

June 2018

Zim Elections Watch

A nation awaits

FEATURE

Conflict prevention as a pathway to credible and peaceful elections

REACHING 68%

Ensuring higher voter turn out of youths

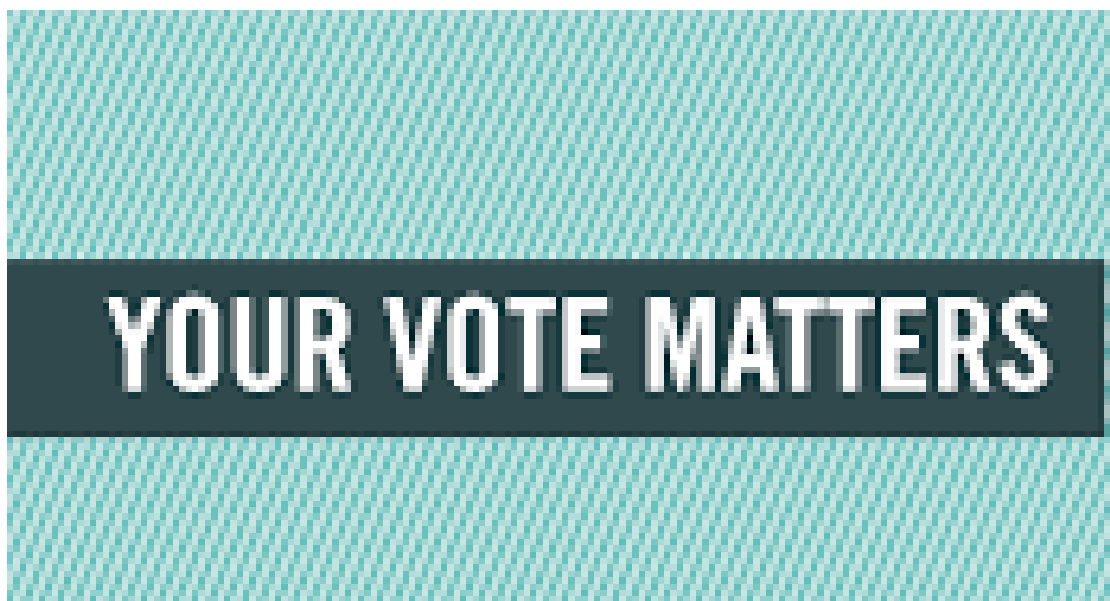
SOCIO-ECONOMIC QUESTION

Prioritising poverty alleviation, sustainable human development, and provision of social services



Contents Page

Chairperson’s Note	3
Executive Director’s Note	4
#GreenPaperSeries	5
<i>A perspective from the church</i>	11
Independent commissions play a part in legitimising elections	13
Transparency and accountability- key to the credibility of electoral processes	16
Conflict prevention as a pathway to credible and peaceful elections	21
Reaching 68%.....	24
Young women: The missing voice in electoral processes.....	25
2018 harmonised election and the socio-economic question.....	27



Chairperson's Note

The harmonised election is fast approaching and compared to previous elections the prevailing conditions are totally new to both seasoned and first-time voters in Zimbabwe. For the first time in history there are 23 candidates vying for the highest position in the land and



Wadzanayi Vere

1652 from 55 political parties and a fair number of independent candidates, all battling for the 210 national assembly seats. The numbers of candidates have been increasing steadily over the years, and key questions have to be asked; could it be that as Zimbabweans we have finally embraced and are fully enjoying our political rights? Or is this a show of public disgruntlement with current crop of leadership? Whatever the reasons, what we as Zimbabweans are certain of is that stakes have been raised high in the Zimbabwe political sphere.

This magazine touches on a number of issues that NANGO has been most concerned about that affect the legitimacy of the harmonised election. NANGO, herein, documents how numerous members and stakeholders have invested in guaranteeing that the coming elections have no trace of the violence that has marked previous elections. NANGO is proud to share a magazine that will inform and educate electorate on their political rights.

NANGO is committed to sustainable development needs of all Zimbabweans and the full realisation of human rights, democracy, good governance and poverty alleviation. NANGO aspires for an election season where people promote peace and harmony and do not use elections to vent and settle scores. I urge the electorate and election candidates to foster respect for the sanctity of life of every citizen regardless of political affiliation, race, tribe or social status.

The NANGO national board and secretariat remind political parties, commissioners, security sector and independent candidates to value sustainable peace, conflict prevention, resolution, management and transformation so that Zimbabwe has a bright future beyond these elections.

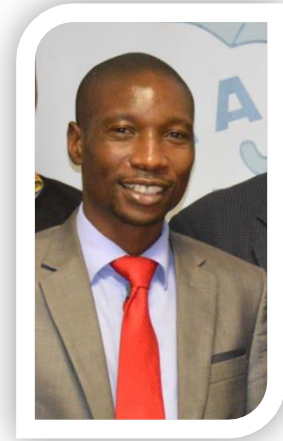
Wadzanayi Vere.

NANGO National Board Chairperson

Executive Director's Note

I am delighted to introduce a collection of socially conscious articles a few weeks ahead of Zimbabwe's third harmonised election. The inaugural harmonised elections were held in 2008 and the second were in 2013 elections. Each has been held under unique conditions, albeit with a prevalence of covert and overt forms of violence.

However, the 30 July 2018 pre-election environment has its own unique characteristics discussed in this publication.



Leonard Mandishara

Zimbabweans are heading for elections and on these polls they are pinning their hopes for an improved political and socio-economic environment. They are looking forward to the fulfilment of campaign promises, as election candidates have promised poverty alleviation, job creation, rejuvenated industries, a sustained improvement in the currency position and development.

It is very critical at this stage, ahead of the elections, to intensify civic education. The electorate need to know the value of their votes and candidates vying for public office should not take for granted the people's demands. Principles of accountability, transparency and legitimacy should be inculcated at a very early stage to enable informed decision making.

This publication raises a number of issues that are relevant to first time and repeat voters, those vying for public office and election observers.

NANGO is taking this opportunity to share with its members, Zimbabweans, development partners, the donor community and state and non-state actors a publication that is aimed at sensitising the electorate and bringing to the fore issues that are most relevant during and after elections.

However, these efforts do not end here, the publication appeals to readers to see beyond this election. The elections will pass and hopefully Zimbabweans can get on with the job of building a united country, content with the results and ready to coexist in spite of their political differences and divergent opinions.

Leonard Mandishara

NANGO Executive Director

#GreenPaperSeries

The National Association of Non-Government Organisations (NANGO) is mandated to represent the interests of the NGO sector and also to catalyse the sector to speak on critical issues to formulate consensus based on pragmatic responses to emerging issues. Currently, the nation is engrossed in elections and it becomes the opportune time for NANGO to raise critical issues that should be attended to by serving and aspiring community leaders, political parties and independent commissions among other stakeholders that play a pivotal role.

NANGO was given the mandate by its members to engage these stakeholders and the engagements feed into the Green Paper Series which documents demands and responses by stakeholders. The series entails the 'Meet your potential leader' and the 'Meet your political leader' series, a process that will run beyond the election season. Through the series NANGO engages political parties and their leadership as well as independent candidates to present non-negotiable demands that those vying for political office should adhere to in order for the nation to experience free, fair and credible elections, sustainable peace and cohesion between general citizens, political leaders, civil society and other state and non-state actors.

The series also appreciates independent commissions whose roles are enshrined in the Zimbabwean Constitution. The major roles of independent commissions are to enhance constitutionalism by promoting transparency and accountability in public institutions as well as entrenching human rights and democracy. NANGO presented demands to Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, National Peace and Reconciliation Commission, Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission and Gender Commission. As the election environment continues to shift and become highly polarised civil society and other non-state actors have consistently monitored developments as the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, political actors and the electorate prepare for this election. Key issues that have emerged include intra and inter party political violence, increase in human rights abuses, marginalisation and exclusion of women, youths and other vulnerable groups, lawlessness, disrespect for the sanctity of life, abrasive language bordering on contempt for political competitors, festering of conflict among different groups within society over unequal treatment by authorities, unequal distribution of resources, marginalisation, exclusion and repression.

These critical issues, if unattended to at this stage, will delegitimise everything being done by the government, independent commissions and non-state actors in ensuring citizens freely support political

parties and candidates of their choice without fear of harassment, threat or intimidation. NANGO gather key concerns and demands from members falling under the ten thematic sectors of the National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO). These thematic sectors which are; media, arts and culture, human rights, women, youths, economic, children, people with disability, land and environment, humanitarian, and health, HIV and AIDS.

Emerging issues

Civil society organisations

CSOs were urged to build the capacity of their beneficiaries, especially women and youth, so that they stand capable of taking up leadership positions with their communities and in political parties. Riding on their autonomy, CSOs are best positioned to report human rights violations and where possible take issues up with the constitutional court. Civil organisations have been accused of being compromised, promoting and supporting political activities.

Independent Candidates

Independent candidates were addressed as critical stakeholders and opinion leaders in the current discourse. It therefore became paramount to inform them of what civil organisations expect from them before, during and after elections. Independent candidates were called to put in place

mechanisms that instil political tolerance during their campaigns, respect the rule of law, uphold human rights and respect the sanctity of life, put an end to hate speech, derogatory language and slogans that promote hate and hurt at rallies and media platforms, respect women, children and other vulnerable groups, put in place conflict prevention, resolution and management systems, have political will to adhere to campaign promises, allow citizens to freely support political parties and candidates of their choice without harassment, threat or intimidation, have zero tolerance for political violence and have zero tolerance for vote buying or use of any forms of resources to exclude perceived non supporters. These demands if adhered to will go a long way in contributing towards holding of free, fair and legitimate elections.

Through extensive interactions with independent candidates it also came to light that the electorate, out of ignorance and lack of knowledge, make demands that are not in line with the aspiring candidates' mandate. Independent candidates revealed that the reason there might be a very high number of youthful independent candidates is due to high unemployment as some of them find this as opportunity for employment. They however added that there are some that are genuine and driven to deliver improved services in the country. As a measure to safeguard the vote, independent candidates said they will deploy volunteers to observe polling

stations and where necessary they will pool resources.

Zimbabwe Republic Police

ZRP is also reminded of their role to ensure a safe and secure environment for every citizen. The police force is demanded to create a fair operating environment for everyone campaigning for public office and to also see beyond political party affiliation of victims and offenders when election related violations are reports.

Zimbabwe Electoral Commission

Political parties, independent candidates and the electorate at large has demanded ZEC to demonstrate its independence and deliver accordingly as set out in the Zimbabwean constitution. ZEC has also been demanded to execute its duties fairly and transparently.

National Peace and Reconciliation Commission

As a result of intra and inter party political violence that has rocked the country and allegedly led to loss of life among other human rights violations NANGO demands from the all the commissions a public strategy that ensures peace, tolerance, safety, security, upholding of human rights, and respect for the sanctity of life. Including putting in place a conflict early warning and early response mechanism that ensures protection of women and children ahead of

the elections. The commissions are reminded to recommend prosecution for criminal violations. Festering of conflict among different groups within society over unequal treatment by authorities is most likely to cause turmoil during election time. NANGO urges the commissions, especially the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission and Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission to speak out against exclusion and repression in order to uphold, promote and develop freedom of association and speech. The commissions should execute this in line with their mandate of protecting sovereignty and interests of the people.

Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission

Increase in human rights abuses have also been a major cause for concern ahead of the elections. The independent commissions are mandated to support human rights and entrench democracy as well as to secure the observance of democratic values and principles by the state and all institutions and agencies of government and government-controlled entities. The Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) has a duty to defend the Constitution and promote constitutionalism. NANGO therefore implores the commission to be proactive, and thoroughly investigate human rights violations and recommend effective measures to ensure a violations free electoral environment. The ongoing unequal

distribution of resources, marginalisation, exclusion and repression has led NANGO to encourage the commission to promote transparency and accountability in public institutions and ensure that state resources go towards the rightful beneficiaries. ZHRC should prioritise creating a sustainable people driven infrastructure for peace building. The commission noted the need for it to promote protection of human rights by politicians and civilians in perceived hotspots. As part of executing its duties the commission has been monitoring the media, rallies, BVR process and inspection, primary elections of Zanu PF and MDC T and nomination court.

Gender Commission

To avert marginalisation and exclusion of women, youths and other vulnerable groups the Gender Commission is demanded to honour its mandate of receiving and considering complaints from the public and to take action addressing complaints. NANGO urges the Gender Commission to ensure women's safety and protection against patriarchal structures in political parties ahead of the election and to timeously intervene when women in politics are violated, demeaned, degraded and subjected to public humiliation.

Media Commission

Abrasive language bordering on contempt for political competitors has been deemed

worrisome and likely to fuel conflict. NANGO urges the commissions to promote and enforce good practices and ethics among political parties, monitor hate and abusive speech in the public interest to ensure fairness and diversity of views that represent the Zimbabwean society.

Political Parties

With over 130 political parties contesting in the harmonised election, NANGO met with those currently in parliament and some that have a large following and representation at a national scale. Political parties were demanded to put in place mechanisms that instil political tolerance at all levels of party structures. Civil organisations also called on political parties to respect the rule of law, uphold human rights and respect the sanctity of life at all levels of the party, put an end to hate speech, derogatory language and slogans that promote hate and hurt at rallies and media platforms, respect women, children and other vulnerable groups. Put in place conflict prevention, resolution and management systems at all levels of party structures and put an end to intra-party violence and conflicts, have political will to adhere to campaign promises, allow citizens to freely support political parties and candidates of their choice without harassment, threat or intimidation, have zero tolerance for political violence and have zero tolerance for vote buying or use of any

forms of resources to exclude perceived non party supporters.

Political parties, as opposed to independent candidates, have been accused of vote buying because they possess resources that are often used to lure and influence the electorate.

Recommendations

Through NANGO's process of engagement numerous recommendations were noted and classified as shown below.

- CSOs should speak out when independent candidates are victimised, unlike other candidates they don't have the backing of political parties.
- Civil society organisations to offer capacity building to public office bearers on various aspects of development such as budgeting, social accountability, state party reporting, conflict prevention, resolution, management and transforming to improve party delivery.
- Civil society commended for continuing with engagement strategies that rope in multi-stakeholders.
- Civil society commended for complimenting the work of independent commissions especially the NPRC during its nationwide consultative meetings.
- Civil society commended for complimenting government in the development agenda.
- CSOs should speak to issues such as constitutionalism, rule of law and credible election outcome.
- CSOs should maintain their neutrality and carryout impactful voter education.
- Civil organisations should inform the public about the roles and responsibilities of councillors, members of parliament and senators.
- Independent candidates should campaign freely without ZRP requesting police clearance for door-to-door distribution of fliers.
- When reports made to ZRP and inaction is recorded politicians and citizens are encouraged to scale up and report to the ZHRC that has oversight over the police.
- ZEC should offer voter education that clarifies that voting is a constitutionally guaranteed civic duty and not a transaction.
- ZEC should adhere to the constitution and deliver pre-election requirements accordingly and timely.
- Independent commissions should ensure that the environment is conducive for independent candidates to campaign freely.
- ZEC should include independent candidates in information dissemination sessions and also sit to address concerns peculiar to independent candidates.
- Commissions should ensure peaceful power transition.
- Stakeholders should accept the will of the people.
- The Media Commission should ensure that all political parties and independent candidates receive equal coverage.
- The ZHRC encourages independent candidates to submit complaints and

- injustices that they have experienced during campaigning.
- Zimbabwe's hostile political environment deters women from participating in elections or running for office.
- There have been workshops to make sure all political party members understand new policies, engagement and direction that current legislature is leading political parties towards.
- There have been workshops between winners and losers of primary elections to facilitate reconciliation and resolution of conflict in a bid to avoid intra-party violence.
- Training sessions have been held for party members on behaviour and attitude change to foster political tolerance.
- Parties attested they are discouraging hate speech and derogatory language at rallies.
- Parties endorsed not using slogans that depict violence.
- To accommodate more women in the senate, parties have claimed to be using the zebra system.
- Value is placed on political tolerance and upholding peace at all party levels.
- Political parties should ensure the environment permits citizens to exercise their political rights.
- Political parties should create a fair campaigning environment for all aspiring candidates.
- Political parties should uphold constitutionalism and ensure a Zimbabwe where every citizen regardless of race, creed, gender, tribe, age or ability enjoys their rights in full.
- Political parties should ensure cohesion in communities in order for the election to be free and fair.
- Aspiring candidates campaigning in wards residing security officers like police and prisons officials' camps should be allowed to campaign without restriction.



A perspective from the church

***“The journey
towards
the Zimbabwe
we want.”***



FREE, FAIR AND CREDIBLE ELECTIONS

A Perspective from the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (Church)

As the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), having met with Heads of Denominations on the 21st of March 2018 in Harare, inspired by the continued public utterances by President ED Mnangagwa, indicating his commitment towards delivering a credible, free, fair and peaceful election, noting the SADC Guidelines Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, as part of our #PrayRegisterVote Campaign, hereby presents our indicators for a CREDIBLE, FREE, FAIR AND PEACEFUL election as follows:

1. Elections held under a New Electoral Law that is consistent with the Constitution of Zimbabwe
2. Timelines of critical processes being publicly shared and adhered to
3. Voters roll publicly availed for inspection and use by any interested party timeously and accessibly
4. All political parties and candidates enjoying access to State media to communicate their manifestos and make public appeal
5. ZEC being adequately resourced by the State
6. Having credible local, regional and international election monitors and observers
7. Political parties signing and adhering to a Peace Pledge
8. Slogans that promotes hate and hurt being banned
9. Citizens freely supporting political parties and candidates of their choice without harassment, threat or intimidation
10. Traditional, Religious leaders and Security Services not publicly demonstrating partisanship
11. Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, Gender Commission, National Peace and Reconciliation Commission playing their constitutional roles to support elections
12. ZRP arresting all perpetrators of violence and criminality without fear or favour
13. At least 60% voter turnout
14. Election results posted at each polling station and announce winners within 5 days as provided by the Law
15. Uncontested result owing to an unflawed process

We implore the guidance of the Almighty as the nation prepares for a FREE, FAIR & CREDIBLE 2018 Election. As the Church, walking in The Journey of Rebuilding Hope, Confidence and Stability towards the Zimbabwe We Want, will continue to #PrayRegisterVote.

Feedback to:

Email: gensec@efzimbabwe.org

Facebook: [Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe](https://www.facebook.com/EvangelicalFellowshipofZimbabwe)

Twitter: [@EFZZIMBABWE](https://twitter.com/EFZZIMBABWE)

Website: www.efzimbabwe.org

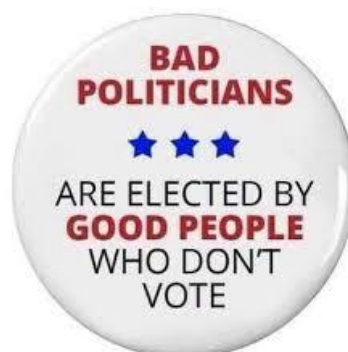
6-point criteria for election

Residents 6-point criteria to be elected as councillor

- 1. The preferred Councillor should be permanently resident in the Ward that they want to contest in. Most residents want the person to have a property or interests in the Ward suburb or having grown up in that ward.*
- 2. Ability to read and write, with five ordinary levels qualification at the least.*
- 3. Evident knowledge of the community they intend to serve.*
- 4. Potential councillor should not have previous criminal convictions.*
- 5. Someone with an appreciation for diversity and divergent views.*
- 6. An individual who is prepared to sign a Social Service Delivery Contract with the electorate before the election, committing to keep campaign promises.*

Ten qualities of a good councillor

- 1. Being financially stable, that is not depending on Council for own survival.*
- 2. Declares their assets, movable and immovable before they assume office.*
- 3. People oriented*
- 4. A good listener that has respect for divergent views.*
- 5. Evident knowledge of the community they serve.*
- 6. Track record of working with the community.*
- 7. Appreciates diversity in a community.*
- 8. Commitment to do deliver on campaign promises.*
- 9. A person with a good work ethic and determination to deliver.*
- 10. Someone with the ability to mediate different societal interests.*





NANGO meets Independent Commissions



Independent commissions play a part in legitimising elections

The National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO) met commissioners from the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC), National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC), Gender Commission and Media Commission ahead of the 30 July harmonised elections. NANGO engaged commissioners as part of its mandate which is to coordinate the activities of NGOs, represent the NGO sector and strengthen the voice of NGOs in Zimbabwe.

The engagements were necessitated by the increasingly polarised election environment, persistence of intra and inter party political violence, increase of human rights abuses, marginalisation and exclusion of women, youths and other vulnerable groups, lawlessness, disrespect for the sanctity of life, use of abrasive language, festering of conflict among different groups within society, unequal distribution of resources.

These critical issues, if unattended have the potential of delegitimising everything being done by the civil society, non-state actors, government and commissions in ensuring that citizens freely support political parties and candidates of their choice without fear of harassment, threat or intimidation.

Through its ten sectors NANGO collated concerns and demands that were then presented to the five commissions.

Intra and inter party political violence

NANGO has received reports of internal violence within the major political parties. The CSOs apex body has been meeting political party leadership and in the meetings they admitted to the existence of internal conflict, which has manifested in both overt and covert forms of violence among their members. The implications of this development are that it sows seeds of instability, closes spaces for the full participation of women and youths in the electoral process, within the parties and in the broader society. Therefore, NANGO demands from the Independent commissions a public strategy that ensures peace, tolerance, safety, security, upholding of human rights, and respect for the sanctity of life; including putting in place an early response mechanism that ensures protection of general citizens ahead of the elections.

Increase in human rights abuses

NANGO members have been documenting human rights violations, which include threats, intimidation, physical and emotional violence. It has also been noted that some independent candidates are being denied access to constituencies for campaign purposes due to police selectively demanding police clearance for distribution of campaign materials such as fliers.

During the opening of the 26th Junior Parliament, Child Parliamentarians raised concerns over the deployment of their teachers to conduct electoral business, at the expense of teaching them. Concern was also raised over the presence of pupils at political rallies. All this has contributed to a compromised education system especially this second academic term. Children under 18 years of age are being exposed to hate speech, derogatory language, and slogans that promote hate and hurt at rallies. They have no capacity to manage political language and they do not vote, hence this amounts to child abuse.

The Commissions have a duty to defend the Constitution and too uphold their mandate to protect and promote human rights. NANGO implores the ZHRC to be proactive, and

thoroughly investigate human rights violations and recommend effective measures to promote human rights. Commissions have also been called to initiate a vigorous campaign to reach out to communities through CSOs, political parties, the police and other key stakeholders in human rights work.

Marginalisation and exclusion of women, youths and other vulnerable groups

The hostile political environment has directly and indirectly led to the disenfranchisement of women, youths and other vulnerable groups. This is further compounded by the legislative framework that objectifies these groups. Ultimately, women's and youths' participation in political party spaces or as the electorate is heavily compromised. Youths in particular have been roped in as defenders of political parties, sometimes being paid to unleash physical violence on their perceived internal and external party opponents.

Despite the Constitutional provisions guaranteeing gender equality and equity, women in some political parties have been deliberately side lined for challenging male dominance and the status quo. The ZHRC and all commissions are not alien to these developments. They have access to the media and they operate within society, hence they must be giving the nation direction in line with their given Constitutional mandates. ***NANGO urges the ZHRC to timeously intervene and begin to exercise its independence in its operations and resultantly giving public confidence in the law and the commission.***

Abrasive language bordering on contempt for political competitors

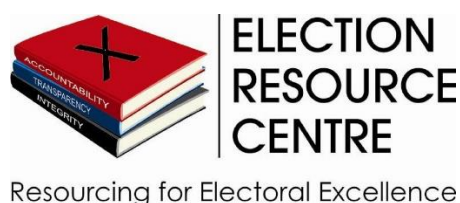
There are reported increases of use of hate speech and derogatory language at rallies and media platforms. The perpetuate hate, hurt, intolerance and disregard for the fundamental freedoms of speech and association. ***NANGO urges the five Independent Commissions to promote and enforce good practices and ethics among political parties, monitor hate and abusive speech in the public interest to ensure fairness and diversity of views that represent the Zimbabwean society.***

Festering of conflict among different groups within society over unequal treatment by authorities

There continues to proliferate unequal access to state media platforms by all political parties and election candidates. This disadvantages other political parties. ***NANGO thereby implores all Commissions to speak out against exclusion and repression in order to uphold, promote and develop freedom of association and speech.***

Unequal distribution of resources, marginalisation, exclusion and repression

There is still existence of past unresolved injustices that continue to hound and affect citizens in their daily interactions. These structural injustices will continue to rear their ugly head in all national conversations. These require a deeper structural intervention that recognises the historical, cultural and language dynamics in the Zimbabwean society. This has continued to fester fears, unrest and suspicions among people. Therefore, NANGO implores all Independent Commission to prioritise creating a sustainable people driven infrastructure for peace building.



Transparency and accountability- key to the credibility of electoral processes

The Zimbabwe Constitution, Chapter 12 (239) mandates the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) to prepare for, conduct and supervise elections and to ensure that elections are conducted efficiently, freely, fairly, transparently and in accordance with the law. This is in line with international law that governs that member states should promote the establishment of necessary conditions to foster citizen participation, transparency, access to information, freedom of the press and accountability in the management of public affairs. State parties shall also establish and strengthen independent and impartial national electoral bodies responsible for the management of elections, according to the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.

The Election Management Body (EMB) is responsible for, among other things, voter education, voter registration, polling operations, counting and tabulation, and settlement of some electoral disputes. Section 235 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe stipulates the independence of ZEC and declares that the Commission will not be subject to the direction or control of anyone, it shall act in accordance with the constitution and it shall exercise its functions without fear. Given the role of the EMB as the primary implementer of the electoral processes and its responsibility of ensuring that the process adheres to national law, election assessments must include an evaluation not only of the EMB's actions but also of its makeup and internal processes. This evaluation, in conjunction with assessments of the body's role in implementing the rest of the process, will help establish the degree to which

pre-election processes were administered fairly, impartially and more importantly transparently.

Transparency and accountability- the cornerstone of free, fair and credible elections

Transparency and accountability are integral to the credibility and integrity of all electoral processes. The manner in which ZEC blurs the line between openness, transparency on one hand and security on the other is critical to this brief. Several allegations including that the commission is highly militarised or controlled by the same; secrecy and concealment on the printing of ballot papers, lack of transparency on the recruitment and training of the commission's staff and secrecy on the procurement of sensitive material cloud the road to credible elections. All stages leading to the election day should be made public to all election stakeholders so as to increase transparency, credibility and openness. An election run honestly and transparently, respecting basic rights, with the effective and neutral support of state institutions and the responsible conduct of participants (leaders, candidates and voters) is most likely to achieve an accepted and peaceful outcome.

Don't blame the law, don't use security as cover

While shortcomings in the law are apparent and the need for security is imminent, ZEC should never find cover against delivering a transparent and credible election. ZEC should be accountable to citizens through the Parliament of Zimbabwe and consult stakeholders on each step towards the harmonised elections.

Independence of ZEC

ZEC reports to the Parliament of Zimbabwe. However, Sections 9, 12 and 192 (6) require that the commission seeks approval, consults or reports to the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs. These unaligned and unconstitutional sections infringing on the independence of the commission cloud the ability to be transparent and to account to the public and to parliament. Possibilities of undue influence are high. The oversight role, if only played by parliament, will ensure credibility as different political parties make up the Parliament.

There is no substitute to transparency and accountability

Continuous oversight of all electoral processes by internal and external mechanisms helps identify problems in the electoral system and thereby identify inconsistencies and provide legitimacy when processes meet best standards.

The accessibility of the voters' roll servers to civil society can ensure that processes such as de-duplication of names is authenticated thereby enhancing credibility. Where suspicion

meets lack of trust, credibility evades and illegitimacy kicks in. The accessibility of the voters' roll servers will bring confidence and trust of electoral processes ahead of the election. ZEC argues that this is a security threat. While this might be so, it is upon ZEC to put in place measures to safeguard the server and or limit access while explaining how the servers work, how much information is stored, where and who has access to them.

Provision of the first draft of the voters' roll is also fundamental in enhancing confidence and trust in the activities of the commission. Stakeholders should be able to trace changes in the roll and certify the final roll. This will in turn ensure credibility and legitimacy of the voters' roll. Should ZEC refuse to make the voters' roll servers public, the voters' roll can be open to manipulation by those who administer the technology. This goes in line with the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance which states that states should ensure transparency and fairness in the management of public affairs. If laws and regulations are duly enforced, it becomes more difficult for participants and voters to reject election results or to question the legitimacy of the newly elected representatives.

Training and selection of the commission's staff

The training and selection of officials mandated to work in the commission is regulated by law. The selection and training of the commission's staff as regulated by the Constitution of Zimbabwe should be publicized. The selection should be public and the positions should be advertised, with public interviews of prospective candidates. Political commitment sources indicate that training for EMB members should include training on human rights, including obligations related to elections. This should be done in conjunction with election stakeholders so as to increase transparency and to limit illegitimacy.

Principles guiding the printing of the ballot papers

Observation of the printing of ballot papers is also another mandate that should be done in collaboration with all electoral stakeholders. This serves to remove suspicion of tampering with the ballot paper. Political party stakeholders in particular the MDC Alliance demanded information on where and when ballot papers will be printed as well as by who. ZEC and the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs have cagey regarding divulging such information. However, best practice dictates that stakeholders must be included in this process, especially political parties contesting the election. ZEC's credibility to be nonpartisan is questionable, and hence, the printing of ballot papers should be done under the auspices of other political parties and civil society so as to limit legitimacy issues. The *Zambian Observer* reported that during the printing and packing of ballot papers in Zambia, different political parties, the commission and other stakeholders are highly involved. The

President of Zambia went on to say that the 2021 ballot papers will be printed locally to avoid inconsistencies and to ensure accountability.

Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) noted the wastefulness of ZEC in printing ballot papers, thereby creating unnecessary expenses for the commission and raising concerns over credibility of the polls. During the 2013 Harmonized Elections, BBC News reported that ZEC printed an excess of 35% more than the number of registered voters. The African Union, (AU) observers confirmed that this was significantly higher than international best practices which are between 5% and 10% and raised concerns of accountability of unused ballot papers.

It is therefore apparent, that secretly printing ballot papers, not adhering to international standards where exceeding numbers of ballot papers is concerned and consulting stakeholders will certainly seal the fate of the election before it is even conducted.

Transmission of results

For the poll result to be highly credible and legitimate, the transmission of election results should follow the agreed procedures and the set processes. Any delay after the tabulation of results will only work to discredit the poll result. The delay in the transmission of poll results of the 2008 harmonized elections shows how ZEC is not entirely independent. Any delay without official communication raises a concern and this goes back to the commission's inability to separate its work without the interference of external factors. Ahead of the 2018 poll, ZEC must establish and share procedures for results transmission with all stakeholders. These must allow for transparency, openness, easy flow of information and accountability in particular of posted ballots.

Access to election residue

To increase legitimacy of the poll and to avoid issues to do with credibility, the election residue must be easily accessible to key stakeholders especially to aid electoral petitions should they rise. Electoral stakeholders must have access to this information so as to track any irregularities that may have been overlooked. The precedence set in 2013, where the High Court ordered not to open the ballots perpetuates mistrust for Zimbabwe's electoral processes. There should be nothing to hide.

Consistent and open consultation of stakeholders

The role of all election stakeholders needs to be appreciated and supported towards enhancing transparency and accountability in electoral processes. Credible, free and fair elections can only be achieved through healthy development and co-existence of all election

stakeholders. ZEC needs to allow for electoral integrity, which in turn preserves the ability of voters to participate in genuine elections, ensuring fair play, transparency, accountability and allowing for peaceful resolution to conflict, open dialogue, debate and information sharing among leaders, civic groups and the public. The role of political parties and civil society as stakeholders for all electoral reforms and processes needs to be fulfilled and respected. This will in turn convince citizens and voters that changes are real and therefore deserve their confidence. Checks and balances done by stakeholders help detect and respond to problems.

Independence of the Observation Accreditation Committee

Observation of electoral processes enhances their legitimacy, integrity and credibility. More so, international observation helps to attract international legitimacy, integration into the international community and official development assistance. It is therefore of great importance for the Observation Accreditation Committee of the commission to be independent and for the committee to implement their work in an impartial manner, thereby allowing them to steer away from the hitherto dominant culture of inviting friends to observe the country's elections. The influence of the executive, save for assisting logistically, must be done away with. This leads to citizen trust and legitimacy locally and internationally.

Recommendations

1. ZEC must enhance transparency by consistently updating stakeholders on electoral processes.
2. There should be no undue influence on the activities of ZEC especially through reporting to the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs.
3. Parliament of Zimbabwe must safeguard the independence of ZEC by aligning the Electoral Act to the Constitution of Zimbabwe.
4. Parliament of Zimbabwe must enact laws that enhance transparency and accountability in elections.

It is important to address the flaws tainting the EMB's efforts towards delivering a credible, free and fair election. This brief posited that, transparency and accountability are pivotal in implementation of electoral processes. It highlighted flaws in management of elections by ZEC including access to the voters' roll, printing of ballot papers, recruitment and training of staff, procurement of sensitive materials and general openness through consultation of all stakeholders. Efforts of ZEC so far, while commendable are not enough.



Conflict prevention as a pathway to credible and peaceful elections

Zimbabwe has taken an important and bold step towards addressing the societal impacts and legacies caused by long periods and different episodes of conflict by gazetting the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) Act on 5 January 2018. The overall objective of the NPRC Act is to lay a foundation for sustainable peace and stability, assist the country to deal with its past by initiating inclusive healing and reconciliation processes as well as enhancing national and sub-national capacities for the peaceful prevention of future conflicts as pathways for sustaining peace and deepening social cohesion in the country.

The NPRC is one of the five Independent Commissions established by Chapter 12 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20) Act, 2013 for the purpose of supporting and entrenching a culture of human rights and democracy, protecting the sovereignty and interests of the people, promoting constitutionalism, transparency and accountability in public institutions, securing the observance of democratic values and principles by the state and all institutions and agencies of government as well as ensuring that injustices are remedied as provided for in Section 233 of the Constitution.

Besides the commission's mandate of dealing with the past, the NPRC is also required to support efforts geared towards inclusive prevention of conflict as a strategy for promoting lasting peace in the country. More specifically, the NPRC is mandated under function

(d) to develop procedures and institutions at a national level to facilitate dialogue among political parties, communities, organisations and other groups, in order to prevent conflicts and disputes arising in the future;

(g) to develop mechanisms for early detection of areas of potential conflicts and disputes, and to take appropriate preventive measures

(i) to conciliate and mediate disputes among communities, organisations, groups and individuals.

(h) to do anything incidental to the prevention of conflict and the promotion of peace.

The upcoming 2018 harmonized elections in Zimbabwe provide an opportunity for the NPRC to launch its Preventative and Peace Building Mandate and in doing so, collaboratively contribute towards a peaceful electoral environment through timely anticipation and response to conflicts before they escalate into violence. Peaceful elections are a key ingredient for long term peace and development in the country and the NPRC has a key role to play in contributing towards this goal.

The NPRC has developed an integrated NPRC Election Strategy which is built on the mentioned foundations of the Commission's constitutional mandate and committed to leverage on the competences, expertise and experiences of ongoing peace building initiatives and collaboratively mobilize for peace during this electoral period. This is in recognition of the fact that the country has historically been characterized by episodes of conflict during elections – constraining prospects for credible and legitimate transitions.

The NPRC seeks to contribute towards peaceful elections in Zimbabwe by:

1. Ensuring timely analysis, scenario planning and response to conflict risks before, during and after elections as a foundation for long term peace and development in the country
2. Strengthening national level commitment to peaceful elections by key political actors, and stakeholders among others,
3. Mobilizing commitment for peaceful elections from presidential candidates from all political parties before, during and after elections
4. Mobilizing the nation for peaceful co-existence before, during and after elections through sustained messaging, dialogue, confidence building and engagement

In its work towards creating a peaceful environment for elections, the NPRC has so far made the following efforts;

- i. Set up a conflict early warning early response platform. This is a platform where members of the peace building ecosystem who have early warning mechanisms at

the community level meet to share information on conflict early warns signs with a view to mobilize for timely response. The platform meets every Thursday.

- ii. Engagement of political parties to promote peace and adhere to the political parties' code of conduct which is now part of the electoral law. The commission brought together political leaders contesting in the elections to make a public commitment to peace by signing a peace pledge. The signing of the peace pledge was a demonstration of the political parties' commitment to enforcing the Code of Conduct which is now law.

NPRC calls for peace

Whenever there is contestation for power, there are bound to be conflicts. However, while conflict is inevitable, violence is a choice. The history of elections in post independence Zimbabwe has been marred by high tensions and incidents of violence.

The upcoming 2018 harmonized elections in Zimbabwe provide an opportunity for all political parties to change the course of history. Political parties, their supporters, organisations, communities and all Zimbabweans at large, can collectively contribute towards a peaceful electoral environment.

The NPRC calls upon all Zimbabweans to be peaceful in their attitudes, behaviours and speech. Zimbabweans have the power to create the peaceful electoral environment much needed for the 2018 elections. The Commission therefore encourages every Zimbabwean to work together to shape the future of politics in Zimbabwe.

Peace begins with me. Peace begins with you. Peace begins with all of us.

Runyararo, basa rako neni.

Ukuthula, ngumlandu wakho lami.



Reaching 68%



Some of the National University of Science and Technology students that registered to vote through NYDT's mobilisation

To ensure higher voter turnout of youths at registration centres during the Biometric Voter Registration exercise, National Youth Development Trust (NYDT) used social media platforms like WhatsApp, Twitter and Facebook as well as animations. The young people were informed, entertained and encouraged to turn out in large numbers at voter registration centres. NYDT's youth volunteers engaged and mobilised other youths through door-to-door campaigns in all Bulawayo's high-density suburbs.

According to ZEC, 68% of the total population that registered to vote are youths.



Youth volunteers engaging a fellow youth in Cowdray Park, Bulawayo.



Young women: The missing voice in electoral processes

*Fiona Chadambuka is a young woman aged 27 who lives in Goromonzi North constituency ward 6. She runs a flea market and sources her wares from as far as South Africa and Zambia. By the end of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) mop up registration exercise in February 2018 Fiona had not registered to vote.

Chadambuka is among many women that had failed to register by the time of the mop up exercise. Zimbabwe Civic Education Trust (ZIMCET) and Centre for Conflict Management and Transformation (CCMT) met up with Chadambuka and other women during one of the activities aimed at encouraging young women to register to vote under the Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) process. Majority of the women run vending stalls at Majuru Business Centre in Goromonzi North.

“Registering requires me to get proof of residence from my village head and that means I lose money for every day that I am away,” said Chadambuka.

The current state of the Zimbabwe economy has seen young people having to find means of sustaining a living by becoming informal traders where every dollar made from the various business enterprises counts.

It came to light that various other reasons compelled women not to register during the initial allocated time. Women play the role of care workers in the home, shoulder economic responsibilities, take care of children, and have other competing priorities that present challenges when it comes to balancing time. This has also been exacerbated by lack of knowledge of some of these young women about the electoral process.

Some women had just delivered babies during the BVR blitz and mop up exercises and therefore failed to register. The long distance to the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) offices in Goromonzi and a lack of information that the voter registration is continuous had resulted in many women failing to register during the process.

A study by the Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU) mentioned that generally violence associated with Zimbabwean elections and the demanding voter registration process deter women from participating in electoral processes as a result of. This finding by RAU supports why it is important for elections to happen in a peaceful environment, void of both overt and covert forms of violence.

A peaceful environment and access to information are critical in ensuring that young women are aware of what is happening at each stage of the electoral process in order for them to participate from an informed position. Zimbabwe is now in the electoral period and young women must know the exact polling station they will vote from and if their personal details are correctly captured in the provisional voters roll. During this stage of the electoral cycle

young women must be aware of candidates that are vying for different political offices, their manifestos and other critical information so that they are able to make informed decisions on the voting day. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and the media should provide balanced information useful to the electorate, young women especially.

It is imperative to continue paying attention to young women whose participation in electoral processes has been low over the past years. Low participation of young women is a cause for concern seeing as they are part of the youth who, according to the Zimbabwe 2012 population census, constitute 77% of the total population, with 36% of the population being aged 15-35 years. They have a stake in the democratic discourse of Zimbabwe. Recent statistics released by Zimbabwe Elections Support Network show that only 13.6% of young people aged between 18-29 years registered to vote.

ZIMCET encourages young women to engage in all civic processes in their communities such as elections, public meetings and parliamentary bill hearings. Citizens in general are encouraged to report all forms of human rights abuses to the police, CSOs and to the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission. This will help achieve a peaceful election environment in which citizens can fully and freely express themselves.

*Not real names.

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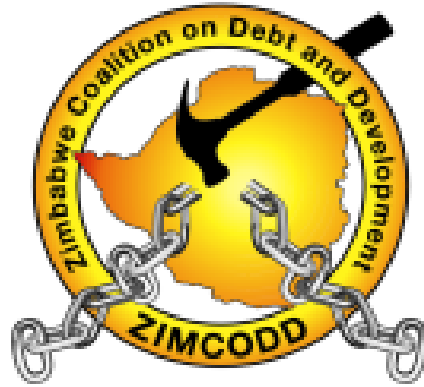
ZIMCET and CCMT assisted 75 young women, including those with disability, in wards 13, 16 and 17 of Gorormonzi district to register.



Goromonzi ZEC District Elections Officers encourage young women to register under BVR during a ZIMCET/CCMT Young Women BVR Dialogue Session in Ward 16 on 22 February 2018



Some young women await their turn to register at the Goromonzi District ZEC Office on 22 February 2018



2018 harmonised election and the socio-economic question

The harmonized election will be held in the context of a military supported transition that took place in November 2017, a new Electoral Law, but of critical importance is the debilitating macro-economic environment, as well as a socio-economic environment that continues to shrink on a daily basis. The socio-economic crises that Zimbabwe is grappling with is characterized by massive unemployment among Zimbabwean youth which stands at an alarming rate of 95%, an unsustainable domestic and external debt estimated at \$18 billion, currently dilapidated social services with the State failing to provide constitutionally guaranteed rights that include the right to safe, clean and portable water in some cities, the right to healthcare and other justiciable socio-economic rights fundamentally recognized in the Bill of Rights.

Zimbabwe is undergoing harsh social and economic challenges characterised by poor and inaccessible social services. The last two decades have been extremely hard for many and poverty has a strong stench in our society to date. Recent data estimates that general poverty as measured by the Total Consumption Poverty Datum Line is at over 70%, with the majority of this percentage being in the rural areas that have a record high of household income poverty hovering around 76%. The government has been struggling to provide social safety nets for citizens. The quest for social and economic development in Zimbabwe is so apparent.

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission is urged to be impartial and to steward the electoral processes in line with its constitutional mandate of ensuring that elections are free, fair, credible and transparent. An uncontested election will help the people of Zimbabwe to collectively begin a process of nation building that is devoid of polarisation and toxic contestation. The forth coming elections offer the people of Zimbabwe an opportunity to

reshape their destiny through expressing themselves freely and peacefully. In order for Zimbabwe to be a truly transformational, democratic and developmental State, the upcoming elections must be contested at the level of sustainable ideas that are meant to guarantee socioeconomic justice for the people of Zimbabwe.

The socio-economic question will be addressed if this country deals with the debt situation. Zimbabwe's debt stands \$18 billion which includes both domestic and external debt from the multi-lateral institutions and the Paris Club.

The national question in the context of socioeconomic justice must now be defined as a higher value than seeking political office. The pursuit of power without value or character has been the scourge of Zimbabweans. The challenges with post independent Zimbabwe is that power was and continues to be pursued in a value vacuum. In the context of the forthcoming Zimbabwean elections, a return to values and vision is important.

All political parties are called on to prioritise issues to do with poverty alleviation, sustainable human development, and the provision of social services like quality and affordable healthcare, quality education at all levels and a re-industrialisation to kick start productivity in the ailing economy and create the much needed jobs for the youth of the country. All contesting political parties must clearly articulate these issues in their manifestos in palatable ways that the ordinary average citizen can comprehend and also articulate how they would seek to bring the national debt to sustainable levels without imposing austerity measures.

Previous elections in Zimbabwe have been marred by violence and in most cases the electoral outcome has been contested by differing parties.

All political parties are called to abide by and disseminate the code of conduct that is provided for in the Electoral Amendment Bill that was recently signed into law by the President, Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, to ensure free, fair and credible election.

Aspiring candidates from across the political divide in the forthcoming elections must address the debt crisis and the liquidity challenges the country is facing with for this is important if the socioeconomic question is to be addressed.

ZIMCDD therefore makes the following minimum demands for meaningful and transformational elections for all aspiring electoral candidates:

- ✓ Uncompromising resolve on the management of Zimbabwe's natural resources

- ✓ A commitment to addressing the debt question that has haunted the economy for so long with an inclination towards total debt cancellation. The mortgaging of our natural resources is not an option – The future cannot be sold to settle yesterday's illicit spending.
- ✓ Pro-poor sustainable investments that guarantee social and environmental security of present and future generations – Zimbabwe is not for sale
- ✓ Creation of decent jobs and equal opportunities in pursuit of economic and social justice for all citizens.

The looming plebiscite presents Zimbabweans with an opportunity to choose leaders of integrity who can be entrusted with the responsibility of management of resources and sharing the national cake.

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