

## **ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK**



### **ZESN'S STATEMENT CALLING FOR THE EXPEDITIOUS FINALISATION OF VOTER REGISTRATION PROCESSES**

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**5 May 2017** – The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) recently observed the site validation tests for the Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) kits conducted by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC). ZESN applauds the Commission's efforts to improve transparency and enhance confidence in the process by inviting political parties, CSOs and the media to observe the validation processes.

ZESN calls upon ZEC to expeditiously finalise its election operational calendar and share it with stakeholders detailing the specific timeframes for all key electoral processes and when the actual voter registration process will commence. Secondly, the Commission must finalise the voter registration regulations clearly spelling out whether the BVR technology will be used to register voters given that the draft regulations are silent on the issue. There is also need for clarity whether the 2013 voters' roll will be completely discarded for a fresh voters' roll under the new polling station based voter registration system.

In light of challenges observed in the previous voter registration exercise such as the slow processing of potential voter registrants, ZESN believes that the Commission should pay special attention in the recruitment of data capturers and registration officers for the voter registration exercise. The Commission should recruit qualified, competent, impartial and professional personnel who possess the requisite computer literacy skills. ZESN is of the view that ZEC will benefit from the technical expertise at technical colleges and tertiary institutions of higher learning, thus the Commission should extend an invitation to these institutions. The use of university students as data capturers worked well in other countries that undertook BVR such as Kenya.

ZESN calls for the timeous awarding of the BVR tender in order to allow for sufficient time for the procurement of the registration kits, recruitment of voter registration officers and data capturers, comprehensive voter education for voter registration and other important electoral processes. The Network

is concerned that delays in the selection of the vendor will affect the timelines for the actual registration exercise. ZESN reiterates that, the Commission must also fully embrace the open data concept that ensures that there is transparency and access to information to enhance trust and confidence in the electoral processes. In addition the Commission must review its website to become more interactive, and ensure that the social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter accounts are constantly updated, to make information more accessible.

ZESN is committed to the promotion of democratic electoral processes in Zimbabwe.

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**PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE  
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