ZESN COMMENDS SUPREME COURT RULING ON BY ELECTIONS

Harare- 17 July 2012- The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) welcomes the decision by the Supreme Court directing the President to set the election date for by-elections in three vacant House of Assembly constituencies in Matabeleland. ZESN commends the Supreme Court for reaffirming the right of individuals to participate in government. The Supreme Court has expressly showed that people are entitled to choose representatives and to be represented. ZESN further congratulates the three former legislators who instituted this court action.

The posts became vacant after three MDC legislators Abednico Bhebhe, (Nkayi South) Njabulo Mguni (Bulilima East) and Norman Mpofu (Lupane East), were expelled from the party and subsequently relieved of their parliamentary positions in 2009.

However it is sad to note that this decision has taken so long as it comes close to the end of the life of the current Parliament in June 2013. In addition, if these by elections are to be held, the parliamentarians will serve for less than 12 months making this decision a hollow consolation to the people considering the time that they have spent without representatives. ZESN also expresses similar concerns over the remaining 27 constituencies where by-elections are also due.

ZESN therefore hopes that in future such decisions will be arrived at early, at least within six months after the institution of court action. We reiterate our call to the state to uphold, protect and guarantee people's right to political participation enshrined in the Constitution and many Human Rights Instruments that Zimbabwe is party to. End//

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