

ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK



ZESN URGES ZEC TO ADHERE TO PRINCIPLES OF ELECTION MANAGEMENT

8 July, 2016 – The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) urges the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) to adhere to the principles of election management such as independence, impartiality, integrity, transparency, efficiency, professionalism and service-mindedness. This call follows the swearing in of new Commissioners to replace individuals whose terms of office expired in March 2016. The appointment of the new Commissioners is in line with Section 238 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe on the establishment and composition of ZEC.

The President selected three former Commissioners who were eligible for re-appointment namely Mrs Joyce Kazembe, Mr Daniel Chigaru and Mrs Sibongile Ndlovu. The other three Commissioners are Dr Ngoni Kundidzora an academic, Mrs Netsai Mushonga a trainer on issues of development and women's rights as well as Mrs Faith Sebata an educationist and a former ZEC Director of Voter education. Mr Emmanuel Magede who was appointed as a Commissioner in 2015 is now the Deputy Chairperson of ZEC a position which was previously held by Mrs Kazembe.

ZESN urges the entire Commission to discharge their mandate with high levels of professionalism, integrity, competence and non-partisanship. “The conduct of the Commissioners should enhance the integrity of ZEC in the administration of electoral processes whose outcomes are acceptable to contesting political parties, interest groups and the electorate,” said ZESN Director Rindai Chipfunde Vava.

The Commission is preparing for the 2018 harmonised elections and a number of crucial processes must be completed such as reviewing of voter education methodologies, the creation of a conducive electoral environment, as well as the adoption and implementation of a sound voter registration model. It is therefore imperative for the new and returning Commissioners to ensure the legitimacy and credibility of the processes leading up to these impending elections.

ZESN reiterates that for electoral processes which will be undertaken by the Commission to be credible there must be strict adherence to the principles of election management. It is important for the Election Management Body (EMB) to be *Independent* from governmental, political and other partisan influences on their decisions. As a principle *Impartiality* can be enforced through behavior, attitudes and engagement with all stakeholders. Impartiality is critical in establishment of integrity and credibility of electoral processes. The election management body is the primary guarantor of the *Integrity* of the electoral processes in a manner that does not disenfranchise stakeholders.

In addition, ZESN calls for *Transparency* in operational and financial management by ZEC. Transparency is vital to combat perceptions of electoral fraud, favouritism and other negative perceptions thereby enhancing the credibility of the Commission. The principle of *Efficiency* entails that electoral programmes are sustainable and cost effective. In the design and implementation of election programmes and activities election officials must be *Professional*, well trained and apply themselves with accuracy, diligence and non-partisanship. Lastly, service-mindedness is a responsibility to stakeholders and a major reason for the existence of the Commission. Therefore adherence to service-mindedness in processes such as voter education, voter registration, results management is essential for success of the electoral processes.

ZESN reinforces its calls for the speedy alignment of electoral related laws with the Constitution for the creation of a conducive electoral environment. There is need for ZEC to review electoral regulations to ensure efficient and effective administrative management of electoral processes. ZEC must ensure that electoral processes that guarantee the full enjoyment of universal suffrage and credible elections such as voter registration and voter education are undertaken timeously. ZESN remains committed to the promotion of democratic elections in Zimbabwe.

PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE

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