



His Excellency,
Cde. Dr Emmerson D. Mnangagwa,
President of the Republic of Zimbabwe

His Excellency Joaquim A. Chissano,
former President of the Republic of Mozambique

His Excellency
Dr Akinwumi A. Adesina
President of the African Development Bank Group

23rd February 2023

Your Excellencies,

2nd High-Level Structured Dialogue Platform Meeting – Meikles Hotel, Harare, Zimbabwe, 23rd February 2023

We, The African Forum and Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD) and The Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) representing Zimbabwean Civil Society Organisations working on economic and social justice issues, write to express our sincerest appreciation and gratitude extended to us, to attend and participate in the 2nd High-Level Structured Dialogue Platform Meeting at Meikles Hotel on 23rd February 2023.

Your Excellencies, we congratulate H.E Cde. Mnangagwa for demonstrating resolved and determination in stabilising his country in the face of a multiplicity of challenges. It is not mean feat to achieve the stability in these trying conditions and with a ballooning debt burden much of which is historical and inherited. Indeed, Your Excellencies, today, the people of Zimbabwe are paying for the sins of those who long came before them.

Your Excellencies, the debt predicament Africa generally and Zimbabwe specifically faces is one that Civil Society has been warning of for the past decade. The Neo-Liberal, Market based, and private sector led approach to solving public services and investments is not working for Africa. The global financial and debt architecture is rigged against Africa because Africa does not have a voice at the table of global decisionmaking. Your Excellencies, this 2nd High-Level Structured Dialogue Platform Meeting is robust example of Africa taking its destiny in its own hands, and as we say at AFRODAD, ***Making Africa a Rule Maker not a Rule Taker!*** And for this, we congratulate you Your Excellencies for this bold step in the arrears clearance programme for Zimbabwe.



Your Excellencies, this 2nd High-Level Structured Dialogue Platform Meeting came at a critical time for Zimbabwe and her people, when global crises from Covid-19, Ukraine-Russia War, and the Climate emergency all converging on a country already crippled by its heavy debt burden. As such, access to public services, food, and other basic services have been impacted thus deepening the inequality and poverty in the country as well as undermining human dignity of the people of this great country.

Your Excellencies, Zimbabwe is a country in debt crisis and needs help. The IMF projections for 2022, put Zimbabwe consolidated public sector debt of [US\\$18.4 billion](#). The accumulation of external debt payment arrears and penalties for the past two decades, now estimated at [US\\$6.3 billion](#) as at end of September 2022. The existence of these external debt payment arrears and penalties remain a major obstacle to the achievement of the national Development Strategy 1 ([NDS1](#)) objectives and the attainment of [Vision 2030](#). The people of Zimbabwe have suffered extensively from the crisis. High inflation has dramatically hit real incomes, while falling public spending per person threatens to reduce access to vital public services.

Your Excellencies, as Civil Society working in the public financial management, we welcome the inclusion of our sector in this process. The opportunity to articulate our analysis and recommendations to His Excellency Chissano, the Facilitator, ahead of the 2nd High-Level Structured Dialogue Meeting is a watershed moment for collaboration of government, creditors, and the public through Civil Society. For this we congratulate, the Three Principals, for recognising the important contribution of Civil Society in this process. Indeed, Your Excellencies, seeing Zimbabwe and her people recover from outlined challenges, is a shared ambition and objective for us all, and as such we look forward to continuing our active participation in this Arrears Clearance Programme.

In reference to the work programme for the Arrears Clearance, Your Excellencies, we make the following asks and recommendations:

1. **Economic Reforms Matrix** – Combatting financial leakages in all forms to protect the limited government revenue streams in Zimbabwe will be critical to stabilising the macroeconomic environment and generate confidence for both domestic and international business to invest in Zimbabwe. Interventions in this area are critical to successfully implement the “Zimbabwe is Open for Business” policy.
2. **Debt Transparency** – Strengthening the capacity and capabilities of institutions to record and publish debt data and statistics is a key pillar in promoting openness and transparency between citizens and state. In the spirit of cooperation and collaboration, Civil Society stand ready to work with the Government in this regard. Our *African Borrowing Charter* offers proposal on

how debt transparency can be strengthened in Zimbabwe. We attach it as an annex for your perusal and due consideration.

3. **Creditor Responsibility** – The debt architecture is skewed in favour of creditor. Indeed, A ‘debt crisis’ is a shared responsibility between the debtor country and its creditors. We recommend the Arrears Clearance Programme impress on **ALL** Zimbabwe’s creditors to reciprocate the transparency of their dealings with the Republic. This reciprocity will strengthen the programme significantly.
4. **Civil Society Participation** – In the spirit of cooperation and wanting the same end goal, a prosperous Zimbabwe, we recommend Civil Society be given a defined role within this Arrears Clearance Programme that is integrated in the Economic Reforms Matrix through the Sector Working Group, and the Economic Growth Sub-Sector Group.

Your Excellencies, as the international creditor community focuses on resolving the Zimbabwe case, it is important to highlight that the debt crisis in Africa is a pervasive problem and we seek to draw attention to the [African Borrowing Charter](#) and the [Harare Declaration](#) which decries with enormous concerns the risk of seeing another debt crisis in Africa such as that which unfolded in the late 1980s and 1990s and calls for a reformed international financial architecture through the United Nations, which delivers sustainable development finance to all countries.

We remain at your disposal for any necessary clarifications on these proposals and look forward to constructively engaging in the upcoming engagements and follow up processes.

Yours Sincerely,



JANET ZHOU
Executive Director
Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt & Development (ZIMCODD)



Jason R Braganza
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[AFRODAD](#) is a Pan African civil society organisation established in 1996 as a regional platform and organisation for lobbying and advocating for debt cancellation and addressing other debt related issues in Africa. AFRODAD influences African governments to institute and implement policies and practices to promote development and poverty eradication.

[ZIMCODD](#) is a socio-economic justice coalition established in February 2000 to facilitate citizens’ involvement in making public policy more pro-people and pro-poor.