



**ZIMBABWE EUROPE NETWORK (ZEN)
RECOMMENDATIONS to the
“Friends of Zimbabwe”
Donor meeting
Brussels 28th June 2011**

Zimbabwe Europe Network (ZEN)’s position paper focuses on the prevailing situation in Zimbabwe, addressing the elections roadmap, GPA implementation and a suggested way forward.

ZEN notes with concern that since the Friends of Zimbabwe group meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark, in December 2010, there has still been little substantial progress in implementing the most contentious elements of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) and resolving identified outstanding issues between the three main political parties to the GPA.

Widespread state-sponsored violence, partisan application of the law, increased deployment of soldiers across the country openly intimidating citizens and campaigning for ZANU-PF, and increased arrests and harassment of rights activists and MDC leaders all confirm that key state institutions remain unreformed and extremely partisan and politicised. There is a general consensus amongst civil society that, due to the prevailing political environment, Zimbabwe is not ready for elections in 2011 without extensive constitutional and legislative reforms as outlined in the GPA, including the constitutional reform process, media and electoral reforms.

Election Roadmap

ZEN is seriously concerned about the readiness of the country for elections. The operational environment still needs to be improved and most of the critical reforms outlined in the GPA have not yet been implemented. We therefore urge the international community to apply intensive diplomatic pressure on the government of Zimbabwe to outline a clear road map for the hosting of credible free and fair elections.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC), as the guarantors of the GPA, should urgently lay out in clear terms with firm pre-conditions how to ensure democratic elections in Zimbabwe that are without violence and intimidation and that fully comply with SADC electoral principles and guidelines. While it acknowledges the efforts made thus far by the SADC Organ Troika on Politics, Defence and Security Summit through the milestone Livingstone Communiqué and the subsequent Sandton Summit Communiqué on the need for a credible elections roadmap for Zimbabwe, ZEN suggests that more still needs to be done to ensure free and fair elections. The following outstanding issues of disagreement amongst the political negotiators on the following five key thematic issues need to be addressed:

- a. The staffing of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission
- b. The role of the Zimbabwe Security Forces in governance issues and political campaigns
- c. The denial or lack of acknowledgment of violence as a problem by ZANU (PF)
- d. The existence of oppressive legislation prohibiting freedom of expression and movement
- e. The role of election observers and monitors

ZEN submits that the Zimbabwe elections roadmap should address the following five critical pre-conditions to guarantee free and fair elections:

1. A new, democratic constitution which includes critical electoral reforms such as an updated and accurate voters' roll, guarantees for media freedoms, promotion of gender equality, and equal access by all political parties to state media while repealing or amending all legislation that hinders free political activity. The roadmap must lay out contingency steps to be taken if a credible constitutional referendum produces a No Vote.
2. All soldiers currently deployed across the country should be returned and confined to their barracks; all service chiefs should publicly commit to restricting their activities to their constitutional mandate and separating themselves completely from interference in political and electoral matters.
3. The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission and its secretariat, responsible for election management, should be completely demilitarised, independent, professional, adequately-resourced and receive direct technical support from the SADC Electoral Commissions Forum to enable it to discharge its mandate impartially.
4. In the context of its ongoing mediation in the political conflict in Zimbabwe and before an election date can be set, SADC should independently examine and certify that the environment is conducive to holding free and fair elections; SADC should supervise such elections to ensure full compliance with SADC electoral principles and guidelines. The elections must be monitored and observed by local, regional and international groups with guaranteed unfettered access to all parts of the country.

5. Together with the AU and the UN, SADC should deploy peace-keeping monitors at least three months ahead of the day of elections to prevent state-sponsored violence and intimidation and guarantee that the freely expressed will of the people is adhered to. The peace-keeping monitors should remain on the ground a further three months after elections have been held.

Two-Pronged Engagement

The international community has at its disposal a two – pronged strategy for engaging with the Zimbabwean question in support of the people of Zimbabwe;

Firstly at the **diplomatic level**:

- i) Engagement with SADC, as the guarantors of the GPA, and South African President Jacob Zuma as the facilitator, to address the unresolved articles of the GPA;
- ii) The international community should apply political and diplomatic pressure to ensure that that the inclusive government prioritises security sector reform in Zimbabwe.
- iii) Apply pressure on both SADC and the Zimbabwe authorities to agree on a roadmap for the hosting of free and fair elections;
- iv) To support lobbying and advocacy efforts by civil society for the deployment of SADC, AU and UN monitors to Zimbabwe to assess and ensure full implementation of the GPA.

Secondly the international community should extend **financial** and **technical** support towards targeted state institutions, regional and civil society organisation whose work will strengthen the credibility of the electoral process:

- i) Build the capacity of the constitutional commissions created by Amendment 19 of the constitution before elections are held. This includes providing technical and financial resources to carry out their respective mandates;
- ii) Facilitate technical support to the newly-appointed Zimbabwe Electoral Commission by more experienced regional electoral bodies such as the South African Electoral Commission. This includes administration of the pre-election, conduct of elections, and post election periods; overhaul of the voters roll; and creation of an enabling environment for the other actors within the electoral process;
- iii) Continue work within the Kimberley Process to work for fulfilment by Zimbabwe of the adopted 2009 joint work plan plus additional issues from the July 2010 agreement in St Petersburg. In particular to call for acknowledgement of the civil society role in the Process;
- iv) Support for civil society's critical role in supporting the transition processes in Zimbabwe towards full democracy. Hence the international community should continue to support civil society initiatives in the following areas;
 - The participation and engagement of civil society with the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process for Zimbabwe due in October 2011. In particular both diplomatic and technical support is needed to engage the members of the Troika on Zimbabwe: namely Spain, China and Senegal.

- Protection to human rights defenders including establishment of a Civil Society Violence Early Warning and Response Coordination Mechanism;
- Voter education to build a body of citizens aware of the need to participate in democratic processes, and of how the electoral process works;
- Monitoring and documentation of the referendum and elections;
- Evidence-based advocacy and lobbying premised on solid research and the development of discussion papers to inform alternative policy positions;
- Creation and maintaining of dialogue and engagement platforms with both local and international actors;
- Violence prevention initiatives in support of Article 7 in the GPA to prevent recurrence of the scale of politically-motivated violence witnessed during the 2008 elections;
- Increased support to monitoring of the Chiadzwa diamond fields in order to avert the use of this resource to fund conflict and for personal rather than national use. Particularly we would encourage the donors to support the Kimberley Process-endorsed Local Focal Point to enable it to operate efficiently in the current disputed situation;
- Strengthen regional networks and civil society groupings such as the SADC CNGO to foster greater cooperation and coordination in order to lobby SADC on Zimbabwe.

Way Forward

Donors to Zimbabwe should formulate incentives for full compliance with the GPA and development of a clear roadmap for the holding of free and fair elections. This includes a creative approach to the targeted measures debate so that gradual relaxation of these measures is linked with steady progress towards full democratisation reforms. Other economic tools relate to the huge international debt that Zimbabwe has accrued over the years; the suspension or total lifting of portions of this debt could be part of a rescue package with clear benchmarks to support democratic reforms.

In conclusion, ZRN re-iterates the following recommendations as presented by Civil Society in Copenhagen, December 2010:

- a.* **Continue and increase support to the people** of Zimbabwe, maintaining high levels of humanitarian aid and support for social sectors. Donor aid should be transparent in the nature and extent of engagement with government and civil society. Donors should strengthen the social component of aid to ensure participation of the poorest sectors of the population;
- b.* Provide **long term, predictable funding** to civil society organisations;
- c.* Focus support on **human rights and governance**, including for monitoring the inclusive government and greater transparency in the extractive industries. We also urge quick and

- enhanced support for civic society efforts in countering fear, and mitigating and exposing violence;
- d. Strengthen support for the transition towards a new Zimbabwe, including working for legislative and institutional reform, especially **security sector reform, transitional justice and healing**;
 - e. **Support the election preparations** in the country to ensure elections are free from violence, intimidation and manipulation, and are carried out in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) electoral principles and guidelines;
 - f. Ensure access in Zimbabwe to the **widest variety of media information**, including support for externally-based media outlets;
 - g. Support a **moratorium on debt repayments** to allow an independent and transparent debt audit;
 - h. Support a **land ownership audit**;
 - i. Support work on transparency in extraction and use of **diamond revenue in Chiadzwa, to enable the country to meet international standards**. Support the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme Local Focal Point and encourage Zimbabwe to join the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative;
 - j. Continue the appropriate and targeted measures until the GPA obligations are fulfilled, including the travel bans on individuals responsible for human rights violations;
 - k. **Continue to press and support SADC and the African Union**, including using the EU-AU human rights dialogue, to fulfil their role as guarantors of the GPA.

-ends-