

The Zimbabwe Teachers Association (ZIMTA) will seek audience with Saviour Kasukuwere, the Minister of Youth Development, Indigenisation and Empowerment, over teachers' participation in the black economic empowerment agenda.

Created: 24 April 2012

Adopted from the Financial Gazette : 20 April 2012

ZIMTA, which held its annual national conference in Bulawayo, resolved at the end of the gathering that teachers needed to be empowered under the government's economic empowerment programme to augment their meagre salaries.

Kasukuwere was supposed to officially open the conference but could not do so due to other commitments.

But ZIMTA officials said they would nonetheless seek his assistance in a bid to improve the lot

of their members.

A lowly paid teacher earns US\$296 against the poverty datum line estimated at US\$505.

“ZIMTA resolves to engage government on the policy of indigenisation and economic empowerment,” said Tendai Chikowore, ZIMTA president.

“The media has been awash with information and reports that there are sectors that are benefiting from loans from this ministry (indigenisation) with the youth and women benefiting. We are now saying as teachers is the government making a provision for us to say we also have a fund that will allow teachers to access and also come up with their small businesses? You will be shocked to realise that maybe up to now there is no provision for us,” she said. Chikowore said if teachers were economically empowered in other areas, they would not be strained during salary negotiations with their employer because the government would have put in place a plan to augment their remuneration.

The ZIMTA president said teachers were living from hand to mouth and had nothing to show for their work when they retire, except clothes they put on, adding it was high time they demanded a share in the wealth of the country.

Chikowore said poverty among teachers was not an accident but a result of poor past policies that constrained teachers from running businesses while in employment.

“When we joined this profession, we graduated after training and each time we were addressed by officers or government ministers from the ministry of education it was hammered over and over again: ‘civil servants cannot get into businesses because that would divert you from your day to day work.’ It has been passed on from generation to generation and we still find ourselves in this kind of predicament,” she said.