

## JUBILEE-ZAMBIA STRATEGIC PARTNERS MEETING

On 4<sup>th</sup> March 2003, Jubilee-Zambia organised a Strategic Partners' Meeting in Lusaka. Fourteen representatives from various civil society organisations attended the meeting. The following were the main objectives of the meeting:

- To discuss the integration of the debt issue in our partners' work programmes
- To strategise for an effective coalition on debt cancellation
- To set up debt focal desks in our strategic partners organisations.

### PART 1: EXPECTATIONS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

For this meeting, the participants had the following expectations:

- How to identify contact persons and the way forward
- An update on the current debt situation
- How to advocate for effective debt cancellation
- How to achieve unity of purpose for debt cancellation, without making it appear like a "JCTR" project
- How debt cancellation will benefit the poor
- How HIPC has fared so far and if it is the solution to the debt problem.
- What role civil society should play in monitoring debt relief resources under HIPC?
- Is debt cancellation tangible or achievable or is it just a theory
- How to maintain and sustain the debt contacts
- How to mainstream the debt issue in our activities
- How to achieve total debt cancellation
- Reflect on our previous efforts on debt cancellation and map the way forward

### PARTICIPANTS COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

The participants had the following concerns about the debt cancellation campaign:

- Jubilee-Zambia has not done much. We need to take the campaign to the poor people living in the rural areas. What must we do to achieve wider rural support to the debt cancellation campaign?
- What is the structure of the Jubilee-Zambia provincial teams?
- What has been the impact of the debt cancellation so far?
- At what point can strategic partners work with Jubilee-Zambia provincial teams?
- Jubilee-Zambia must be represented at district level

#### Responses

1. *Reaching Rural Areas* – Yes, to a large extent, Jubilee-Zambia has not reached wider audiences in the rural areas. This is the reason why Jubilee-Zambia decided to set up the Provincial Teams. Initially, we visited 8 provinces of the country but only managed to set up teams in 5 districts namely Ndola, Kasama, Livingstone, Monze and Mongu. These teams operate as a link between the national office and the local communities, especially those in outlying areas of the country. We also acknowledge that these teams require more training in order for them to effectively reach and engage the local communities on debt.

2. *Structure of Provincial Teams* – Structurally, the provincial teams are made up of representatives from local civil society organisations and interested members of the public operating on a voluntary basis. The national secretariat provides limited organisational and programme funding to these teams. The main idea behind this set-up was to ensure that Jubilee-Zambia is anchored within existing civil society groups operating at local level.

3. *Link between Jubilee-Zambia National Partners and the Provincial Teams*: Jubilee-Zambia National Partners who have provincial or district extensions should encourage their local contacts to join and participate in

Jubilee-Zambia activities through the Provincial Teams. Provincial Team membership is drawn from civil society groups such as NGOs, Church, Unions, Associations, Schools, interest clubs and individuals.

4. *Representation of Jubilee-Zambia at the District:* This is done through the Provincial Teams, who are right now confined to the district level in terms of coverage, organisation and operation. Jubilee-Zambia intends to expand to further regions within provinces after these first 5 Teams are fully developed, strengthened and empowered to operate effectively.

## **STRENGTHENING THE JUBILEE-COALITION**

In order to strengthen the Jubilee-Zambia coalition, the participants were asked to identify the weaknesses/constraints and strengths/opportunities

### **Weaknesses/Constraints**

- Strong Catholic Church inclination
- Debt has not been identified as a core areas of focus in Jubilee-Zambia Partners' organisations
- The debt issue has not been analysed within the context of the real life situations of the local people
- The debt cancellation campaign lacks wider civil society ownership. The campaign has been developed in isolation of the populace
- The debt cancellation drive seems to be an "utopian dream"
- Inadequate sharing and distribution of good materials
- Inadequate and unclear information on debt (present and past)
- The debt cancellation campaign secretariat does not participate in the partners' activities
- Cultural barrier – debt is not an issue that is discussed openly by people

### **Strengths/Opportunities**

- Government has recognised civil society's role in the debt issue
- The campaign has promoted popular education on debt and its impact on the development of the country
- A coalition against debt has been built
- The presence of a coalition has built a sense of responsibility in Government on borrowing
- The campaign continues to draw Government and IFIs attention to the issue of debt
- The campaign has continued to draw on support from similar movements in other countries
- The campaign has put pressure on creditors to lend in "good faith"
- The campaign is enriched by the diversity of its members
- The campaign has made debt a "common concern for all"
- Public awareness on debt has grown

### **Recommendations**

1. ***"Taking Debt Beyond Catholic Church."*** The Secretariat must explain to the public that the debt cancellation campaign belongs is not a "Catholic Church" project. It is a movement for all who are concerned about debt and the development of this country.

2. ***Making Debt A Major Focus in Partners' Organisations:*** Involve the organisations' Executives in strategising and strengthening Jubilee-Zambia partnership

3. ***Linking Debt to Real Life Situations:*** Explain the impact of debt using local situations

## **BUILDING A COALITION FOR DEBT CANCELLATION**

1. ***Debt is a catalytic issue:*** Debt is a common concern, which opens up to broader social and economic concerns such as agriculture, employment, policy, and national sovereignty

2. ***Numbers count:*** A huge force is required to pressurise the creditors to give-in and Government to operate according to the wishes of the people. To achieve total debt cancellation, we need a louder voice and need heavier pressure for our Government and creditors to act.

**3. Diversity in skill and expertise:** Lobby and advocacy techniques are dynamic. So we can draw and learn from each other

**CURRENT ISSUES IN THE DEBT CANCELLATION CAMPAIGN By Jack Jones Zulu**

Debt Cancellation: members will recall that the vision of Jubilee-Zambia from inception is total debt cancellation for poverty eradication and this we continue to champion at various local and international fora. I challenge this gathering to take stock of our achievements and failures as a movement towards this goal. We need to ask ourselves one question, “what strategies do we need to put in place in order to accelerate our mission towards ultimate goal of debt cancellation?”

The HIPC Initiative: As most of you are aware, Zambia reached the Decision Point under the enhanced HIPC Initiative in December 2000—a condition that entails that as a nation we qualified to receive some modest debt relief. Preliminary figures from both our own government and the creditor community indicate that there has been some interim debt relief to Zambia in terms of reduced debt service payments.

While debt relief of any sort is generally welcome, the current creditor measures dealing with our indebtedness do not go far enough to redress the debt overhang as annual debt service payments continue overshadow budgetary social sector spending. In light of this, the HIPC Initiative is not a substitute for total debt cancellation that we continue to consistently call for. The HIPC Initiative is premised on shaky grounds of a buoyant export sector to ameliorate the high poverty levels in the country but our national experience so far shows that this assumption is over ambitious and therefore not tenable.

There are also stringent conditionality attached to the HIPC initiative. For Zambia, the HIPC package has conditionality focusing on the need to improve the conditions of teachers, especially in the rural areas. It also demands that we pay more attention to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. These are good conditions. But as civil society, we must pay particular attention to the conditionality on Structural Reforms. This entails the continuation of the privatisation, liberation and public service reform programmes.

Way forward: While current the debt relief Zambia is receiving is not sufficient for our competing national demands, it is important to prioritise and rationalise its usage. We therefore implore government to put this money to good use in an open, accountable and transparent. In line with that Jubilee-Zambia is calling for the adoption of the Debt Mechanism as a basis for prudent usage of all debt relief resources. Since HIPC is not a solution to our debt crisis, we must now double our efforts to demand for total debt cancellation.

**PART 2 – PARTNERS RELATING TO THE DEBT ISSUE**

Organisation	Focus	Link to debt
Christian Council of Zambia (CCZ)	Poverty Alleviation – provision and facilitation of access to basic needs – shelter, water, food, clothing, education, health Spiritual Intervention	Proceeds from debt cancellation can be used to improve the living standards and conditions of the people
Operational Young Vote (OYV)	Governance, Human Rights and Unemployment. Strong focus on the state of the Youth in Zambia	Conditionality attached to loans/debt and debt servicing contributes to robbing the country of opportunities to invest and provide livelihood opportunities to the Youth. This has thrown most of Youth in poverty and delinquency
Forum for Democratic Process (FODEP)	Democracy, human rights and election monitoring	Democracy in key to promoting good governance and reducing poverty. One major indicator of good economic governance is the how the financial business of the country is handled

Zambia Alliance of Women (ZAW)	Advocacy and sensitisation of human and legal rights, Gender and Environmental awareness, sustainable or alternative livelihoods	Debt and debt servicing has contributed to the causing the current poverty crisis. Cancellation of debt will contribute to poverty reduction
Inter-Africa Network on Human Rights and Development (AFRINET)	Human rights, Governance, Economic, social and political rights	Indebtedness has diverted Government's attention to deal with the social, political and economic needs of the people. Indebtedness is a major issue in economic governance
National Economic Advisory Council (NEAC)	Human rights, political and Economic analysis, unemployment, debt and poverty	How Government can handle the problem of debt at the same time provide for the people – economically and socially
Micro Bankers Trust (MBT)	Empowering the “have not” to be self-employed – agriculture and trading. Special focus on women	To improve the “home-basket” Government must invest more in the country than service debt. Paying debt leads to high cost of living which in turn soars interest rate internally
Free Federation of Trade Unions (FFTUZ)	Promotes a Tripartite Council – Employer, Employee and Government on labour	Workers conditions and employment have gone down because of debt, debt service and conditionality. So Jubilee-Zambia provides a forum where the worker in Zambia can demand his/her rights, better working conditions and policies
Women for Change (WFC)	Gender, Human rights, Economic empowerment, Children's rights – advocacy for poverty eradication	Poverty can be reduced when neo-liberal development paradigms are heavily opposed. Debt is one tool under the neo-liberal paradigm used to enslave the poor nations. Issues of NEPAD, Globalisation and WTO are not for the poor but benefit the world and national leaders only
PASSFTA	Lobby for better services to small-scale farmers. These services include roads, marketing facilities and financial support. The aim is to uplift the standards of rural communities through agriculture	Proceeds from debt cancellation can be used to improve the conditions of small scale farmers in Zambia Cancellation of debt can serve small scale farmers from the harsh conditionality that come with debt
Catholic Commission of Justice and Peace	Integral approach to development – Evangelisation and material well being of people – Justice and peace	Debt has thrown a lot of people into poverty, which means there is no peace. It is unjust to service debt at the expense of improving the lives of the people

### Expectations and Roles of the Focal Contact Persons

- Facilitate communication between the secretariat and the partner organisation
- Represent the Jubilee-Zambia Coalition at different for a
- Attend Jubilee-Zambia Strategic Partners' Meetings

### Way forward – Affirmation Action

- Periodic meeting – Once a quarter
- Involve organisation Executives in strengthening this partnership
- Send information to the strategic partners – quarterly
- Find out what partners are doing and participate – secretariat
- Contact partners frequently
- Invite partners to Jubilee-Zambia events – involve them in planning and implementing

## **CONCLUSION**

Participants really saw the need to work very closely with Jubilee-Zambia and encouraged the Secretariat to ensure that this partnership is achieved, maintained and sustained. The Secretariat was further advised to make immediate follow-ups on the way forward and also to keep the partners informed about the debt and other related issues.

## **NOTE OF THANKS**

The Jubilee-Zambia Secretariat would like to thank all civil society representatives who attended this meeting. We further appreciate the willingness of these organisations to work closely with us because the cause for total debt cancellation for Zambia can only be won through popular participation and mass pressure

***TOTAL DEBT CANCELLATION FOR TOTAL POVERTY ERADICATION***

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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