

# Zim government opposes sweets for change

By [Dumisani Ndlela](#)

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Finance Minister Tendai Biti has realised that stability brought to the country by dollarisation has also brought with it some difficulties - hundreds of retail customers have to get their change in the form of sweets because of lack of coins.

But even after persuading bankers to import US\$9 million worth of coins, retailers have refused to get the coins from banks because of an opportunity created by lack of coins to profiteer. Retailers want banks to give them South African rand coins at an exchange rate of 1 to 10 against the US dollar, against an official exchange rate of 1 to 6.3, a move bankers say is not viable.

"The retail sector is sacrificing the economy for short-term expediency and short-term gain," charged Biti during a parliamentary hearing on the crisis.

## Stoking inflation

He accused retailers of stoking inflation by rounding up commodity prices to beat the change problem. He is now considering putting in place legislation to compel retailers to give customers real change, and not sweets and other small items to keep their money in the shops.

As a contingency measure, Biti said he is talking to the US Treasury to purchase large volumes of cash. "We have made representations which have been favourably received," said Biti.

## ABOUT DUMISANI NDLELA

Dumisani Ndlela is a Zimbabwean journalist specialising in business and financial reporting, with experience reporting on commodities, stock and financial markets, advertising, marketing and the media. He has previously reported from a number of regional countries as well as from the UK and Germany on commodities and regional integration. He can be contacted on [dndlela@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:dndlela@yahoo.co.uk).

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