

## **ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK**



### **ZESN'S COMMENT ON THE GOVERNMENT'S TAKE OVER OF THE PROCUREMENT OF BVR KITS**

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**16 February 2017** – The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) calls for openness and transparency in the procurement of the Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) kits amid media reports that the Government of Zimbabwe has taken over the procurement process from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). While ZESN welcomes the commitment by the government to fund the procurement of the kits, the Network believes that it is important to continue engaging technical experts such as the UNDP who have experience and technical proficiency from previous similar work in countries like Zambia and Kenya in order to enhance trust and confidence in the process.

ZESN notes that tender and procurement processes are among the most critical steps in BVR deployment which require adequate time, funding and the involvement of multiple stakeholders. In addition, ZESN calls for public scrutiny, transparency and none interference by the executive in the selection of the vendor following the initial tendering process conducted in January 2017.

Worryingly, the 2017 National budget allocated a paltry USD9, 761 000 to the electoral Commission out of a requested USD59, 209 476 leaving a shortfall of USD49, 448 478 posing a great threat to the ability of ZEC to effectively discharge its mandate. ZESN reiterates its calls for the government to avail adequate funding to the Commission to enable it to execute its mandated role. In addition, there is need for ZEC to clarify how the latest developments will affect its electoral roadmap as well as explain the role of technical partners in the BVR processes going forward.

“It is vital that the government and ZEC provide details of the take over from UNDP regarding the procurement of the BVR kits and how the process will be funded given the limited time left before the 2018 elections. The involvement of technical partners with experience in assisting various other countries in

implementing the BVR processes will improve confidence and trust issues which have always been an issue in electoral process in Zimbabwe,” said ZESN Director, Mrs Rindai Chipfunde Vava.

Furthermore, ZESN notes that currently the Electoral Act is silent on the procedures of the procurement of the BVR equipment hence the need for provisions outlining how the procurement will be conducted. The absence of transparency on the procurement of the BVR kits coupled with inadequate funding for the ZEC will compromise the credibility and delivery of key electoral processes.

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**PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE  
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