

Breakfree



The Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development monthly Newsletter
Investing in people for social and economic justice in Zimbabwe

March, 2007

Quotes on the violence in Zimbabwe

"We Africans should hang our heads in shame. How what can is happening in Zimbabwe elicit hardly a word of concern let alone condemnation from us leaders of Africa..."

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

...One SADC country has sunk into such economic difficulties that it may be likened to a sinking Titanic, whose passengers are jumping in a bid to save their lives...

Zambia's President, Levy Mwanawasa

Facts on Trade Did you know...?

- In 2006 more than 100 developing countries were engaged in over 67 bilateral or regional trade negotiations, and signed over 60 bilateral investment treaties. (UNCTAD)
- More than 250 regional and bilateral trade agreements now govern more than 30 per cent of world trade, whilst an average of two bilateral investment treaties have been agreed every week over the past ten years.
- In Africa, the so called 'Economic Partnership agreements' (EPAs) proposes to oblige countries, the majority being LDCs, to reduce a very large part of their tariffs to zero. Meanwhile, EPAs fail to address the side effects of Rich countries subsidies on Africa through dumping, or the plethora of non-tariff barriers.

Read more of the Oxfam's Briefing paper entitled 'Signing away the future: How trade and investment agreements between rich and poor countries undermine development' on http://www.oxfamamerica.org/newsandpublications/publications/briefing_papers/signing-away-the-future

Editorial

Dear Reader

The current wave of violence bedeviling Zimbabwe is unfortunate and regrettable. Here is a nation in turmoil economically, socially and politically. Disease (particularly the HIV/AIDS pandemic), droughts, corruption, and economic chaos are wreaking havoc. The country is indeed in a state of emergency. The discovery of diamonds in Manicaland has opened yet another Pandora's Box. The paradox is that Zimbabwe is endowed with plenty of resources, natural, human and all, yet it finds itself in a dire economic crisis. So many solutions are being proffered for Zimbabwe's problems. Whilst the international Financial Institutions particularly the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have prescribed privatisation of government entities among other 'panaceas', the Government of Zimbabwe has called for the lifting of 'sanctions' on the ruling ZANU PF regime to allow for more 'aid' to flow into the country. Others have called for the resignation of President Robert Mugabe and the replacement of the ruling ZANU PF party with the Opposition Movement for Democratic Change. What is interesting is that there seems to be resonance among all these proposals, that foreign aid is the critical key to Zimbabwe's recovery and subsequent development. None of the solutions coming from the well-wishers seems to be interrogating aid and its neoliberal connotations. However, in this issue Julius Kapwepwe Mishambi exposes foreign aid for what it is whilst Eddy Ziyera unravels the sacred Chiadzwa diamonds. Meanwhile, China continues to cause a stir in Africa.

Read on...

Editor

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- The reality of aid
- "A handful Of Dust": the Diamond Saga in Zimbabwe
- Mabvuku -Tafara on an anti-Privatisation Drive
- International Women's Day: Some reflections
- China Provokes Debate in Africa

Zimbabwe Debt Statistics

External Debt US\$4, 1 billion (November 2006)
Arrears & Interest US\$2, 2 billion (November 2006)

Domestic debt \$Z922 028.2 billion (March 2007)

Annual Inflation rate 1729.9% (February 2007)

Consumer price Index Z\$ 133 4 521.7 (February 2007)

To contribute send your articles to comms@zimcodd.co.zw. Please note that articles should be precise with a maximum length of 1page

THE REALITY OF AID *by Julius Kapwepwe Mishambi*

Following the G.8 Summit at Gleneagles, I have read and listened to arguments on Aid and Poverty, especially in Africa and Uganda in particular, for some time now. Equally, I have taken interest in the strong belief of the officials in the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) on aid as a tool for poverty eradication for Uganda. These and other such views have made me feel that I too should make this point below.

Looking at the recent decisions taken in Scotland by a conglomerate of the 11; G.8 (actually the G.7-Canada, U.S, U.K, France, Germany, Italy and Japan and 1 Russia) and 3 (IMF, The World Bank and the European Commission, it was clear that aid does not work. Why? Because aid is a bait that man sets himself and it catches him.

The huge amounts of resources that the officials in MoFPED talk about were actually meant to ameliorate the very pathetic conditions that were a creation of the very western countries and their institutions. So, these officials should not be deceived that those guys have cooked up HIPC and enhanced HIPC because they love us. They are not a charity conglomerate and there are indicators that this conglomerate does not wish us well as Africans, Ugandans inclusive. A quick example here is the Health sector. The introduction of cost-sharing was destructive to the Health sector as otherwise anticipated by IMF that was the driver of this policy. The poorest sections of the Uganda society were hurt most. It only took the selfless decision by President Museveni against the IMF and the rest of the G.11 that the wrath of cost-sharing subsided.

In fact, Africa and other developing nations of the world have been looted through the guise of aid. By even looking at basically a space of ten years, evidence from the OECD shows that financial resources extended to the developing world between 1982 and 1990, was \$927 billion. In the same period, developing world lost \$1,345 billion in debt servicing alone. Arithmetically, the level of financial plunder alone was, therefore, \$418 billion.

The officials in MoFPED would also agree with me that the level of management of public resources in Africa, including Uganda, is in a sorry state. There are still debates on indeed whether the recent oil discovery will at all contribute meaningfully to Uganda's and Africa's socio-economic development, or will actually be a key factor in the apparent deteriorating governance and human rights situation. Sufficient evidence to this situation is available with the office of Inspector General of Government, Auditor General and Parliament's Public Accounts Committee reports. Various media in Uganda have published the details of this kind of rot. The civil society has exposed the filth of mismanagement and general corruption in the national and Local Governments (procurement, etc) but attracted minimal action from the powers that be. The School Facilities Grant (for putting up school structures) in Uganda, as a case in point, has been marred by mischief of some of the contractors and we seem to be building for the present and not the future too.

In other words, other than aid making business for the G.11, it is lucrative for selfish ends within the very countries where it is received.

It is true to an extent that, as the MoFPED officials attempt to illustrate and make us citizens believe that aid can contribute meaningfully to poverty eradication or reduction in Uganda. Those conditions that fail it, nonetheless, must be critically addressed with urgency.

Aid to poor countries is actually not spent there. Other than OECD, a recent study by Action Aid International reveals that a mere one third (1/3) of G7 official aid in 2003 was genuine. The rest was like the infamous ghost soldiers and 'air supply' in a number of African countries. Also that, only 10 cents of every dollar of US aid is 'real' aid. Most of this aid is phantom, for it finds its way back to where it came from, through the so-called Technical Assistance, fuel-guzzling and costly-to-maintain air-conditioned vehicles, flying first-class, entertainment, sundry and rent costs in the posh suburbs of African cities like Nakasero (in Kampala-Uganda), Muthaiga (Nairobi-Kenya), etc.

Africa and other developing countries had better realize that aid is anti-development, anti-democracy, too costly for our economies and will not deliver the poor nations out of poverty. If our own house was in order, aid would at most make a small contribution.

(Julius Kapwepwe Mishambi is the Senior Programme Officer for Uganda Debt Network)

A Handful of dust: The diamond saga in Zimbabwe



Picture from www.newzimbabwe.com.

By Enddy Ziyera

De Beers, the South African based multinational diamond mining and marketing magnate's catch phrase is "diamond is for life". An eminent philosopher many years ago postulated that "wealth is not owning property but using it." You ask any sane resident of Chiadzwa, Chirasike and other diamond areas in Marange, the answer may be a straight 'diamond equals death, maiming of the physical body, destruction of the environment and of course a curfew. Yes, a curfew.

When did you last hear of a curfew and a state of emergency? Highfield and Budiriro Suburbs of Harare. That should be a Sunday picnic, provided the country men and women of this country can still afford one. When an unknown mortal "discovered diamonds" in September 2006, Chiadzwa, an unknown hunger ravished barren patch of 'tribal trust land' suddenly became a national treasure, assuming the same status as Heroes Acre and State house judging by the mundane presence of security details all over the place.

It is very difficult to separate Chiadzwa from Somalia, Iraq or Darfur due the high concentration and activities of security details. They attempt all forms of cruelty and evil in an effort to make their presence felt and known. They are very good at displaying and using their tools of the trade- guns, baton sticks, anti riot gear, dogs, horses, walkie talkies and tear gas canisters.

The discovery of diamonds has brought more suffering for the local people. It's a double blow for the people of Chiadzwa and other areas in Marange where diamonds and other precious stones have been found. When they should be rejoicing over their newly found wealth, they are mourning the dearth of their beloved Bocha, due to massive panning activities that were allowed by the highest political office in the province- the governor's office in September 2006 during the run up to council elections. They are mourning the death of their beloved community. In a political gesture to woo voters the governor leading a high powered delegation including almost the entire cabinet, their deputies, permanent secretaries, their secretaries and their under secretaries told villagers in Chiadzwa that they should all mine the Zanu PF given diamonds as long as they sold the proceeds to Fidelity Printers. The price, a paltry \$2000 a gram of diamond!

Government in its wisdom or stupidity has sealed off Chiadzwa. Effectively it's under a curfew. Breaching the curfew can lead one losing a limb. More than thirty cases of people being shot have been recorded. Some still have bullets embedded in their legs. Police dogs have been feasting on the flesh of poor villagers. Popular perception being that police no longer have to worry about feeding their dogs, for ready meat awaits in Marange. Citizens now need special clearance to visit Chiadzwa from the police and Central Intelligence Office. This is all in the name of safeguarding our diamonds and sovereignty. Visiting relatives and friends in Chiadzwa now requires visas. *Visa rekuenda kumusha here vakomana (is it fair to have to seek clearance to visit one's own home area?)* From the Reserve Bank, word is that a new 'clean-up exercise' code named "*mari wakaiwana kupi*" (*where did you get the money from*) will be launched soon. It will start in Mutare, Marange and other parts of Manicaland. Its objectives will be to harass citizens to account for some wealth acquired between August 2006 to present. Nobody knows what the definition of newly found wealth entails, but watch *Breakfree* for details.

Quite a number of strangers both men and women from all corners of the country, the region and beyond have suddenly discovered 'tourist spots' in Chiadzwa judging by the strange visits noted in the past few months. Big cars, including the Hummers have made several sorties to Marange. Some of the country's biggest names have been implicated in the illegal expropriation of Marange diamonds. There is strong belief among people that politicians and other Zanu PF mandarins have parcelled out among themselves prime diamond claims to the detriment of local people. There is an area that locals call "*churu chamai Mujuru*" which is closely linked to some very politically ubiquitous of this country. Churu chamai Mujuru or "Mrs. Mujuru's mount" refers to a fenced area complete with a generator to produce electricity. It is heavily guarded by soldiers. Rumour has it that bulldozers came and opened up the area making a huge mount. It is alleged that some haulage trucks came at night and were loaded with the soil and ferried to some central province in Mashonaland.

Most government vehicles by virtue of their immunity to searching have been very common in Marange. Even ambulances with sirens blaring have become a common feature despite the fact that villagers are left wondering who the sick person is since everyone will be accounted for and the sick among the villagers use scotch carts and wheel barrows as their mode of transport. Police details deployed to Chiadzwa have suddenly become healthier and wear new shoes, their rickety boots discarded. As soon as night falls, the law enforcers suddenly become law breakers as they allow some selected gwejas (panners) to dig quickly and they share the spoils. Even the junior police officers have to bribe their seniors in order to be deployed to Marange.

There are no less than six road blocks at any one given time along the Mutare-Marange route. The same applies for Mutare Birchenough road. For the 120km stretch one endures 5 to 6 hours travel. It's a painful exercise. What is more painful is not the eternal delays but the abuse that sons and daughters of this country have to endure. Women are subjected to some most dehumanizing treatment by police. At 22 miles and Bambazonke they are stripped naked and some police women even dip their fingers in their womanhood claiming that "the women have brought it upon themselves since they hide the diamonds in there". They call it 'diamond fishing'. Testimonies abound that the police use only one glove on multiple women. The men are not spared either, as the manhood is "milked for the diamonds as well. Insanity can never surpass this level.

Who has benefited from the Marange diamonds really? Does this country need to be so demonic and oppressive in order to keep the God given diamonds untapped for the benefit of communities? Whose interests is the government serving by denying the local people access to and ownership of their natural resources? Who is going to mine the diamonds anyway? Government officials have said that diamond mining shall be a preserve of government alone, but why should this be limited to Marange only? Is government mining diamonds at River Ranch and Morrow, if not, why. Is it not true that the government failed as a miner at Mhangura and Alaska? Where did *churu chamai Mujuru* go to? Is it the people of Chiadzwa who benefited from the massive looting of their diamonds or some pervasive garners of evil and some scar faced neo liberals in the ruling party?

Chief Marange thinks it's a curse to have the diamonds in Marange. Maybe they should be in Kutama or Dotito. They are in the wrong place. Others just grin and shake their shoulders languidly. It's all a handful of dust.

(Eddy Ziyera in Mutare).

Mabvuku-Tafara residents call for a stop to privatisation in Zimbabwe by Joseph Rose



Some of Mabvuku and Tafara residents at the workshop

The residents of Mabvuku and Tafara have vowed that they will fight tooth and nail against the privatisation of essential services in Harare. Speaking at a workshop organised by the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) on March 23, the residents said they will not allow government to

sell off “peoples’ services to a few individuals for profit making purposes”. The workshop was attended by groups of people living with HIV/AIDS, members of local residents associations, and youths from Mabvuku and Tafara. Citing poor provision of water, sewerage management, garbage collection, and poor public relations by the city authorities, participants at the workshop called on all Harare residents to demand better services delivery by all means necessary.

Reflecting on how privatisation was impacting on health, participants noted that due to severe water experienced under the new water and sewerage management of the ‘commercialised’ Zimbabwe National Water authority (ZINWA) Cholera out breaks have been reported in the two suburbs. Apart from the intermittent supplies of water, residents also said the poor quality of water supplied to them was a cause of great concern. They also said burst sewers and heaps of refuse which have become common sights in Harare posed a serious threat to people’s health, particularly children. One of the residents who preferred anonymity said, “People are dying in silence because access to health facilities is costly, the polyclinics in this area are not adequately resourced and the private doctors and pharmacies charge exorbitant fees for drugs and consultation”.

During the workshop, the Mabvuku and Tafara residents also called on government to take over the management and administration of Schools from the Schools Development Associations adding that the government should not abrogate its mandate to provide universal education. Participants raised concern about the increasing number of school dropouts in the two suburbs citing the ever increasing cost of stationery, School uniforms, levies and school fees.

The workshop resolved that there is an urgent need to stop the privatisation of essential services. Proposals were that there was need for residents to unite and demand that relevant authorities should seriously consider reversing privatisation. There was a call on government to dissolve ZINWA and capacitate city councils to deliver quality services. Participants called on ZIMCODD and the Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA) to disseminate more information on privatisation and to help residents organise themselves to address the challenges of privatisation.

The International Women’s Day: Some Reflections

By Evince Mugumbate

March 8 is commemorated globally as the International Women's Day set to assess the progress women have made in their struggle for equal rights, as well as a day to celebrate their economic, political and social achievements over the past year. This day is also recognized at the United Nations and is designated in many countries as a national holiday. This is when women on all continents, often divided by national boundaries and by ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic and political differences, come together to celebrate their Day, they can look back to a tradition that represents at least nine decades of struggle for equality, justice, peace and development. Zimbabwe Women and AIDS Support Network (WASN) has been holding public meetings in recognition of this day since 2002. The purpose of the public meetings is

to share information on the Universal Access to Accelerated, treatment care and support. This is a global theme which states that by the year 2010 people all over the world should have access to treatment for HIV and AIDS related illnesses.

This year WASN commemorated the International Women's Day by holding a public meeting at Chikangwe Hall in Karoi. The focus for this year was on sexual reproductive health and rights of women and the access to treatment where service providers like the Ministry of Health, National AIDS Council and the service recipients engage in informative debates on what is available, who can access drugs and whether the drugs are accessible. Despite various interventions aimed at prevention, treatment, care and support of HIV and AIDS, the global pandemic has had and continues to have a devastating impact on the lives of Zimbabwean women and girls. As women celebrate their past achievements this year it is important for them to reflect on the challenge of HIV and AIDS as it wield immeasurable potential to reverse women's achievements in the political and economic realms. One of the greatest achievements of this century would be a solution on dealing with the pandemic. In that regard, educating women on reproductive health and rights of women, the Prevention from Parent to child transmission (PPTCT) and the opportunistic infections is a critical step towards dealing with the scourge. The following reflection points are of note:

- Treatment ensures that women and girls have access to appropriate, free and comprehensive treatment – including but not limited to nutrition services on HIV and AIDS. It also removes social barriers that prevent women from accessing HIV and AIDS treatment and services including violence they face as a result of their status. The need to expand PPTCT interventions beyond protecting the fetus to include comprehensive pre- and post-natal treatment of women and ensure that interventions such as voluntary Counselling Testing PPTCT do not contribute to increased risk of women to stigma and violence can not be over emphasised.
- Unequal sex relationships between men and women result in the inability of many Zimbabwean women to negotiate safe and pleasurable sex. The female condom has made a big difference in many lives of the Zimbabwean women because they can now no longer depend on men to wear a condom. But unfortunately it is hard to find the female condom in the shops is as it found it is more expensive than the male condom. Most married women in Karoi said it was hard to negotiate safe sex or the use of condoms with their husbands. To propose a condom means that the woman is promiscuous. Most women are socio-economically weak and when they have nothing the men decide everything and it is very difficult to refuse to do anything the man wants. Tradition also plays a major role in why the women are still in the predicament they are.
- The assault on women's human rights continues through forms of violence against women and girls including, rape, marital rape, domestic violence, trafficking, harmful customary and traditional practices, forced marriages and early marriages. These forms of violence take place within homes, and they are continuing and increasing at an alarming rate fuelling HIV infections amongst women and girls.

- The nature of the woman's body makes her more prone to contracting HIV than man. The vagina has a larger surface area that makes it have more places for the virus to enter into the body if there are cuts and bruises. Also a vagina holds sperms which may be carrying HIV virus, therefore giving it more opportunity to enter the body.
- Tradition also plays a role in the women's vulnerability. Culturally women can not refuse to have sex with their husbands. There are men who are infected but do not know and do not want to know their status. These men will infect their wives in ignorance.
- Young women in Zimbabwe are as twice as likely to contract HIV compared to men the same age, for the reason those young women in search of security socially and financially tend to marry older men. Because of their need for financial and social security they are often unable to demand safer sex or end relationships where there are at risk of infection.
- Ignorance about sexual and reproductive health and HIV and AIDS is wide spread. Most women do not know enough to protect themselves against the disease. They are more prone to infection. WASN will continue to educate women on their sexual reproductive health and rights.

(Evince Mugumbate is the Information Manager- Women and Aids Support Network (WASN))

China Provokes Debate in Africa

Walden Bello | March 9, 2007

It was unexpected.

At the Seventh World Social Forum (WSF), held in Nairobi, Kenya, in late January, the most controversial topic was not HIV-AIDS, the U.S. occupation of Iraq, or neoliberalism. The topic that generated the most heat was China's relations with Africa.

At a packed panel discussion organized by a semi-official Chinese NGO, the discussion was candid and angry. "First, Europe and America took over our big businesses. Now China is driving our small and medium entrepreneurs to bankruptcy," Humphrey Pole-Pole of the Tanzanian Social Forum told the Chinese speakers. "You don't even contribute to employment because you bring in your own labor."

Stung by such remarks from the floor, Cui Jianjun, secretary general of the China NGO Network for International Exchanges, lost his diplomatic cool and launched into an emotional defense of Chinese foreign investment, saying that "we Chinese had to make the same hard decision on whether to accept foreign investment many, many years ago. You have to make the right decision or you will lose, lose, and lose. You have to decide right, or you will remain poor, poor, and poor."

The vigorous exchange should have been anticipated since many Africans view China as having the potential to bring either great promise or great harm. If African civil society representatives were hard on China, this was because they desperately wanted China to reverse course before it was too late, so that it would avoid the path trod by Europe and the United States... (For the rest of the article, visit www.fpif.org)

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