



Dear Members

Welcome to the 2021 1st quarter edition of our Newsletter which delves on:

1. Demystifying COVID-19 pandemic myths under the Adjust & Adapt COVID-19 Series;
2. The EMCOZ Business Indaba 2021.

The main purpose of the first workshop was to help delegates better understand the COVID-19 pandemic and have a better perception of the COVID-19 vaccination program, which was already underway in some parts of the country. Prompted by the need to enhance resilience and business continuity, the fundamental objective of the EMCOZ Business Indaba was to come up with strategic policy resolutions that would materialize the much awaited economic recovery amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. EMCOZ promotes and protects the interests of Zimbabwean employers and employees by lobbying Government on national policies, practices and standards, especially in this Covid-19 pandemic. We pledge to continue offering quality and demand driven services to

members in the areas of Employment Law, Labour Relations, Executive Training and Development as well as Management Consultancy in Organization Development. We urge you to continue engaging with us and specifically request that you update your contacts with us to enable us reach you effectively and timely.

Let us all continue to mask up, sanitize and practice social distance. I wish you pleasant reading.

EMCOZ President

Dr. I. Murefu

CONTACT DETAILS

Physical Address:

21 Smit Crescent, Eastlea, Harare

Phone:

(04) 2937587

Email:

emcoz@emcoz.co.zw

Website:

www.emcoz.co.zw

Twitter:

@EMCOZ_ZIM



1. DEMYSTIFYING COVID-19 PANDEMIC MYTHS UNDER THE ADJUST & ADAPT SERIES

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Novel Coronavirus discovered in 2019 (COVID-19), being an emerging betacoronavirus caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2); frustrated Governments across the globe as no one was prepared for the new normal. Having been officially confirmed in China, in the Hubei province, around late December 2019; the virus spread across the world at an alarming rate. Three months later, in March 2020, Zimbabwe recorded its first case. At that time myths and misinformation had already become rampant not only in Zimbabwe but also in the rest of the world, including China itself. Many Zimbabweans could not buy into the COVID-19 related deaths or reported new cases. Others would argue that COVID-19 thrives in winter while some hinted that the disease was less deadly for Africans or blacks.

1.2 CONTEXT

To demystify COVID-19 pandemic myths, EMCOZ organized a virtual meeting on the 24th of February 2021. The meeting was attended by Business Leaders, EMCOZ members, Employer Associations and Employment Councils. The workshop brainstormed on the challenges faced by employers, employees and the nation as the country mapped the way forward to a sustainable environment for socio-economic development.

The workshop presentation included the following:

Title of Presentation	Presentation Content
Development and Administration of Vaccines	The workshop presentation included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How vaccines are developed • Costs and Efficacy • How vaccines are administered including number of doses
Lessons learnt from other countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International experiences of other countries with vaccination programs • Various lessons were learnt
Government – private sector partnership in the vaccination program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private sector financing models for the vaccination program
Types of COVID-19 vaccines to be availed in Zimbabwe and Government's expectations from Business in light of the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipated vaccines explained; • time of vaccines availability; • expected vaccine roll-out plan including financing and procurement strategies; • expected role of Business in fighting the pandemic



Government – private sector partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies on how business can to assist Government
---	---

2. EMCOZ BUSINESS INDABA 2021

2.1 BACKGROUND

On the 27th of March 2020, the Government announced that the country would go into a nationwide lockdown for 21 days beginning from the 30th of March 2020. Since then, Zimbabwe has not stopped ensuring adherence to COVID-19 preventive measures and restrictions. The COVID-19 pandemic further worsened economic challenges in the country which was already suffering from climatic shocks in the form of drought and Cyclone Idai, energy challenges, foreign currency shortages, high inflation rates, extreme poverty levels due to rising unemployment, low investments & savings as well as low productivity levels. This year’s EMCOZ Indaba 2021 was held under the umbrella theme “Enhancing Resilience in the Corporate Sector: Macro-economic Policy Responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in Zimbabwe”. The main thrust of the Indaba was to come up with strategic policy resolutions that would give impetus to sustainable economic growth and development in the country.

2.2 CONTEXT

The workshop, sponsored by the Zimbabwe Manpower Development Fund (ZIMDEF), Zimbabwe Clothing Manufacturers Association (ZCMA), National Social Security Authority (NSSA), Premier Service Medical Investments (PSMI), Zimbabwe Textile Manufacturers Association (ZITMA), First Mutual Health, FBC Holdings Limited and Dairibord Holdings; was organized by EMCOZ and held on the 29th and 30th of April 2021. The Indaba was attended by delegates from government, business and labour.

The workshop presentation included the following speakers:

Title of Presentation	Presentation Content
Effects of COVID-19 on Business: Immediate Socio-Economic Responses to COVID-19 in Zimbabwe	<p>The presentation covered the following findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Zimbabwean business operations in various sectors of the economy the extent to which Zimbabwe businesses are ready for the Fourth Industrial Revolution readiness of Zimbabwe businesses to participate in the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA) against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic dynamics
The Impact of COVID-19 on the Informal Economy and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Background of the Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Association (ZCIEA);



Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facts and figures about the informal economy in Zimbabwe; • Impact of COVID-19 on the informal economy.
Vaccine Procurement: Private Sector Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vaccine development dynamics and types • Role of private sector in Zimbabwe including financing models
Strategic HR Management: Repositioning HR Management in Turbulent Times; HR_Management as Business Partners: Lessons From Other Countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characteristics and causes of turbulence; • How turbulence affects organizations; • Experiences (and lessons) from other countries
NSSA Guidelines: Managing Workplaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) issues at the workplace. • Workplace guidelines for COVID-19 management.
Practicing Fiscal Prudence: Tax Environment and Effects on Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax administration in Zimbabwe; • Benefits of best practices on tax • Tax revenue trends; • Challenges and opportunities within the current tax practices; • Effects of the current tax policy on business activities.

2.3 RESOLUTIONS

In order to revive the economy of Zimbabwe, while enhancing business resilience in the current COVID-19 era; the following resolutions were made:

- The need for more traction in the Tripartite Negotiating Forum (TNF);
- There is need for formulation of a social contract;
- Operationalization of the TNF including appointment of independent secretariat and chairperson for the TNF;



- Operationalization of the national productivity institute;
- The need to conclude the labour-law reform process covering the labour amendment bill and the OHS bill;
- The need to adhere to COVID-19 prevention measures including NSSA guidelines;
- The need for sector-specific wage review rather than national minimum wage setting;
- The need to support the ongoing vaccination program by encouraging vaccine uptake;
- Policy reforms aimed at improving the country risk as well as promoting FDI inflows;
- There is need for the government to urgently finalize the drafting of a comprehensive ACFTA implementation plan to ensure that the country reaps benefits from participation in ACFTA;
- In consultation with all relevant sectors, the Government should develop a comprehensive and coherent Digital Transformation Strategy (DTS);
- The need for transition from informal to formal economy;
- HR practitioners should be agile and speedily adjust to turbulent situations;
- The need for companies to invest in digitization and capacitate their staff to embrace the new normal in the world of work;
- Intensify Soft Skills Training;
- There is need for Government to consider rolling out a second stimulus package to assist organizations in financial distress;
- There is need for implementation of OSH management systems for all;
- Full development of the OSH promotional framework for the country;
- The need to strengthen social dialogue;
- Restructure the tax collection systems;
- Broaden the tax threshold in order to protect income from the erosion due to hyperinflation;
- The need to create tax incentives in order to motivate companies to create jobs;
- Tax amnesty in light of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Strengthen tax administration;
- Create incentives for tax complying companies.



Mrs. N. Mukwehwa, EMCOZ Executive Director, setting the scene of the Indaba



Some of the delegates who attended the EMCOZ Indaba