

ZIMBABWE CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS (ZCTU)

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PRESS RELEASE

RE: WORKERS NOT READY FOR THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE SCHEME

The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) has learnt with surprise that Cabinet has approved the setting up of a National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), despite our reservations to the move.

While noting that the idea is noble, the ZCTU believes the timing is wrong given the fact that the scheme was mooted more than ten years ago and conditions on the ground have since changed. Currently, workers are already burdened with high income tax as well as AIDS Levy and the new scheme would further worsen their plight as it will be funded through further taxation of workers.

During the Tripartite Negotiation Forum (TNF) discussions, the ZCTU strongly opposed the move and it is surprising that the government has decided to go it alone. Workers are not prepared for any extra deductions on their meagre wages and we also believe our economy is not yet ready for the scheme.

We are told that the scheme will be administered by the National Social Security Authority (NSSA) and our experience with NSSA is not pleasing at all as it has failed to meaningfully benefit workers, let alone Zimbabweans at large.

In addition, NSSA has totally failed to administer all the other schemes that it is currently running. Countrywide consultations with workers have revealed that given a choice, workers would want to withdraw from NSSA because of the way the authority is run.

The ZCTU believes that the scheme should only be implemented after wide consultations with all stakeholders, workers included. Labour hopes that the National Health Insurance Scheme will be shelved until all modalities have been worked out and the workers consulted on whether they would want their money to go towards the NHIS.

Japhet Moyo
SECRETARY-GENERAL
28 November 2016