



ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK

POSITION PAPER

Delimitation ahead of the 2023 Harmonised Elections

Introduction (Historical Perspective and Context Analysis)

Boundary delimitation refers to the process of drawing electoral district boundaries. It is the process of demarcating electoral boundaries (constituencies, wards, polling districts) for the purposes of conducting elections. In Zimbabwe, delimitation is the process of dividing the country into constituencies and wards for the purposes of elections of persons to constituency seats in the National Assembly and of councilors to local authorities.

Problems identified with previous delimitation processes have included; lack of transparency; absence of involvement of interested stakeholder; lack of public participation; inadequate publicity; independence of the previous Delimitation Commission; and, inadequate time for the delimitation process.

Knowledge of the new constituencies and wards was not widespread prior to polling day.

In 2000, delimitation was conducted well after the five-year interval set in terms of section 59(4) of the old Constitution¹. Then, the Delimitation Commission was responsible for determining electoral boundaries and Zimbabwe was divided into 120 constituencies. The President appointed the Commission at five-yearly intervals, or just before the next election. The shortcomings of the process included late appointment of the commission; the voters' roll was not provided on time; late submission of the report; and, lack of public participation. Sachikonye (2003: 13) points out that the Commission was appointed late, delaying its work and availability of the report which was made public three weeks before the election, leaving very little time to

inspect the report, and thereby creating some confusion amongst voters in constituencies where boundaries had changed about where they should vote. In 2005, the Delimitation Commission was criticized for manipulating electoral boundaries (Crisis Coalition 2005: 6). Ndoro (2005: 79) further points out that allegations of gerrymandering of election boundaries were made and areas that lost constituencies were strongholds of the opposition, while the ruling party strongholds gained seats, contrary to census statistics and the theories of rural to urban migration.

Constitutional Amendment Act No. 18 of September 2017, among other issues increased the number of constituencies in the country from 120 to 210, and empowered the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) to delimit constituencies and wards. The 2007/08 delimitation conducted by the ZEC was not sufficiently consultative and participatory². The report was finalised late, leaving no time for debate in Parliament, opening the ZEC to accusations of favoring the ruling party (Human Rights Watch, 2008). The ZEC failed to carry out its educative mandate after establishing boundaries.

Knowledge of the new constituencies and wards was not widespread prior to polling day. Allocation of polling stations was done too late, contravening section 51 of the Electoral Act requiring information about polling stations to be provided at least 21 days prior to the polling date. The timing of the delimitation left inadequate time for voters' to establish their ward and constituency boundaries and subsequently inspect the voters' roll. Inconsistencies were noted in the allocation of constituencies, were provinces that are largely rural, Mashonaland East, Mashonaland West, Midlands and Masvingo received more new constituencies, while urban provinces such as Bulawayo did not receive a significant number of new constituencies.

¹ The Parliamentary Elections in Zimbabwe 24-25 June 2000: The Report of the Common Wealth Observer Group, available at < <http://aceproject.org/ero-en/regions/africa/ZW/zimbabwe-final-report-parliamentary-elections>>

² EISA Regional Election Observer Mission to the 2008 Harmonised Elections in Zimbabwe: Interim statement Harare, 31 March 2008, available at < <https://www.eisa.org.za/cpp-zim-2008-com-interim-statement.php>>

Statement of the Problem

The last delimitation was conducted in terms of the old constitution, and was based on the voters' roll and made no linkage to the census. For the first election after the new Constitution was promulgated, the new Constitution had a transitional provision that provided for electoral boundaries to apply as they were for the purposes of the first elections³, hence the 2008 delimitation was used for the July 2013 elections.

Over the past years, internally displaced persons established settlements close to urban areas thereby increasing the population in those areas. Migration also resulted in changes in the population since the last delimitation as the protracted economic crisis in Zimbabwe resulted in huge migration flows to other countries in search of better opportunities. Reliable estimates of Zimbabweans living outside of their country are difficult and hampered by the generally lack of adequate data on migration in Zimbabwe (Schachter 2009; ZimStat2009).

ZESN notes that since elections in 2013, the number of Zimbabweans leaving the country has doubled while significant number remains undocumented (ZESN 2017: 6). Population projections show an increase of the population from 15, 1 million in 2019, to 16, 4 million in 2023 (ZimStat and UNFPA 2015: 22). Projections for the voting population for 2018 based on 2012 census increased from 6.8 million in 2012 to 7.2 million in 2018 (ZESN 2017: 6).

There are significant differences in the size of constituencies, necessitating the need for rationalization of both constituencies and wards that are too big and those that are too small in order to adhere to the +/- 20% variation of the voter population as provided for by the Zimbabwe Constitution⁴ to ensure representativeness and equality of the voting strength. IRI/NDI ZIEOM (2018:24), in the final election observation mission report to the Zimbabwe 2018 election point out that in 106 out of 210 constituencies, the number of registered voters varied by more than 20 percent.

The EU Election Observation Mission (2018:9) corroborate with IRI/NDI by highlighting that half of the constituencies differ from the average by more than 20%. Notably, constituencies with high registration figures include; Harare South 76 287, Epworth 71 835, Dangamvura/ Chikanga 60 651, and Goromonzi South 73 031, in comparison to constituencies with less than 15 000 registered voters.

Such constituencies include, Gutu North 14 165; Wedza South 14 295; Chikomba East 14 513; Insiza South 14 694; and Magwegwe 14 790 registered voters⁵. Similarly for wards, the Harare South ward 1 has 76 287 and the lowest Bubi ward 4 has 62 registered voters', a departure from the +/-20% variation.

Although, the electoral commission adopted a new biometric voters' roll in 2018, audits of the voters' roll conducted by the ZESN and Team Pachedu⁶ showed significant anomalies that need to be addressed to enhance accuracy and integrity of the roll. The audits highlighted instances where voters' were allocated the same address but voting in different wards, duplicate ID numbers, under and over registration in certain provinces, constituencies and wards.

The registration rate for Bulawayo and Harare stands at 63.2% and 66.9% respectively (EU EOM 2018:15), when compared to the other provinces. This is more likely to have an impact on the allocation of number of constituencies. To ensure representatives and equal suffrage, the electoral commission will need to enhance registration in under-registered provinces, as well as urban areas.

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A study conducted by ZESN on Citizens Perceptions on Delimitation of Electoral Constituencies and Wards (2019) pointed out that most of the citizens lack knowledge of the delimitation process hence a need for civic and voter education. Furthermore, from the same research, citizens believe that the ZEC should consult stakeholders on delimitation; that the Government should provide adequate financial resources towards the delimitation process; and, the ZEC should have a roadmap for the delimitation process. Currently, the legal framework on delimitation in the Electoral Act is not comprehensive.

There is need to align the Electoral Act with the provisions of the Constitution on delimitation to address gaps in the legal framework. There are no provisions that enhance participation of stakeholders (political parties, the public, CSOs).

³ Sixth Schedule paragraph 5 of the Constitution

⁴ Section 161 (6) (f) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe

⁵ Source: February 2019 Voters' Roll

⁶ www.teampachedu.org

⁷ <https://www.veritaszim.net/node/2431>

Yet participation goes a long way in enhancing transparency, confidence, trust and integrity of the process. Provisions on handling boundary disputes or a complaints/ appeals mechanism, including timelines for determination of complaints and appeals are missing and need to be legislated to improve procedures for handling disputes.

Section 235 of the Constitution and section 10A of the Electoral Act (Chapter 2:13), provide for the independence of the ZEC. However, the involvement of the Ministry of Justice in the approval of regulations adopted by the Commission undermines its independence to some extent (Veritas)⁷.

The Urban Councils Act and the Rural District Councils Act still contain provisions purporting to allow the President to divide local authority areas into wards and to alter the wards from time to time (Veritas, 2008)⁸.

Section 4⁹ of the Urban Councils Act, is inconsistent with section 160(2) of the Constitution to the extent that it allows the President to divide a local authority's area into wards. Similarly Section 8 of the Rural District Councils Act, is inconsistent with section 160 (2) of the Constitution¹⁰.

Veritas suggests that when a new local authority is established, the President's proclamation can lawfully fix its council area and name, but should not divide the council area into wards. Veritas notes the need to amend the Rural District Councils Act and the Urban Councils Act to bring their provisions relating to elections into line with Sections 160 and 161 of the Constitution.

Section 161 (1) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe provides for delimitation to be conducted after the population census and Section 161 (2)¹¹ that the report should be finalised at least 6 months before the elections. There might not be adequate time to conduct a thorough and inclusive process due to time constraints.

The ZEC has expressed reservations about completing in accordance with the timelines provided in the Constitution, if it is to be conducted after the census¹². The census is scheduled to be conducted in 2022 and thereafter the delimitation in preparation for the 2023 elections. Failure to finalise delimitation 6 months prior to the elections, would mean reverting to using the electoral boundaries that applied for the 2018 election, yet these boundaries do not promote equal suffrage. De linking delimitation from the census will call for a constitutional amendment.

Legal Framework

The legal framework for delimitation includes the Constitution of Zimbabwe, the Electoral Act (Chapter 2:13), and the Census and Statistics Act (Chapter 10:29). The ZEC has the mandate to conduct delimitation in accordance with Section 239 (f) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe. Delimitation is conducted once every 10 years, after a population census as provided for in the Constitution. In accordance with the provisions of the Electoral Act, Section 37 A, the ZEC should publish in a Gazette and in any other appropriate manner, notification for the delimitation process.

Delimitation has to be completed 6 months before the general elections, and if it is completed less than six months before the general elections, the boundaries will not apply to that election, and instead boundaries that existed before the delimitation will be applicable.

The number of Constituencies and wards are provided for in Section 160 (1-2) of the Constitution. National Assembly seats should be 210, whilst number of wards for local authority elections are not specified.

The parameters for delimitation as outlined Section 161 (5) are:

- its physical features;
- the means of communication within the area;
- the geographical distribution of registered voters;
- any community of interest as between registered voters;
- in the case of any delimitation after the first delimitation, existing electoral boundaries; and its population;

⁸ <https://www.veritaszim.net/node/2357>

⁹ Section 4 of the Urban Councils Act on Provisions relating to establishment, alteration or abolition of municipalities, towns, councils and council areas (1) Whenever the President considers it desirable he may, subject to this Act, by proclamation in the Gazette, after any local authority concerned has been consulted, establish a municipality or town and- (a) shall establish a municipal council or a town council, as the case may be, therefor; and (b) shall fix the area of the municipality or town; and (c) shall assign a name to the municipality or town; and (d) may divide the council area into any number of wards. (2) At any time after the establishment of a council the President may, subject to this Act, by proclamation in the Gazette and after consultation with the council- (a) alter the name of the municipality or town; (b) divide or redivide the council area into any number of wards, create one or more additional wards, alter or abolish one or more wards or abolish the division of the council area into wards;

¹⁰ Section 8 of the Rural District Councils Act on the establishment and naming of councils and division of areas into wards (1) Subject to this Part, whenever the President considers it desirable he may, by proclamation in the Gazette, do any one or more of the following- (a) establish a rural district council for any district with effect from a date specified in the proclamation, which date shall be at least sixty days after the publication of the proclamation; (b) assign a name to any council; (c) divide a council area into any number of wards.

¹¹ Section 161 (2) If a delimitation of electoral boundaries is completed less than six months before polling day in a general election, the boundaries so delimited do not apply to that election, and instead the boundaries that existed immediately before the delimitation are applicable.

¹² Pamela Shumba, ZEC in quandary over delimitation exercise, The Chronicle, 22 August 2019, available at < <https://www.chronicle.co.zw/zec-in-quandary-over-delimitation-exercise/> >

The Constitution also sets a variation of not more or less than 20% of registered voters in other wards or constituencies in the delimitation of boundaries.

Furthermore, there are a number of considerations that are factored in terms of the delimitation of wards such as service provision; economic capacity of the local authority to fund additional representatives (councilors); future development plans and land usage changes; growth in settlements; and, boundary alignments within and among the local authorities, districts and provinces. A preliminary report must be submitted to the President, containing: a) a list of wards and constituencies, with names assigned and description of boundaries; b) a map or maps showing wards and constituencies;

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and c) any further information or particulars that are considered necessary. The report has to be presented before Parliament within 7 days after the President has received it, upon which within 14 days either the President or Parliament may refer the report back to the ZEC to make further considerations.

ZESN (2017: 11) notes that the involvement of the executive and legislature in the formulation of the delimitation report is of no consequence as ZEC still has the final say.

Within 14 days after receiving the report from the Commission, the President must publish a proclamation in the Government Gazette declaring the names and boundaries of wards and constituencies.

Key considerations from other contexts Zambia

Delimitation in Zambia, is currently underway from July to November 2019 in preparation for the 2021 elections. Previous delimitations were conducted in 2011, 2014 and 2016. Constitutional Amendment No. 2 of 2016 increased the number of constituencies from 150 to 156¹³. The delimitation will address factors such as increases in the population, long distances covered by voters to access electoral services, developmental and new settlement patterns¹⁴.

Delimitation is conducted at intervals of not more than 10 years as provided for in Article 58 of the Constitution.

The Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ), is mandated by article 229 (2) (g) of the Constitution of Zambia Amendment Act No. 2 of 2016 to conduct delimitation¹⁵.

Article 58 of the Constitution of Zambia and Article 21 of the Electoral Process Act No. 35 of 2016 further state that the ECZ will delimit constituencies, wards and polling stations for the purposes of conducting elections for National Assembly and Councils¹⁶.

Delimitation is conducted at intervals of not more than 10 years as provided for in Article 58 of the Constitution. The delimitation will apply for the next elections as names of boundaries and wards are published in the Gazette and come into effect on the next dissolution of Parliament or councils. According to Article 59 of the Constitution of Zambia, for the delimitation of constituencies and wards, the ECZ has to take note of the following:

- (a) the history, diversity and cohesiveness of the constituency or ward;
- (b) population density, trends and projections;
- (c) ensure that the number of inhabitants in each constituency or ward is reasonable, taking into account the means of communication and geographical features;
- (d) ensure that constituencies and wards are wholly within districts; and,
- (e) seek to achieve an approximate equality of constituency and ward population, subject to the need to ensure adequate representation for urban and sparsely populated areas.

Factors that are considered for the delimitation of polling districts are; availability of suitable venues for the polling station; number and distribution of eligible voters; accessibility of the polling station to voters; district and provincial boundaries; and, cultural diversity. The ECZ considers the following factors when establishing and relocating polling stations; number and distribution of eligible voters in the polling districts; availability of suitable venues for polling stations; distance to be travelled; access routes; availability of transport; traffic density at or near the polling station; telecommunications facilities at the polling station; and, general features at the polling station. Article 58 (7) of the Constitution of Zambia provides for a person to apply to the Constitutional Court for review of a decision made by the Electoral Commission in demarcating boundaries.

¹³ Chris Phiri; ECZ Launches Delimitation Exercise; Zambia Reports; 5 July 2019; available at < <https://zambiareports.com/2019/07/05/ecz-launches-delimitation-exercise/>> viewed on 11 August 2019

¹⁴ Sipilisiwe Ncube; ECZ launches delimitation in preparation for 2021; News Diggers; 5 July 2019; available at < <https://diggers.news/local/2019/07/05/ecz-launches-delimitation-exercise-in-preparation-for-2021/>> viewed on 11 August 2019

¹⁵ Constitution of Zambia, Amendment No. 2 of 2016; available at < http://www.parliament.gov.zm/sites/default/files/documents/amendment_act/Constitution%20of%20Zambia%20%20%28Amendment%29%2C%202016-Act%20No.%202_0.pdf>

¹⁶ Electoral Commission of Zambia; 2019 Delimitation of Constituencies, Wards and Polling Districts; available at <

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HymW5jO3P3rFPEwvai42FL0G9x1ruxvE/view?fbclid=IwAR3wnK5feTLIQZL38j-iz3cPRV8jGm5EAifL9zzpOPrDWVBFYDuYjtxeuUU>>

¹⁷ Ibid

Key Considerations from Zambia

The ECZ has been endeavouring to ensure greater equality of the vote hence boundary delimitation has been conducted 3 times since 2011. Following the 2016 elections, the European Union Election Observer Mission (EU EOM) recommended review of constituency boundaries to ensure that constituencies reflect the population distribution. The 2019 boundary delimitation will be based on the census projections from the Central Statistical Office. The ECZ listed transparency as central to the exercise and stakeholder engagement is key to the success of the process.

Some of the key considerations from Zambia are:

- The ECZ produced a detailed 2019 delimitation booklet and roadmap, with all the essential information on the delimitation process. This information includes; objectives and importance of the delimitation; types of delimitation to be conducted; factors to be considered; activities that will be undertaken; and, detailed schedule of delimitation sittings. The roadmap ensures that the public and stakeholders are provided with adequate and detailed information, and are hence able to meaningfully contribute towards the process.
- The delimitation process is being guided by principles of impartiality, representativeness, non-discrimination, and transparency that goes a long way in building public trust and confidence. These principles are aimed at providing standard benchmarks for stakeholders to scrutinise the process.
- The ECZ will engage stakeholders throughout the process. Pre-delimitation briefings were convened with traditional chiefs, political parties, civil society organisations, and Members of Parliament.
- The ECZ will also consult other relevant institutions such as the Ministry of Local Government on increases in wards and the central Statistical Office for the population data. The Commission receives oral and written submissions from stakeholders on how boundaries are to be demarcated. Engaging stakeholders enhances transparency and openness of the process.
- Zambia has a detailed legal framework on delimitation of boundaries. Both the Electoral Act and the Constitution contain adequate and comprehensive provisions for delimitation.
- The delimitation process in Zambia is being conducted in good time, way before the elections. The Commission is expected to submit a report in the first quarter of 2020 for government approval¹⁸.
- The delimitation process will be completed nearly a year before the elections. This could be a consideration for Zimbabwe, with recommendations from the EU EOM and the NDI/IRI Zimbabwe International Election Observer Mission that delimitation should be conducted in good time ahead of the elections in 2023.

Kenya

The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) has the mandate to delimit constituencies and wards as provided for in Article 88 (4) (c) of the Constitution of Kenya. Article 89 (2) of the Constitution of Kenya, provides for the IEBC to conduct delimitation at intervals of not less than eight years and not more than twelve years, but any review shall be completed at least twelve months before a general election of members of Parliament. The previous delimitation was conducted in 2012. Boundary review for the next process is expected to be completed between 2020 and 2024.

Article 89 of the Constitution of Kenya further provides the criteria for delimitation of the boundaries of constituencies and wards, obligation for consultation of all interested persons, and provisions on the judicial review of the decisions of the Commission. The relevant legal provisions include:

1. Number of constituencies should be 290
2. Article 89(5) specifically states that the "boundaries of each constituency shall be such that the number of inhabitants in the constituency is as nearly as possible equal to the population quota".

¹⁸ European Union; Election Follow-up Mission Republic of Zambia Final Report; June 2019; available at <https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/efm_zambia_publication_july_2019.pdf>

3. Article 89(5) further mandates the Commission to take into account other factors such as:

- i) Geographical features and urban centres;
- ii) Community interest, historical, economic and cultural ties; and,
- iii) Means of communication.

4. Article 89(6) provides variations around this quota, not greater than or lesser than:

- a) Forty per cent (40%) in the case of cities and sparsely populated areas; and,
- b) Thirty per cent (30%) for other areas.

5. In reviewing constituency and wards boundaries, the Commission shall consult all interested parties and work towards progressively ensuring that the number of inhabitants in each constituency and ward is as nearly as possible equal to the population quota.

6. Article 89(9) of the Constitution of Kenya provides that the Commission shall publish the names and details of such boundaries in the Kenya Gazette. These boundaries, other than the first one under the new Constitution, shall come into effect on dissolution of Parliament first following its publication. Once published, any person aggrieved by the decision of the Commission in terms of the names and details of such boundaries, may apply to the High Court within 30 days for a review of such a decision. The High Court will have to determine the matter within three months of such application.

Kenya is in the process of amending the IEBC Act to resolve obstacles that may hinder the delimitation process. The amendments seek to improve transparency, appeals mechanisms and civic and voter education on delimitation. Some of the notable clauses contained in the IEBC (Amendment) (No 2) Bill 2019 include:

- Availability of the report to the public for a period of 21 days and invite representations from the public on the proposals contained in the report;
- Any person who, fails to publish the final report within the time required by the Commission after the report has been submitted to that person, commits an offence and is liable to imprisonment for a term of one year;
- Applications may be made to the High Court for review of a decision of the Commission made under the Constitution and this Act;
- An application for the review of the decision made to the High Court shall be made within thirty days of the publication of the decision in the Gazette and shall be heard and determined within three months of the date on which it is filed;
- Sensitisation of the public on the boundaries shall be conducted for a period of thirty days; and
- All documents, materials, publications, reports and recommendations arising from the delimitation process are maintained in A form that is accessible and usable by members of the public.¹⁹

Key Considerations from Kenya

For Kenya to deliver the delimitation process there is need for concerted effort to involve all interested parties as stipulated in the Constitution. The principle of public participation and involvement is a running thread throughout the Constitution. The Commission is required by the Constitution of Kenya and the IEBC Act to observe the principle of public participation and consultation with stakeholders in its processes of delimitation of Constituencies and Wards²⁰.

To meet this requirement, the Kenyan delimitation process involves public outreach mechanisms to be able to deliver its delimitation agenda

- a. A communication strategy;
- b. Civic education; and
- c. Public awareness.

The issues to be conversed in the communication strategy include: crafting a corporate image that gives prominence to the boundaries review; publishing of a brochure outlining the boundaries mandate; sensitization meetings with the media; content analysis of print; electronic and social media coverage on boundaries; targeted media plan; venues and schedules of the exercises and media monitoring.

¹⁹ The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 2019, available at <http://kenyalaw.org/kl/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/bills/2019/IndependentElectoralandBoundariesCommission_Amendment__No._2Bill_2019.pdf>

²⁰ Article 89(7)(a) of the Constitution of the Republic Kenya

Lessons for Zimbabwe

Delimitation processes from Zambia and Kenya provide the following lessons for Zimbabwe:

- **Timeliness of the process-** in Zambia delimitation will be completed at least a year before the elections. This will provide adequate time for civic and voter education on any changes to constituencies, wards, and polling districts.
- **Public participation and stakeholder engagement-** Public participation is important as it seeks to enhance transparency, confidence and trust. In both Zambia and Kenya, that public participation is important. In Zambia, the Commission receives submissions from the public and all stakeholders through oral and written submissions on how boundaries should be demarcated.
- **The Commission then conducts pre-delimitation briefings** with CSOs, traditional leaders, political parties, and Members of Parliament before commencing on delimitation. The ECZ provides regular updates on the process. In Kenya, participation is enshrined in the Constitution.
- **Roadmap-** To increase transparency, Zambia published and circulated a detailed roadmap on the delimitation. In Zimbabwe, embracing the same will go a long way in building trust, confidence and enhancing transparency.
- **Comprehensive amendments of the legal framework on delimitation -** Kenya is in the process of reviewing the legal framework to address gaps in preparation for the next delimitation process. In Zimbabwe past experience has shown that electoral reforms/ amendments to the legal framework are done late and hurried through Parliament ahead of elections without adequately consulting stakeholders. There are gaps in the legal framework that need to be addressed. ZESN has made repeated calls for holistic review of the legal framework, including provisions on delimitation based on international standards for delimitation.
- **The independence of ZEC needs to be strengthened;** hence there should not be interference from government, political parties or any institution for ZEC to conduct their mandate in a free, impartial and independent manner to ensure credible elections.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Delimitation of electoral boundaries needs to comply with international standards of equality of voting strength, representativeness, and non-discrimination. The process should be guided by principles of transparency, non-discrimination, representativeness, equality of the vote, and impartiality.

Recommendations

Legal Framework Reforms

Key considerations for legal review include:

- De-linking delimitation from the population census, to provide the ZEC with ample time to conduct and complete the delimitation exercise
- Provisions for mandatory enforcements of timelines or durations should be introduced into legislation to ensure that the required boundary delimitation processes take place on time
- The legal framework should provide for conflict resolution mechanisms in cases of boundary disputes. These mechanisms should include specific timeframes for handling complaints and appeals.
- The Electoral Act should incorporate provisions that promote public participation
- The law must provide for provisional delimitation maps to be advertised widely to ensure their accuracy
- to enable interested parties to properly scrutinize and give feedback on the maps. The delimited maps must be made available to the public at ward level and at constituency level and the public must have access to them.
- Strengthen, guarantee and commit to put in place mechanisms that further promote the independence of the electoral commission
- The ZEC should put in place regulations for accreditation of CSOs to observer delimitation to enhance transparency
- The Rural District Councils Act and the Urban Councils Act will need to be amended to bring their provisions relating to elections in line with Sections 160 and 161 of the Constitution

Administrative reforms

Voter education

Voter education should be detailed, comprehensive, inclusive and adequate for effective public and stakeholder participation. The design of manuals and materials for voter education should be inclusive of all relevant stakeholders, that is women, people living with disabilities, youth, minority ethnic groups, CSOs, and political parties.

The voter education should be conducted on time, adequately resourced, and the ZEC should explore innovative means for voter education, including amplifying use of social media. Voter education should be conducted throughout the entire process, that is before, during and upon completion of demarcation of boundaries.

After the delimitation process has been concluded, civic and voter education should be done to inform the electorate of any changes that would have taken place to boundaries of constituencies, wards and polling stations.

Roadmap

The ZEC should share with the public and stakeholders a detailed and comprehensive roadmap which will go a long way in ensuring effective participation, building confidence and trust in the process, increase transparency, and credibility of the process. The ZEC should release the delimitation timetable at the earliest opportunity to enable civil society actors to engage in provision of civic education to complement the ZEC civic education programme.

ZEC Operations

The ZEC needs to improve on dissemination of information of the delimitation process on time. The public and relevant stakeholders need to be frequently updated about the process, hence ZEC can consider increasing stakeholder briefing meetings, updates using both mainstream and social media.

Budget

ZEC must also set its delimitation budget in consultation with relevant stakeholders to make the process as transparent as possible. ZEC should ensure timely resourcing of the delimitation process.

Voter Registration Mobilisation

A voter registration mobilisation exercise, should be conducted before delimitation. The voters' roll should be comprehensive, current and accurate to ensure representativeness and equality of the vote, as well as to prevent malapportionment of electoral constituencies and wards.

Stakeholder engagement

The ZEC should consider engaging electoral stakeholders on the delimitation process. The engagement can include conducting feedback and consultative meetings. The engagement meetings will go a long way in opening the process to scrutiny.

The ZEC should ensure that the public participates in the delimitation of electoral boundaries. This can be done by putting in place mechanisms that promote public participation

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