

ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK



PRESS STATEMENT

ZESN CALLS FOR IMPERATIVE ELECTORAL REFORMS BEFORE ELECTIONS

Harare- 18 JUNE 2013 - The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) is calling for meaningful reforms before Zimbabweans go for polls this year. This call comes in the wake of the proclamation by President Robert Mugabe on Thursday the 13th of June setting 31 July 2013 as the election date for the harmonized elections and the call for extension by SADC during its Extra Ordinary Summit in Maputo over the weekend.

ZESN continues to reiterate its call for a number of imperative electoral reforms to be in place before the election. This will include the realignment of laws such as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) with the new Constitution. In previous elections these pieces of legislations were used to curtail a number of freedoms that are now enshrined in the new Constitution hence their review is important.

Furthermore, the legislative framework include media reforms, specifically that public media should be accessible to all citizens and political players in a fair and equitable manner. The timing on accreditation and deployment of observers and the creation of a conducive electoral environment is necessary for the holding of credible elections. Further we demand that adequate time and attention be dedicated to effectively complete the voter registration exercise which is now overlapping with election preparations.

Given the short period to elections we therefore appeal to the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU) to urgently deploy both long and short term observers to promote a human rights environment conducive for credible, free and fair elections. We strongly believe that, some of the aforementioned reforms can still be put in place if there is a political will of ensuring the holding of credible election.

We call upon the Government of Zimbabwe to release adequate funds for the polls forthwith in order for ZEC to start all the necessary preparatory work including a comprehensive voter education exercise and other logistics for the elections.

We call upon ZEC to immediately release the election calendar to enable all stakeholders to plan within the election calendar. We urge ZEC to organize a credible election consistent with laws of Zimbabwe and in accordance with regional international principles and guidelines governing the conduct of elections. We further urge ZEC to demonstrate high levels of professionalism, integrity and competence and to demand its independence for political interference.

Despite its serious concerns on the absence of significant reforms before the elections, ZESN remains dedicated to the promotion of democratic elections in Zimbabwe and is ready to observe all the processes leading to the harmonized elections.

ZESN restates that Zimbabwe these impending elections should be done properly and in accordance with SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections and other regional and international principles in order to avoid a repeat of the inconclusive 2008 elections. End//

PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE

FOR COMMENTS AND FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT

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