

ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK



ZESN HOLDS A WORKSHOP ON ELECTORAL REFORMS PETITION

4 JUNE 2019- Kariba – The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) is holding an Electoral Reforms Petition workshop to review the legal framework governing elections in light of the petition submitted to Parliament by ZESN on the 3rd December 2018. The workshop is attended by the Speaker of Parliament, Honourable Advocate Jacob Mudenda and Members of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs in Kariba from 4 - 5 June 2019.

The workshop comes against the backdrop of a plethora of recommendations that were proffered by ZESN and other Election Observer Missions to the Zimbabwe 2018 Harmonised elections. In light of the foregoing, it is incumbent upon Zimbabwe to undertake electoral and political reforms to ensure future electoral processes are not disputed as well as complying with domestic, regional and international standards that govern the conduct of democratic electoral processes.

In his Opening Remarks, the Speaker of Parliament Honourable Advocate Jacob Mudenda also echoed the sentiments noting that, *“This petition, comes at the most vital moment in that it creates thorough leverages to interrogate and take stock of our electoral laws, identify gaps and shortcomings in our electoral system that can be refined in order to promote and enhance democracy, transparency and an effective democratic electoral system.”*

Honorable Mudenda commended ZESN for utilising the Constitutional provisions, in particular Sec 149 to petition Parliament. He also applauded the Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Portfolio Committee for taking the petition process seriously and for demonstrating its commitment and institutional accountability in seeking more clarification and engaging with ZESN.

Mindful of the need for free, fair and credible elections in 2023, the Speaker is elated that the public inclusive of ZESN is consciously responding to the dictates of the Constitution regarding their rights.

“It is, therefore, appropriate and salutary that the petitioners are now desirous of seeing Electoral Law reforms which beckon Zimbabwe to embrace and implement its commitments under the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance as well as the SADC Principles and Guidelines for Democratic Elections so that the Electoral law creates clear voting related rights,” says the Speaker of Parliament.

The workshop brought in local and regional experts to get a more in depth engagement with

the Portfolio Committee, reiterating ZESN's calls for political, administrative and legal reforms that are needed to enhance the credibility of Zimbabwe's electoral processes as expounded in the Petition.

The key demands in the ZESN Petition for consideration include the need to ratify and domesticate the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance which Zimbabwe is signatory to, the independence of ZEC and other Chapter 12 institutions; reviewing provisions around the delimitation of constituencies; incorporation of a Code of Conduct for traditional leaders to ensure they are apolitical; reviewing results management and transmission systems; the repeal or amendments of Acts that restrict the enjoyment of fundamental rights key in electoral processes, review legislation relating to public media to ensure equal coverage of all political parties, ensuring compliance with Constitutional provisions for the equal representation of women in all key decision making positions; and streamlining election dispute mechanisms.

ZESN applauds the Speaker of Parliament in particular and Parliament in general for demonstrating commitment to the electoral reform process as an investment in the promotion of peace, good governance and democracy in light of the residual mistrust amongst some election stakeholders as a result of continual contested electoral outcomes.

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PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE
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