

## BNNB Statement

7<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

### *A Call for Campaigns that Address the High Cost of Living*

The cost of living for a family of five living in Lusaka as measured by the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) Basic Needs and Nutrition Basket (BNNB) for the month of May stood at **K8, 442.24**. This shows a decline of K301.65 from the April basket which was K8, 743. The fall in the basket is attributed to price movements mainly from the food items. The price of vegetables reduced by K93.06 for 40kg moving from K552.43 to K459.37, 16kg of bananas went down by K86.15, from K283.49 to K197.34, the price of 14kg of other fruits moved from K503.89 to K422.59, a decline of K81.3, 4kg of Irish potatoes went down by K27.9 from K138.25 to K113.36, 2kg of soya pieces went down by K25 moving from K138.25 to K113.36, the price of 2 25kg bags of mealie meal reduced by K19.33 from K203.33 to K184.00 and 2kg of beef reduced by K14.46 from K145.71 to 131.25. From the non-food but essential items, the price of 2 90kg bags of charcoal reduced by K44 moving from K684.80 to K640.80. On the other hand, price increases were observed in the value of 1 kg Kapenta which increased by K40.09 from K250.90 to K290.99, pounded groundnut moved up by K28.96 from K45.53 to K74.49 for a kg, the price of 3kg beans rose by K17.61 from K121.43 to K139.04, 6kg of cassava flour increased by K15.66 from K80.12 to K95.78, the value of 4kg of rice went up by K13.83 moving from K88.96 to K102.79 and the price of 5kg of chicken increases by K10.72 moving to K255.71 from K244.99

The prices of fruits such as apples, bananas and oranges have shown a further decline likely owing to increased availability as they are in season. The movement in the price of vegetables could however be attributed to market behaviour following the price increase that was noted in April. The price increase likely encouraged the farmers to grow more vegetables despite weather challenges. It is nonetheless, JCTR's wish that such reductions and even more could be registered towards enhanced access for citizens to basic essential items such as food.

The socio-economic context of the May BNNB is instructive. After showing a minimal decline of 0.1 percent in inflation in April 2021, the country has seen a 0.5 percent increase in the year on year inflation in May 2021. The May inflation rate stood at 23.2 percent, a 39.76 percent increase from the May 2020 inflation rate which stood at 16.6 percent. The impact of a continuous increase in inflation cannot be overlooked especially given the effect of COVID-19 on household income, economic activities and economic growth. Further erosion of households' purchasing power compromises the country's fight against poverty; a key barrier to dignified living for all Zambians. It should be noted that society has a responsibility to care and accompany the less privileged in society.

As Zambia goes to the polls this August, JCTR wishes to urge political parties to focus on issue based campaigns. Campaigns that will stipulate clear, workable and enforceable interventions to address the rising inflation, currency depreciation and huge debt overhang that continues to impact the cost of living in a nation where many struggle to meet the cost of basic essentials.

**For further clarifications contact the Social and Economic Development (SED) Programme at the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) on 0955295881 and 0954755319. Email:**

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