



Ballot Update

Bulletin

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SUCCESS OF THE BIOMETRIC VOTER REGISTRATION PROCESS HINGED ON TIMEOUS FINALIZATION OF REQUISITE PROCESSES.

The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) has called for the speedy implementation of voter registration processes. The call comes in view of the limited time and thorough preparations required for the successful implementation of the BVR system, ZESN has called upon the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) to publicize its election roadmap and calendar detailing among other things when voter registration will commence.

Some of the areas identified by ZESN that requires urgent finalization include the completion of the voter registration regulations which will outline in greater details how the voter registration process will be conducted and the recruitment of voter registration officers and data clerks.

On the issue of the voter registration regulations, legal experts have highlighted the need for clear provisions on whether the BVR technology will be used for registration. In addition, calls have been made for clarity on whether the 2013 voters' roll will be completely discarded for a fresh voters' roll under the new polling station based voter registration system.



The BVR equipment supply tender was awarded to Laxton Group Limited

On the issue of the voter registration regulations, legal experts have highlighted the need for clear provisions on whether the BVR technology will be used for registration. In addition, calls have been made for clarity on whether the 2013 voters' roll will be completely discarded for a fresh voters' roll under the new polling station based voter registration system. "There is need for the Commission to clearly state in the regulations whether BVR will be used in registering voters for the 2018 elections, as it stands the Regulations are silent on the matter thereby giving rise to concerns on whether the technology will be used or not," said Dr Alex Magaisa at a meeting on BVR organised by ZESN in Harare last month.

ZESN noted that the validation test for the BVR kits by ZEC was a vital step in enhancing transparency and confidence in electoral processes in Zimbabwe.

ZESN urged the Commission to continue opening up the BVR process to stakeholder scrutiny in order to enhance transparency and allay fears about the process. "Delays in the finalization of processes such as the voter registration

regulations will affect the timelines for the actual registration exercise and put the whole process in disarray", said ZESN National Director, Mrs Chipfunde Vava.

ZESN's calls for the speedy finalization of the voter registration process come in light of the challenges observed in the previous voter registration exercise in 2013 such as the slow processing of queues which affected hundreds of thousands of potential voter registrants.

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Kuti Chirongwa chekunyoresa vanoda kuvhota pachishandiswa michina chibudirire, hurongwa hwese hune chekuita nekufambiswa kwesarudzo humofanira kupedzwa pangauva yakafanira.

Sangano reZimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) ririkuti hurongwa hwekunyoreswa kvevanoda kuvhota humofanira kutangisa nekukasika. ZESN yakataura izvi mushure mekucherechedza kuti pasara nguva shoma uye kuti gadziriro yekushandiswa kwemichina pakunyoresa kuvhota inofanira kutwa nemazvo kuti chirongwa ichi chibudirire. Naizvozvo ZESN iri kukurudzira kuti Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) ishambadzire hurongwa hwayo ichijekesa mazuva ekuti vanhu vatange kunyoresa kuvhota nezvimwewo.

Zvimwe zvacherechedzwa neZESN zvinoda kukasika kugadziriswa, zvinosanganiswa kukasika kupedza kugadzirisa mitemo yekunyoresa kuvhota. Mitemo iyi ndiyo ichataura kuti kunyoresa kuvhota kuchafambiswa sei panwe nekuti vashandi vanoma nezvekufambiswa kwesarudzo vachapinzwa mabasa sei. Panaya yemitemo yekunyoresa kuvhota, vanamavkikota vemutemo varikuti mutemo wezesarudzo uinofanira

kujekesa kuti kunyoresa kuvhota kuchaitwa nemichina here kana kuti kwete. Chimwe chinofanira kujekeswa inyaya yekuti Gwaro remazita evakunyoresa kuvhota rakashandiswa muna2013 richashandira zvakare here kana kuti pachagadzirwa rimwe Gwaro idzwa zvienderana nemutemo unoti munhu anovhotera paakunyoresa.

"ZEC inofanira kujekesa kuti vanhu varikuda kuvhota muna2018 vachanyoreswa mazita avo pachishandiswa michina here kana kuti kwete. Parizvino, mutemo wakanyarara pamusoro penyaya iyi. Naizvozvo vanhu varikunetsekana kuti pachashandiswa michina here kana kuti kwete," mashoko aya akataura naDr Alex Magaisa pamusungano waikururuka nezvekushandiswa kwemichina pakunyoresa kuvhota wakarongwa neZESN muHarare.

ZESN yakati zvakanosha kuti ZEC iwongorore michina ichashandiswa pakunyoresa kuvhota kuti ikwanise kuona kuti inoshanda nemazvo here. Izvi zvinobatsira kuti sarudzo dzitwe



nenzira yakajeka pasina kubiridzira uye kuti vanhu vagutsikane kuti sarudzo dzaitwa nemazvo muZimbabwe. "Kunonoka kupedzisa hurongwa hwakaita sehwekunyoresa vanoda kuvhota kinokanganisa zviku ru ngwa dzekutanga nekupedza kunyoresa vanoda kuvhota uye zvinokanganisa zviku ru mafambiro esarudzo." Mashoko aya akataura nemutungamiri weZESN, Ama Chipunde Vava.

ZESN irikuti, hurongwa hwese hwekunyoresa kuvhota humofanira kupedzwa nekukasika. Izvi zvinobatsira kudzikisa huwandu hwematambudziko akasanganikwa nawa pakunyoresa kuvhota kwakaitwa muna2013. Matambudziko aya anosanganisa kunonoka kufamba kwemitara yavanhu vaida kunyoresa kuvhota. Izvi zvakatadza zviru evanhu kuvhota nekuti havana kuzokwanisa kunyoresa.

Youths called upon to fully participate in electoral processes

Youths, undeniably, remain at the centre of Zimbabwe's development, however, the increasing reluctance among the youth to register and vote is alarming. Although youths constitute the largest number of the population, that is has not translated into any significant participation in governance and electoral processes in particular.

It is estimated that out of a population of about 12.9 million people in Zimbabwe five million of them are between the ages 18 and 35 years. Section 67 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe gives everyone above 18 years the freedom to exercise his or her rights by voting for a preferred leader during elections, however, youths are generally apathetic in elections. In past elections, a number of factors may have contributed to the low participation of youths such as the requirement of proof of residence, slow processing of voter registration queues and violence.

According to the Research Advocacy Unit (RAU) youths make up about 41% of the eligible voters, but only constitute 14% of the registered voters in Zimbabwe.

Thus the youth are largely excluded from democratic governance processes. They vote in less numbers than older age groups and even fewer young people stand as candidates in local and national elections. Since independence youths have not shown their interest in voting, not only by failing to show their presence at the voting booth on the election day, but by also failing to register to vote which amounts to weakening democracy.

In view of the impending polling station based biometric voter registration exercise, Civil Society Organisations have a role to play by mobilising and educating youths on the importance of registering as voters. Specially designed information and education campaigns that include advertisements, pamphlets, radio and TV programmes, visits to schools and universities, and information displays at youth events must be employed.

As a way of encouraging youths to register the ZEC should ensure that youth specific voter registration drives are implemented and that the Registrar General's Office must facilitate the

awarding of birth certificates and national identity cards to a significant number of youths that do not have such documents. The Commission must also put registration facilities in places frequented by young people for example

schools, colleges, universities and other social places. Elections play a crucial role in a representative democracy. Youths participation is vital in representative democracy.





Ballot Update Bulletin

Ukuphumelela kohlelo lokubhalisa ukuvota kusetshenziswa imitshina yakulezi insuku (BVR) lweyame ekuphumeleleni kwezinhleloezihambisana lalo ngesikhathi.

Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) isikhuthaze ukubana kuqedelelwe uhlelo lokubhalisa ukuvota kusetshenziswa imitshina yakulezi insuku kusalesikhathi. Isimemezelo lesi siza emva kokunanzelela ukuthi sekusele isikhathi esilutshwana ukubana amalungiselelo adingakalayo ukuthi uhlelo lokubhalisa ukuvota kusetshenziswa izitho zomzimba zomuntu (BVR) luphumeleliswe.

iZESN sikhuthaze I Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) ukuthi yazise uzulu ngemigomo yendlela ezalandelwa etshengisa sobala lesikhathi lapho loluhlelo oluzaqala khona. Ezinye zezinto ezinanzelwe yiZESN ukubana zigqitshwe, zibalisa ukuqeda imithetho yokubhalisa ukuvota eyivo ezakhombisa kabanzi indlela loluhlelo oluzaqutshwa ngayo, leziqhatswana ezizabhalala imininingvana yabantu ezizaqutshwa ngayo. izikwamifundo zemithetho sezibalise ukubana kuyadingeka ukuthi kubesobala ukuthi lindlela yokubhalisa ukuvota kusetshenziswa izitho

zomzimba zomuntu (BVR) yiyo sibili ezasetshenziswa ekubhaliseni ukuvota. Phezu kwakho lokho kuyadingeka ukuthi kucaze ukubana ugwalu olumumethe amabizo abantu ababhalisa ukuvota lomnyaka ka 2013 luzabekwa yini eceleni kusetshenziswe lolo oluzaqoqwa kakutsha.

Kuyadingeka njalo ukuthi iKhomishini ebona ngezokhetho eZimbabwe icece kumithetho yokubhalisa ukuvota ukuthi lindlela entsha yokubhalisa (BVR) izasetshenziswa yini kukhetho luka 2018. Kusenanje akulotshwanga kulumthetho ukuthi lindlela yiyo ezasetshenziswa kumbe hayi, kubuka umnunzana Dr Alex Magaisa emhlanganweni owaqoqwa yiZESN esiGodlweni Eharare.

IZESN inanzelela njalo incoma indlela iZEC eyaqhuba ngayo ukhulolwa kwemitshina yakulezi insuku yokubhalisa ukuvota eyenzakala esiGodlweni, isithi lokhu kuzaletha ukuthembeka kundlela ukhetho lemnye imininingvana yokhetha ezinqutshwa ngayo kuleli.

Ngalokho iZESN ikhuthaza iZEC ukubana isheshise ukunikeza labo abazenza loluhlelo ukuze labo babelesikhathi esifaneleyo sokuthenga leyomitshina, ukuqatshala labo abazayisebenzisa bebhala uzulu, ukufundisa ngokhetho kanye lokwazisana ngezinye inhlelo zokhetho eziqakathekileyo. Ukuphuzwa ekulungiseni imithetho yokubhalisa ukuvota (Voter registration Regulations) kuzaphuzisa ukuqala kohlelo lokubhalisa ukuvota. Lokhu kuzenza uhlelo lonke lubesenkingeni,

kubika umqondisi wenhlanganiso yeZESN uNkosikazi Rindai Chipfunde Vava.

iZESN ikhuthaza ngokuqedelela kohlelo lokubhalisa ukuvota kusetshenziswa lindlela entsha (BVR) lapho siqhathanisa lobunzima esahlngana labo kubhaliswa ukuvota ngomnyaka 2013 ebalisele ukuphuzwa ukuqeda abantu emizileni ababelindlela ukubhalisa. Lokhu kwenza izinkulungwane zabantu zangenelisi ukubhalisa ukuvota.



ZESN estimates that 7.2 million people will be eligible to vote in 2018.

A research conducted by ZESN projects that Zimbabwe will have 7,224,128 people over the age of 18 eligible to vote in the 2018 harmonised election. Of the total figure, Harare has the highest number of people aged 18+ at a projected 1,345,818, while figures for Manicaland, Midlands and Mashonaland West stand at 912,762, 865,185 and 834,414 respectively.

Given the limited time before the next election which according to Veritas must be held before 21 August 2018, early registration of voters is crucial to avoid disenfranchisement of eligible voters.

An early registration process will result in a comprehensive voters' roll and go a long way in avoiding chaotic

registration process that characterized 2013 harmonised elections.

The expeditious finalization of the biometric voter registration kit procurement, election operational calendar, regulations for voter registration and voter education are essential for a comprehensive and inclusive registration process that does

not disenfranchise citizens.

In light of the various changes to the voter registration system in Zimbabwe, there is also need for clarity from the Commission whether the 2013 voters' roll will be completely discarded for a fresh voters' roll.





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MEDIA URGED TO DESIST FROM MISINFORMING CITIZENS AND AUGMENT VOTER EDUCATION.



ZESN held a meeting on the Biometric Voter Registration system with media practitioners Harare on 3 May 2017. The purpose of the seminar was to interrogate the merits and demerits of the BVR system, the legal provisions for voter registration in Zimbabwe as well as lessons from other African countries that have implemented the system. The media plays a critical role in disseminating information, shaping opinions and aiding voter education on the electoral processes such as the new BVR system thus the need to understand the various processes that will be undertaken.

ZESN National Director Mrs Rindai Chipfunde Vava implored the media to "desist from misinforming citizens on what the BVR system entails and focus on interrogating the implementation of the various aspects of the system such as how the tendering and procurement processes have been conducted, whether feasibility studies and pilot tests were properly done as well as the deployment of staff and equipment." As part of their role in, the media should have the ability to simplify technical, legal and administrative electoral issues for the general public and encourage eligible persons to register as voters.

What they said during the meeting:



Dr. Alex Magaisa

"There is a lack of confidence in the electoral system in Zimbabwe, and it is the duty of the media to demystify some of the fears that people have especially related to the use of technologies in electoral processes."



Mrs. Rindai Chipfunde Vava

"The media should invest in understanding how elections are administered and demand for information that should be made public in order to fulfill their role as watchdogs in electoral processes."



Mr. Dzimbabwe Chimbga

"It is the responsibility of the media to know the various processes and legal provisions governing elections in Zimbabwe and have the ability to ask the right questions to the right people."