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**PROMOTION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE MUST LIVE ON SAYS JCTR**

As Zambia mourns the passing of the late president H.E Michael Chilufya Sata, it is important to acknowledge the strides made by the late president and the PF government in the area of infrastructure development and efforts to enable workers afford a decent cost of living by implementing the minimum wage and raising the tax free threshold. It goes without saying that the efforts made will go a long way in boosting the positive economic growth that the country has been experiencing for the past 10 years. However for this growth to have lasting benefits it must significantly translate into poverty alleviation for the majority of Zambians that are living in poverty. The high poverty levels of 60.5% living below the poverty line indicate the extent of hardships currently being experienced by households in accessing basic needs and these hardships are much more severe in the rural parts of Zambia where 77.9% of the population are living in poverty.

Even though inflation has been kept at a single digit, this has not curbed the upsurge in prices of food and non-food items. This certainly makes it a challenge for households to meet their required household needs and nutritional requirements. Millennium Development Goal number 1 is *Eradicate extreme Poverty and Hunger by 2015* however this is one of the goals that Zambia will be unlikely to meet. Food is the most basic of human needs and therefore hunger is a subject that cannot be ignored. Through our rural basket monitoring trips to various rural parts of Zambia, it is apparent how households are struggling to provide basic needs for their families.

From the month of September 2014 to the month of October 2014, there has a steady reduction in the cost of living. This reduction comes at a time when inflation is said to have increased by the Central Statistical Office’s observation that it increased by 0.1% from 7.8% to 7.9% in October 2014. The cost of living for the month of October 2014 as measured by ***JCTR’s Basic Needs Basket*** (BNB) for an average family of five living in Lusaka is **K3, 635.83**. This shows a decrease of **K67.19** from September’s BNB which stood at **K3, 703.02**. The decrease is mainly attributed to the increase in availability of seasonal food items such as *Tomato, Vegetables and Beans*. The prices of the following food items contributed significantly to the decrease; *Kapenta* by **K41.32** per Kg, *Beans* by **K7.73** per Kg and Mealie meal by **K4.65** per Kg from the previous month of September. In contrast, other commodities showed marginal increases in pricing namely, Dry *Fish* which increased by **K38.79** per Kg, Charcoal increased by **K10.00** for a 90kg bag and *Onion* which increased by **K1.35** per Kg.

As we therefore mourn and reflect on the many strides made by the late President and his Government in reducing poverty and promoting social justice during the three years of his reign, the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) October BNB is a reminder to all of us that the war against poverty and social injustice has not been won yet and should not end with the death of President Sata. We need to forge ahead to ensure that the quest for poverty eradication and social justice remains central to Zambia in order to improve every aspect of Zambian people’s lives. Every human being desires to lead a standard of life worth of adequate and nutritious food. This is the only way the late President’s legacy will be honoured. Therefore, lack of realization of this fundamental need is a denial of the inherent dignity of each one of us and it is a denial of social justice that the late President believed in. The incoming government should therefore safeguard the national economy by pursuing policies that promote inclusive and equitable development such as accelerating implementation of interventions in the area of food security, health, education and water and sanitation sectors.

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

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