

# NGO EXPO 2019



19 -21 September 2019



*Theme: Inclusive spaces and partnerships for improved public accountability, transparency and effective development*

## Civil society - An ally in development

Zimbabwe should allow civil society organisations to flourish as part of the country's democratisation agenda, European Union Ambassador to Zimbabwe Timo Olkkonen said on Friday.

Olkkonen was speaking at the National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO) expo in Harare. The EU envoy expressed concern at what he described as a shrinking civic space against the strides NGOs make in economic development.

"Civil society has an important role to play as Zimbabwe thrives to attain middle income status by 2030 as it complements the work done by the government. "Therefore the civil society is not an opponent but an ally in development," Olkkonen said.

Olkkonen added: "An empowered civil society is a crucial component of any democratic system as it promotes pluralism, inclusiveness and democratic governance."

Recently, there has been a spate of arrests and abductions of trade unionists, civil society members and political activists with some alleging torture by State security agents.

In a statement read on her behalf by director Langton Ngorima at the same event, Public Service Minister Sekai Nzenza acknowledged civil society's role in development.

Nzenza said government, however remains worried by constant interference by some organisations dabbling in local politics.

"We have noted with disappointment the continued interference in the political domain by certain NGOs and other civic organisations which is unfortunately straining the relationship with the government," Nzenza said.

She warned that government was considering deregistering organisations that have failed to meet requirements.

"Very soon we will be publishing a press release of NGOs that remain live in our registers but have never bothered to comply with requirements.



*EU Ambassador cutting the ribbon at the NGO Expo Official Opening Ceremony*



*NGO Expo Official Opening Ceremony*



*E.U. Ambassador at one of the stands at the NGO Expo*

"Failure to respond to conditions set by government will result in automatic deregistration," she said.

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## NGO Expo promoting inclusion of children

The National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO) in partnership with the Global Foundation of Public Speaking (GFPS) hosted 60 pupils on 20 September 2019 at a quiz competition at this year's NGO Expo.

The pupils took part in a quiz on the Transitional Stabilisation Program (TSP) which was an innovative way of stimulating the children's interest towards national development policies.

After the quiz officials from Global Fortune Foundation, Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, Cassava Smart Tech and Institute for Economics and Peace also shared insights with the pupils in a bid to sensitise children on national development policies, improve the children's financial literacy and capacitate them to hold the government accountable.

Students were encouraged to be accountable financially, to track their expenditure and make savings from an early age. They gained knowledge regarding financial inclusion, accountability and management. Students were also sensitised on their involvement in key national policy and interaction with their national leaders in the financial services sector and emphasis was placed on the importance of child-led governance in financial matters.

The event highlighted the importance of sensitisation programs (such as the TSP) to children in order to stimulate participation and interest, child friendly budgeting, including school children in the Financial Inclusion Strategy (2016-2020), nurturing young scholars into a financially literate generation and the importance of youth savings accounts. The meeting also brought to the fore the negative effects of collateral and other restrictive measures which affects girls and women from accessing financial assistance such as loans.

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*Discussions with the Junior Councillors*



## **Inclusive spaces and partnerships for improved legitimacy, public accountability, transparency and effective development**

Social accountability and good governance for effective development is at the heart of many NGOs. In some countries, the opening up of formal democracy systems has led to an increase in the accountability of states to its citizens. This has led to strengthening the capacity of NGOs and citizens to effectively participate in decision making processes as well as to demand accountability of state and non state actors. Good governance requires credible and trustworthy institutions built on principles of legitimacy, transparency and accountability. It has been noted that, accountability goes beyond the responsibility of delivery of a task or service. It also means being answerable if a service is not delivered in a timely and efficient manner. In this regard, there is need to mobilise all stakeholders to work together for the improvement of the country's public social accountability and transparency for effective development.

It is against this background that NANGO hosted a panel discussion on public finance management. The discussion was running under the theme Effective public finance management: Can it be a gateway to sustainable economic growth and development while was part of the major theme for the 2019 NGO expo was Inclusive spaces and partnerships for improved legitimacy, public accountability, transparency and effective development. The panel comprised of a representative from parliament, business sector and NANGO economic sector.

### **Q and A**

Questions were being asked by the NANGO Executive Director, Leonard Mandishara and respondents were Member of Parliament and member of the Parliamentary Budget Oversight Committee, Willias Madzimure, CEO Africa Roundtable Director, Kipson Gundani and Senior Researcher/ Economist, Naomi Chikanya.

**Q:** Do we have effective public finance systems in Zimbabwe?

**A:** Hon. Willias Madzimure – It is the responsibility of the parliament to make sure that the constitution is protected. The oversight roles of parliament are legislation (making laws), representation (acting on behalf of voters and citizens), scrutiny (examining the government), and formation of government. The biggest culprit in the abuse of funds in Zimbabwe is the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

There are several requirements in the Public Finance Act that require the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development to produce certain accounts. This has not been happening, including the certificates that are supposed to be signed by the accounting general to authorize ministries to start using finances appropriated by Parliament in the budget.

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development has been paying some money on behalf of other ministries, making it hard to trace expenditure and usage of money. The Public Accounts Committee found that there is no way of tracking these finances. For instance, he in Command Agriculture, about 3 billion dollars cannot be accounted for by the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water, Climate and Rural Resettlement due to the lack of transparency and accountability as they do not have proof of payments.



*Culture Fund Stand*



*Mrs. Gwere leading the E.U Ambassador and the NANGO Executive in touring the stands at the NGO Expo.*



*Dialogue with the Junior Councillors*



*ZIMCDD stand*

In addition, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) has been contracting debt on behalf of the government; also making it difficult to trace expenditure and usage of money. There is a strong nexus between effective public finance management systems and economic development.

**Q: What is supposed to be done to enhance public finance management systems?**

Citizens should be empowered, the parliament itself should exercise oversight and continuous capacity building especially for members of parliament to understand the provisions of the constitution in terms of their roles. The office of the auditor general must be empowered and treated with the respect that it deserves and reports from the auditor general must lead to investigations and arrest and other forms of punishment for non compliance.

**Q: How has public finance management in Zimbabwe affected social service delivery that is supposed to benefit the general citizens?**

**A:** Naome Chakanya - A study by ZIMCodd indicated the amount of figures with financial irregularities. For instance, about 5 billion United States dollars could not be accounted for by various ministries and government institutions that were audited, 318 000 in Rands and around 5 million in Euros. Some other finances that could not be accounted for are from the individual ministries like Ministry of Agriculture and ZESA (US\$4 million) which was paid for transformers since 2017. All these funds that cannot be accounted for could have made a difference if they were channeled towards social service delivery for economic transformation.

Lack of effective public finance management is undermining citizen's rights. The challenge that the country is having is that the concept of the importance of tax payers money has not been communicated enough to citizens. With system that does not account, Zimbabwe can never attain the Sustainable Development Goals. The previous MDGs were achieved only because of support from donor funds.

**Q: In what ways can the business community benefit from public finance management?**

**A:** Kipson Gundani – Budget, expenditure and accountability are public finance management reforms that are critical components to achieve economic growth. Currently, Zimbabwe is going through economic challenges and around 2016-2018, the country experienced a huge fiscal deficit and this was primarily through monetary accommodation which ushered in the return of macro-economic instability. The major expenditure items were the agriculture support program (Command Agriculture) and infrastructural programs.

Not only the private sector has been affected but the business sector and the whole country at has been seriously affected by the behaviors of our fiscal authorities. The way we have managed our public finances has affected our potential to grow as an economy at firm level. Public finance management is linked to macro economic variables and the macro-economic environment that we are currently experiencing.





*Participants of the Panel Discussion on Public Finance Management*

**Q: To what extent is the high debt level in the country related to poor public finance management?**

**A:** Tirivangani Mutazu – CSOs always advocate for an effective public finance management to be in place. Public finance management is not only a government issue but the local authorities, parastatals, urban councils, rural district councils are also important players. It is important for public finance management to be anchored on a strong legal framework. The constitution has some of its acts especially number 20 of the 2013 Constitution. The budget consultation processes are important and they should be inclusive. When it comes to budget approvals there is need to closely look at key issues.

During the execution phase, there is need to analyze well in order to curb corruption and leakages. It is therefore important to know citizen’s roles in all stages of budget processes.

Hon. Madzimure gave an example of Kenya where no money bill is passed without going through the budget office and information from public hearings is involved in the national budget. He then compared with Zimbabwe where he said that is operating in a “briefcase system” where some decisions are made overnight without consultations.

There is need to align acts of the constitution and what is required is political will and to do away with impunity to people who have abused the country’s finances like the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. The

RBZ was involved in some cases it shouldn’t be involved in; it should not contract debt on behalf of the government.

**Q: What are the key issues to fiscal authorities and parliament in terms of enhancing public finance management?**

**A:** Naomi Chakanya – One of the key issues is the culture in our government offices. In Zimbabwe, the culture is corruption, a culture that impoverishes people. Strong leadership drives culture and it is that culture that gives performance. It is not about arresting the corrupt, but rather about how to recover the money that was lost. Corrupt people should be sued and bring back the money that they would have taken illegally to be used for investment in service delivery. She recommended independence of all the commissions in Zimbabwe.

The public have to be informed of the corrupt activities that need to be addressed without fear of victimization.

**Q: What is the role of the private sector in enhancing the capacity to effectively manage public finances?**

**A:** Kipson Gundani - The government is running a system that is not transparent. Submission from public finance management empower parliament. Political will to reform and to change is the missing link in the society. There is therefore need to inspire confidence in the private sector and petitioning bill sponsoring.



*(From left to right) Lenard Mandishara, Hon. Madzimure, Kipson Gundani, Tirivangani Mutazu, Naomi Chakanya*

## Recommendations

- The Auditor general should carry out value for money audits and forensic audits.
- Reports from the auditor general must lead to investigations and arrests and other forms punishment for non compliance.
- Public finance management should be anchored on a strong legal framework.
- The RBZ should not contract debt on behalf of the government and other ministries.
- The civil society should have a shadow anti corruption board and its own audit team as it plays the watchdog role.
- Parliament approvals should be sought before contracting ministerial loans and debts.
- The citizens should be part of the budget discussions especially the open budget consultations.

## Galvanising public participation

One hundred and sixteen residents and members of Harare Residents Trust drawn from Mabvuku, Chitungwiza, Sunningdale, Mbare, Highfield, Glen-Norah, Glen View, Budiriro, Rugare, Mufakose, Kuwadzana Dzivarasekwa, Tynawald, Warren Park, Kambuzuma and Ushewekunze convened at the NGO Expo.

NANGO sensitised the residents on the Transitional Stabilisation Program (TSP) an economic policy blueprint, facilitated the establishment of the role of communities in monitoring the TSP and mapping stakeholders and their roles in TSP implementation.



*Meeting at the NANGO stand with Harare Residents Trust (HRT)*

In October 2018, the government of Zimbabwe adopted the Transitional Stabilisation Programme and at the same time today's convergence of crises - economic and financial meltdown as well as continuing increase of food and fuel prices - poses a need to reshape policies.

The sensitisation with residents sought to strengthen their capacity to monitor and advocate for improved accountability, transparency and effectiveness in the implementation of the TSP. It is envisaged that through strengthening the ability of residents to monitor and engage policy makers, and to galvanize public participation in public policies will hold the government at national level (Parliament and the Executive), local level (local authorities) accountable for the transparent and timely implementation of the TSP.

## Residents speak

- TSP is all talk. There is no progress on the ground and hospitals have no medicine.
- Our members of parliament and councilors are not always available, therefore they are not well informed of our needs and concerns.
- Until we are a truly democratic country, civil society organizations must keep pushing for reforms.
- We are yet to see the success of TSP as service provision remains poor.
- There are women and youths who had earlier been allocated land, but this has since been reversed.
- There is shortage of clean, safe and portable water in most public hospitals.
- Government must not privatize hospitals as it did to Chitungwiza Hospital. Many people live below the poverty datum line so health care facilities need to be affordable
- National leaders should ensure that health service provision improves to a point where they are also confident to see medical care locally.
- Consistent refuse collection is a need and is more effective than clean up campaigns.
- There should be efforts to combat corruption in the allocation of residential stands.
- Public participation in policy formulation will enhance ownership of projects by the communities. Citizens are more likely to participate and support programs that they were part of from the formulation stage.

## Residents rate service delivery

A community score card was administered at the 2019 NGO Expo to get feedback on the quality of service delivery in areas of health, agriculture, governance and institution building.

The ratings are :    **1 –Very poor**    **2 – Poor**    **3 – Not good**    **4 – Good**    **5 – Excellent**

Indicator	Average score	Reasons
<b>HEALTH</b>		
Availability of medicines in hospitals and clinics	<b>0</b>	-No medication in clinics ,residents pay 25 dollars at clinics
Access to primary healthcare	2	Access to immunization is low, but improving
Provision of reproductive health services	4	Condoms and basic contraceptives are readily available
Provision of maternal health services	<b>2.5</b>	ARVs are subsidized  There is free cervical cancer screening
Treatment of non-communicable diseases e.g. cancer, diabetes and hypertension	<b>0</b>	There are no Cancer screening services  BP medication is scarce  ARV drugs are available
Emergency and disaster management (floods, cholera outbreaks etc)	<b>0</b>	Burst sewers pose a health threat  Poor water treatment  Poor refuse collection

Agriculture		
Food security status in the community	2	Partisan distribution of food
Governance and institution building		
Protection of human rights	1	Abductions  ZRP corruption  Limited access to justice
Access to basic human rights by the poor and marginalized	3	NGO efforts on human rights protection are targeting the poor and marginalized especially women and children  Because they are aware of their rights, there is better access
Citizen participation in policy formulation and governance processes	1	Government continues to disregard public participation



This year the NGO Expo also sought to promote access to justice, empowerment of youth and women, child participation in governance, access to information and transformative livelihood skills. This led to the novel initiative of having the legal clinic, youth, women, children and media zones.

At the **Women's Zone** NANGO members took charge of imparting transformative skills and knowledge to women and girls. Women's organizations such as Zimbabwe Women's Bureau, Self Help Development Foundation, Wadzanayi Community Development Trust, and Jekesa Pfungwa Vulingqondo were teaching women skills such as beading, basket weaving, food processing, crafting and making detergents and soap. Men and young people were welcome to tour stands and learn these transformative livelihood skills that can help them generate income. There were numerous other NGOs that were transferring skills and sharing knowledge for free at the NGO Expo.

Members of the NANGO human rights centre also took the opportunity to host a **free legal clinic**. Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights and Legal Resources Foundation offered members of the public free legal advice regarding accident claims, peace order, assault claims, wills, custody, access and guardianship, sharing of property, property rights, gender-based violence, maintenance, inheritance, birth registration, child abuse, divorce, road traffic accident claims. Zimbabwe Human Rights Association and Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum held civics education and shared innovative ways of informing citizens of their human rights.

At the **Youth Zone** the National Association of Youth Organisations together with For Youth By Youth and Chikokoko Traditional games held discussions to dissuade young people from abusing drugs and other harmful substances. Young people were taught that playing traditional games is one of the effective ways of staying off the streets and away from criminal activities. The games strengthen decision-making on many aspects of life, including education and social cohesion among indigenous knowledge transmission. At the youth zone young people were also sensitised on the critical role that they play in monitoring public social accountability, holding the government a countable and ensuring meaningful inclusion of young people in national development processes.



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