

Zimbabwe



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65%

Population below international poverty line

not by law

National minimum wage

€232
per month

Rural living wage

66%

Agricultural workforce

8%

Agriculture share of GDP

5

very high
Risk to workers' rights

Context

Zimbabwe has a population of approximately 16 million people.^[1] The country rural population is still the majority, accounting for 68%^[2], with 32%^[3] living in urban areas. That explains the high number of the population working in agriculture: 62%^[4]. The sector represents 8.8% of the national GDP.^[5]

A decade ago, the agricultural sector accounted for about 20% of the country's GDP, but this has since declined below 10% in recent years. Frequent droughts, low and erratic rainfall, intermittent floods, and the current COVID-19 pandemic have affected productivity. This has exposed millions of people to poverty, food and nutrition insecurity, making the country a net importer of food and among the top 10 most fragile countries in the world. With almost 70% of the population depending on agriculture for their livelihood, however, small-scale farmers play a critical role in the sector, as they own the majority of the agricultural land.^[6]

The top produced commodities in Zimbabwe are sugar cane, maize, cattle meat and milk, and wheat.^[7] The country's top export commodities in terms of quantity are unmanufactured tobacco, oranges, cotton, and raw cane and beet sugar.^[8]

Wages

Minimum wage

Zimbabwe has no official Minimum Wage set by law. In 2022, the Government proposed a minimum wage of 77 USD (72 EUR) for 2023, in contrast, unions representing the manufacturing and mining sectors have proposed a 400 USD (376 EUR) minimum wage.^[9] An estimated 80 to 90% of the country's workers laboured in the informal sector. Labour laws technically apply to informal sector workers but were not observed or enforced. Most informal workers worked in agriculture, trading, or mining.^[10]

Living wage

The Anker Living Wage Reference Value for rural Zimbabwe is estimated at 247 USD (232 EUR) per month. This is the wage required for workers in a typical rural area of Zimbabwe to afford a basic but decent standard of living. The value is 3.2 times higher than the government proposed minimum wage and 38% lower than the union proposed minimum wage for mining and manufacturing sectors.^[11]

What's happening

RESOURCE

[Living Wage Reference Value, Rural Zimbabwe](#)

Living wage estimate for workers to be able to afford a basic but decent living standard in rural areas of Zimbabwe.

Footnotes

1. World Bank (2021). <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=ZW>
2. World Bank (2021). <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS?locations=ZW>
3. World Bank (2021). <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS?locations=ZW>
4. World Bank (2021). <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.AGR.EMPL.ZS?locations=ZW>
5. World Bank (2021). <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NV.AGR.TOTL.ZS?locations=ZW>
6. [6] IFAD. Zimbabwe and IFAD join forces to transform small-scale agriculture. <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/latest/-/zimbabwe-and-ifad-join-forces-to-transform-small-scale-agriculture>
7. FAOSTAT (2021). http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#rankings/commodities_by_country
8. FAOSTAT (2021). http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#rankings/commodities_by_country_exports
9. WageIndicator Foundation (2023). Minimum Wage-Zimbabwe. <https://wageindicator.org/salary/minimum-wage/zimbabwe>
10. U.S. Department of State. 2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Zimbabwe. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/zimbabwe/>
11. Global Living Wage Coalition (2022). Anker Living Wage Reference Value: Rural Zimbabwe 2022. <https://www.globallivingwage.org/living-wage-reference-value%e2%81%a0-rural-zimbabwe/>