***Press Release 8th May, 2017.***

**Secure decent work for sustainable socio-economic development**

On 1st may, 2017 during the Labour Day celebrations President Edgar C. Lungu in his address is quoted as saying that the PF government attached great importance to the promotion and realization of decent work without which, no sustainable socio-economic development could take place. He further went on to say that, government intended on creating, at the minimum, 200,000 decent jobs on an annual basis in order to attain the goal of higher growth in employment. According to the 2014 Labour Force Survey, 83 percent of Zambians are in the informal sector and 17 percent in the formal sector. This implies that the majority of the informal sector workers lack access to social protection or social security and the sector is usually characterised by exploitation of worker’s rights. It is therefore essential that the government invests in all sectors so that the margin between those in the formal and informal sector is reduced

The **April 2017** JCTR Basic Needs Basket BNB for a family of five living in Lusaka stood at **K4, 973.03** which is **K44.06** less than the **March** BNB which was at **K5,017.09**. The BNB shows a reduction in some food items which include; **beans** which has reduced from **K40.1** to **K30 per kg**, **fish** has also reduced from **K103.43 to K96.33 per kg**, **tomatoes** from **K6.33 to K5.33 per kg**, **onion** from **K11.61 to K8.5** **per kg** and non-food items like **charcoal** which has reduced from **K171.67 to K143.33 per 90kg bag**. The reduction in food items is attributed to increased food supply as the harvest season begins. The BNB however, shows an increase in the price of **Kapenta** from **K181.05** in March to **K208.17** in April. This has been attributed to scarcity of the commodity due to depletion of Kapenta species while demand has remained the same causing prices to rise.

The JCTR BNB has ranged between **K4, 500** and **K5, 300** in the past 4 months, this is far higher than the monthly urban average income of **K3, 152.00** as estimated by the Central Statistical Office in the 2015 Living Conditions monitoring survey. The United Nations recognized the importance of decent work and proposed sustainable development goal number eight “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”. Where decent work means dignity, equality, a fair income and safe working conditions.

The JCTR is glad that the President has attached great importance in promoting job creation and decent work. It is hoped that this commitment will lead to ensuring that more of Zambia’s population is employed in the formal sector and guaranteed their worker’s rights. The JCTR also takes cognisance that even though Zambia has a minimum wage law, there are still implementation challenges that hinder Ministry of Labour from ensuring that this law is fully implemented. Further, JCTR notes with dismay that workers such as those working for contractors in the mining sector still face low pay, job insecurity and unsafe working conditions. JCTR calls on government to seriously look into having sector specific minimum wages to protect its citizens and ensure decent work for all.

**For more information, contact the Social and Economic Development Programme**

**The Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection, P.O. Box 37774, 10101 Lusaka, Zambia**

**Tel: 260-211-290-410 Fax: 260-211-290-759 E-mail:** [**jctr@jesuits.org.zm**](mailto:jctr@jesuits.org.zm) **Website:** [**www.jctr.org.zm**](http://www.jctr.org.zm/)

**Location: 3813 Martin Mwamba Road, Olympia Park, Lusaka**