

# JESUIT CENTRE FOR THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

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## IMPLICATIONS FOR POVERTY REDUCTION OF THE INCREASE IN COMMODITY REVENUES

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## **A. Introduction and Background**

1. Poverty reduction is one term that the majority of Zambians are familiar with. It is now a common term for the Government, Civil Society, International Organisations, and Donors. In one sense, one can say that this term has been overused to the extent that some policy makers are dismissing the reality of poverty itself.

### ***Poverty reduction, what is it?***

2. For the purpose of this discussion, we will use the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) understanding of poverty which is that "Poverty is multidimensional, involving not only a lack of income, but also ill-health, illiteracy, lack of access to basic social services, and little opportunity to participate in the processes that influence people's lives".
3. We further add that, the lack of deliberate effort(s) to reach out in predetermined ways to sectors of the society that find themselves in any or all of the conditions above reinforces the extent of poverty and sends the victims into acute deprivation under which the hope of revival is bleak.
4. Any programme(s) therefore aimed at directly improving any or all of the conditions above, become poverty reducing mechanisms.
5. It is therefore imperative that the victims of poverty are included in the identification, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of mechanisms aimed at improving their wellbeing as this increases ownership of the process of poverty reduction and ultimately the process of human sustainable development.

### ***Brief Historical Focus on Poverty***

6. Like many development concepts, focus on poverty reduction has received some attention from national priorities since independence. Rooted in socialist development ideologies prevailing at the time and pre-occupied with seeking to redress the social and economic deprivation created by the colonial regime, the Zambian state prior to 1991 played a leading role in the direct provision of social services as well as spearheading commercial production of goods and services.
7. Under the various reforms such as the Matero, Mulungushi reforms etc, Zambia focussed on national development through, for example, the National Economic Recovery Programme of the late 1980s which sought to increase the industrial base and thus create jobs. These efforts were abandoned in 1991 in preference for an open market system which admittedly brought momentous changes to Zambia.
8. The implementation of widespread market liberalisation and structural changes under the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was mainly propelled by the North which sought to promote development in the South with the assumption that economic development could lead to poverty reduction. Some programmes embarked on by the North have had direct implications on poverty. For example, the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) which now have come to be known for the momentous changes they have brought to the Zambian society have led to massive job losses and de-industrialisation consequently aggravating the high poverty levels as recorded in the 1990-1998 period (table 1). SAP aimed at reducing the role of the state in the economy by stabilizing and liberalising the economy including external trade and privatizing state owned enterprises (World Bank 2002)<sup>ii</sup>.

9. While SAP measures achieved macro economic stability, the GDP growth in the reform decade 1990-2000 was negligible, averaging 0.6 %, while between 1991 and 1995 the economy contracted by 1.6 percent and external aid dependence increased. In 2002, 43 percent of the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) annual budget was financed from external resources that included loans (Saasa 2006)<sup>iii</sup>.
10. Consequently, Zambia's external indebtedness rose from US\$3.2 billion in 1980 to US\$5.6 billion at the beginning of 1987. By 2000, it had skyrocketed to over US\$7 billion. As the levels of public debt rose, concurrently did the level of leverage of it's' creditors especially the IFIs in determining Zambia's economic and social policies (White, 1999 in Chisala 2006)<sup>iv</sup>
11. In summary, these programmes mainly reduced public expenditure, eliminated agricultural subsidies, introduced user fees in education and health, perpetuated the trend of high debt service etc.
12. Recently, the trend as expressed in the World Bank/IMF induced poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSP), contains deliberate efforts to increase allocations to social sectors such as education, health and social protection with the hope of reducing poverty. What has been unique about this concept however is its emphasis on the development programmes to be country-driven, with rare emphasis on mutual accountability. It is in this spirit that Zambia returned to national development planning to continue from the fourth development plan which was abandoned in 1991 by the formulation of the current development roadmap-- the Fifth National Development Plan (FNDP).

#### ***Poverty Reduction Agenda***

13. There are many documents and policies mirroring the international call for poverty reduction. Key to this process are the Millennium Development Goals which have to be attained by 2015. Recent reports indicate that "While the MDG 1 poverty-reduction target will be met at the global level, Sub-Saharan Africa is likely to fall well short<sup>v</sup>".
14. At a local level, the government has developed the FNDP and the Vision 2030. These documents give precise areas of focus for a country to attain poverty reduction. For example, the FNDP emphasises "agricultural development as the engine of income expansion in the economy". The plan further identifies the linkages that the agriculture sector has with other sectors such as infrastructure, tourism, manufacturing, mining and energy. The FNDP also seeks to reinforce distributive measures that have better overall positive impact on the poor which include "poverty reduction, focussed safety nets, issues of disability, social protection and good governance" as key for social sector development.
15. However, despite these efforts and international technical and financial support, Zambia has not made much progress towards the realisation of integral human development. Between 2004 and 2006, rural poverty increased by 2 per cent to 80 percent. Of Zambia's 11.7 million people, 7,612,472 or 65 % are in rural areas.
16. Notwithstanding the recent pronouncements that urban poverty reduced to 34 % in 2006 from 53 % in 2004, currently 92 % of Zambians in urban areas perceive themselves as poor while 97 % in rural areas perceive themselves as poor (World Bank vulnerability study, 2007<sup>vi</sup>). This brings the average of self-assessed poverty to 95 %. In fact, the World Bank/IMF 2008 Global Monitoring report clearly brings to the fore the fact that "Despite progress, on current trends most human development MDGs are unlikely to be met at the

global level. While some regions will meet some of these goals, Sub-Saharan Africa and, in some cases, South Asia are likely to fall seriously short.”

### Statistics at a Glance

17. Zambia is one of the poorest countries globally as is indicative of the UNDP Human Development Index (Zambia is the 165th of the 177 countries). Other indicators like maternal mortality, illiteracy rates, etc, face similar glaring indicators with 1 in five children being severely underweight, maternal mortality at 750 per 100 000 births, 17 per cent of the population between 15-49 years with HIV/AIDS. . The JCTR Basic Needs Basket has constantly revealed a rising trend which has become the phenomena since the beginning of 2008 moving from K1 636 900 in December 2007 to K1 939 800 in April 2008. This is already eroding the benefits of the 2008 exempt tax threshold which is K600 000 and it is further threatened by rising food and fuel prices.
18. The poverty trends indicated in table 1 below show that even though there is a downward trend, poverty has still remained significantly high in Zambia averaging 64 percent in 2006.

**Table 1 Poverty trends from 1991 to 2006**

Residence/ Province	1991	1993	1996	1998	2004	2006
	Incidence of poverty	Incidence of poverty	Incidence of poverty	Incidence of poverty	Incidence of poverty	Incidence of poverty
All Zambia	70	74	69	73	68	64
Rural/urban						
Rural	88	92	82	83	78	80
urban	49	45	46	56	53	34
Province						
Central	70	81	74	77	76	72
Copperbelt	61	49	56	65	56	42
Eastern	85	91	82	79	70	79
Luapula	84	88	78	82	79	73
Lusaka	31	39	38	53	48	29
Northern	84	86	84	81	74	78
North Western	75	88	80	77	76	72
Southern	79	87	76	75	69	73
Western	84	91	84	89	83	84

Source: CSO 2006

19. The preliminary report of the Living Conditions Monitoring Survey (2006) indicates that overall poverty has reduced from 68 percent in 2004 to 64 percent (table 2) in 2006. The change was much more dramatic in urban areas where poverty reduced by 19 per cent from 53 percent to 34 percent. Mention should however be made that the reduction in urban poverty has been contested and demands for a more rigorous explanation have been made

20. Poverty in rural areas, where 7.6 million of the 11.6 million Zambians reside, increased by 2 percent from 78 percent to 80 percent.

**Table 2 Incidence of Poverty among Individuals in Provinces, Urban and Rural Areas 2006**

Location	Poverty Status				Total Population	Total poverty incidence in absolute terms
	Total Poor	Extremely Poor	Moderately Poor	Non Poor		
All Zambia	64	51	14	36	11,696,462.00	7485736
Rural/Urban						
Rural	80	67	14	20	7,601,274.00	6081019
Urban	34	20	14	66	4,095,188.00	1392364
Province						
Central	72	59	13	28	1,221,188.00	879255
Copperbelt	42	27	15	58	1,782,098.00	748481
Eastern	79	65	14	21	1,604,257.00	1267363
Luapula	73	61	12	27	929,310.00	678396
Lusaka	29	16	12	71	1,639,574.00	475476
Northern	78	64	14	21	1,482,916.00	1156674
North-Western	72	57	15	28	704,993.00	507594
Southern	73	58	16	27	1,449,674.00	1058262
Western	84	73	10	16	881,974.00	740858

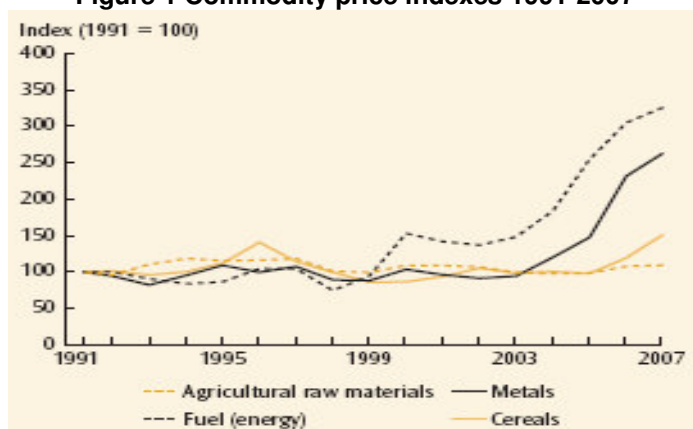
Source: constructed from CSO 2006 data

21. Table 2 above, also includes a column of poverty figures in real/absolute terms as this gives the actual number of people per province. For example, while poverty is high in Western province at 84 percent, in absolute terms, this accounts for 740858 people, which is 7623 people below the total poverty incidence for the Copperbelt province where poverty is recorded at 42 percent. Poverty in Southern province is recorded at 73 percent affecting over 1 million while it affects just above half a million people in North-Western province where it is recorded at 72 percent.
22. Furthermore, extreme poverty is more prevalent among female-headed households than poor male headed households. Female-headed households have 57 percent of the people falling who are extremely poor, while male-headed households had 49 percent below the extreme poverty line..
23. In this regard, targeted interventions should be holistic and provide programmes that are all encompassing and specific within each province.
24. Paradoxically, Zambia is a country very rich in resources and this has been reflected in the long-standing presence of the copper industry and a large diversity of both fauna and flora.
25. The question to ask however is why Zambia has remained a poor country despite its rich resources. In our reflections, the response is that there has been a web of causes ranging from 1) over dependence on copper and unfair agreements governing the extractive industries, 2) urban focused policies at the neglect of the rural areas, 3) lopsided support between the productive and service sectors, 4) unjust terms of trade, 5) vulnerability to international trends, and until recently 6) subordination of social sector development, breakdown in trust and confidence in society due to 7) delayed or non-existent prosecution of national treasury defaulters etc.
26. As a result of the above, the government for a long time depended on donor support to finance development programmes including recurrent costs such as salaries. Thankfully, Zambia attained the HIPC completion point in 2005 upon campaigns from stakeholders including Jubilee-Zambia.
27. Zambia's macro-economic indicators, currently, reveal that there has been steady growth recorded at an average of over 4 percent in the last 5 years as opposed to GDP of 2.2 percent in the four years before the government embarked on a return to national planning induced by the Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme under HIPC. Inflation has also been below 10 percent in the last two years. While this favourable macro-economic outlook is necessary for the improvement of economic and human development; in itself, it does not guarantee human development and poverty reduction.
28. The results of a stable macro-economic outlook have not translated into direct benefits for communities. It is clear that striking the delicate balance and trade-offs between macroeconomic stability and economic growth is not adequately addressed, while certain social priorities are subordinated.

### ***Recent Commodity Price Boom***

29. Just as the country is vulnerable to negative international trends such as oil prices and minerals, the global increase in demand for copper leading to high metal prices (see figure 1) largely as a result of growth in Asian economies has had a positive impact on Zambia.

**Figure 1 Commodity price indexes 1991-2007**



Source: Global Monitoring Report  
 Note: Price index in special drawing rights

30. Upon the successful renegotiations of the mining contracts, the country holds a chance of becoming self-sustaining in terms of resource mobilisation. Just this year, Zambia expects about US\$415 million<sup>vii</sup> as revenue from the mines. While it is clear that these resources will not be utilised this year, it is not yet clear where and how it will be used.. There are sectors that indicate that government intends to have these resources play a stabilisation role. There are also real challenges of donors withdrawing their support on the basis that Zambia will now be raising more revenue than anticipated at the formulation of the FNDP. It is our view that while Zambia needs a long term exit strategy for aid, the development challenges are still daunting and as such, the revenue from commodity price boom should not substitute donor support but augment current domestic and donor commitments.

**B. To which sectors and areas should these resources be applied?**

31. Our brief highlight of the incidence of poverty above helps us to highlight some of key areas where interventions are needed in order to ensure that resource allocation is poverty based.

**i. Increase the Rural focus on development**

*Of Zambia's 11.7 million people, 65 percent (over 7.6 million) are in rural areas where poverty increased to 80 percent from 78 percent.*

***Increase Spending for Agriculture Inputs and Outputs in Rural Areas***

32. The space to increase spending to cover for poverty reduction should contribute towards improving productive capacity of rural areas which are mostly agricultural based. The challenges faced by rural areas are well articulated, they include 1) Rundown/obsolete infrastructure (roads, bridges, storage facilities, communication, etc), 2) Lack of access to farming inputs, 3) Difficulties to access credit facilities and often failure to service loans (,4) difficulties to access markets, 5) lack of extension services etc. In this regard, spending for rural development should increase, commencing with improved allocations for agriculture. Agriculture allocation for 2008 has gone down by 3 percent from 8.8 percent (1 064 billion in 2007) of the total budget to 5.8% (800 billion in 2008). It is imperative that subsequent budgets benefit from the commodity price boom and increase the expenditures to cover the

Agriculture financing gap of K807 million<sup>viii</sup>1 (approximately (US\$241 000) estimated by the FNDP.

33. Additionally, a JCTR/CSPR/CCJDP (now CARITAS) 2005 study estimated that to achieve the first MDG—poverty reduction, Zambia needs to increase total cost per capita from US\$48 million in 2005 to US\$142 million in 2010 and to US\$279million in 2015 (table 3--below).

**Table 3: Total Cost of Hunger Key Interventions**

Total Cost Estimates in US\$ Million	2005	2010	2015	% of Total 2010	Total 2005-15	Average 2005-15	% of Total over Period
<b>Agricultural Production</b>							
Capital Costs	11.1	31.6	62.7	22%	365.3	33.2	22%
Operating Costs	18.9	48.9	94.5	34%	572.0	52.0	35%
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>30.0</i>	<i>80.5</i>	<i>157.2</i>	<i>56%</i>	<i>937.3</i>	<i>85.2</i>	<i>57%</i>
<b>Other Rural Income Generation</b>							
					0.0		
Capital Costs	3.3	4.4	5.3	2%	47.5	4.3	3%
Operating Costs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%	0.0	0.0	0%
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>3.3</i>	<i>4.4</i>	<i>5.3</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>47.5</i>	<i>4.3</i>	<i>3%</i>
<b>Nutrition</b>							
Capital Costs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%	0.0	0.0	0%
Operating Costs	6.0	33.0	69.2	25%	384.4	34.9	23%
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>6.0</i>	<i>33.0</i>	<i>69.2</i>	<i>25%</i>	<i>384.4</i>	<i>34.9</i>	<i>23%</i>
<b>Awareness</b>							
Capital Costs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%	0.0	0.0	0%
Operating Costs	1.0	1.0	1.0	0%	11.4	1.0	1%
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>11.4</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>1%</i>
<b>Capacity</b>							
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>8.1</i>	<i>23.8</i>	<i>46.5</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>276.1</i>	<i>25.1</i>	<i>17%</i>
Total Cost per Capita \$	<b>48.5</b>	<b>142.7</b>	<b>279.3</b>	100%	<b>1656.8</b>	<b>150.6</b>	100%

Source: MDG Costing study, 2005<sup>ix</sup>

34. There should be increased and timely provision of agricultural inputs such as fertilisers, seeds, pesticides and extension services on key appropriate technologies including the use of treadle pumps, better animal husbandry techniques (such as deep tanks, milk storage, etc) and irrigation techniques which can be used even for off season farming to promote continuous production. With fertilisers, improved fallows (based on improved technologies proven by ICRAF<sup>2</sup>), green manures and cover crops, water harvesting and small-scale irrigation, and improved seeds, rural based small scale farmers will increase the food yield per hectare thereby being food secure and quickly end chronic poverty.

#### ***Increase Spending for Human Capital in Rural Areas***

35. Poverty based spending and development will also require an ardent programme for a viable social sector services delivery. The current set of education and health infrastructure need to be reinforced with increases in schools, clinics, rehabilitation of schools, clinics and increasing skills development programmes which promote self sustaining income generating activities.
36. Meals for all children at primary schools could improve the health of school children, the quality of education, and school attendance. Expanded vocational training for students could teach them the skills of modern farming (for example, using improved fallows and fertiliser),

<sup>1</sup> FNDP has a gap of K2 982 billion of which K807.11 million is under agriculture.

<sup>2</sup> International Centre for Research in Agroforestry

computer literacy, basic infrastructure maintenance (use and maintenance of a diesel generator, water harvesting, boreholes/wells construction and maintenance) carpentry, etc. These skills are needed not only for economic viability but also for the promotion of diversity to some sectors that are not heavily dependant on seasons.

37. Rural based clinics and health centres with well motivated staff would provide key health services including overseeing the distribution of antimalarial bed nets, effective antimalarial medicines; treatments for HIV and AIDS opportunistic infections; antiretroviral therapy for late-stage AIDS; and a range of other essential health services, including skilled birth attendants.

#### ***Staff Retention Mechanisms for Rural Development***

38. Rural development often suffers from urban migration due to the efficient services and opportunities that are often associated to urban areas. These include the ease with which individuals can progress in their career, the high prospects of changing jobs to better paying jobs, good and efficient medical facilities and clean energy sources. A rural based poverty reduction programme will ensure that the enclave of the young, aging and somehow illiterate society in rural areas receives good human personnel that can assist to propel the changes necessary for development to occur.
39. To achieve retention of this staff requires good incentives which can include 1) setting up a bursary for career development with an agreement to compel beneficiaries to return to these areas for an agreed time, 2) provision of low-cost transportation to teachers, nurses, doctors and extension workers such as bicycles, 3) improve access to capacity building programmes for entrepreneurship as this will be necessary to create a strong rural entrepreneurship spirit with basic book keeping skills. These incentives should be augmented with adequate housing, provision of safe and clean water and low-cost energy sources such as solar panels.

#### ***Increase Infrastructure Development in Rural Areas***

40. Rural areas are challenged by rundown/obsolete or inadequate infrastructure in terms of roads, bridges, storage facilities, telecommunications and energy. Programmes for grading and paving roads should be funded in order to ensure efficient connectivity between rural producers and the markets.

#### **ii. Urban Based Poverty Interventions**

*More people were employed in 2004 than in 2006, 54 percent and 43 percent respectively, while more people were classified as unpaid family workers in 2006 (12 percent) compared to 2004 (5 percent<sup>x</sup>).*

41. Most urban households are engaging in small scale income generating activities such as retailing, quarrying, etc. Many others are extremely vulnerable and are not yet engaged in their own income generating activities. Coping strategies have led to increases in children contributing to family income generating activities, begging, etc.
42. Even though, it is stated that urban poverty is on the decline, it is important to note that these statistics are mainly representative of Lusaka and the Copperbelt and have also been contested. Some interventions needed in urban areas would include the following:

#### ***Enhance Social Sector Delivery***

43. Health, education and social protection remain to be key challenges for Zambia. Government must not only increase investments in these areas but also enhance efficiency in the delivery of the services. The past three post-HIPC budgets indicate modest increments to social sectors with pledges for building more schools and clinics.

**Table 4 Needs in for Education**

<b>Human Resource and Infrastructure needs</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>Total 2005-2015</b>	<b>Average 2005-2015</b>
<b>Number of Teachers</b>					
Primary Education	37850	54094	70103	598766	54433
Secondary Education	33162	34255	36306	378921	34447
<b>Total</b>	<b>71012</b>	<b>88349</b>	<b>106409</b>	<b>977687</b>	<b>88881</b>
<b>Number of Classrooms</b>					
Primary Education	56328	71114	80117	775879	70534
Secondary Education	21331	30449	41493	339253	30841
<b>Total</b>	<b>77658</b>	<b>101562</b>	<b>121610</b>	<b>1115131</b>	<b>101376</b>

Source: MDG Costing Study, 2005

44. These levels of human resource need to be met and spending in these areas should be increased.

45. While the 2008 national budget acknowledges that improving service delivery in health is critical and that “expansion of capacity of training institutions to increase their enrolment” is one clear strategy to achieve the goal, allocations for infrastructure development are reducing. Infrastructure development programme under the Ministry of Health has reduced to K42 billion as opposed to K96billion allocated in 2008. The challenge for the Health sector is to make meaningful investments in not only infrastructure but also in the training and retention of the health personnel.

***Increasing Household Economic Activities and productivity***

46. Urban households, who are struggling to sustain their businesses such as caterers, butchers, retailers, etc, need access to sources of capital which can be easily accessed. Most businesses cannot borrow from the commercial market due to high interest rates. Therefore, there should be a pool of resources which can be easily accessed and at low interest rates that Banks are offering.

47. The Citizen Economic Empowerment misses the opportunity to empower small-scale businesses due to the eligibility requirement which does not include small scale entrepreneurs of an informal nature. Part of the resources, therefore, should be targeted at enhancing the supply side of urban based small-scale investments. The current energy crisis is proving to be overbearing on these entrepreneurs sending them into negative returns on their investments.

**Conclusion**

48. It is imperative to note that poverty reducing interventions should work in combination and therefore a holistic view is needed to respond to challenges of deprivation. In our view, the current tools aiming at reducing poverty, namely the Fifth National Development Plan, the

vision 2030 provide a framework through which government can robustly tackle the problem of poverty.

49. The recent gains from commodity price boom should augment the fight against poverty. In this fight, transparency, accountability and participation remain as daunting challenges. While macro-economic stability should be sustained, the link with human development should be enhanced. It is therefore indisputable that the government must use the available resources wisely and invest in areas which will positively impact on sustainable human development as a cardinal step towards poverty eradication.

## Recommendations

50. Notwithstanding the unexpected revenue from the mineral industry, the government should place emphasis on widening the tradable commodity base to avoid a repeated economic crisis

51. Enshrining Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the new constitution to ensure that expenditures in social sectors are enforceable by law and are justiciable.

52. Promote backward and forward linkages between rural and urban areas. More emphasis should be on developing rural areas.

53. There is an urgent need for the government to consider increasing citizen involvement in programmes aimed at reducing poverty and the effects of it at all levels, including the most overlooked but significant level – the community.

54. Taking advantage of this prevailing resource price boom to develop other sectors (investments) that may take over as income earning activities when the current resources no longer have the capacity to do so..

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