



# **ZAMBIA CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS (ZCTU)**

## **THE WORKERS' MANIFESTO**

MAY 2021

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## ABBREVIATIONS

7NDP	Seventh National Development Plan
ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
CAGs	Cluster Advisory Groups
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CSPR	Civil Society for Poverty Reduction
DDCCs	District Development Coordinating Committees
DEBs	District Education Boards
DEC	Drug Enforcement Committee
EAP	Economically Active Population
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEEA	Gender Equality and Equity Commission
GEEC	Gender Equity and Equality Commission
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
JCTR	Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection
LMIC	Lower Middle-Income Country
MMD	Movement for Multi-party Democracy
MNDP	Ministry of National Development and Planning
MoF	Ministry of Finance
NDP	National Development Plan
PDCCs	Provincial Development Coordinating Committee
PF	Patriotic Front
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TIZ	Transparency International Zambia
UN	United Nations
UNIP	United National Independence Party
WB	World Bank
WDCCS	Ward Development Coordinating Committees
ZCTU	Zambia Congress of Trade Unions
ZPS	Zambia Police Service
ZRA	Zambia Revenue Authority

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**Mr. Cosmas Mukuka**  
**SECRETARY GENERAL**



## FOREWORD

This Workers' Manifesto has been developed by the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) as a culmination of work to foster national development, trade union unity, solidarity and transformation. The development process of the Workers Manifesto involved broad consultations which resulted in the identification of the priority areas in line with the ZCTU Strategic Plan of 2019-2022.

The development of the Workers' Manifesto has come at an opportune time when Zambia is holding general elections. It is therefore the building block on which the workers' aspirations will be presented to various political players aspiring for public office. This Workers' Manifesto takes into account the changing nature of work and society that is fundamentally shifting the decent work priorities.

This Workers' Manifesto recognizes that so many people's working lives are dominated by low pay, insecurity and powerlessness. This is a sign of broken systems where many people – and not just the lowest earners – are forced to top up their monthly wage with debt, just to cover their living costs. As our economy has stagnated coupled with huge public debt and high inflation, real wages have eroded overtime.

Therefore, in this Manifesto, workers demand for the kind of employment that respects the fundamental rights of the human person as well as the rights of workers in terms of conditions of work, safety, remuneration and respect for the physical and mental integrity of the worker. The workers believe that the Decent Work Agenda must be at the centre of Government actions to bring back economic growth and contribute to building an economy that puts people first. The workers further believe that sustainable economic growth can only be attained by upholding principles of democracy in-terms of transparency and accountability as well as advancing Decent Work and Social Justice.

In this Manifesto, we further recognize the growth of the informal economy where conditions of work remain precarious. The informal economy is associated with economic marginalization and vulnerability; and absence of social protection coverage. Therefore, the workers demand for transformation of the basic social protection system and extending social security to the informal economy. As the nation aspires to attain the vision 2030 and the UN Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, the workers envisage a prosperous society founded on equality of treatment, social inclusion, and a development process that "leaves no one behind". Through this Manifesto, we reaffirm the commitment of the Labour Movement towards achieving national development with the trade union movement as a strong and strategic partner to the development process.

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**Mr. Chishimba Nkole**  
**President**

## **1.0. INTRODUCTION**

The Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) is the largest and most representative trade union federation in Zambia. It was founded under an Act of Parliament in 1965. The ZCTU is a democratic membership-based workers' representative organisation committed to the promotion and protection of the rights and interests of workers in Zambia. It strives to promote harmonious workplace co-operation and understanding which enhances trust and confidence among the social partners.

### **1.1. Vision**

To organise all workers into a strong, dynamic and sustainable labour movement for social justice

### **1.2. Mission**

A democratic workers' federation committed to promoting and defending workers' rights and interests, core trade union values and solidarity for socio-economic prosperity and sustainable development

### **1.3. Major Objective**

To promote and support progressive legislation in the interest of workers in connection with legal rights of trade unions, industrial, health, training, safety welfare and social security, and any other matters the congress may legally pursue.

### **1.4. Intent of the Manifesto**

Since Zambia is holding its presidential and general elections on 12 August 2021, the workers' movement has codified a manifesto of the workers, on whose basis it should mobilise the workers to support election contestants who commit themselves to the Workers' Manifesto.

This is in recognition of the fact that political parties vying for political office have their own party manifestos, on whose basis they will be seeking the mandate of the people through their vote.

Trade unions are not only a voice for workers, they are also the voice of the nation. In this regard the Workers' Manifesto not only contains the aspirations of the workers, but the demands and aspirations of the people of Zambia. This Workers' Manifesto thus contains both worker-specific demands and aspirations as well as the demands and aspirations of the nation as a whole.

## 2.0. BACKGROUND

Zambia's economy has undergone transformation from the time of independence from a command economy under the United National Independence Party (UNIP) administration to a liberal economy under the Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD) and the current Patriotic Front (PF) administrations. Copper production and export has remained the mainstay of Zambia's economy. Copper export receipts currently account for over seventy per cent (70%) of the total national export earnings (OXFAM, 2021). The mining industry, however, employs a paltry 2.4% of total labour force (ibid). The largest proportion of Zambia's labour force is in the agricultural sector, where employment is largely informal. Government, on the other hand, is the single largest employer of the formally employed workers.

In Zambia's context, the future of work is understood within the confines of the Vision 2030. The Vision 2030's goal is to transform Zambia into a prosperous middle-income country by that year. At the centre of realizing this vision is *work in all its forms*. In this regard, how work and the labour force are organized, governed and whether it is rewarding or not will, to a large extent, determine the outcomes of the Vision 2030.

Furthermore, Zambia's current National Development Plan, the Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP) also seeks to create a future with not merely adequate employment opportunities but productive jobs that reward the workers adequately, and provide good conditions of service that include social protection among others (GRZ, 7NDP 2017-2021). Additionally, Zambia is a signatory to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which should be achieved by 2030. The eighth SDG compels countries to achieve economic growth that promotes the creation of decent work by 2030 (UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable).

There exists, however, development challenges that have adverse effects on workers. These include the high cost of living, high inflation rate, high interest rates, and high exchange rates due to depreciation of the Zambian currency. In addition, the huge public debt position, coupled with the challenge of the current COVID-19 pandemic, has worsened the government's fiscal position. These economic factors have a causal effect leading to low growth rates, high fiscal deficits, high unemployment levels, high poverty levels, low spending towards recruitment and retention of public service workers, as well as low spending towards essential sectors such as health, education, sanitation and social protection.

Management of public resources also remains a challenge, with Government failing to meet the macroeconomic targets set out in national budgets. Regular reports from the Auditor General's office expose widespread abuse and misapplication of public resources.

With the high public debt, translating into the high debt service obligations, Zambia's economic situation remains precarious and demands for sound macroeconomic policies to attain macroeconomic stability.

### 3.0. SITUATION ANALYSIS: Stating the Case of the Worker

Zambia has a total workforce of seven million six hundred and thirty-six thousand six hundred and sixty-four (7,636,664) (World Bank, 2020). Of these, ten percent (10%) are located in the formal sector while the remaining ninety percent (90%) is found in the informal sector (ILO 2017). The majority work force in the informal sector is in subsistence agriculture and informal trading activities. Informality of the workforce is one of the biggest challenges that compounds the problem of unemployment and nobleness as it entails living on income that is earned on a daily basis. But this income is low, unstable and inconsistent, resulting in financial vulnerability. Additionally, the working conditions under this type of work are usually deplorable, risky and insecure.

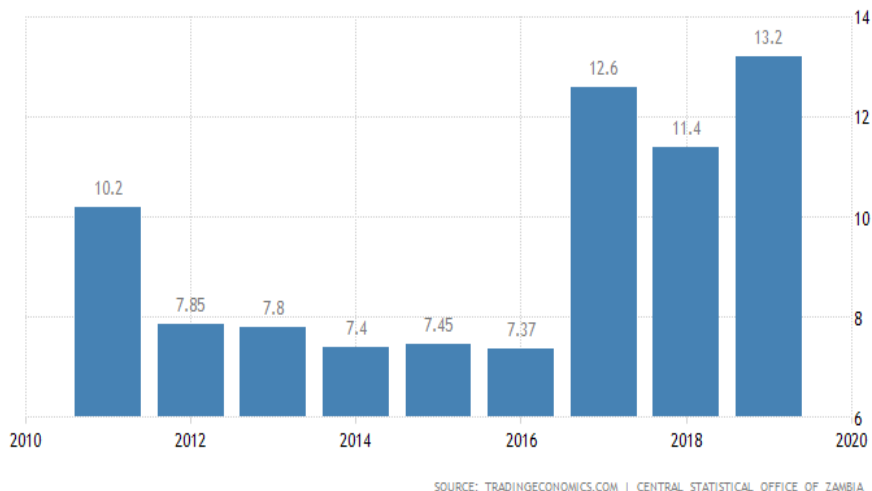


Figure 1: Zambia's Unemployment Rate

As depicted above, high levels of unemployment and joblessness have become perennial problems in Zambia since early 1990s. However, this unemployment and joblessness carry a gender dimension: female participation in the labour market is 70.4% compared to 79.1% for men (UN 2020). The combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force is at 41.2% (ibid). This means that unemployment is higher among females, at 49.0% compared to 35.1% for men (CSPR 2020).

#### 3.1. State of Employment and Unemployment

About fifteen (15) per cent of the economically active population is unemployed. Unemployment is highest amongst the youth aged between fifteen (15) and twenty-four (24) years, with 28 per cent of economically active youth being unemployed.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Central Statistical Office: *Zambia Labour Force Survey*, p. 81.

### **3.2. General State of Conditions of labour - salaries and wages, social protection and assistance**

Increasingly, employers are employing workers on casual and fixed-term contracts and through outsourcing arrangements.<sup>2</sup> These forms of employment are characterized by poor working conditions, including low wages and lack of social security protection.<sup>3</sup>

### **3.3. State of Inclusion in the Labour Sector**

Gender inequality is also a challenge as women are economically and socially marginalized, and under-represented in decision-making positions in Government, the private sector and civil society.<sup>4</sup> In addition, women entrepreneurs are unable to access the finance and other resources necessary to build prosperous enterprises. Women's limited social advancement is the result of their limited access to education and training opportunities, gender stereotypes about the respective roles of women and certain traditional values and practices.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, contractual and casual jobs are disadvantageous to young people as they are robbed of the opportunity to access permanent and pensionable jobs, gain experience and secure their livelihoods on a long term basis. Such jobs also entrench conditions of vulnerability.

Based on the situation above, it is clear that the conditions of the worker have deteriorated given the limited opportunities against huge and growing demand. The current context has mostly advantaged the employers at the expense of the workers who are commonly subjected to hard working conditions such as low wages, inadequate incentives as well as unfair and unjust agreements.

### **3.4. Declarations and Demands**

- More "decent work" opportunities should be created: this should include provision for productive and permanent jobs, enterprise development, social protection and social dialogue. Over a period of five years (2021-2026) the unemployment rate should be reduced from the current 11.5% to 7.5%;
- Workers should be accorded the enjoyment of their full rights without intimidation. These include equality; dignity; freedom from slavery, servitude and forced labour; freedom of association and expression, the right to assemble, picket, demonstrate and petition; and the right to social and security protection;
- There should be guaranteed organizational rights for representative unions. In particular, political interference and manipulation of the labour movement should not be condoned;

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<sup>2</sup> *Zambian Patriotic Front Manifesto* (2011 to 2016) p. 33; ILO: *Zambian Decent Work Country Programme 2012-2015 Context and Priorities* (Draft) p. 14 and p. 21; Tripartite Consultative Labour Council (TCLC): *Minutes of the TCLC Meeting* held on 21<sup>st</sup> Dec. 2011 paras 1.0 and 3.0.

<sup>3</sup> *Zambian Patriotic Front Manifesto* 2011 to 2016 p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> See Government of the Republic of Zambia: *National Gender Policy* (2000).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

- Workers should enjoy affordable cost of living that meets their basic such as food, health, education, water and sanitation;
- There is need to integrate the role and contributions of the informal sector into the overall national economic sector. The following should be undertaken in order to improve the conditions and enhance the role of the informal sector in economic development process of Zambia:
  - o synchronise, harmonise and legitimize the informal economy taxes, using legally recognized bodies such as the Councils and the Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA);
  - o Facilitate and provide incentives, such as access to financial services;
  - o Introduce social protection and health insurance should also be introduced; and
  - o Facilitate provisions for a clean environment.

#### 4.0. THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY

Although Zambia was classified a Lower Middle-Income Country in 2011, its economic performance has generally remained unimpressive. Characteristically, the economy has continued to experience various economic challenges including debt contraction, misapplication of funds, high inflation rates, high interest rates due to depreciation of the country's currency, corruption and the lack of accountability. These economic conditions have negatively affected the workers and the labour movement in several ways. These include income poverty, lack of readily available and permanent jobs and employment opportunities, casualisation and short-term jobs.

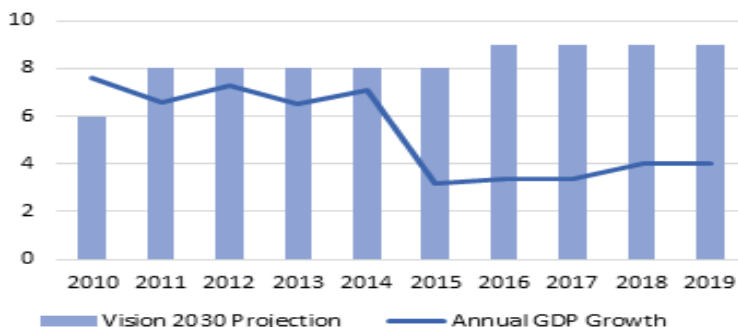
These economic challenges have persisted despite the Country being endowed with vast natural and productive resources ranging from water sources, forestry, minerals, land to wild life (GRZ 2017, WB 2018). The major challenges encountered include declining growth rates, low productivity, and high levels of inflation, unsustainable debt burden and weak currency. Economic growth rates have deteriorated to as low as two to three percent (2-3%) as compared to projects of six, eight and ten percent (6%, 8% and 10%) stated in the National Vision 2030 (GRZ 2005).<sup>6</sup>

In terms of earnings, copper alone, generates about three-quarters of the Zambia's export earnings.<sup>7</sup> Economic growth rate has dropped since 2006 from 6% to 1.3% by 2020 (GRZ 2020).<sup>8</sup> This poor economic situation is attributed to four main factors, namely, the falling copper prices, declines in agricultural output and hydro-electric power generation and insufficient policy adjustment to these exogenous shocks. Presently, the country has a huge and unsustainable debt stock estimated at US\$ 27 billion (IMF 2020; 2021).

<sup>6</sup> The National Vision envisioned the Country to attain on average six percent (6)%, eight percent (8%) and ten percent (10%) under the 6NDP, 7NDP and the 8NDP respectively

<sup>7</sup> Zambia is the second largest producer of Copper in Africa after the Democratic Republic of Congo

<sup>8</sup> According to the National Vision 2030: Towards a Prosperous Medium Income Country by 2030. Zambia's economy was expected to grow at a rate of eight (8) percent between 2006-2010, nine (9) percent between 2010



Source: <https://cuts-lusaka.org/pdf/policy-brief-mitigating-the-socio-economic-impact-of-covid-19-in-zambia.pdf> 10/4/21

As the Country continues to face difficulties related to indebtedness, including failing to meet its debt service obligations, it will be forced to cut some of its public spending especially those relating to social development needs. Presently the total national debt stock stands at US\$ 27 billion out of which US\$ 18 billion is Government debt while the remaining is privately owned debt (GRZ 2020). This has resulted in the cutting down of some budget expenditures, particularly, Social budget; health, education, water and sanitation including social welfare (JCTR 2020). The value of the Kwacha against the US\$ declined, economic growth contracted by 1.7%, as declines in industry and services outweighed growth in agriculture, mining and services (BITI 2020).<sup>9</sup> In addition, Inflation is in double digits at 15.7% while national unemployment worsened.

These economic conditions have led to adverse consequences on the workers in Zambia. They have to contend with shrinking employment and job opportunities, low wages and salaries, poor working conditions, including non-payment of obligations such as pensions, wage and recruitment freezes against rising cost of living. For instance, according to JCTR, a family of six (6) requires a minimum of K8, 394.00 per month to adequately meet merely the core basic needs. The salary of an average civil servant is about K7,400 (JCTR 2021).

This situation has been worsened by the advent of COVID-19 pandemic that has led to losses of small business and trading activities. The failure to develop and implement a robust economic diversification plan for decades now coupled with poor management of public resources will continue to hinder the country's prospects to overcome its current economic challenges. In turn, the repercussions and burden of the failing economy will be carried by the working class of Zambia – fewer employment opportunities and poor working conditions.

<sup>9</sup> At an average of K20 to the US\$

#### **4.1. Declarations and Demands**

- There should be broad-based economic growth that responds to the needs of the majority, especially the workers and people in the informal sector
- The economy should be diversified and should prioritise mining, agriculture and tourism, with value addition streamlined in this diversification;
- Government should embark upon economic development projects that have the potential to provide more permanent and vast employment opportunities. An example in this regard includes the revamping of the Railway sector and development of the tourism sectors within the broader diversification of the economy, as these will create millions of permanent pensionable jobs;
- The mining sector needs to be diversified to promote value addition/processing, and there should be participation of local people in the value chain of the mines. There is need to ensure that all the investors in the mining sector fully comply and adherence to laws and regulations governing the mining sector should be promoted. In addition, there is need to review and restructure investment agreements in the mining sector within the first two years.
- The backlog of pension benefit payments should be cleared.

#### **5.0. THE STATE OF SOCIAL AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

The state of human and social development in Zambia is generally poor, and is characterised by high poverty levels, huge income inequalities, high social inequalities, high cost of living and poor public service provisions. These conditions have negatively affected the lives of the working class in Zambia particularly in terms of these: lack of, or inadequate access to, quality social basic needs such as housing, education, health, water and sanitation. This has, in turn, entrenched disease burdens, illiteracy or poorly skilled population as well as perpetuated social and economic exclusion among the working class.

#### **5.1. Poverty and Vulnerability**

Although Zambia achieved lower middle-income status in 2011, poverty and vulnerability have remained high. More than half of the total national population still lives below the poverty line (GRZ 2017). The poverty levels in Zambia stand at fifty-four (54) percent (GRZ 2017). The largest proportion of poor people (76.6%) are in the rural areas while the remainder are located in the urban areas, with the largest proportion of extremely poor people located in rural than in urban areas (60.8% compared to 12.8%) (ibid). Poverty and vulnerability in Zambia have persisted due to the following factors:

- unemployment and under-employment;
- limited access to productive and employment opportunities such as finance – particularly for low income groupings, females, the youth and rural populations;
- inadequate infrastructure- goods and services such as roads, hospitals, water, health and limited access to services and markets;
- loss making and wastage;
- high birth rate and a relatively high burden of HIV / AIDS; and
- the Coronavirus crisis



The workers are directly affected by these poverty and vulnerability conditions given their generally poor working conditions, low wages, high cost of living and limited opportunities of permanent jobs. These hard conditions have also affected the population that has separated from work as most of them have not been given their pension benefits or end of work packages. Consequently, they are subjected to a life of destitution, depression, and vulnerability.

## **5.2. Huge Income Inequalities and Social Inequalities**

Zambia has one of the highest gender inequality levels in the Southern region.<sup>10</sup> Yet, the 2016 Amended Constitution of Zambia provides the equal participation of both males and females in the governance and development of the Country (GRZ 2016). It provides the equal worth of women and men and their right to freely participate in, determine and build a sustainable political, legal, economic and social order including the provision of gender equality measures<sup>11</sup>. Some of the major influencing factors include:

- Increased gap between middle and high income households;
- Slow outcomes of efforts on poverty reduction;
- Consistent low spending on public services and goods;
- Self-employment which is low and inconsistent is the most common source of income;
- Failure to restructure public financing to reflect correct development priorities;
- Weak social protection and assistance interventions; and
- Absence of strong re-distributive policies.

## **5.3. High Cost of Living**

The cost of living has continued rising and majority of the households in Zambia in the past two (2) decades and presently are failing to meet their basic needs on a monthly basis including food, health, housing energy, education, water and sanitation services (JCTR 2020). Most notably, the gap between monthly household incomes and expenditures on basic necessities has been widening (ibid). To make matters worse, little has been done to cushion the poorest and marginalized from this economic and financial hardship.<sup>12</sup>

Majority of the workers cannot afford basic nutritious diets and other essential requirements such as medication and decent housing. Such conditions have the potential of undermining the workers' health and levels of productivity thereby compromising the prospects of growing healthy families, communities and nation at large.

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<sup>10</sup> Zambia even trailing behind Countries such as Mozambique and South Africa.

<sup>11</sup> Zambia enacted a law in 2016, namely the Gender Equality and Equity Act which provides for the establishment of the Gender Equity and Equality Commission (GEEC), its functions and powers and provide for the taking of measures to ensure gender equity, equality and the integration of both sexes in society

<sup>12</sup> For instance, by May 2020, many Zambians could not afford foods, such as eggs and milk that are nutritious sources of protein. These are some of the foods recommended for the health of groupings such as women, particularly mothers and children.

More importantly, the burden of unaffordable cost of living disproportionately falls on women generally as main the main care takers of homes as well as victims of the growing number of female and child headed households (CSO 2015).

#### **5.4. Poor Public Service Provision**

The capacity of the Government to provide quality and adequate public goods and services has notably declined in the past two (2) decades and this has been worsened by the failure to set the national priorities correctly (UN 2020; CSPR 2020). Today, the provision of public services is characterized with the following:

- inadequate, late and irregular financing;
- poorly qualified and inadequate human resource;
- shortage of expertise; and
- Poor implementation and overall management of public development programmes.

In this regard, the most affected sectors include education, health, water and sanitation, social protection and assistance.

##### **5.4.1. Education**

Education plays a critical role the socio-economic development as it provides opportunities for employment, poverty reduction, productivity and personal growth. An educated population is essential to the growth of both the public and private sectors (IGC 2018). Although Zambia has recorded significant gains in the education sector especially in terms of increasing access to education, infrastructure provision and working conditions for the personnel, the sector is still facing significant challenges.

These include high illiteracy levels, high teacher-pupil ratio, high pupil-book ratio and poor quality of services as well as inadequate infrastructure especially in the rural areas of the Country. Literacy rate stands at 55.3 percent, with illiteracy much more pronounced in females than males - 38.5 percent of adult women have reached at least a secondary level of education compared to 54.1percent of the males. Financing to the sector has remained a big challenge with budget allocations consistently falling short of the twenty (20%) threshold stipulated under the Dakar Declaration (UNICEF 2020). Instead, public financing has averaged at four (4 %) of GDP which in turn has compromised the provision of quality services such as teaching materials such as books, desks and other necessary aids. (JCTR 2020). Teacher-pupil ratio has remained high characterized by over-populated classrooms. Pupil-teacher ratio, primary in Zambia was 42.06 as of 201 (UNESCO 2017).

Financing to the sector has remained a big challenge with budget allocations consistently falling short of the twenty (20) percent threshold stipulated under the Dakar Declaration (UNICEF 2020). Instead, public financing has averaged at four (4) per cent of the GDP, which in turn has compromised the provision of quality services like teaching materials such as books, desks and other necessary aids. (JCTR 2020). Teacher-pupil ratio has remained high characterized by over-populated classrooms.

This is ironic because the country today has in excess of 40,000 (forty thousand) unemployed trained teachers (NAQUEZ, 2020), while teacher deficit stands at over 40,000 (forty thousand) as well.<sup>13</sup>

The quality of management and administration of public learning institutions has remained poor (ICG 2018:11). Student-book ratio stands at 5:1 while teacher's deficit is at 40,000. There are only 1,009 secondary schools against 8,843 primary schools, making the education pyramidal system characterized by a wide primary schooling base with a very narrow secondary base.

Additional challenges include the lack of enforcement of the Ministry of Education's teacher allocation rule, weak teacher deployment and transfer policies, payroll mismatch, weaknesses in the budgeting process for teacher positions, and staffing challenges in rural versus urban schools (ibid).

### 5.4.2. Health

Although Zambia has witnessed significant positive change in terms of infrastructure and human resource in the health sector in the past decade, it is still grappling with severe challenges in this regard.<sup>14</sup> The major ones include inadequate services and infrastructure, particularly in the rural areas, high maternal and child mortality rates, shortage of essential drugs and equipment, increase in non-communicable diseases such as cancer, diabetes, tuberculosis as well as insufficient human resource.

In 2017 maternal associated causes were the fourth leading cause of death in Zambian women of childbearing age (UNICEF 2019). In 2018, maternal mortality rate stood at 183 deaths per 100,000 live births (ibid).<sup>15</sup> Infant mortality in Zambia has remained high. In 2019, the infant mortality rate in Zambia was at about 42.4 deaths per 1,000 live birth. Even in hospitals with an adequate number of doctors and nurses on site, majority of them lack emergency and specialized equipment, services and infrastructure.

The sector still faces significant capacity gaps in infrastructure especially in terms of transportation and communications. The case is very severe for the peri-urban and rural areas (GRZ 2017). The doctor-patient-ratio in Zambia is pegged at one (1) doctor for every twelve thousand (12,000) patients. This is beyond acceptable standard ratio set by the WHO - 1 physician to every 5,000 people (UNICEF 2020). Malnutrition rates remain among the highest in the world. The country ranked 143 of 189 in the 2019 Human Development Index, with 48 percent of the population unable to meet their minimum calories requirements, more than one-third of children under five years stunted and more than half suffering from iron deficiency.

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<sup>13</sup> Minister of General Education Dr Dennis Wanchinga has told Parliament that government schools have a deficit of 44,000 teachers (18 Sep 2020).

<sup>14</sup> The Country has registered some improvements in terms of life expectancy. The life expectancy for Zambia in 2019 was 63.55 years, a 0.46% increase from 2018.

<sup>15</sup> Zambia is not on track with the third SDG which aims at achieving maternal mortality ratio of less than 70 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births by 2030 - briefly put, maternal mortality is a major cause of death among women in Zambia today

The estimated shortage of Doctors, Nurses and Midwives is about 14,960.<sup>16</sup> On the whole, the country “lacks about forty (40) per cent of its estimated workforce needs” (SOLIDAR MED 2020). One major cause of this shortage are the poor working conditions in Zambia. Health workers go overseas, especially to the United Kingdom, in search of greener pastures.

The health sector has continued to experience serious shortages of essential drugs with public supply processes characterized by uncertainty, late disbursement and uneven distribution (CSPR 2020). Furthermore, access to private health services and products has proved to be higher than international reference prices, with counterfeit products flooding the market compared to original brand products. The purchase of generics was associated with price savings (Lusaka Times 2020). Majority of the citizens are unable to afford or access quality health services and goods, given the existing levels of income and poverty (Kaiser et al 2019).

For a nation to grow healthy and productive people, including the working class, it must provide equitable access to quality, safe, and cost-effective medical services. The working class in Zambia has been contending with unavailability, inadequate and poor health services. Alternative sources, such as private health provisions, are costly.

### **5.4.3. Water and Sanitation**

Public provision of water and sanitation services in Zambia has remained largely poor and inadequate. By 2018, more than thirty-six (36) per cent of Zambia’s population lacked access to basic drinking water services and more than sixty-seven (67) per cent lacked access to basic sanitation services (ZDHS 2018). An estimated ten (10) per cent of the population practiced open defecation while seventy-six (76) per cent of households did not have access to a handwashing facility with soap and water in 2018 (ibid). In addition, sixty-four (64) per cent of the population use basic drinking water services eighty-seven (87) per cent in urban areas and only forty nine (49) per cent in rural areas. Furthermore, only thirty-three (33) per cent of the population use a basic sanitation service: forty-one (41) per cent in urban areas and twenty-eight (28) per cent in rural areas. Only twenty-four (24) per cent of the population has access to basic hygiene services, i.e. a handwashing facility with soap and water: thirty-six (36) per cent in urban and fifteen (15) per cent in rural areas.

The working class are located in all areas of the country – urban and rural – and given their vulnerable and fragile socio-economic status – majority find themselves in communities that lack or have poor and inadequate water and sanitation services. This is not only a danger to their health but becomes strenuous as these conditions affect them as individuals but as families and communities. Such deplorable conditions also affect the motivation and performance of the workers.

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<sup>16</sup> With projected population growth, the deficits more than double to 25, 849 by 2020 and more than 46, 000 by 2035

## 5.5. Declarations and Demands

- There is need for commitment to improve the standards of living that meets basic needs of the people in the areas of education and health, as well as accessibility to balanced nutritious diet, water and sanitation;
- The national budget should have Specific allocations for the employment of essential trained workers, particularly in social protection, community welfare, water, sanitation, health and education sectors. Strict recruitment mechanisms that should prevent discrimination, corruption and nepotism in the recruitment process should be put in place;
- There should be more public resources allocated to sectors that have high potential to reduce poverty;
- There is need for the development of practical and effective implementation policies capable of reducing poverty in tangible ways
- Reduce poverty from the current 54% to at least 50% over a period of five years (2021 - 2026);
- There is need for quality and functional public services, especially in the education, health, water and sanitation sectors;
- Social protection requires comprehensive reforms to allow for coordination by various social protection institutions and Government Ministries. The various social protection schemes should be streamlined and strongly connected to the overall national development programmes on iconic and social development and their operations should be decentralised. The system used to identify beneficiaries of social protection and assistance needs to be restructured to ensure that it is locally driven and community based. There is also need for domestic financing of social protection in order to enhance its sustainability;
- Management of pension funds needs to be strengthened for the purposes of ensuring transparency, accountability and meaningful stakeholder involvement, as well as facilitate for the rational management of public pension schemes and funds; and
- All pension packages should be paid out on time and the current backlog of payment should be cleared within a period of three (3) years,

## 6.0. THE STATE OF GOVERNANCE

Although Zambia returned to a democratic system of governance in 1991, the Country has continued to suffer from severe setbacks particularly in terms of democratic governance (Freedom House 2020). To date, the country is still operating under a highly centralized system of governance, lacks public accountability and participation and is witnessing low levels of constitutionalism and weakening of public institutions particularly those mandated to provide checks and balances (TIZ 2020).

## 6.1. Accountability and Transparency

In order to ensure transparency, accountability and public participation, the 2016 Amended Constitution of Zambia provides for the separation of powers among the three major arms of the Government - Executive, Judiciary and Legislature (GRZ 2016 GRZ 2017; CSPR 2018). This separation is necessitated to promote the rule of law and effect checks and balances. Despite these provisions, corruption and abuse of public resources in Zambia have worsened (TIZ 2018, 2020; GRZ 2018, 2019). The Country is ranked very low in Southern Africa in terms of public involvement in the budgeting process (BITI 2020).

Poor development performance is largely as a result of weak public finance management systems, weak oversight and entrenched political interference particularly in public procurement processes.<sup>17</sup> The main consequence of all these policy, administrative and financial mismanagement is that public resources required to pursue national development concerns such as poverty reduction, job creation and industrialization are diverted to non-developmental and personal interests. For instance, Government's implementation capacities of public development programmes have fallen to as low as thirty-four (34) percent (UN 2020). This means less and poor delivery of public goods and services especially in the agriculture, education, health, water, sanitation and welfare sectors (ibid 2020; CSPR 2018).

## 6.2. Constitutionalism<sup>18</sup>

The rule of law is a pre-requisite factor in the pursuit and consolidation of democratic governance. It requires that decision and actions undertaken by office bearers and power holders on behalf of the public are based and guided by legal provisions – hence the “rule of law.” In order to secure fair justice, this virtue is expected to be operationalized in an impartial, objective and intended manner. In the case of Zambia, deviation from the rule of law is deepening. The Constitution-making process has up to now not been concluded, and this has negatively affected the rule of law. Additionally, there is a lack of adherence or compliance to constitutional provisions. There is also blatant lack of accountability and transparency to the public in the decisions making process, alongside the shrinking of democratic space, particularly the civic and political components. Critical institutions, such as the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), Zambia Police Service (ZPS), Drug Enforcement Commission (DEC) and Parliamentary Committees, which are required to maintain the rule of law, have been severely weakened thereby incapable of effectively carrying out these tasks (TIZ 2020; CSPR 2019). This has led to limited public access to fair justice and judiciary services and to violation of democratic rights.

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<sup>17</sup> The National Procurement Process (NPP) Act in October 2020, amendment of the PP Act and the Public Finance Management (PFM) Act were enacted in 2016 and 2018 respectively.

<sup>18</sup> Constitutionalism can be defined as the doctrine that governs the legitimacy of government action, and it implies something far more important than the idea of legality that requires official conduct to be in accordance with pre-fixed legal rules (Hilaire Barnett). In other words, constitutionalism checks whether the act of a government is legitimate and whether officials conduct their public duties in accordance with laws pre-fixed/ pre-determined in advance. The latter definition shows that having a constitution alone does not secure or bring about constitutionalism (Maru Bazezew).

### **6.3. Inclusion, Participation and Representation**

The Constitution of the Republic begins by confirming the equal worth of women and men and their right to freely participate in, determine and build a sustainable political, legal, economic and social order (GRZ 2016). To ensure equal participation of all, the Constitution also provides for gender equality under the Gender Equality and Equity Act which also provides for the establishment of the Gender Equity and Equality Commission (GEEC).

However, the inclusion, participation and representation of the public in the development and governance affairs of the country have remained low. Even institutionalized public spaces as the Cluster Advisory Groups (CAGs), Provincial Development Committees (PDCCs), District Development Committees (DDCCs), and Ward Development Committees (WDCs) are generally ineffective as they are highly technical, urban-biased, poorly managed and hijacked by political actors. In addition, public activism has remained a challenge mainly because of the failure to fully decentralize the governance system, enforce regulations such as those related to gender equality and provide additional obligatory regulations on youth and gender consideration in public affairs. Ultimately, the governance system in Zambia has remained exclusive to important segments of the population such as women, Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) and the youth, as a result of these shortcomings (ZNWL 2020).

### **6.4. Declarations and Demands**

- There should be an inclusive system of governance which is anchored on decentralisation and equal participation of all in decision-making processes;
- There should be commitment to adhere to the principle of the rule of law in the conduct of all power holders, and within six months or 180 days of the post 12 August 2021 elections government, the constitution-making process which started way back in 1993 should be concluded, through a participatory process that should lead to holding a Referendum;
- There is need for professional, meritocratic, accountable and transparent public administration and management by all power holders;
- The participation of local communities in development investment processes, spearheaded by both domestic and foreign investors, must be enhanced. There should be an investment framework which should be directing investors to the available and or potential investment opportunities, and the workers should have a say on the investments of pension funds.

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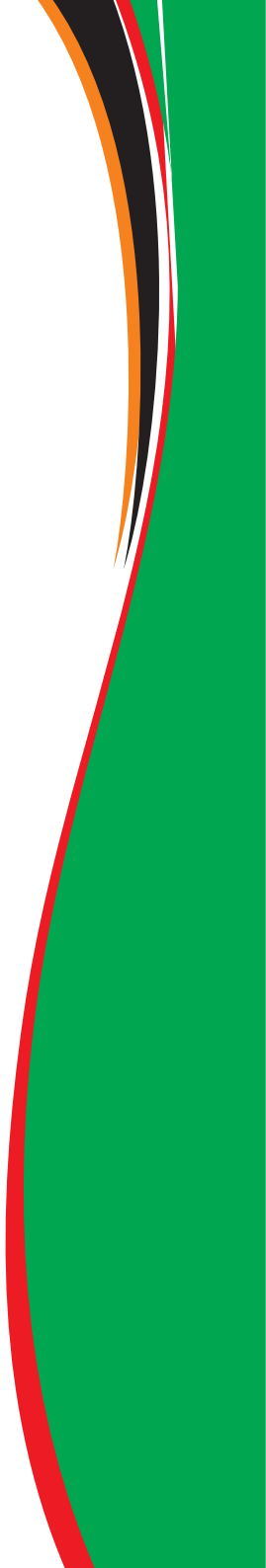
## Conclusion

This Workers' Manifesto is the first of its kind in Zambia and has been developed taking into account the changing nature of the world of work. The Manifesto has taken into account the existing legal frameworks guiding the world of work globally and industrial relations in Zambia. Particularly, the Manifesto has taken into account the existing legislative gaps in management of industrial relations which generally shrink the trade union space to operate in full freedoms. The Manifesto also took into account the International Labour Organization Conventions relating to the world of work and the rights of workers to decent employment.

The Manifesto also considered the current macroeconomic environment and how the existing economic challenges such as the high cost of living and low wages continue to rob workers of decent living conditions. The economic challenges have also exposed our fragile social protection system which to a larger extent has failed to provide the safety nets needed to alleviate widespread poverty and vulnerability. The huge public debt has also put pressure on public spending because of increasing debt service obligations; leading to low spending on education, health, social protection, and generally on social amenities.

Most importantly, the Manifesto recognizes that 2021 is the election year for Zambia and thus an opportune time for political leaders to appreciate the challenges of the workers and consider to take into account the needs of the workers on their respective political agenda. In general, this Manifesto reaffirms the commitment of the Labour Movement towards achieving national development with the trade union movement as a strong and strategic partner to the development process.





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