

ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK



ZESN' STATEMENT ON THE APPOINTMENT OF JUSTICE PRISCILLA CHIGUMBA AS NEW ZEC CHAIRPERSON

1 February 2018 – The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) notes the appointment of Justice Priscilla Chigumba as the new Chairperson of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC). ZESN calls upon the newly appointed Chairperson to spearhead the requisite legislative and administrative reforms to ensure that the 2018 elections are, free, fair and credible.

As head of the electoral Commission, Justice Chigumba must strive to safeguard and protect the independence of ZEC by ensuring that principles of good electoral management such as transparency, integrity, professionalism, competence and fairness are upheld. Furthermore, the network calls upon the new ZEC Chairperson to ensure that provisions of the Electoral Act that guarantee freeness and fairness of electoral processes are respected by all electoral stakeholders in particular political parties. For instance, ZEC together with other institutions supporting democracy such as the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission and the Zimbabwe Republic Police must bring to account individuals engaging in the illegal practice of soliciting for voter registration slips' serial numbers and intimidating voters.

As ZEC finalizes the biometric voter registration mop up which concludes on 8 February 2018, ZESN urges the new Chairperson to ensure that a comprehensive election calendar, clear timelines and roadmap of key electoral processes are put in place and shared with all stakeholders. ZESN reiterates its position that the continued absence of an election roadmap and timelines makes it difficult for stakeholders to adequately prepare to interface with processes such as voters' roll inspection, deduplication and certification of the voters' roll among others. In addition, ZEC should continue to hold the stakeholder engagement meetings and consider increasing the frequency of such meetings in view of the time left before the elections are held. ZESN urges the Justice Chigumba to be responsive to the needs and concerns of all electoral stakeholders.

ZESN reiterates its calls for ZEC to adopt the Open data policy which entails the timely access to information about each phase of the election process in granular and analyzable formats. It is imperative for the new ZEC Chairperson to ensure that the Commission adheres to the principles of open data which are fundamental in creating and reinforcing public confidence in electoral processes.

ZESN is committed to promoting democratic electoral processes in Zimbabwe.

PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE

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