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## **Press Statement**

### **ERB embarks on Electricity Tariff verification exercise**

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The Energy Regulation Board has embarked on a verification exercise to determine whether ZESCO Limited has implemented new electricity tariffs in accordance with the board approval.

This development comes in the wake of complaints by energy consumers that under the new tariffs, the number of units consumers are receiving in the life-line consumption band of 300 kilo watt hours (kWh) has drastically reduced compared to what they were entitled to before tariffs were adjusted.

In order to mitigate the impact of the tariff increase on residential customers, the ERB increased the lifeline band from 100 to 300 kilo watt hours (kWh) per month. Tariffs for this consumption band have not changed from the energy charge of 15 ngwee per kWh and fixed charge of K18.23. However, consumption beyond 300kwh per month will be charged at a higher tariff of K1.54 for the energy charge and K18.23 as the fixed charge.

It is for this reason that we advise residential consumers to restrict their consumption to the lifeline tariff of 300kwh. Any households using electricity for commercial ventures such as salons, barber shops and welding centres should expect that this will inevitably push their consumption into the higher Residential 2 (R2) consumption band which now costs more.

Through its Economic Regulation department, the ERB will examine or analyse receipts from a cross section of consumers who submit their receipts to ERB offices in Chinsali, Kitwe, Livingstone and Lusaka.

In the meantime, ERB directs that ZESCO should sensitise its customers on the new tariffs and how these will impact their spending patterns.

In arriving at the tariffs, the ERB was mindful of how an upward adjustment would impact residential, commercial, social services and maximum demand customers given the current challenging economic environment.

Regrettably, after the necessary analysis, the ERB had to hike the tariffs because it has a responsibility to ensure that ZESCO has sufficient revenue to invest in generation projects that are desperately needed to address the critical power deficit which has resulted in enhanced load shedding for all customer categories. The ERB in carrying out its mandate balances the interests of stakeholders and in considering the recent tariff application found it necessary to grant ZESCO an increase.

It must be pointed out that Government is currently paying colossal sums of money to import emergency power to cushion the impact of load shedding.

To counter the power deficit, the ERB appeals to both industry and households to collectively adopt energy conservation practices such as:

- Sparingly use geysers especially during this period when temperatures are relatively high;
- Switch off lights in unoccupied rooms and offices;
- Discard incandescent bulbs and use energy saver bulbs. Although energy savers cost more than the incandescent ones, they tend to last for up to three years;
- Be prudent in the use of power when cooking foodstuffs such as beans, dry fish which take long to prepare on the stove.
- For those who can afford, use alternative sources of energy for cooking and heating such as solar geysers and use gas stoves.
- Implement demand side management initiatives such as installing equipment to improve the power factor.



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