

Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection

## **JUBILEE-ZAMBIA**

# **NATIONAL CONFERENCE REPORT**

*(MULUNGUSHI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE-LUSAKA)*

**9<sup>TH</sup> June 2005**

### *PARTICIPANTS*

Secretariat

Provincial Team Representatives

Strategic Partners

Ministry of Finance and National Planning

UNDP Resident Representative

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Jubilee-Zambia held a one day national conference on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2005 to discuss the theme “**BEYOND THE HIPC COMPLETION POINT- WHICH WAY FORWARD FOR JUBILEE ZAMBIA.**” The conference’s main objectives were to highlight the meaning of reaching the HIPC completion point and strategise on the new course for campaigners and civil society organisations (CSOs). The resolutions drawn from the discussions were to form up the agenda for the following day’s meeting which was to concretise on the movement’s way forward.

The conference drew representation from various members of society including Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Government. The Minister of Finance and National Planning (MoFNP), Honourable Ng’andu Magande graced the occasion as Guest of Honour. Other dignitaries included retired politician and former Minister of Finance, Mr. John Mwanakatwe State Council (S.C), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) resident representative who is also Head of the UN systems in Zambia, Mr. A. Chuma and many others list of which is annex 1.

## ***Objective setting - Charity Musamba-Jubilee Zambia***

The objectives of the conference were elaborately outlined by Jubilee Zambia coordinator Charity Musamba as follows;

- ✓ Realign the movement to the purpose of the campaign and provide the new course and direction that the network should embark on.
- ✓ To keep each other abreast on the progress through the provision of information. The members of the network need to have a better picture on issues of debt particularly as it is affected by the attainment of the HIPC completion point. J-Z needed to know how much is/will be coming in, how it will be used, and who it will benefit.
- ✓ To understand what reaching the HIPC completion point entails to campaigners, civil society and the general public.
- ✓ The conference was an opening to a new phase in the campaign- stronger emphasis on dialogue for better national effective management system on debt relief resources and loans. This goal has been clearly identified and Jubilee Zambia campaigners are fully committed to its attainment.
- ✓ The conference was a strategic meeting for strategising on the continuity of the campaign and the package of information that should comprise the campaign.

## ***Expectations of participants***

The participants mentioned various things which they wanted to be addressed by the end of the programme (annex 2). These were generally focussing on benefits and opportunities of reaching the HIPC completion point, need for transparency and accountability in the use of debt relief and public resources. Specifically, the following were expectations outlined:

1. The course of Zambia as a nation and as individuals after HIPC completion point.
2. Expected to have the International Monetary Fund (IMF)/ World Bank (W/B) representatives on the programme or at least on the attendants list.
3. What are the benefits of HIPC to the people in the streets and villages?
4. Will Government continue borrowing after the HIPC completion point?
5. What is the debt stock after the post cut-off date of January 1, 1983?
6. To have answers to the uncertainty resulting from the lack of information regarding issues surrounding HIPC completion point.

## **2. Official opening remarks – Minister of Finance and National Planning: Honourable Ng’andu Magande**

Following the expectations of the participants, the Minister decided to speak off the cuff as a formal speech would possibly have been out of context and would most certainly not have addressed the core issues at stake. A brief report on Zambia’s programme under the HIPC initiative (annex 3) had already been sent to Jubilee Zambia secretariat from MoFNP.

He opened with the statement that HIPC completion point is good news because Zambia is no longer “Heavily Indebted” although still a poor country. Zambia’s debts are no longer unsustainable.

The minister traced the issue of debt as far back in time as the first republic which had struggled so much to bring the nation to the standards that are currently prevalent. The first republic prioritised education, health, agriculture, among many other socio-economic problems pressing on Zambia’s economy which was dependent on copper mining.

Investment in these sectors demanded a lot of resources in order to put up the needed infrastructure and other requirements. Additionally, sectors like agriculture like all others did not only require trained human resource and good road network but also mechanised industry. Therefore, the government embarked on building infrastructure, schools, hospitals, linking all provinces through a good road network and mechanising particular prioritised industries.

However, the reserves at Government exposure got exhausted and were not sufficient to cover all Government requirements. To resolve this Government

decided to start borrowing. This was precisely in 1973 and before then the only loan had been contracted in 1958 to construct the Kariba Dam.

At the time of borrowing, the nation's foreign exchange position had become a problem in that copper prices were falling while oil prices on the contrary were rising, this in turn resulted in a deficit in the country's ability to meet its development needs and thus repay its foreign loans.

The first loan for the purpose of putting up education infrastructure and 12 medical institutions was contracted from the W/B and was \$22 million. In exception of UNZA, numerous academic institutions including 61 secondary schools, 4 teacher colleges and agriculture institutions in various districts were built out of the same funds. This loan was not to be repaid until 1983 and by 1999 the loan was still at \$20.4 million and it is part of that loan that the Zambian people are being forgiven today.

Despite the loans having been contracted for good intentions, by 1980 it was obvious the debt could not be serviced. This forced the international community to analyse and discuss Zambia's debt portfolio. They queried how for instance, Zambia could borrow from Canada huge sums of money for the purchase of Canadian wheat to make bread in Zambia.

The international community advised that Zambia needed to change the way of doing things and thus proposed Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). However, in 1987 the Government abandoned the programme and this resulted in the international community withholding aid to the country. This move had severe consequences on the economy manifesting in a critical shortage of goods in the country and the accumulation of colossal arrears on debt service. In 1989, the Government had to rescind its decision and went back to SAP; however, the loss of confidence sustained so far led to a change of Government.

In 1992 the new Government under the Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD) agreed to implement the SAPs and this led to negotiations that culminated into the country's inclusion on the new debt initiative. After satisfying a number of conditions, in December 2000 when the external debt was estimated at \$7.1 billion, Zambia reached the enhanced HIPC. The creditors promised a robust exit from the problem of debt with additional relief to bring total relief to \$3.8billion upon completion.

This however, came with conditions set out in the Decision Point document for the Enhanced HIPC initiative dated 20<sup>th</sup> November 2000 agreed between the Zambian Government and IMF. Subsequently the SAPs were replaced by a Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF). Under this strategy Zambia had to undertake 15 key structural reforms and measures in the following area:

- Poverty reduction
- Social sectors

- Combating HIV/AIDS
- Education sector reform
- Health sector reform
- Macroeconomic and structural reform

The implications of reaching the HIPC completion point are that:

- ✓ The creditors had to give irrevocable debt relief of \$3.8 billion which is an amount made up of some of the loan repayments due between 2001 and 2020 to various creditors
- ✓ Paris club members agreed
  - 100% write off, this was in exception of Russia which had already written off 90% of Zambia's debt in December 2000.
  - Reduction of outstanding debt (\$1.92bn) to \$124million by writing off \$1.796 billion.
  - 50% of the balance of \$124million owed to Russia has been rescheduled to be repaid in 2009, 2010 and 2011.
  - Each creditor government should prepare the appropriate agreement for signing with the Zambian Government and this should be concluded by December 2005.
- ✓ W/B will give debt relief of \$885.2 million from 2001 to 2020
- ✓ IMF will give \$602 million debt relief on payments falling due 2001 and 2008
- ✓ One donor country has agreed to pay 10% of all repayments due from Zambia to two multilateral institutions until 2015.

At the conclusion of the negotiations with all the creditors, it is likely that Zambia's debt of \$7.1 billion will be reduced to \$3.1 with a debt write-off of \$4billion.

The current status is that Zambia will exit the HIPC initiative as it will be sustainable since the debt service-to-export earnings ratio will be low at 7%, however it still retains the status of Poor Country. The Government promises accountability, transparency and prudence in contracting and use of fresh loans in order to avoid falling back into another debt crisis in future.

## **2.1 Vote of thanks- Saul Banda- Jubilee Zambia**

In thanking the Minister, the J-Z Provincial Outreach Coordinator, Mr Saul Banda, informed the Minister of the various groups in attendance and also focussed on the concerns which require urgent attention and action so as to facilitate change. Particular emphasis was placed on J-Z Monze team's long desire to have the minister attend to their plea to meet the people in Monze and present current affairs on debt.

The concerns surrounded 3 major issues:

1. **Government and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) relations** which are currently poorer compared with government-donor relations. These required strengthening through timely provision and accessibility to

- information and institutionalisation government and civil society relations.
2. **Government position on poverty requires implementation of concrete and long-term strategies.** This calls for a clear and concrete national position on poverty and strategies of overcoming this problem. Furthermore, CSOs are aware of the “new” 5<sup>th</sup> NDP process going on, however, the CSOs have not yet been involved even though the plan is almost over. There is need for clear and concrete policies on how we can appropriately marry economic growth desires, poverty reduction ambitions and good governance goals.
  3. **Good Governance is needed since the current pace is slow and non-committal.** Zambia’s governance standards should improve in all aspects socio-economic, financial, political and cultural. Jubilee Zambia supports a genuine fight against all forms of corruption, misuse of public and debt relief resources.

Finally, concern about the sustainability of Zambia’s debt situation and its impact on the country’s sustainable development was expressed.

The full presentation is annex 4.

## **2.2 Comments and questions**

The participants had a number of views and questions to the Minister

### **Questions**

1. What safeguards have been put in place so that our debt does not become unsustainable again like Uganda which has fallen back into debt unsustainability?
2. Who is running the affairs of our country W/B and IMF or the Zambian Government?
3. What is the government doing about the highly politicised budgeting process which sidelines the various groups in districts?
4. Since privatisation failed Zambia, does government intend to revamp some industries which had been privatised?
5. What is government’s view on corruption especially that it hampers progress on various sectors of the economy?

### **Answers**

1. The house was challenged to gather data on Uganda at the time they reached HIPC completion point and analyse their commodities and other factors. It is apparent the comparisons are being made without statistics. Unlike Zambia, Uganda’s foreign exchange is from agriculture not copper. Zambia’s foreign exchange earnings have been improving since both agriculture and copper earned \$27m and \$47m last year alone and this gives hope. Moreover, before the write-offs the debt stock was about 138% of Zambia’s earnings and with the current forgiveness it will be 50%. In

- addition Zambia will not be getting loans except where the money is for productivity instead Zambia will be receiving grants.
2. Creditors have substantial amount of control in the affairs of the nation when it comes to setting conditions on loans. This can be avoided if Zambia reduced on borrowing.
  3. Community based budgeting is good but it receives political alienation that makes it difficult to progress. In this regard people should bury their political differences and be very objective in order to progress on developmental issues. Without burying the political differences debt will not be sufficiently tackled as it does not have a political colour.
  4. The privatised companies were in a deplorable state and required urgent intervention. People had become greedy and personalised public offices which they used for personal gains rather than national interest. In this resolve, the government regarded privatisation as a better exit to the problem of poverty. Re-nationalising enterprises currently in private hands would certainly imply slipping back into the deplorable and pathetic situation that Zambia was in.
  5. Corruption is widespread and it requires personal measures as it comes in form of greed and personalising public offices. Consistency is important and therefore the talk against corruption should not die.

### **3. Key concerns about the HIPC completion Point – Mr. Jack Jones Zulu**

The presentation tackled a number of current pressing issues that among other things include:

- Social and Economic indicators such as the continued HIV/AIDS pandemic, unprecedented poverty levels and under-five mortality rate which is at 162 deaths per 1000 children.
- General concerns around the HIPC initiative like HIPC' s failure to provide a permanent exit to the debt problem, the issue of a 'floating' and elusive completion point and conditionality which has continued to compromise the effectiveness of the HIPC initiative.
- Long term debt sustainability which has been difficult to realise due to flaws in the Debt Sustainability Approach (DSA) such as unrealistic and overly ambitious projections.
- Specific concerns around HIPC in Zambia after completion point indicate that HIPC debt relief is spread over a long period of time until 2023. There is a real danger of slipping back into heavy debts and moreover HIPC does not even cover all loans.

To reduce the flaws in loan contraction the government should build capacities of all loan negotiating officers, reinstate the HIPC monitoring

team, strengthen and expedite public expenditure management reforms such as IFIMIS and PEMFAR.

- Message to the donors/creditors is that sustainable development is needed more than debt sustainability. Therefore, aid should be delivered in increased quantitative and qualitative ways such as cancelling all outstanding debts or converting them into grants. Additionally, donors should help Zambia and other poor countries to build capacities and drop harmful conditions especially the structural ones.
- Case for Debt cancellation in Zambia should follow a clear vision on poverty reduction and prudent use of money released in order to address poverty issues
- Current debt relief: debt cancellation and increased aid provide necessary and complementary financial flows to finance development. This is essential because it provides direct budgetary support to debtor countries and helps to keep domestic interest rates low.
- Way forward for Zambia, certainly more can be done if all debts were cancelled and if as a nation we develop clear priorities, stop abuse of public funds and implement and monitor programmes effectively.

A complete PowerPoint slide presentation is annex 5.

#### **4. The Response to the HIPC Completion Point-Charity Musamba**

The discussion was mainly focussed on three major themes; a full report is annex 6,

1. Reflections on the performance of the HIPC initiative in Zambia- the debt burden persists amid the greater problems and challenges facing Zambia such as decline in local manufacturing rise in unemployment, poor education and health facilities. We indeed need some relief. The only panacea to this problem is full cancellation of Zambia's external loans on condition that the government puts in place effective loan and debt management systems.
2. Overcoming Zambia's debt crisis which over the years has continued to be unbearable through conditions that interfere with both national authority and economic policy choices must be taken as a matter of immediate urgency. Therefore it is imperative that calls for debt cancellation are continued in order to gain freedom to make decisions and have a fresh start to development.
3. Debt cancellation- a practical and possible achievement. History and recent events show that it is possible to cancel debts for as long as we continue to pressure for it and call for good governance. More to the calls, there is need for people to demand for true partnership in

development. Among other strategies is the forwarding of the following conditions to our national government

- Immediate establishment of loan and debt management systems
- Institutionalisation of public participatory mechanisms in the use of the debt relief resources and contraction of new loans.
- Formulation and implementation of appropriate development policies
- Promotion of good governance

The discourse established that HIPC completion point marks a point for deeper reflection and it is time that the call for quality aid/grants was strengthened and heightened.

## **COMMENTS**

1. The group suggested that Zambia should tighten the conditions on loan contraction and adopt a strong legislative approach. Zambia can emulate Nigeria's parliament which passed a law which forbids government from paying back interest on all loans to be contracted.
2. Zambia needs to have a concise vision and elaborate plan on poverty alleviation. A good plan requires good capacity to implement it. In the past there used to be National Development Plans which covered a five year period, however with the changing of governments particularly in 1991, this was abandoned.
3. Zambia should have a substantial leverage on conditions set by the external donors when borrowing money.
4. CSOs need to be more proactive rather than engage in publicity alone.
5. Zambia needs to develop a more effective and relevant education system in order to fight poverty and corruption.
6. Concerning the Ministers observation over the NGOs' lack of transparency and unaccountability, NGOCC revealed that they have a basket fund through which they identify members that can handle their programs prudently. Through this kind of a mechanism transparency and accountability can be achieved.
7. Since Jubilee Zambia has gained ground with both government and the donor community, it has been urged to take advantage of this in pursuit of better conditions. Furthermore, Jubilee Zambia should get to know the conditions set up by donors.

8. In as much as grants are required, the current optimism should be checked and eventually determine the conditions that will be attached to any such aid.
9. CSOs should seek to determine how much the government has borrowed and why it has been failing to pay back. Parallel to this the creditors will also wish to know where the money comes from in order to curb illicit transactions at national level.

## **5. ISSUES FOR JUBILEE ZAMBIA**

### **5.1 THE CALL FOR TOTAL DEBT CANCELLATION AND TRADE JUSTICE FOR ZAMBIA! (MR. J. MWANAKATWE S. C.)**

The speaker noted the significance of the conference as not having been for the history of Jubilee Zambia alone but also in that of JCTR. He challenged the participants to implore a high measure quality thinking and seriousness.

He singled out poverty as having been a major constraint to Zambia's development and that the exit has been surrounded and characterised by numerous avenues as sought by such commissions as the Blair Africa Commission, Zambia's HIPC "completion point", the Millennium Development Goals and many other issues about aid, trade and debt. However, one most effective approach is to urgently address the debt problem.

In view of the poverty crisis, heavily indebted countries need a substantial reduction of their debt burden and 'it must be accepted that its (external debt) full nominal value will not be repaid.' Therefore, 'total debt cancellation is necessary to achieve a substantial reduction of debt and debt service simultaneously.'

He particularly called for the following;

- ✓ Total cancellation of the debt
- ✓ Total debt forgiveness since ethically 'forcing countries to continue debt service is immoral' and economically 'developing nations have already repaid their debts'
- ✓ CSOs steered by Jubilee Zambia should continue the struggle vigorously yet fearlessly fight poverty reduction in Zambia
- ✓ Unification of the people of Zambia in calling for total cancellation of Zambia's debt.
- ✓ Jubilee Zambia should continue to spearhead a vigorous campaign for the total cancellation of the debt as it is economically exhausting, politically destabilizing and ethically unacceptable.

The full message is annex 7.

## **5.2 Solidarity Messages**

### **5.2.1 Message from African Friends Services Committee (AFSC)**

Participants of the June 2005 African youth initiative training with membership from 10 African countries presented a message at the conference in solidarity of the movement's continued call for total debt cancellation and making poverty history.

The group is convinced that initiatives such as HIPC are in place to maintain a wide gap between the rich and poor nations and continue 'to derail the process of total liberation for Africa.'

The group called for:

- Total debt cancellation and fair trade.
- Unification of all African governments in advocating for cancellation and changes in economic system.

With the motivation drawn from the work of Jubilee Zambia AFSC is motivated and eager to contribute to the success of the global campaign for debt cancellation.

Annex 7a is the full message.

### **5.2.2 UNDP Resident Representative's Message**

The representative appreciated and acknowledged the continuous advocacy campaign that J-Z has fought in the recent past on debt relief for Zambia. He commended the Zambian people for attaining the HIPC completion point and the members of the Paris Club for writing off over \$1.7 billion of Zambia's bilateral debts.

Emphasis was placed on the importance of debt relief especially with the mammoth task of reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) right ahead of many African countries including Zambia. In this regard 'the "fiscal space" created by this relief would enable government to increase public investments in infrastructure and human resource development-prerequisites for reaching the MDGs.'

He further called for increased aid particularly as it relates to the fulfilment of the pledge by developed countries to contribute 0.7% of their GNP to official development assistance. Increased aid flows coupled with debt relief and increased market access would enable Zambia to address the long-term structural constraints that besets it.

After analysing the poverty and literacy statistics alongside high HIV/AIDS and malaria cases that do not support the well being of Zambians, he called for 'complete debt relief to enable government address the development challenges...' especially now when the opportunity exists and can easily be seized.

Besides urging Jubilee Zambia to deepen the campaign for total debt relief he called 'for 100% debt relief for Zambia...'

For full message see annex 7b.

### **Comments**

The participants were encouraged to continue with the fight as it is for a noble cause.

Participants emphasised the importance of transparency and effective use of public resources by government. This entails instituting a control and monitoring mechanism to enhance effectiveness and transparency of government operations.

The attendants reaffirmed the need to coordinate and communicate.

A question was asked to Mr. J. Mwanakatwe S.C who was once Minister of Finance in the first republic as to whether he had ever perceived that Zambia would fall in HIPC pitfalls. He responded that at the time of his tenure of office there were no frivolous and unreasonable expenditure as government was financially disciplined.

## **6. Conclusion and closure of the conference**

Jubilee Zambia coordinator, Charity Musamba thanked all the attendants and specially the speakers for their time and insightful contributions.

She highlighted 3 major outcome points of the conference these being:

1. Understanding of the real meaning of reaching the HIPC completion point.
2. Major concerns such as the loan contraction process, conditionality and what will happen to Zambia after having reached the HIPC completion point.
3. There is still cause for moving ahead and this time more thrust and vigour is required. This gives rise for the need to reorganise and reorient the movement to the new dimension and direction to be taken.

JCTR Director, Fr. Pete Henriot closed by placing emphasis on the possibility of reaching full debt cancellation. With the strength that J-Z has, **good consequences** are expected particularly as they will result in the fullness of life exhibited in the MDGs which proclaim that people can live better. For this **good cause**, Jubilee Zambia must continue as it is a **good research**, it is comprised of **good people** (committed campaigners), it is being driven by a **good strategy** and will certainly result into **good consequences**.

The conference was participatory and it generally set the pace for the campaign and provided amicable resolutions to the various expectations of the attendants.

## Annexes:

Table 1 Annex 1 List of attendants

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Telephone</b>	<b>FAX</b>	<b>E-mail</b>
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