

Development Watch Newsletter

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the April 2026 edition of the NANGO Development Watch Newsletter — an edition that reflects both the vibrancy and the urgency that define Zimbabwe's civil society moment.

This edition carries stories that matter. We celebrate the appointment of our Executive Director, Mr. Ernest Nyimai, to the Executive Committee of the Southern Africa Council of NGOs (SACNGO) — a proud milestone for NANGO and for Zimbabwe's civil society on the regional stage. We reflect on our partnership with ZACRAS in celebrating community radio excellence in Bulawayo, and on the continued impact of the Talk to Your Regulator initiative, which has now directly supported the registration of over 300 organisations and is proving, session by session, that dialogue between civil society and regulators produces real results. Beyond the celebrations, this edition also speaks honestly about the moment Zimbabwe finds itself in.

The Constitution Amendment Bill No. 3 has emerged as a significant moment in Zimbabwe's ongoing constitutional and democratic processes, raising fundamental questions about how and by whom the rules governing the country's executive and key institutions should be determined. While constitutional reform extends beyond electoral arrangements to the broader framework of rights, institutions, and accountability, attention has increasingly focused not only on the content of the proposed amendments but also on the environment in which public engagement is taking place.

Concerns have been noted in various quarters regarding the broader climate surrounding discussions on CAB3, with reports and perceptions in some contexts suggesting that individuals and institutions expressing critical or divergent views may face heightened sensitivity, pressure, or caution in their participation. These dynamics have contributed to wider reflections on the quality of civic space during the consultation process and the extent to which engagement is freely enabled in practice, underscoring the importance of ensuring that constitutional reform processes are conducted in a manner that safeguards open expression, inclusive participation, and the ability of citizens to engage without fear or undue constraint.

On another front, Zimbabwe is currently undergoing a Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Mutual Evaluation Exercise— a rigorous international assessment of how the country manages risks related to money laundering and the financing of terrorism. This is a significant undertaking

for the country, and civil society has a direct stake in its outcome. One of our continuing concerns is the misapplication of FATF Recommendation 8, which, when poorly implemented, has been used in other countries to justify excessive restrictions on non-profit organisations under the guise of financial risk management. NANGO is actively engaged in this process to ensure that Zimbabwe's response to the evaluation strengthens legitimate financial oversight without shrinking the space for civil society to operate. The two goals are not in conflict — but achieving both requires deliberate effort and vigilance.

We are also continuing to push for the full operationalisation of the PVO Amendment Act (2025). The law is on the books, but without gazetted Standard Operating Procedures and Regulations, implementation remains inconsistent and uncertain for many organisations. Clear, publicly available regulations are not a bureaucratic nicety — they are what allow organisations to plan, comply, and operate with confidence. NANGO will keep pressing until that work is done.

We also carry an important call to action: Zimbabwe's 2027 Universal Periodic Review process is open for civil society submissions, with a deadline of 17 July 2026. Begin preparing now. Additionally, mark your calendars for the 2026 NANGO Annual Regional NGO Expo and Winter School — check the flyer for dates and venues.

The common thread running through this edition is simple — showing up matters. Whether in constitutional debates, international evaluation processes, or regulatory engagement, civil society's presence and voice make a difference. NANGO remains committed to showing up for this sector, in every space where it counts.

We extend our appreciation to all our members, partners, stakeholders, and readers for your continued support and engagement. Your contributions and dedication continue to shape a stronger, more coordinated, and impactful civil society sector.

We hope you find this edition informative, insightful, and inspiring.

Happy reading!

The Editor

Development Watch Newsletter

National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO)

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CAB3: Observations on Process, Participation, and Emerging Debates

Parliament held public hearings on Constitution Amendment Bill No. 3 (CAB3) in late March, in what was intended to be a national consultation process. The hearings, however, quickly became a focal point for wider debate about the conduct of constitutional reform processes and the extent to which citizens are able to meaningfully engage when politically sensitive amendments are being considered.

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As previously outlined in earlier civic space updates, CAB3 proposes a number of significant constitutional changes, including shifting the election of the President from a direct public vote to a parliamentary process, extending presidential and parliamentary terms from five to seven years, and making adjustments to several governance institutions. Since the bill was tabled, it has proceeded into the consultation phase, with public hearings now concluded and attention turning to the next legislative steps.

The hearings were conducted over a four-day period from 30 March to 2 April 2026, covering 65 designated centres across the country, within the constitutionally prescribed 90-day consultation window for such amendments. While the process was presented as nationally comprehensive, questions have been raised in various quarters about the adequacy of the timeframe in relation to the scope and complexity of the proposed changes, particularly those affecting the structure of elections and terms of office.

Concerns have also been noted regarding the practical accessibility of the hearings. With one venue allocated per district, participation largely depended on proximity and the ability of citizens to travel to designated centres. In many instances, transport costs and distance appeared to be limiting factors, particularly in rural and geographically dispersed communities. These conditions have shaped who was able to attend and contribute, and who was effectively left out of the process.

The hearings also took place in a context that many observers have described as politically sensitive, given the nature of the proposed amendments. In such environments, issues around freedom of expression, assembly, and association are often closely intertwined with how open

and comfortable participants feel in engaging with constitutional discussions. Reports and observations from different areas suggest that levels of engagement varied, with differing experiences of participation across locations.

A further point of ongoing discussion relates to the nature of consultation itself. Public hearings provide a platform for citizens to express views, while a referendum provides a mechanism for citizens to directly determine the outcome. CAB3 includes proposals that touch on the mode of electing the Head of State, a matter some stakeholders consider central to democratic choice. This has contributed to continued debate on whether parliamentary consultation alone is sufficient for such changes, or whether a referendum would be a more appropriate mechanism for final determination.

The constitutional provisions governing when a referendum is required remain part of an active legal and interpretive discussion. That question is yet to be resolved definitively, and different perspectives continue to be expressed in legal, political, and civic spaces. At the same time, broader public discussion on the implications of the proposed changes has remained active, reflecting sustained interest in the direction of constitutional reform.

The current 90-day consultation period is expected to conclude in May 2026. Following this, the bill is anticipated to proceed to further parliamentary stages, including committee consideration, second reading, and a vote, subject to any legal determinations that may arise from ongoing court processes.

A legal challenge currently before the courts may have implications for how the process proceeds. Depending on the outcome, the court may provide guidance on whether the consultation process met constitutional requirements, or whether further steps may be required before Parliament can continue its consideration of the bill. Any ruling is likely to have broader implications beyond CAB3, particularly in relation to standards for public participation in constitutional amendment processes.

In several instances, concerns have been raised about the broader context in which the CAB3 discussions are unfolding, particularly in relation to the extent of openness for divergent views. Observers and participants in different settings have noted a growing sense of caution among some individuals when engaging on the subject, especially where their views may not align with the proposed constitutional changes. This cautiousness is often described in relation to perceived risks associated with being publicly associated with dissenting or critical positions during a politically sensitive reform process.

There have also been references to isolated but notable incidents and patterns that appear to

contribute to an environment of self-restraint in expression, including accounts of individuals opting to withdraw from discussions, avoid public commentary, or limit their participation in forums where CAB3 is being discussed. While experiences are not uniform across contexts, these perceptions have shaped how open some civic and community spaces feel during the consultation period.

At the same time, informal and formal conversations on governance and electoral reform continue to take place, reflecting sustained public interest in constitutional matters. However, the nature of participation appears to vary, with some voices more prominently expressed in structured or official spaces, while others remain less visible in public discourse. This dynamic has contributed to ongoing reflections on the balance between consultation processes and the practical conditions under which citizens are able to freely and confidently express their views.

Overall, the trajectory of these discussions points to both continued engagement with constitutional issues and growing concerns around the openness of civic space during the amendment process, particularly in relation to the expression of views that are perceived as critical or contrary to the proposed reforms. Monitoring of developments will continue as the process unfolds.



Success Story: Continued Dialogue Between NGOs & Regulators Yields Positive Results for Zimbabwe's Civic Sector

By Staff Reporter

For many Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) operating in Zimbabwe, navigating the country's regulatory landscape has historically been a source of significant uncertainty, delay, and operational paralysis. Compliance requirements, registration processes, and evolving legal frameworks have often left organisations — particularly smaller, community-based ones — without clear guidance or accessible channels through which to seek it. It was precisely this gap that the Talk to Your Regulator (T2R) initiative was designed to close.

The National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations in Zimbabwe (NANGO), in partnership with Trócaire, successfully convened another National Talk to Your Regulator Interface Session on 19 March 2026 at the Monomotapa Hotel in Harare. The engagement formed part of the ongoing T2R initiative launched in October 2024, built around three clear objectives: to enhance understanding of compliance requirements for NGOs; to strengthen relationships and collaboration between NGOs and regulators; and to advocate for streamlined regulatory frameworks that promote an enabling environment for civil society. Since its launch, T2R has steadily grown into one of the most practical and impactful compliance support platforms available to Zimbabwe's civil society sector — a direct response to a long-standing need for structured, accessible, and candid engagement between regulators and the organisations they govern.

The session brought together 120 participants comprising local NGOs and key regulators, including the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare (MoPSLSW) through the PVO Registrar's Office, the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA), the National Social Security Authority (NSSA), the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), and the Association of Rural District Councils of Zimbabwe (ARDCZ). The breadth of regulatory representation at the session is itself a testament to the growing trust that T2R has cultivated — bringing under one roof the institutions whose decisions most directly shape whether NGOs can operate, register, raise funds, and serve their communities. That trust is not incidental; it is the direct product of T2R's second objective: building relationships and collaboration between NGOs and regulators that go beyond formal correspondence and one-sided communication.

The impact of this edition of T2R on NGO compliance understanding was immediate, tangible, and far-reaching, speaking directly to the initiative's first objective. One of the most significant announcements of the session came from the PVO Registrar, who confirmed that 99 percent of PVO applications submitted before the Board had been approved and provisional certificates issued — representing the formal registration of over 300 organisations. This announcement marked a watershed moment for the sector, directly addressing a backlog that had left hundreds of organisations in a state of administrative limbo, unable to fully formalise their operations or access certain funding streams. The announcement also reflected the Registrar's fulfilment of a commitment made at the 15th NGO Directors Summer Retreat to clear pending registrations before the end of February 2026 — a commitment itself born out of the dialogue that T2R has cultivated.

The session also delivered important updates that reflect T2R's third objective — advocating for streamlined regulatory frameworks that promote a more enabling environment for civil society. The PVO Registrar announced that the Ministry is working towards gazetting official bank accounts through which organisations will pay PVO application fees — USD150 for local organisations and USD250 for international NGOs — ensuring that all payments are processed through formal banking channels and eliminating cash handling within the Ministry. Additionally, the Registrar highlighted ongoing efforts to finalise and gazette the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the PVO Amendment Act (2025), a critical step for guiding implementation of the Act and for Zimbabwe's ongoing Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Mutual Evaluation Exercise. These are not merely administrative updates — they are the tangible fruits of a platform that creates space for civil society's voices and concerns to be heard and acted upon by those with the authority to effect change.



Mr. Tirivavi, Acting PVO Registrar - MoPSLSW

The need for T2R is not merely administrative — it is strategic. Zimbabwe's civic sector operates at the intersection of community need, regulatory obligation, and development impact. When organisations are bogged down by compliance uncertainty, their capacity to serve communities is diminished. When regulators and NGOs operate in silos, misunderstandings calcify into mistrust, and the enabling environment for civil society deteriorates. T2R directly counters this dynamic, advancing all three of its objectives simultaneously: building compliance knowledge at the organisation level, fostering relationships grounded in mutual respect and transparency, and generating the evidence and goodwill needed to advocate for regulatory frameworks that work for civil society rather than against it.



The continued success of the Talk to Your Regulator initiative is a clear demonstration that sustained engagement works — and that the investment NANGO and its partners have made in building this platform is yielding returns that extend far beyond any single session. Through T2R, NGOs are gaining access to accurate information, practical guidance, and direct communication channels with regulators, reducing uncertainty, building compliance capacity, and ultimately strengthening their ability to contribute meaningfully to national development and community resilience.

As Zimbabwe's legal and regulatory environment continues to evolve, the demand for platforms like T2R will only grow. NANGO remains firmly committed to sustaining, expanding, and deepening this initiative — because an informed, compliant, and empowered civic sector, operating within a streamlined and enabling regulatory environment, is not just good for NGOs. It is good for Zimbabwe.

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KEY FEATURES



PVO Registration & Reporting

Step-by-step guidance on applying for new registrations and renewing your organisation's status under the PVO Amendment Act, 2025.



Social Security Support (NSSA)

Everything you need to know about employee social security, contributions, and compliance with NSSA regulations.



Tax Compliance (ZIMRA)

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Labour Law Compliance (NECWEI)

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The Price of Getting There: Fuel Hikes and the Squeeze on Zimbabwean Lives and the Sector

By Staff Reporter

In the space of two weeks in March 2026, the cost of fuel in Zimbabwe rose by nearly 40 percent. The increases did not stay at the pump — they have moved quickly through the economy, and households and civil society organisations alike are already feeling the weight of them.

In February, a litre of petrol in Zimbabwe cost US\$1.56. By the end of March, it cost US\$2.17. Diesel moved from US\$1.52 to US\$2.05 — across two separate price adjustments, both within the same month. The official explanation pointed to rising global oil costs driven by conflict in the Middle East, which disrupted supply routes and pushed international benchmarks sharply upward. Zimbabwe, which imports all of its fuel, was caught in the wake of that.



PETROLEUM PRICES – 17 APRIL 2026

ZWG/litre		US\$/litre	
Diesel (50)	Blend (E20)	Diesel (50)	Blend (E20)
52.63	52.37	2.09	2.08

That external pressure is real. But it does not fully explain why Zimbabwe's increase was so much steeper than those absorbed by neighbouring countries facing the same global shock. The gap points to something additional: a domestic pricing structure layered with taxes, levies,

and regulatory fees that leaves very little cushioning between the international price and what is charged at the pump here. When a global shock arrives, that structure amplifies it rather than softens it.

For the average Zimbabwean, the distinction between external and domestic causes matters less than the outcome. Prices went up. And everything connected to fuel went up with them.

The Ripple Through Everyday Life

The most immediate consequence has been in public transport. Within days of the first price adjustment in early March, kombi and bus fares across urban centres rose by between 50 and 100 percent. Operators passed on their higher running costs almost immediately — and the people absorbing those fare increases had little choice but to pay them. Getting to work, to a clinic, to a market, or to school does not become optional because the fare has doubled.

For low-income households, transport is the second heaviest item in the monthly expenditure basket after food. When fares double, something else has to give. In practice, that often means fewer meals, skipped healthcare visits, children kept home from school, or a longer walk accepted in place of a fare that can no longer be spared. These are not abstract trade-offs. They are decisions that families across Zimbabwe are making right now.

What makes this harder is that the price increases have arrived without any corresponding adjustment in what most people earn. Employers — across both the public and private sectors — have not been able to raise salaries in line with the rising cost of living. Workers are taking home the same pay they received before the fuel hikes, but that pay now buys meaningfully less. The gap between income and expenditure has widened almost overnight, and for households already stretched thin, there is very little left to absorb it.

Food prices are following. Bread, mealie-meal, cooking oil, vegetables — anything that moves along a supply chain is subject to the same upward pressure. Retailers and producers pass on their increased transport and production costs, and early inflation data for March already shows prices rising across food and transport categories. The full second-round effect — as higher costs work their way through production and distribution — is still unfolding, and further pressure is expected in the months ahead.

A Harder Season for the Most Vulnerable

The timing of this price shock matters. Zimbabwe is still in the closing stages of the lean season — the period between the depletion of last year's harvest and the arrival of the new one. In deficit-producing areas across the south, east, west, and extreme north, many households are already relying on the market for food they could not grow themselves. Higher transport costs

mean higher food prices at precisely the moment when household food stocks are lowest and purchasing power is most stretched.

In tobacco-producing areas, the situation is further complicated by early indications that prices in the 2026 tobacco marketing season are tracking at least 20 percent below last year's levels. For farming households counting on tobacco sales to restock food supplies and cover non-food needs, lower earnings combined with higher transport and commodity costs is a convergence that leaves very little margin for resilience.

It is in moments like these that the community's civil society organisations work with need the most support. And it is also in moments like these that the organisations themselves feel the strain most directly.

What This Means for the Civil Society Sector

NANGO member organisations — many operating on fixed donor budgets, project-based funding cycles, and pre-approved expenditure plans — are not shielded from fuel price increases. The effects are operational and immediate. And they arrive at a moment when the funding environment for civil society work in Zimbabwe was already under significant strain. Global shifts in aid priorities, the withdrawal of key institutional donors, and increasing competition for a shrinking pool of development funding had already left many organisations doing more with less. The fuel shock has landed on top of that — not beside it.

Field work now costs more. Organisations that deliver community outreach, conduct home visits, carry out field monitoring, or provide services in rural and peri-urban areas depend on vehicles and fuel to do that work. A 40 percent rise in fuel costs translates directly into higher field delivery costs — without any corresponding increase in the funding available to cover them. Organisations are already having to make difficult choices about reach, frequency, and where to redirect budget lines. For organisations whose donor funding has already been cut or whose project cycles have ended without renewal, those choices are even starker.

Staff commuting has become a quiet financial pressure. For staff relying on public transport, doubled fares are effectively a reduction in take-home pay. People are spending more of what they earn just getting to work. In a sector where compensation already competes with retention challenges, added economic pressure outside the office affects concentration, morale, and the sustained quality of work that communities depend on. Retaining experienced staff has never been easy in Zimbabwe's civil society sector — and it becomes harder still when real incomes are falling while funding for salary adjustments simply does not exist.

Procurement costs are rising. Everything organisations procure — stationery, nutrition supplies, health commodities, training materials, catering for community meetings — is subject to the same inflationary pressure now working through the broader economy. Budgets approved and signed off in the last quarter may no longer stretch to cover what they were designed for. In a normal funding environment, organisations might approach donors for budget revisions or supplementary support. In the current climate, where many funders are themselves managing reduced allocations or shifting geographic and thematic priorities, that conversation is harder to have — and harder to win.

Community need is intensifying at the same time. The people organisations serve are facing exactly the same pressures — higher fares, more expensive food, shrinking household income. Demand on social services, food assistance, livelihood support, and protection programming tends to rise precisely when economic conditions worsen. Organisations are being asked to do more at the very moment when doing it costs more — and when the resources available to meet that demand are, for many, contracting rather than growing. This is the civil society sector's version of the same squeeze that households across Zimbabwe are navigating: expectations rising, margins narrowing, and very little room left to absorb the next shock.

The Structural Question Civil Society Should Raise

There is a broader point worth naming, because it shapes how civil society can engage with this issue beyond the immediate moment.

Zimbabwe's fuel is significantly more expensive than in comparable countries in the region — and that gap existed before the latest global shock. It exists partly because of the domestic structure of fuel pricing: the layers of levies, duties, and fees built into the pump price that add up before a single drop is sold. When an external shock hits, those layers amplify the impact. When the shock passes, those layers remain.

Transparency in how fuel is procured, priced, and taxed is a matter of genuine public interest. The degree to which the domestic pricing structure can be reformed — to reduce Zimbabwe's exposure to global shocks, and to reduce the cost burden on low-income households and the organisations that serve them — is a conversation that civil society has both a stake in and a voice to contribute to. Framing fuel pricing as a governance and accountability question, not only an economic one, opens space for principled advocacy that goes beyond the current episode.

Universal Periodic Review Explained: Why Civil Society Organisations Must Participate

By Staff Reporter

The establishment of United Nations (UN) human rights treaty bodies and the growth of the treaty body system are major achievements in the international community's efforts to protect and promote human rights. Treaty bodies act as custodians of the legal standards in core human rights treaties, and states parties are required to report periodically. Through this reporting cycle, governments are expected to review relevant legislation and policies, receive guidance on improving compliance, and ensure that treaty obligations are translated into measurable improvements for individuals. Because the system is designed to be continuous, regular reporting and follow-up supported by national dialogue and debate are essential for strengthening implementation and for making effective use of recommendations and general comments that often function as both early-warning and practical implementation tools.

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and national human rights institutions strengthen this process at every stage. As emphasized by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the work of treaty bodies and special procedures is not possible without civil society input, which enhances the relevance and credibility of expert conclusions and recommendations. In Zimbabwe, the Government's increased re-engagement where state party reporting is used as a strategy creates a crucial space for CSOs to encourage, support, and monitor the implementation of recommendations from treaty bodies, special procedures, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), and other mechanisms. CSOs also provide independent information through activities such as monitoring, shadow reporting, petitions, inquiries, and early warning, helping ensure that national and global commitments are genuinely reflected in practice, not only in submissions.

Looking ahead, Zimbabwe's preparation for the 52nd UPR session in January 2027 makes civil society engagement especially important. The UPR is a structured mechanism that reviews all UN member states, regardless of politics or power, and its credibility depends on grounded, detailed evidence from lived realities. If CSOs fail to engage, government reports may omit sensitive or inconvenient issues, accountability may weaken, and key advocacy opportunities may be lost. Just as importantly, the voices of vulnerable groups such as women, children, minorities, and persons with disabilities risk being excluded, making the UPR appear superficial and reducing public trust in the process.

Overview of the UPR Process

UPR is a Human Rights Council (HRC) mechanism that assesses the overall human rights

situation in every UN Member State through a peer-review process conducted by all member states. After a country is reviewed, it is expected to implement the UPR outcome comprising the recommendations and voluntary commitments it accepts so that the process leads to practical improvements on the ground. Following Zimbabwe's third UPR cycle in January 2022 with the country report presented to the HRC, the framework being developed aims to track and monitor implementation in a top-track approach, enabling real-time, evidence-based advocacy and supporting the preparation of Zimbabwe's alternative (civil society) report for the fourth cycle, provisionally scheduled for 2026.

In Zimbabwe's third cycle, the Working Group produced 264 recommendations. During the 50th session of the HRC (13 June–8 July 2022), views were considered on the government's conclusions, recommendations, voluntary commitments, and replies. Of the 264 recommendations, Zimbabwe indicated support for 168 meaning the government committed to implement them while 96 were noted or deferred for further examination. The UPR, established in 2006 and guided by UN General Assembly resolution 60/251, is designed to improve human rights situations and share best practices, with Zimbabwe having been reviewed three times since the process began (Cycle 1: October 2011; Cycle 2: November 2016; Cycle 3: January 2022).

The UPR review relies on three main inputs: the national report prepared by the state under review, a compilation of UN information prepared by OHCHR, and a summary of information submitted by other stakeholders (including civil society, national human rights institutions, and regional organizations), also prepared by OHCHR. The review takes place in Geneva before the UPR Working Group (composed of 47 HRC member states) and involves an interactive dialogue between the state under review and council members/observers. Stakeholders can contribute written submissions and, where accredited, attend the session and make oral statements helping ensure that alternative narratives and independent evidence are reflected in the review and outcomes.

Why CSOs should participate

- CSOs should participate in the UPR because it is meant to reflect real human rights conditions, not only government reporting; the people most affected by violations and the organisations that document and respond to them hold essential knowledge that should not be excluded.
- CSOs often work closely with affected communities and draw evidence from victims, witnesses, legal aid providers, and documentation networks to report on real patterns of harm, obstacles to justice, and day-to-day realities that may be missing from official narratives.

- CSOs Strengthen the quality and accuracy of recommendations making them more actionable, realistic, and aligned with what communities actually need .
- CSOs ensure underrepresented group and people facing restrictions on civic space are heard, and often serve as key channels through which these communities' experiences reach international institutions.
- They also expose gaps between laws and practice even where rights-protecting laws exist on paper. CSOs can provide evidence on whether reforms are enforced, whether institutions function properly, and whether victims can access effective remedies.
- CSOs contribute to long-term monitoring to track whether governments accept recommendations, enact reforms, and allocate resources helping identify both progress and ongoing shortcomings.
- In challenging political contexts, credible, well-documented CSO information can still influence recommendations made by other states, shape diplomatic discussions, and sustain domestic advocacy momentum.
- CSOs can submit alternative written shadow reports that is compiled alongside other stakeholder submissions; although CSOs may not speak directly in the session, they can also include addressed to Recommending States, supporting more informed recommendations based on evidence beyond the government's submission.

Key Dates

The tentative timelines for Zimbabwe's 2027 UPR process are as follows:

1. Deadline for Stakeholder (CSO) Submissions: **17 July 2026**
2. Deadline for National Report: **October 2026**
3. UPR Working Group Review (Geneva): **January- February 2027, 54th Session.**

Conclusion: UPR needs CSOs to be meaningful

Zimbabwe's human rights situation is widely reported as being undermined by serious and ongoing violations, and the concerns extend beyond individual incidents to the wider environment in which rights are exercised. At the same time, policy and legal changes that restrict civic space such as the Private Voluntary Organisations (PVO) Amendment Act and the proposed Constitutional Amendment Bill Number 3 have raised fears that CSOs may face greater barriers to operating, documenting abuses, and engaging in public debate. In preparation for the UPR, these developments matter because they shape what information can be produced and by whom: as restrictions tighten, civil society may be limited in its ability to collect evidence, consult affected communities, and submit detailed shadow reports that help ensure the review reflects lived realities rather than official narratives. They also influence the credibility and effectiveness of follow-up, since implementation of recommendations depends not only on government action but also on whether independent monitoring and advocacy remain possible in practice.

That is why CSOs should participate. Their involvement strengthens the accuracy of information, improves the quality of recommendations, highlights overlooked communities, bridges law and implementation, and supports long-term follow-up. In short, CSO participation ensures that human rights reviews are not conducted for governments alone, but for the people whose rights are at stake.



HOW DOES AN NGO REGISTER ON TARMS?

Step 1

Self-Service Portal

Visit the official Self Service Portal – SSP at mytaxselfservice.zimra.co.zw



Step 2

SSP User Account

Create an SSP user account by clicking on the **"Sign Up"** hyperlink and follow the steps to get your Username and Password.

Step 3

Account Log In

Log into the system using your username and password and follow the steps as directed.

Step 4

Existing Taxpayer

If you are an existing taxpayer with BP number, click on the **"Register with an Existing BP Number"** hyperlink and follow the instructions.

Step 5

New Taxpayer

If you are a new taxpayer, choose the appropriate option from **"Register as an Individual"** or **"Register as an Organisation"** or **"Register as a Representative of a Deceased Taxpayer"** and follow the steps.

Step 6

Bank Selection

Select your preferred bank to link to the **ZIMRA Single Account** located in that bank. Note that, you should be an **account holder** in that bank to facilitate tax transactions.

All NGOs are encouraged to contact their nearest **NANGO Offices** should they face registration challenges or email us at info@nangozim.org or get in touch with the **ZIMRA Contact Center** on **585/0868800761**

NANGO Executive Director Appointed to Southern Africa Council of NGOs Executive Committee



A Milestone for Zimbabwe's Civil Society on the Regional Stage

The National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO) is pleased to announce that its Executive Director, Mr. Ernest Nyimai, has been appointed as a member of the Executive Committee of the Southern Africa Council of NGOs (SAf-CNGO). This distinguished appointment marks a significant milestone not only for NANGO as an Association, but for Zimbabwe's broader civil society movement and its growing influence in regional development discourse.

Mr. Nyimai's appointment is a recognition of his leadership, dedication, and the pivotal role NANGO continues to play in fostering a vibrant, inclusive, and effective civil society sector across Zimbabwe. The SAf-CNGO Executive Committee serves as a strategic decision-making body responsible for guiding the direction of the regional council, shaping policies that affect Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) across Southern Africa, and strengthening the collective voice of civil society in the sub-region. His inclusion on this committee places Zimbabwe's civil society at the heart of regional conversations around governance, civic space, sustainable development, and multi-stakeholder partnerships — issues that are central to NANGO's own mandate and strategic vision.

Mr. Nyimai's appointment also reflects growing recognition of his leadership and contribution to strengthening civic space, coordination, and collaboration within the civil society sector in Zimbabwe and the broader Southern African region. Since assuming leadership at NANGO, he has championed initiatives focused on civil society resilience, regulatory engagement, capacity strengthening, multi-stakeholder engagements, and sustainable development partnerships

SAf-CNGO is a regional platform that brings together national NGO umbrella bodies and civil society networks from across Southern Africa. It serves as a collective voice for the non-governmental sector at the regional level, engaging with bodies such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union (AU), and international development partners on matters affecting civil society. SAf-CNGO's work spans a range of critical areas including governance, human rights, civic space, gender equality, environmental sustainability,

and socio-economic development — all of which align closely with NANGO's priorities in Zimbabwe.

Mr. Nyimai's appointment opens new avenues for Zimbabwe's civil society to contribute meaningfully to regional policy dialogues and decision-making processes. As a member of the SAf-CNGO Executive Committee, he will be positioned to advocate for the interests of Zimbabwean NGOs, share best practices from the country's civil society ecosystem, and help shape the agenda of the broader regional movement. The appointment also affirms NANGO's standing as a credible and influential organisation within the Southern African civil society landscape — one that is not merely a domestic actor, but an active participant in shaping the regional environment in which NGOs operate. With a seat at the regional table, the concerns, innovations, and experiences of local civil society can inform broader strategies and policies that affect communities across Southern Africa.

NANGO congratulates Mr. Ernest Nyimai on this well-deserved appointment and expresses confidence in his ability to represent Zimbabwe's civil society with distinction at the regional level. This appointment is a testament to his commitment to the values of transparency, accountability, inclusion, and collaborative development that have always defined NANGO's work. NANGO also extends its gratitude to SAf-CNGO for this expression of confidence in Zimbabwe's civil society leadership and looks forward to an even more productive and impactful relationship with the regional body in the years ahead.

Together, we are Changing the Narrative.



Participants Posing for a Group Photo During the Annual High-Level Stakeholders Symposium



NANGO Partners with ZACRAS to Celebrate Community Radio Excellence in Zimbabwe

By Staff Reporter

The National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations in Zimbabwe (NANGO) proudly partnered with the Zimbabwe Association of Community Radio Stations (ZACRAS) during the inaugural ZACRAS Community Radio Awards held on 19 March 2026 in Bulawayo. The landmark event marked the first national platform dedicated to celebrating excellence, innovation, and impact within Zimbabwe's growing community broadcasting sector, and represented a significant moment in the advancement of NANGO's Media, Arts and Culture thematic cluster.

Held under the theme "Radio and AI – Amplifying Local Voices," the awards ceremony brought together community broadcasters, civil society organisations, development partners, media practitioners, government representatives, and sector leaders to recognise the transformative role of community radio in advancing access to information, citizen participation, and grassroots development.

As a key partner, NANGO's involvement is a direct expression of its Media, Arts and Culture thematic cluster, through which NANGO actively supports initiatives that promote freedom of expression, media development, and the use of creative and cultural platforms to advance civic participation and inclusive development. Community radio stations serve as vital communication channels, particularly in rural and marginalised communities where access to mainstream media remains limited. Broadcasting in indigenous languages and addressing local issues, these stations play a critical role in empowering citizens with information, preserving cultural identity, and fostering community dialogue – all of which are central to NANGO's thematic priorities in this area.

Through this partnership, NANGO reaffirmed its commitment to positioning community media

as a strategic pillar within its Media, Arts and Culture cluster — one that bridges civic space, cultural expression, and development communication. The partnership recognises that a vibrant, independent, and well-resourced community media sector is inseparable from NANGO's broader agenda of strengthening civic space, promoting democratic participation, advancing accountability, and ensuring that no community is left behind in Zimbabwe's development conversation.

The awards ceremony achieved several important milestones for Zimbabwe's community media sector, all of which resonate directly with the goals of NANGO's thematic work. It elevated the visibility of community radio nationally, encouraged professionalism and ethical standards in broadcasting, strengthened collaboration between media stations and development partners, and created opportunities for peer learning and innovation sharing. Importantly, the initiative recognised the dedication of grassroots broadcasters who continue to operate under resource-constrained environments while delivering critical information services to communities — the very constituency that NANGO's Media, Arts and Culture cluster seeks to champion and support.

Among the major winners of the night, **Avuxeni FM Community Radio Station** received the **Community Radio Station of the Year Award** and also won accolades for **Environmental Reporting and Gender Equality Reporting**. **Nyazema Community Radio** received the **SDG Award**, while **Lyeja FM** won the **Human Rights Award**. The **Lifetime Achievement Award** was presented to **Father Nigel Johnson** in recognition of his outstanding contribution to community broadcasting. Other notable winners included **Radio Bukalanga** for the **Safe and Gender Sensitive Workplace Award**, and **Nhimbe FM** which won both the **Best Media Viability Award** and **Community Radio Initiative of the Year**. **Anesu Manzanga** was named **Community Broadcaster of the Year**, **Shantani Dube** received the **Community Voice Champion Award**, and the **Impact Story of the Year Award** went to **Cheriel Dzobo**.



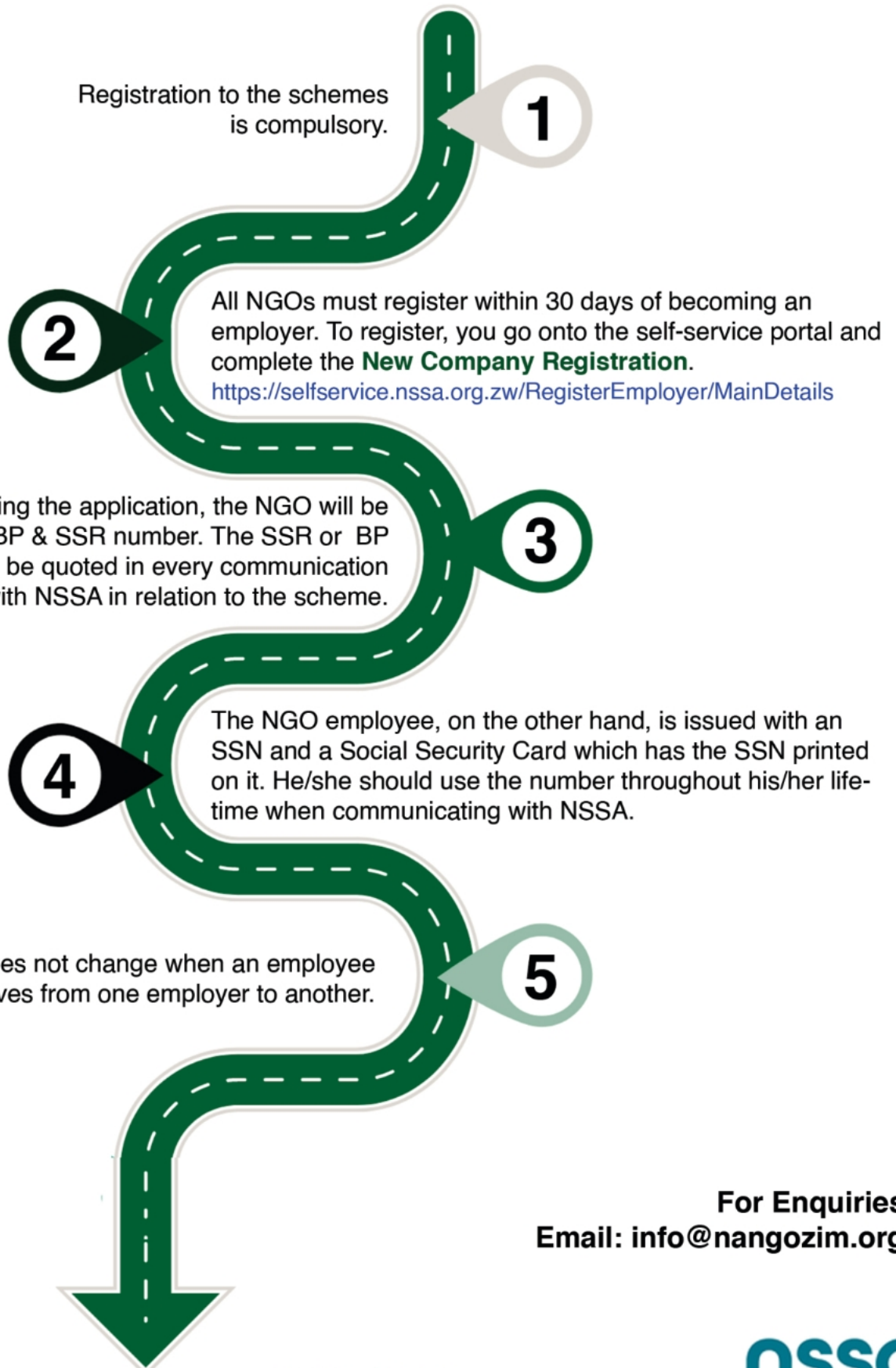
NANGO recognises that community radio remains a strategic instrument within its Media, Arts and Culture thematic cluster — a tool for strengthening local participation, advancing human rights awareness, promoting transparency, celebrating indigenous culture and languages, and fostering social cohesion. In an increasingly digital and AI-driven communication environment, investing in community media innovation is essential to ensuring that local voices, stories, and cultures are not left behind or homogenised by global technological shifts.

Looking ahead, ZACRAS intends to institutionalise the Community Radio Awards as an annual national event aimed at expanding participation, strengthening partnerships, and promoting innovation within the sector. NANGO welcomes this development and remains firmly committed to deepening its engagement with the community media landscape as part of its ongoing work under the Media, Arts and Culture thematic cluster — supporting collaborative initiatives that strengthen Zimbabwe's civic, cultural, and media ecosystem for the benefit of all communities.

The inaugural ZACRAS Community Radio Awards therefore stand not only as a celebration of broadcasting excellence, but as a powerful affirmation of the role that community media plays in shaping informed, resilient, and empowered communities — and of NANGO's resolve to keep amplifying that role through focused, sustained thematic investment.



HOW DOES AN NGO REGISTER TO NSSA?



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What Civil Society Told the African Commission About Zimbabwe

By Staff Reporter

From 30 March to 2 April 2026, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) conducted a promotion mission to Zimbabwe — a formal in-country engagement through which the Commission meets with government, national institutions, and civil society to assess the human rights situation on the ground. Ahead of that visit, civil society organisations prepared a consolidated briefing note for the delegation. It was a candid document, and what it raised matters for anyone working in Zimbabwe's development and human rights space.

The submission recognised genuine gains — the repeal of the death penalty, ratification of disability rights instruments, and reforms to education access among them. But it was direct about the larger picture: Zimbabwe is experiencing a deterioration in fundamental freedoms that sits uneasily alongside those gains, and that is inconsistent with the ACHPR's own recommendations following Zimbabwe's last review in May 2025.

The freedom to associate, assemble, and speak remains constrained. Civil society actors and ordinary citizens continue to face arrests and harassment for exercising constitutionally protected rights. Human rights defenders operate in an increasingly hostile environment, with a pattern of arbitrary detention and criminalisation of activism that has no adequate legal remedy. And civic space — the real, practical ability of citizens and organisations to engage, advocate, and hold power to account — is narrowing.

The submission placed Constitutional Amendment Bill No. 3 in a regional accountability frame. The proposed abolition of the Gender Commission was highlighted not only as a domestic concern but as a direct retreat from Zimbabwe's obligations under the Maputo Protocol — the continent's key instrument on women's rights. Transferring specialised gender oversight to a body already chronically under-resourced risks diluting the focused attention gender justice requires. The briefing also called for Zimbabwe to ratify the African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, which remains outstanding.

The delegation included commissioners responsible for prisons and women's rights, and the briefing addressed conditions in detention directly. Much of Zimbabwe's prison infrastructure is colonial-era and significantly deteriorated. Courts have had to order urgent improvements to sanitation and basic conditions. Healthcare in detention remains severely limited, and systemic underfunding means prisoners go without treatment that the state is legally obliged to provide.

On broader socio-economic rights, the briefing flagged deepening gaps in public healthcare access — compounded by the withdrawal of significant international health support — as well as rising school dropout rates, barriers to education for vulnerable learners, and environmental rights violations in communities affected by extractive industry operations.

The core ask was straightforward: implement the recommendations already on the table from the May 2025 review. The guidance exists. What is needed is follow-through — and the ACHPR's sustained engagement to hold the government to account for it. Civil society also called for stronger monitoring and follow-up mechanisms so that commitments made in regional forums translate into measurable change on the ground.



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