

Dear Friend,

Happy New Year!

In 2010 we at the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) together with our partners, Caritas and Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR) have taken the initiative to prepare a consultative paper for submission to the Ministry of Finance and Cabinet on the national budget process on input and monitoring. The JCTR has for a number of years done research and advocacy on the challenges of development including input to the budget and monitoring its effectiveness. This year the JCTR seeks to provide its partners and the general public with a platform to comment and provide recommendations on the challenges that they face in relating to the national budget.

Zambia has had a situation where the budget has managed to deliver in some areas but failed significantly in others. Although allocations are annually made, the expenditure does not always occur, funds are misallocated or funds simply fall short. More often than not the reasons are usually attributed to fiscal indiscipline, poor planning and poor coordination.

In order to improve budget advocacy, a template has been prepared and attached to the email to guide the input by stakeholders. This is a process that seeks to enable the budget to be effective and improve the coordination of development efforts by all interested stakeholders. This is to ensure that the scarce resources that Zambia has as a low income country are used to deliver on the urgently required development needs of those that require it the most.

We hope that as many people as possible participate in this process as this document will be presented to the Ministry of Finance once all input is collected. **Our initial deadline for submissions is Monday 08 February 2010.**

May God bless you all and our thoughts and prayers for a better Zambia.

Debt, Aid and Trade Program
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Budget Process		
Input to the budget	Observation	Recommendation
Existing structure (DDCC, PDCC etc)		
Timelines (is there enough notice to provide input into the budget?)		
Participation (who takes part in providing input and how?)		
Feedback on input (how does the Ministry respond to contributions? E.g., are clarifications requested on your input?)		
Understanding the budget (do stakeholders understand what the purpose of the national budget is? Are there difficulties?)		
Monitoring the budget	Problem	Recommendation

Access to Data (how easy is it for people to monitor the budget?)		
Interpreting data (how easy is it for people to interpret the data in the budget?)		
Breakdown of the budget (is the budget clear enough for people to be able to track it?)		
Legitimacy of the final budget (are the contributions of the people included in the budget?)		
Adherence to the budget (are commitments for the budgeted year always kept?)		
Consistency of the budget (is there consistent expenditure from the budget on projects or programmes to ensure that they are completed or effective?)		

What are the development plans that the budget is based on (are the different plans emerging complementing or contradicting other development plans, e.g., FNDP and Provincial Plan)		
Other issues		
Organisation (Individual/NGO/Private Sector)	Contact Person	Contacts (Email/Phone/Address)