



PRFT'S BASIC NEEDS BASKET POLICY STATEMENT – MARCH 2021

The cost of living continues to increase as established by the Basic Needs Basket (BNB) survey of March 2021. The Basic Needs Basket for a family of 5 increased by 22.8% to ZWL\$ 42,354.84 for the month of March 2021 from ZWL\$ 34,498.48 in February 2021. The increase in prices of basic goods such as cooking oil, mealie-meal, eggs, bread and accommodation per room has contributed to the rise in the cost of the basket. The Zimstat Total Consumption Poverty Line (TCPL) for one person for the month of March 2021 increased to ZWL\$ 5,312.00 (roughly ZWL\$26,500 for a family of 5) from ZWL\$ 5,187.00 (ZWL\$25,900) in February 2021, reflecting the increase in the cost of living. The localised basket cost for the month of March 2021 were ZWL\$ 59,896 for Newlands; ZWL\$ 36,888 for Mabvuku; ZWL\$ 29,622.00 for Epworth; ZWL\$ 42,596.00 for Hatcliffe; ZWL \$ 37,876.00 for Mbare; ZWL\$ 31,414.00 for Ushewekunze; ZWL\$ 25,.00 for Hopely; ZWL\$ 37,674.44 for Glenorah; ZWL\$ 57,719.85 for Waterfalls and ZWL\$ 61,568 for Hellensvale. The BNB survey established that Hellensvale has the highest cost of living with BNB value of ZWL\$ 61,568.00 whilst Hopely has the lowest cost of living – approximately 25,578.00 for a family of 5 in the month of March 2021.

Whilst the cost of living is moving in an upward trajectory, the black market continues to offer competitive prices of basic goods to the majority poor. Observations made during the BNB survey confirmed the increase of “outdoor stores” which are offering competitive prices to those found in major grocery stores such as OK and TM supermarkets. Interviews with residents in Mabvuku and Epworth indicated that they prefer buying their groceries on the black-market because of the favourable prices. Despite the competitive prices on the black markets, the quality of products remains questionable with some informal suppliers selling goods that have expired and substandard goods in some cases. Citizens have to be protected and ensure that they consume products that do not compromise their health and maintains their dignity.



Informal market store at Kamunhu business centre in Mabvuku

Overall, the cost of living in Zimbabwe is quite unaffordable for many. This is exacerbated by the prevailing lockdowns which have taken centre stage since early last year. The government in collaboration with other private and non-governmental agencies has to put in place far reaching social protection programmes considering the household food security threats posed by the inflationary economic conditions, COVID-19 restrictions and limited livelihood opportunities for the majority poor.

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