

## **ACTIONAID'S EXPECTATIONS OF PARLIAMENT OPENING SEPTEMBER 2019 POSITION PAPER**

ActionAid looks forward to the State of the Nation Address by the President of the Republic of Zambia this coming Friday 13th September 2019. We have high expectations in the President's speech to address and provide clear road maps on some of the major issues that the nation has been grappling with as follows:

### **WOMEN'S DECENT WORK INCLUDING UNPAID CARE WORK**

On June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019 the International Labour Conference voted to adopt the new ILO Convention and Recommendation to end violence and harassment in the workplace. This is very momentous as we now have an international statute which sets a minimum standard of protection and prevention, but as it stands, this is only on paper. We recommend that the president speaks on plans to ratify this important convention and strengthen legislation in line with this convention to effectively fight against SGBV in the workplace. This in turn will promote women's decent work, as they are generally the victims.

### **SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS INCLUDING CHILD MARRIAGE AND SEXUAL GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

In the last State of the Nation Address, the president alluded to the fact that GBV remains one of critical moral issues of our time. Reports from the Zambia Police Service Victim Support Unit indicate that there has been a steady increase of SGBV in the country with 22,073 cases reported in 2018.. We recommend that the president speaks to:

- 1.Rolling out Anti-GBV fast track courts to the other provinces in addition 6 for all the 10 provinces.
- 2.The establishment of the Anti-GBV Fund, as provided for in the Anti-GBV Act of 2011, for effective implementation of this piece of legislation
- 3.The establishment of Shelters to support survivors, so that they are not forced to go back to the places where the perpetrator may still be living
- 4.Recommend the Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs to be actively involved in combating GBV and Child marriages as these are mainly embedded in social and cultural norms that need to be dismantled.

### **WOMEN'S ACCESS AND CONTROL OVER PRODUCTIVE RESOURCES**

The Gender Equity and Equality Act No 22 of 2015 provides for the establishment of the Gender Equity and Equality Commission for functions and powers among others to stimulate productive resources and development opportunities for all sexes. Four years past its enactment, the commission remains to be established and so we expect the

president to speak to governments plan on this, if we are to mainstream gender across all sectors. We also recognize the feminization of poverty and women's limited access to and control over productive resources. In the last State of the Nation Address the president alluded to Government's policy to allocate 40% available land to women, but this still needs to be further enhanced especially in rural areas where the patriarchy system has side lined women in land allocation.. We expect the president to address empowerment that increase access to land for women in rural areas such as collateral free loans and the rolling out of village banking programmes to all districts..

### **POWER DEFICIT**

Recently ZESCO announced a six hour-load shedding citing power deficit due a decrease in power production necessitated by low levels of water in lake Kariba which is the main power generating dam. In that regard, the government announced that they would start importing power from ESKOM at a cost of \$13.5 million. For many years power deficit has been the issue of concern especially in the summer when water levels tend to decrease Lake Kariba at a higher rate. This is usually preceded by poor rainfall and/or droughts due to the the global climate challenge. We wish the president to highlight clear plans to diversify power generation with the realizing the cardinal role electricity plays in socio-economic development.

### **PUBLIC FINANCE LEAKAGES**

Public finance management in Zambia is characterized by misallocation, wrong prioritization, abuse and mismanagement, posing a tremendous challenge for the efficiency and effectiveness of development interventions and poverty reduction. The public finance mismanagement can be attributed to among other things weak institution and legal framework in Zambia.

Public procurement accounts for more than 40 percent of the total Government expenditure, however, it remains the most vulnerable to corruption and contributes significantly to public finance leakages. According to 2018 Financial Intelligence Centre (FIC) report, public procurement is one of the most vulnerable government activities to corruption. The most prevalent forms of corruption noted in 2018 were public procurement related, involving bribery, self-dealing/conflict of interest amounting to K4.9 billion.

The national budget is one of the important economic tools which sets out priorities of the government in terms of resource mobilisation and allocation among various government programmes, henceforth, it requires a shared sense of purpose and ownership among the citizens through participation. However, there has been little or no citizenry participation in the budgeting process due to lack of legal framework to guide their engagement with government on the budgeting process. Since the development of the budgeting and planning policy in 2014, the government has not brought the bill to parliament for enactment.

The government should look to review and repeal the Public procurement Act No. 12 of 2008 to include legal provisions, address corruption, promote transparency and accountability, and enforce the principle of value for money in public procurement for the public. Secondly, bring the Planning and budget bill to parliament for enactment. Budget transparency is the foundation of fiscal transparency; therefore, law will not only promote citizenry participation but will also enhance accountability and transparency in public finance management and by doing so circumventing public finance leakages. And lastly enhance and promote the capacity and independence of anti-corruption watchdogs and/or institutions like FIC that has proved to be more effective in fighting corruption and public finance leakages.

### **DEBT DISTRESS**

It is no longer a secret that the sustainability of our debt levels is questionable. Zambia's external debt stock as at end June 2019 was US\$10.23 billion while domestic debt in terms of securities and bonds was at K60.3 billion translating the public debt to over 70% of the GDP as of June 2019. This has come amidst the nations credit downgrading from B- to CCC+ outlook by Standards and Poor's rating agency (SP).

The President should speak to the actualization and the scaling up of austerity measures as we continue to negotiate for the IMF bailout package to arrest the investor's confidence which may have negative cascading effect on our economy. The IMF bailout package must be as well expediated before the economy is finally chocked due to unsustainable debt levels.

### **LIFESTYLE AUDIT**

There has been an increase in both reported and unreported corruption cases in Zambia especially in the public sector and/or among politically exposed people. People are getting rich overnight. We can cite the recent case of the mysterious 48 houses which left nations appalled as the ACC claimed that they couldn't trace the owner. There is need to strengthen the current systems that exists in line with a lifestyle audit for public officials as well as constitution office bearers. Additionally, there is need to explore a new system speaking to lifestyle audit.

### **DECENTRALIZATION**

Local government Charter has not been ratified, hence, hindering its full attainment of devolution as well as public service delivery to local level. Another area of concern is the lack of commitment by the government to process resources at local level with Match planning (Physical devolution). Ratifying of the Local government charter must be prioritized. The 7<sup>th</sup> NDP clear stipulates the principle of leaving no one behind, hence full devolution will allow citizens at local level to participate in the governance of Zambia.

## **FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, ASSOCIATION AND ASSEMBLY**

There is limited freedom of expression, association and assembly necessitated by the archaic Public Order Act as well as lack of tolerance by the government. The government must be tolerant to diverse views with respect to the rule of law and human rights principles by allowing various stakeholders to assemble and/or express their views on national issues without harassment.

## **DROUGHT**

The drought has affected largely Western and Southern Provinces and partly Lusaka and Central Provinces. Arising from the mediocre 2018/19 seasonal performance, most southern half of the country (Southern and Western Provinces) has experienced between 50 percent to 60 percent reduction in overall maize production. From the Crop Forecast survey, Maize production has been forecasted to have decreased from 2,394,907 metric tons in 2017/2018 to 2,004,389 metric tons in the 2018/2019 season, which represents a decline in production of 16.3 percent and approximately 24 percent when compared to the five-year average. A total of 418,969 households are affected nationally according to DMMU Vulnerability Assessment Report of March 2019. With this state of the nation, as ActionAid Zambia, we expect the President of the Republic of Zambia to declare this a **National Disaster**.

Secondly, under the issue of drought, we expect the President to make an inquiry into the insurance company that was used last year (on FISP) and what happened to the compensation that was supposed to go to the farmers as stated in the contract that farmers will be compensated in cases of losses incurred due to unfavourable weather pattern.

## **BUDGET ALLOCATION TO FISP**

For the past decade and half, between 37% and 60% of the total agriculture budget was spent on the combined input and maize-output market subsidy programmes. Despite the increase in allocation to FISP, the intended target groups of the program (small-scale farmers) are not benefiting from it, with records showing that less than 50% of small-scale farmers are receiving FISP inputs. The budget allocation simply indicates that other agricultural sectors are not being prioritized by the government and FISP alone cannot address food security issues. Irregularities, allegations of corruption and misuse of public funds in relation to FISPs have been widely reported in the country. ActionAid Zambia expects the Republican President of Zambia to reconsider FISP to broaden the importance of small-scale farmers' involvement, extension services, promoting agroecology, infrastructure development, value addition and marketing to ensure sustainability and gradual weaning of farmers as well as to reduce poverty amongst small holder farmers.

## **RURAL AGRICULTURE EXTENSION SERVICES**

Long recognized as an area of weakness, the vast majority of small-scale farmers do not have any or adequate access to rural extension officers or services and do not receive any technical advice or guidance on using FISP inputs. Rural extension officers invariably do not have soil-testing kits or materials for demonstration plots, and rarely offer advice to small-scale farmers on cheaper and more sustainable alternatives, such as agroecology, or on diversifying cropping systems. According to the recent Auditor General Report on the Provision of Extension Services (2013-2016), the ideal Extension Officer to Farmer ratio is 1-660 but even when fully manned, the Extension Officer to Farmer ratio is currently at 1-2,084 for Eastern Province for example. As ActionAid Zambia, we expect the President to seriously consider the extension worker to farmer ratio towards the 660 thresholds and equip them with adequate resources to ensure the country is food secure. Also, we expect the strategic direction on opening the active window of E-vouchers throughout the year to necessitate farmers enough time to exhaust their total allocation. The inputs that farmers can get should equally be broadened to increase farmers choice and promote agroecology for food sovereignty. We recommend that government compliments physical extension service provision with ICT technologies in providing agronomical messages in real time.

### **AGRICULTURE TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT**

FISP is not backed by technological support to boost production. Corporates who purport to support FISP are embedding Green Revolution technologies, its associated chemicals, particularly the use of modern biotechnology (to produce Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and new Synthetic Biology technologies) which exacerbates climate change and not sustainable to small scale farmers. Instead the small-scale farmers are encouraged to go commercial by use of hybrid seeds, chemical fertilisers and focus on commodity crops linked to international markets, replacing farmers complex knowledge. We expect the President to give direction on the need to diversify farmer support that includes agroecological practices and inputs; farmer-based research and development; and the recognition, promotion and support of farmer-managed seed systems. Lastly, there have been concerns on some of the hammermills which have not worked since installation in some of the parts of the country. No information has been availed to the public and we demand that this is done in order to hold those responsible accountable.

### **EDUCATION**

There is the danger of compromised education delivery due to the current underfunding to the education sector by Government. Additionally, district education offices are underfunded and lack basic tools to conduct duties such as monitoring to ensure compliance.

The youth are concerned that the current curriculum promotes theoretical or desk-oriented education and lacks practical skills learning.

The youth are recommending transforming education in Zambia that aligns education institutions to provide skills that are relevant for the skills market in addition to the desk orientated learning system. The Ministry of Education should engage the youth when making decisions related to the curriculum.

## **YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THE CIVIC /POLITICAL SPACE**

The levels of participation in this space is determined by the socio-economic situation where the youth are unemployed at a rate of 1.4% (CSO: Zambia Figures 2018)) As a result they are an easy target for 'use' as tools of political violence by politicians. The few who may engage politically lack capacity to meaningfully engage with the politicians to bring about desired change.

Currently our Youth Policy 2015 has outlined intent for promotion of entrepreneurship in Zambia and has put in measures such as the entrepreneurship tax to promote this.

However, Government should create a conducive environment to support this which includes deployment of resources and as well as diversification of industry to allow and create more opportunities for young people.

## **YOUTH LEADERSHIP**

Statistics indicate that the population of the youth (15-35 years old) in Zambia is 4.8 million, which is 36.7 percent of the population according to UNPF. Annual population growth rate is at 2.4 percent which indicates a population of 24.5 million by 2030 according to the Human development Report, which will see a growth in the youth population.

Surprisingly, Youth representation in parliament is only at 2%. There is also a limited number of young people in lower level structures such as Ward Development Committees (WDCs) and Zonal Development Committees. This therefore means that there is insufficient representation of youth issues at different levels of governance structures.

Deliberate policy and guidelines to be put in place to promote and enforce youth leadership

## **HEALTH**

Zambia has the fifth-highest adolescent birth rate in Sub-Saharan Africa, which in turn has the highest rate in the world. About 29% of adolescent girls become pregnant by the age of 19 years (ZDHS 2013-14). Adolescents aged 15 to 19 are sexually active in Zambia, and therefore face high risks in contracting STIs including HIV, and only 40% use condoms for protection against pregnancy and STIs. Although Zambia continues to record reduced HIV prevalence, increased Antiretroviral Treatment (ART) and reduced child

mortality rates, the disease burden has mostly affected the youths who lack direct access to Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) services.

There is need to increase funding to the health sector to support youth friendly services such as medical resources, adequate competent medical personnel and flow of information to the young people. Young people need to be involved in making informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health, as well as having access to relevant care.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**

Zambia continues to be eyed by foreign investors for its abundant natural resources. However, ActionAid is concerned with replication of environmental degradation and violation of Human Rights among the corporates especially in the extractive industry. It is imperative that government strengthens the policies and legislation that protects the environment, the people of Zambia and most importantly ensure that the proceeds from corporate projects benefit the local people.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Develop plans of ratifying the ILO Convention agreement and strengthen legislation in line with this convention to effectively fight against GBV in the workplace. This in turn will promote women's decent work, as they are generally the victims.
2. Roll out Anti-GBV fast track courts in all the ten (10) provinces,
3. Establish the anti-GBV fund, as this is already provided for in the anti-GBV Act of 2011, for effective implementation of this piece of legislation
4. The establish shelters to support GBV survivors, so that they are not forced to go back to the places where they perpetrator may still be living
5. The Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs should be actively involved in combating GBV and Child marriages as these are mainly embedded in social and cultural norms that need to be dismantled.
6. Develop plans that will see increased access to land for women in rural areas, such as collateral free loans and the rolling out of village banking programmes to all districts to enhance women's economic empowerment.
7. Government to embrace as well as realize power generation diversification given the cardinal role electricity plays in socio-economic development.
8. Government should review and repeal the Public procurement Act No. 12 of 2008 to include legal provisions address corruption, promote transparency and accountability, and enforce the principle of value for money in public procurement for the public.
9. Bring the Planning and Budget bill to parliament for enactment. Budget transparency is the foundation of fiscal transparency; therefore, law will not only promote citizenry

- participation but will also enhance accountability and transparency in public finance management and by doing so circumventing public finance leakages.
10. Enhance and promote the capacity and independence of anti-corruption watchdogs and/or institutions like FIC that has proved to be more effective in fighting corruption and public finance leakages.
  11. Actualization and the scaling up of austerity measures as we continue to negotiate for the IMF bailout package to arrest the investor's confidence which may have negative cascading effect on our economy.
  12. Strengthen the current systems that exists in line with a lifestyle audit for public officials as well as constitution office bearers. Additionally, there is need to explore a new system speaking to lifestyle audit.
  13. Ratify of the Local Government charter must be prioritized to attain full devolution, hence, promoting and effectuating public service delivery at local level.
  14. The government must be tolerant to diverse views with respect to the rule of law and human rights principles by allowing various stakeholders to assemble and/or express their views on national issues without harassment.
  15. Declaration of **National Disaster due to drought** and make an inquiry into the insurance company that was used last year (on FISP) and what happened to the compensation that was supposed to go to the farmers as stated in the contract that Farmers will be compensated in cases of loses incurred due to unfavorable weather pattern.
  16. The President should seriously consider the extension worker to farmer ratio towards the 660 thresholds and equip them with adequate resources to ensure the country is food secure. Also, we expect the strategic direction on opening the active window of E-vouchers throughout the year to necessitate farmers enough time to exhaust their total allocation. The inputs that farmers can get should equally be broadened to increase farmers choice and promote agroecology for food sovereignty.
  17. The President should give direction on the need to diversify farmer support that includes agroecological practices and inputs; farmer-based research and development; and the recognition, promotion and support of farmer-managed seed systems.
  18. Avail the public with information on the hammermills that have not been working since installation. A plan needs to be developed that will ensure that all the hammermills are operational and hold those responsible for failure of operation in certain areas accountable.
  19. Transform the education system in Zambia that aligns education institutions to provide skills that are relevant for the skills market in addition to the desk orientated learning system. The Ministry of Education should engage the youth when making decisions related to the curriculum.



20. Government should create a conducive environment to support the youth including deployment of resources and as well as diversification of industry to allow and create more opportunities for young people.
21. Develop deliberate policy and guidelines to be put in place to promote and enforce youth leadership.
22. Increase funding to the health sector to support youth friendly services such as medical resources, adequate competent medical personnel and flow of information to the young people. Young people need to be involved in making informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health, as well as having access to relevant care.
23. Strengthens the policies and legislation that protects the environment, the people of Zambia and most importantly ensure that the proceeds from corporate projects benefit the local people.