversight.
4. Establish a Ring-Fenced Drought Response Fund Allocate dedicated resources for drought preparedness and climate resilience to ensure timely interventions and protect vulnerable households from food insecurity.
5. Reform the Tax System and Maximise Mining Revenue Reduce reliance on regressive consumption taxes by strengthening the contribution of the extractive sector through improved royalty collection and fair taxation of mineral wealth.



Varelie Chitando,
SEJA ALUMNI 2025

Corruption at the Border: Reflections from the 2026 SADC People's Summit

My participation in the 2026 SADC People's Summit in Durban, South Africa, on 14–15 August provided an opportunity to engage with conversations about social and economic justice, xenophobia, and regional solidarity. The Summit brought together civil society organisations, activists, youth, and community representatives from across Southern Africa. Solidarity messages from countries including Eswatini, South Africa, Zambia, and Malawi highlighted the importance of collective action in addressing the challenges facing our region. Yet, the discussions on migration and Afrophobia took on a more personal meaning during my two-day bus journey to Durban.

At the border, I witnessed hundreds of Zimbabweans travelling back into South Africa amid recent deportations and debates about tighter immigration controls. What struck me was the contradiction between the public rhetoric around restricting migration and practices I observed, including instances of people paying to have longer periods of stay stamped in their passports. While authorities speak of tightening controls and deporting migrants, these practices raise questions about whether some officials may be financially benefiting from the very movement they are supposed to regulate. It is a troubling irony that deserves closer scrutiny.

The experience also prompted me to reflect on Zimbabwe's own approach to immigration. We often question how Zimbabweans are treated in South Africa, yet we must also ask how we treat migrants from other African countries. Do our immigration practices and attitudes sometimes make it easier for white visitors to enter or stay than for fellow Africans? These are uncomfortable questions, but regional solidarity requires us to examine our own biases, too.

This reflection is particularly personal for me. During apartheid, my great-grandfather migrated to Zimbabwe, and our family history includes the difficulties people faced crossing borders, sometimes resorting to forged documents. Today, Zimbabweans make similar journeys into South Africa unschoolder very different circumstances, often driven by economic necessity.

Through my work with Kuyenda Collective, which supports youth leadership, community-led research, and advocacy, I have also seen how migration affects education. In border communities such as Chiredzi, parents sometimes travel to South Africa through irregular routes to earn money for fees and other basic needs. Their absence can leave children vulnerable, sometimes contributing to school dropout and other challenges.

Ultimately, migration is about more than borders and documentation. It raises questions about corruption, inequality, and human dignity. If we are serious about building a people-centred SADC, we must confront these contradictions and address the economic conditions that compel people to leave home in search of a better future.

VOTE!

We have been shortlisted among the top three contenders for the **NGO Communicator of the Year Award** at the 14th NANGO Annual NGO Awards 2026.

https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/KTxgmwPAbJ

Strengthening Our Programmes Through Reflection

ZIMCODD is grateful to the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) and the Norwegian Church Aid Advocacy Programme Africa (NAPA) for creating this opportunity to reflect on the work being implemented together, appreciate each other's contributions and strengthen collaboration. This creates space to review programme progress, share experiences, address operational challenges and identify areas for improvement. It also allows us to recognise achievements, learn from one another and strengthen the systems that support effective programme delivery. Through this process, ZIMCODD can further strengthen its programming, improve coordination and ensure that collective efforts remain aligned with shared advocacy priorities.



OPPORTUNITIES

Consular and Protocol Officer – Embassy of France in Zimbabwe
candidatures.harare-amba@diplomatie.gouv.fr
(Deadline: 4 November 2026)

WASH Specialist (NO-3) – UNICEF Zimbabwe
https://jobs.unicef.org/en-us/job/596481/wash-specialist-no3-fixed-term-position-00068709-harare-zimbabwe-open-to-zimbabwean-nationals-only
(Deadline: 1 November 2026)

Research Nurse – Zvitambo Institute
https://form.jotform.com/250991414186562
(Deadline: 4 November 2026)

Data Officer – Zvitambo Institute
https://form.jotform.com/262981871094569
(Deadline: 4 November 2026)

Programmes Officer – Zvitambo Institute
https://form.jotform.com/262981973476576
(Deadline: 4 November 2026)

Data Management Officer – Zvitambo Institute
https://form.jotform.com/262980775897582
(Deadline: 4 November 2026)

Independent Consultant – End-of-Project Evaluator – ActionAid Zimbabwe
Jobs.Zimbabwe@actionaid.org
(Deadline: 8 November 2026)

Various Vacant Positions (7 Posts) – Judicial Service Commission of Zimbabwe
The Secretary, JSC House, No. 161 Josiah Chinamano Avenue, Harare
(Deadline: 5 November 2026)

Territory Sales Managers x4 – MultiChoice Zimbabwe
Multichoice.Zimbabwe@dstv.co.zw
(Deadline: 4 November 2026)