

## **ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK**



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### **ZESN STATEMENT ON THE CHANGES TO THE OBSERVER ACCREDITATION DATES**

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**Harare - 6 October 2017** - The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) notes with concern the recent changes by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) to the voter registration roll out plan and the dates for accreditation of observers for the Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) exercise. ZESN and other electoral stakeholders have repeatedly called for a comprehensive electoral roadmap and the timeous availing of crucial electoral information in order to facilitate the smooth implementation of activities around key electoral processes.

ZESN notes that in the continued absence of a clear and comprehensive electoral roadmap, it is difficult for stakeholders to adequately prepare to interface with processes such as observer accreditation, voter education and the voter registration process. The ZEC notice on the changes to the dates for the accreditation comes only three days before the start of the BVR process. This therefore presents a number of logistical and administrative challenges for civic groups and other stakeholders in deploying observers to their respective wards on time for the commencement of the registration blitz on 10 October 2017.

ZESN calls upon ZEC to ensure that information that has a bearing on the operations of stakeholders is timeously availed. "Most of the observer trainings were scheduled to take place this weekend with the view of having observers accredited during the weekend to allow them ample time to travel back to their wards which are in most cases under this first phase the farthest distances in their respective provinces," said ZESN Chairperson Mr Andrew Makoni.

Given the modalities involved, ZESN calls upon ZEC to give special consideration and establish alternative means of ensuring that observers are accredited this weekend. Observers play a fundamental role in electoral processes; hence their presence at the respective registration centers from the onset is required to ensure comprehensive and independent observation of the biometric voter registration process. Furthermore, ZESN reiterates its calls for the expeditious finalization of the election operational calendar and for key electoral information to be shared timeously with stakeholders.

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### **PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE**

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