



ZIMBABWE CHAMBER OF INFORMAL ECONOMY ASSOCIATIONS

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ZCIEA PRESS STATEMENT ON GOVERNMENT'S ULTIMATUM REGARDING ZERO VENDING IN CITIES AND TOWNS - VENDORS ARE NOT CRIMINALS

As ZCIEA, we took notice of a Government directive, in collaboration with the City of Harare, to clear vendors from all the CBDs in the country. We also note with concern all the allegations mentioned by the lead Minister about vendors in the streets during the presser on this ultimatum.

As an Association that represents informal workers and traders, we acknowledge the need to keep our cities clean and free from any other vices, as pointed out by the Minister, however, we are deeply concerned by this harsh and misinformed reaction from the government. We strongly feel that the government should engage us as stakeholders in the sector, and we frame a productive way forward to address multi-expanding vending as the concern of the country. There is a great need for an honest and robust engagement to see how we can collectively address the factors that draw informal traders into the CBD. It should be noted that the continued proliferation of informal traders is a direct result of de-industrialisation, which makes this intended action dealing with the symptom just but a temporary measure. As stakeholders, we know and understand for a fact that the Local Authorities have failed to provide readily designated places meant for informal traders with sufficient sanitary facilities to cater for the huge number of our members. There is a need for a permanent solution that satisfies all stakeholders in dealing with this national issue.

While the Government and City Council has a mandate to maintain order in our towns and cities, this should not happen at the expense of continuous criminalisation of already vulnerable livelihoods of the majority citizens, who are striving to eke an honest living in this very difficult economy, hence the need for an approach that balance all competing interests.

In the circumstances, instead of a harsh and unilateral approach from the authorities, we call for the Government to embrace the effort of the Formalisation Strategy which is being spearheaded by the Ministry of Public Service Labour and Social Welfare, where other Ministries Women Affairs and SMES, Youth, Skills Audit, Higher and Tertiary Education, among others including ZimStats, Social Partners Trade Unions and EMCOZ, Research institutes, Economists and International Agencies who are making unwavering efforts towards National Development Strategy 1 and 2 into 2030 agenda. The informal economy - vendors and traders are part of the 2030 agenda too. This is the realistic and productive way of addressing the challenges facing our country on vending. We condemn the harsh actions on innocent citizens. This will create unnecessary panic, instability, vulnerability, corruption and bad images of the country on its citizens. This will have many implications on increase to poverty, robbery, children not going to school, women injustices among others. We believe that when our President, His Excellency Dr. ED Mnangagwa, is saying Leaving No One Behind on development towards 2030, the informal economy cannot be left behind too.

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We need to be at the table and present working solutions to our beautiful Zimbabwe. An all-inclusive approach where our voices are considered to have a collective lasting solution to these problems is the way out. We, therefore, call upon Honorable Minister Garwe and the team behind this ultimatum to call us to the table and map the way forward together.

Sincerely

Kizito Mupunga (Acting President, ZCIEA) 13 March 2025

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