

# TOWARDS A POLITICAL PARTIES' COMMON AGENDA FOR ELECTORAL REFORM

ZESN Post Election Conference, 7-8 March, 2019

# Introduction

- A political party is defined as a political group that is officially recognized as being part of the electoral process and who can support (put forth) candidates for elections (free or not) on a regular basis (Sartori 1976).
- Importance of political parties in electoral processes and reform
- Is electoral reform a common “ground” and agenda?

# A history of successful Collaboration

- JOMIC 2008-2013
- Constitution making process (2008-2009)
- Electoral Code of Conduct for political parties, candidates and others (2018)
- Peace Pledge (2018)
- Election Polling Agents (2018)

# Advantages of Collaboration

- Reform is quicker
- More acceptable
- More sustainable

# What then goes wrong and why? (Disadvantages)

- Results in compromised outcomes (expediency)
- Unstructured collaboration (based on number)
- Political Party registration Law (number of players increases)
- Working with those represented in Parliament (solution, has advantages in structure)
- Elections as events- Interest in electoral reform post election vs pre-election

# But what needs reform?

- Alignment of Electoral Act to the Constitution of Zimbabwe
- Addressing Systemic manipulation of electoral processes
- (Vote buying, political intolerance, intimidation, violence, assisted voting etc)
- Results transmission
- Post election reviews
- Women participation in electoral processes

# A common Agenda for Reform?

- Will there be a better impetus for reform for 2023 than prevailed in 2018?
- Electoral Reform without dialogue?
- “Reforming a party out of power”?
- Reforms for posterity not for partial gain/Regime change...

# Electoral Reform: Important low hanging fruits

- Political party registration Law
- Political Parties Finance Act reform
- Results transmission
- Delimitation



# Challenges and opportunities

- No meaningful dialogue to address 2018 elections
- Economic prioritization
- Political parties already engaged on electoral reform through dialogue. Two issues on the cards- broader electoral reform and women participation in electoral processes
- Engagement of political parties with ZEC , ZRP, Chapter 12 Institutions, Observers and CSOs

# Recommendations- Towards 2023

- Agree on shortcomings of 2018 Harmonized election
- Use Local, Regional and International Observer findings and recommendations
- Timing of seeking electoral reforms- Elections are a process
- CSOs must promote an interaction of political parties- technical assistance (e.g Code of conduct)- **REMAIN IMPARTIAL**
- Electoral reform forms part of nation building, must receive attention regardless of political affiliation
- Reform for posterity, not to change regimes/ or maintain them!

# Conclusions

There are opportunities for common agenda on electoral reform. However, is it important to first accept the previous election as gone/past?

- Thank You and Happy Women's Day!!!