

Harare unlivable!

By Business Writers

Sunday, 04 September 2011 16:39

HARARE - An announcement by Energy minister Elton Mangoma that Zimbabwe would continue facing power shortages until 2013 is set to worsen the country's economic fortunes and its perception indices such as "livability rating."

Harare was on Thursday rated as the worst city to live in out of 140 world cities rated by British-based Economist Intelligence Unit.

The group said factors such as power and water shortages had resulted in the capital's low rating in the survey.

"Harare, where power and water outages occur daily, scored a 38 percent livability rating", the group said.

The research said factors such as power communication services and health facilities had also fared poorly on the annual survey.

"The threat of civil unrest and the availability of public health care and public transport in Harare were intolerable. Energy and water supplies were undesirable while calling phones and internet services uncomfortable," the unit said.

The capital's rating highlighted continuing "bleak prospects" for Harare's population of nearly two million, the survey noted.

It said quality housing was available only for the wealthy, while quality private education was available in the city, but costly and takes good teachers away from Harare's impoverished government schools.

Melbourne and Vienna were rated the two easiest cities to live in.

The annual global cities survey advises companies on the level of hardship employees face and recommends pay adjustments for those who move to cities where living conditions are particularly difficult, with "excessive physical hardship or a notably unhealthy environment."

A livability rating — compiled on site in the cities by experts and statisticians — given as 80 percent to 100 percent means there are few challenges to daily living standards such as housing, health, education and transportation.

Fifty percent or less means most aspects of living are "severely restricted", the group said.

Cities across sub-Saharan Africa had an average livability rating of 50 percent, compared to 92 percent in Western Europe and 91 percent in North America.

The World Bank on Wednesday painted a bleak future for the country when it announced the country required \$13 billion for energy projects while its ability “to develop to its full potential still seems to be far away.”

Kundhavi Kadiresan, the World Bank representative in Zimbabwe said despite “positive developments” the country remained heavily indebted to the tune of \$8,8 billion.

The Bretton woods institution said discussions were on going with government with regards to its debt repayments “of which close to \$6 billion is in arrears. Now from the World Bank and multilaterals alone the arrears are equal to close to \$2 billion.”

Kadiresan said the country also required a huge capital investment to repair its road network and re-tool industry.

Earlier in the year, the World Economic Forum’s Global Competitiveness Report 2011 said the country had eight poor rankings out of nine in respect to key labour market fundamentals.

The fundamentals include cooperation on labour relations (79th out of 139 countries), flexibility of wage determination (137th position), rigidity of employment index (82nd position), hiring and firing practices(122nd position), brain drain (121st position), redundancy costs (134th position), pay and productivity (120th position), reliance on professional management (23rd position) and females in labour force (77th position).