



ZESN 2018 Harmonised Election – 11 am Situational Statement

Harare – 30 July 2018 – As part of its comprehensive effort to observe the 2018 Harmonised Elections, the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) has deployed over 6,500 trained, accredited observers to every ward, constituency, district and province, of the country.

This 11 am Situational Statement is based on reports from a statistical sample of 750 polling stations to provide truly representative information on the conduct of voting and counting in near real time. As of 11 am 708 of 750 (94%) of these observers had reported in. Observers who have not yet reported in either do not have network coverage or are unable to report due to challenges with the use of mobile phones at polling stations. ZESN anticipates to receive these reports at the end of the day, after counting has completed.

The information in this 11 am Situational Statement is provisional as we continue to receive reports from our observers and to verify the information already submitted.

ZESN intends to issue its preliminary statement on the conduct of voting and counting on the morning of Tuesday 31 July 2018 at the Holiday Inn in Harare. It is important to consider that elections are more than just voting and counting on Election Day, but a culmination of various processes that take place around the electoral process. Therefore, ZESN's overall assessment of the 2018 Harmonised Elections will be based on the entire electoral cycle processes and not just Election Day.

Opening of Polling Stations

At the sampled polling stations observers reported that 97% opened on time. ZESN observers have reported long queues in both rural and urban polling stations.

Polling Officials

25% of sampled polling stations had eight (8) polling officials, 23% had nine (9) election officials, and 30% had 10 polling officials. The average number of election officials at polling stations is 9 of whom 5 are women, representing 56% of the polling officials. In addition, 36% of polling stations have a female presiding officer.

Polling Materials

100% of the sampled polling stations where ZESN has accredited observers had all essential polling materials such as ballot boxes, voting booths, ballot papers, indelible marker pens, ZEC stamp, inclusion list and voters roll with voters' photographs.

Party Agents

At 100% of sampled polling stations where ZESN accredited observers are stationed, ZANU-PF party agents are present, 96% of polling stations had a MDC-Alliance party agent present while the People's Rainbow Coalition party has party agents present at 38% of polling stations.

In addition, 59% of polling stations have party agents from any other party or for independent candidates present.

Setup Process

Overall, ZESN has observed that set up of polling stations was completed on time and in accordance with laid down ZEC procedures. For instance, 98% of polling stations were setup so the voters could mark their ballot paper in secret. Reports have also indicated that 91% of sampled polling stations, where ZESN observers are present, were easily accessible to everyone, including persons with physical disabilities. At 100% of polling stations the ballot boxes were shown to be empty before being closed and sealed.

Conclusion

At this juncture, it is too early for ZESN to draw any conclusions on the conduct of the Election Day. As noted, ZESN will share its preliminary findings on voting and counting in due course. ZESN notes that polling stations are still open and encourages all registered voters to go out and exercise their right to vote. In addition, we encourage citizens to maintain peace during and after the voting process. ZESN is continuing to observe the process and will issue additional statements as necessary.

PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE

ZESN Chairperson Mr. Andrew Makoni: [+263772234891](tel:+263772234891)

ZESN Director Mrs Rindai Chipfunde Vava: [+263712415902](tel:+263712415902)

zesn2011@zesn.net, info@zesn.net

Facebook: Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN)

Twitter handle: @ZESN1

Website: www.zesn.org.zw