



March Basic Needs Basket Statement

THE PLIGHT OF TENANTS IN MUTARE IS A CALL FOR COUNCIL TO ACT!

During the March 2015 Basic Needs Basket Survey conducted by the Poverty Reduction Forum Trust (PRFT), it was seen that the average rental prices for a standard room in Chikanga, Dangamvura and Sakubva is \$55. This increase has occurred gradually from \$40 per room in March 2012. The Rent and Domestic Workers survey by ZIMSTAT showed that the average rental per room in Manicaland's high density areas in March 2012 was \$38.53. For a family of five, PRFT estimates that in order for the family of five to live in a decent manner, there is need for at least four standard rooms. This increase in rental accommodation has further ballooned the cost of the average Basic Needs Basket for an urban family of five in Mutare. On average, the BNB in Mutare for March 2015 was \$526.55, up from \$453.82 in January 2012.

Rentals all over the country have been high in comparison to the average incomes with the poor suffering the most. The average incomes in Mutare's high density suburbs for the month of March 2015 stood at \$323.00. It has been noted that there are several factors that can be attributed to the high cost of rentals namely, the fact that landlords experience rental stickiness in which they fail to adjust their rentals to what the market forces are demanding. There has also been the precedence that acquisition of residential stands has been at a slower pace compared to the population growth, resulting in an increased demand for accommodation. This has resulted in the prevalence of substandard housing sprawling in some parts of Dangamvura known as Federation and Area 17. This substandard housing poses as a threat in the provision of water and sanitation which is linked with an increased prevalence in illnesses. In Sakubva, areas such as Bhawa where people started living when operation Murambatsvina struck in 2005 has unsafe living conditions as overcrowding prevails.

During the Basic Needs Survey, PRFT established that residents in Chikanga, Dangamvura and Sakubva are frustrated by the delay in applying for residential stands at the Council offices. To get onto the council's waiting list, it costs \$5/annum for a 400m² high density residential stand. Apparently, this delay has caused many to opt for acquiring stands through housing cooperatives with very little success. In the past, there have been hundreds of Mutare dwellers that have found themselves in fraudulent deals in acquiring stands, namely in the Gimboki scandal. This has also instilled fear on taking the cooperative route. Knowing that the Mutare Council may be facing challenges to address this issue, PRFT has come up with some recommendations given below.

Recommendations

Zimbabwe is a signatory to the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. Article 11.1 of the Covenant declares that:

The State Parties to the present Covenant recognise the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realisation of this right.

It is therefore in the best interest of the city council to engage in Public Private Partnerships in order to increase the efficiency of provision of accommodation to the general public. However, PRFT calls for more transparency and regulation under the Private Public Partnerships and there must be increased community consultation on these arrangements. It cannot be ignored that the provision of housing stands is a necessity for city dwellers. This will promote the increase in good quality housing which also comes with good quality water and sanitation facilities.

Mutare BNB¹ for March 2015

Food Item	Preferred Brand	Unit Available	Quantity Required	Average (US\$)
A. Essential Food Items:				
Mealie Meal	Red Seal (Roller meal)	20kg	2	23.06
Cooking oil	D'lite	2Ltrs	2	7.44
Beef	Mixed	1kg	8	48.24
Chicken	Suncrest cuts	2kg	1	6.92
Beans	Sugar beans	500g	2	3.10
Fish	Fresh	1kg	2	6.65
Salt	Pro-brands	2kg	1	0.95
Bread	Bakers Inn	1loaf	30	30.00
Eggs	Standard	1 crates	2	11.50
Sugar	Gold star (white)	2kg	4	7.48
Tea (leaves)	Tanganda	250g	4	8.68
Milk	Steri	500ml	10	9.62
Margarine	Buttercup	2kg	1	9.53
Onions		1kg	5	5.45
Tomatoes		1kg	10	11.47
Vegetables (greens)	Rape	1kg	15	6.00
Sub-total				196.09
B. Essential Non-food items				
Washing soap	Green bar	1kg	3	4.26
Bathing soap	Geisha tablets	250g	4	3.72
Washing Powder	Omo	1kg	1	2.82

¹ The following are the shops and markets where PRFT collected data on prices of basic commodities for the March 2015 BNB; Dangamvura TM, Sakubva TM, Sakubva Spar, Chikanga COST IT - ENT, TM City centre, OK City Centre. The survey was conducted on the 19th and 20th of March 2015.

Toothpaste	Colgate	100ml	2	1.94
Sanitary pads	Farai	1 pack	3	2.55
Toilet paper	Softex	4 rolls	4	4.30
Jelly	Vaseline	250ml	2	3.87
Sub-total				23.46
C. Rates and other essential services				
Water & Sanitation (medium cost - fixed)	Water fixed			0.00
	Average usage/month	420 m3		16.00
	Sanitation (Sewage)	Fixed		6.00
Monthly rent (4 roomed house)	Basic accommodation	per room	4	220.00
Electricity ²	Fixed		1	0.00
	Average usage/month	Units		65.00
Sub-total				307.00
Total for Basic Needs Basket for Mutare				526.55
Other Costs				
Telephone/Communication		\$/month		30.00
Transport (2-way)		\$1/day		26.00
School Fees				
Tertiary	University			365.00
	Technical/Professional College		National certificate	175.00
			National Diploma	225.00
	High School (Forms 5&6)	per term		140.00
	Secondary (Forms 1-4)	per term		70.00
	Primary	per term		35.00
	ECD	per term		90.00
	Creche	per month		50.00
Health care	CIMAS Basic care package		2 adults and 3 children @ \$10 each	50.00
	Matches	Carton of 10		0.60
	Candles	pack of 6		1.83
	Firewood	per month		20.00

² Electricity charges were estimated using averages that families are now paying following the installation of pre-paid meters in most homes in Mutare.

PRFT is an independent think tank formed with the mandate to carry out poverty research to influence social and economic policy programming

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