

ZIMBABWE: AT THE CROSSROADS

10 July 2000

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Zimbabwe's 24-25 June 2000 parliamentary election resulted in President Robert Mugabe's ruling ZANU (PF) party retaining power. However, the nine month old opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), made an impressive showing, winning 57 of the 120 contested seats. This represents a significant democratic advance in a country which, since independence in 1980, has been essentially a one party state.

With the elections over, Zimbabwe faces many immediate challenges. The first is whether the new ZANU (PF) government will take note of the massive shift in voter sentiment and reconstitute itself as an effective, responsible government capable of addressing the very serious problems facing the country, or simply be a continuation of the last government, which demonstrably failed to deliver on a broad range of issues.

Among the issues the new government must address immediately are whether to restore and reaffirm the rule of law which has been willfully violated over the period March-June in the run-up to the election; and whether to credibly address the declining economy which is in critical free fall with the prospect of a 10-20 per cent drop in 2000 GDP with all the attendant social and possibly political consequences.

In the absence of an effective new government committed to take the tough but necessary steps to turn the economy around, Zimbabwe will face continued increases in inflation, unemployment, and interest rates (all three well over 50 per cent). As of the election, international and investor confidence in Zimbabwe was virtually nil and Zimbabwe's programs with the World Bank and IMF had both been suspended because of arrears and failure to meet previously agreed conditionalities. Without prompt, demonstrable, positive action on the economic front, it is entirely possible that Zimbabwe will face food, fuel, electricity and other shortages that could lead to civil unrest by the end of 2000.

What happens in Zimbabwe also has major implications for its Southern African neighbouring states, particularly in relation to investor confidence, tourism, exchange rates, and possible refugee flows.

Many people in Zimbabwe, both in government and in the private sector, understand that Zimbabwe will need substantial outside financial assistance to reverse the economic decline. They have high, perhaps too high, expectations for such support. Having lost the confidence of the international community and would-be investors, Zimbabwe must now take concrete actions to win it back.

The biggest question mark hanging over Zimbabwe is President Robert Mugabe. He has selfishly and single-handedly sacrificed his country's economy and once positive international image to his all-consuming obsession to retain power. Will he change after the election? Is he capable of changing and leading his country forward? The initial signs are not encouraging but it may be that the momentum for change with or without Mugabe — not only coming from the opposition but from within ZANU (PF) itself — proves irresistible.

It is vitally important that the international community — and in particular all those governments and international organisations that have some capacity to offer or withdraw economic or other forms of support from Zimbabwe — not lose interest in the country now that the election is over.

The best way that the international community can help is by accepting nothing less than positive, concrete steps in return for its support. It must remain especially wary of taking at face value what President Mugabe says, and not, as has often been the case in the past, give him the benefit of the doubt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the government of Zimbabwe

1. Restore the rule of law. This would include enforcement of outstanding court orders with respect to the land invasions by the so-called War Veterans, and the arrest and prosecution of those responsible for the pre-election violence that claimed the lives of over 30 Zimbabweans of all races.
2. Do not victimise the MDC opposition, and work cooperatively with it.
3. Address immediately the ballooning budget deficit on the current account.
4. Re-engage immediately with the World Bank, the IMF, and other potential sources of outside assistance.
5. Take serious steps to establish a partnership with the private sector to address the most serious economic and social issues facing the country.
6. Address the land reform issue in a transparent, non political manner that takes into account interests of all those involved, perhaps through the establishment of an independent land commission.
7. Withdraw the Zimbabwe armed forces deployed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

For the international community

8. Continue programs that promote democracy and human rights and those that respond to genuine humanitarian needs.
9. If the new government takes concrete steps to address the agenda of recommendations described above, re-engage with it on a carefully calibrated basis, responding to performance, not promises.
10. If the government continues along previous lines, continuing to flout acceptable international norms and ignoring the demonstrated will of the people as reflected in the election results:
 - a) Limit or downgrade diplomatic relations: in the case of the Commonwealth, by moving to suspend membership, and in the case of the EU by considering suspension of Zimbabwe's privileged trade access.
 - b) Isolate senior government and ZANU (PF) leaders by declining to receive them abroad: stop visa issuance to senior officials.
 - c) Continue the near universal suspension of foreign assistance programs.
 - d) Make it clear, both publicly and privately, that until such time as Zimbabwe measures up to acceptable international standards on the rule of law, human rights, and general good governance there will be no return to "business as usual".

Harare/Brussels, 10 July 2000



ZIMBABWE: AT THE CROSSROADS

I. THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN

A. Background

Zimbabwe's fifth parliamentary election, on 24-25 June 2000, was the first serious election since the one in 1980 that brought to an end white-run Rhodesia's fifteen year Unilateral Declaration of Independence and the resultant bloody civil war, and an extraordinary one by any measurement. The issue in the 1980 election was peace or the threat of more war. The issue in the 2000 election, was change or the continuation in power of the well-entrenched ZANU (PF) government of President Robert Mugabe.

For nearly twenty years, President Mugabe and ZANU (PF) ruled Zimbabwe increasingly autocratically, confident of the solid support of the heavily rural black electorate. Beginning in late 1997, however, with a budget-busting promise of compensation to the Liberation Struggle War Veterans and a parallel announcement that government would acquire 1500 white-owned Commercial farms without full compensation, the tide of domestic sentiment began to shift. The Zimbabwe Confederation of Trade Unions mounted an effective general strike to protest tax increases that government proposed to pay for the War Veterans payout. That led through intervening events to the eventual formation of the MDC as an opposition political party in September 1999. Between 1997 and 1999 there were increasing pressures from many quarters of civil society for a revision of the constitution.

President Mugabe eventually was obliged to appoint a Constitutional Commission to come up with a new draft constitution to be put to a national referendum. Depending on one's perspective, some of its work was positive, as in providing for a prime minister, and some negative, as in broadening presidential powers. In any case, President Mugabe, after receiving the Commission's report, added some clauses of his own, including a provision allowing for the acquisition of commercial farm land without compensation unless the British government paid for it.

A national referendum on the proposed draft constitution was held in mid-February 2000 and, to the surprise of almost everyone, it lost by a 55-45 margin. The MDC had actively opposed it and ZANU (PF) had complacently assumed an easy victory. The result was a wake-up call for the President and his party. Despite accusations that the whites (who make up well under 1 per cent of the voters) and the British

had conspired to defeat the draft constitution, ZANU (PF) recognised the defeat for what it was — a vote of no-confidence by the black electorate.

With their eye on the constitutionally required year 2000 Parliamentary elections, President Mugabe and his ZANU (PF) party turned their attention to reasserting control over the black electorate. According to numerous credible accounts, there were in fact open challenges to Mugabe's continued party leadership at a post-referendum ZANU (PF) party Central Committee meeting. These he brushed aside, reportedly telling the party he would show them how to win an election. The party fell into line but, again according to reliable sources, the ensuing campaign was clearly directed by Mugabe with little or no consultation with his cabinet or party. His political life was on the line and he was not about to lose, whatever the consequences.

B. Party Strategies

ZANU (PF). The ZANU (PF) campaign was personally directed by President Mugabe supported by a few close advisors and implemented by the party bureaucracy. They knew they could not run on the government's and party's recent record — which includes unemployment, inflation and interest rates all at well over 50 per cent and rising, fuel and electricity shortages, and no foreign exchange. Understandably, they knew they had to divert voters attention from these very real issues, and blame others for their failures.

As reflected in the Party manifesto and in Mugabe's campaign speeches at party rallies across the country ZANU (PF) themes were:

- Liberation War nostalgia: "We are the party that brought peace in 1980 and remain deserving of support."
- Land - the unfinished agenda of the liberation struggle: "We will take it from the white farmers and give it to you."
- Race: "The whites are our enemy. The MDC is a front for the whites. Don't be deceived."
- The foreign devil, particularly the British government: "They support the MDC. They want to recolonize Zimbabwe."

These themes, plus party loyalty and the effects of the party-sponsored violence and intimidation, resonated in rural Zimbabwe where the population tends to be more traditional, less well educated, and less directly affected by the economic challenges facing Zimbabwe. Indeed, the poll results show that almost all of ZANU (PF) victories came in rural areas.

MDC. The MDC as a new party with very little infrastructure, virtually unknown candidates, and physically blocked from campaigning in many rural constituencies, ran on the basic theme of "change". It aimed its appeal at the country's urban areas with some spillover into rural areas, particularly in provinces which had historically been hostile to ZANU (PF) such as Matabeleland.

The MDC's message — in addition to "it's time for a change" and that "enough is enough" of misrule, mismanagement and corruption by the ruling party — was a promise of future good governance. They played heavily on the urban voters' economic woes rising unemployment, and higher food, housing, and energy prices. It was almost a Clintonian "it's the economy, stupid" theme and it worked, with the MDC carrying all the urban and peri-urban seats by wide margins.

C. Conduct of the Campaign

The "campaign" began in early March with farm invasions/occupations by the War Veterans accompanied by ZANU (PF), and assisted by state security, operatives. There is no question that the occupations were directed or condoned by Mugabe. The invaders terrorized, beat, intimidated and, over the ensuing months, killed five white farmers and at least 25 black alleged MDC supporters. The violence and intimidation spread from the farm workers to school teachers and others believed likely to be MDC supporters across the country, but with particular focus on the rural areas. The National Democratic Institute (NDI), Amnesty International, and the EU observer delegation to the Parliamentary elections all have reported on the extensive pre-election violence and intimidation, which they judged to compromise the prospects for free and fair elections no matter how accurate the actual polling turned out to be.

The ruling party's determination to put obstacles in the path of the opposition took a number of other forms. The state controlled media lauded ZANU (PF) and gave scant, and then only negative, mention to the MDC. The government's last minute decision to exclude all non-government international election observers (including the NDI and the International Republican Institute) left only 305 foreign observers (mostly the EU and Commonwealth delegations) to cover over 4000 polling places. Of the 24,000 Zimbabwean nationals who applied to be election monitors, only 4000 were accredited, and then only at the last minute, leaving a great many unable to perform their role effectively on the first day. The government's control of the electoral process also raised serious questions as to the fairness and transparency of the process. For example, up to 10 per cent of would-be voters were turned away from polling places because of seriously flawed voter rolls.

The EU released the final report of its observer mission on 4 July 2000. This report commended the determination of Zimbabweans to influence the future of their country, but judged that the violence in the period prior to the election marred the final result and that the electoral administration was hindered by lack of openness and transparency. The EU report concludes with a recommendation for close monitoring, with particular attention to rule of law and the issue of land reform, and to provide assistance and support where appropriate. The final report of the Commonwealth's observer mission is scheduled for release on 13 July 2000, and should no doubt shed further light on how the election as a whole should be characterised.

II. THE RESULT

President Mugabe's ZANU (PF) narrowly won by a margin of 62 to 57 seats over the new, less than one year old MDC. One seat was won by a small party, ZANU-Ndonga. The parties have 30 days to contest the results, and the MDC has announced its intention to do so in as many as 20 constituencies, with consequences that cannot be foreseen at this stage.

The turnout was huge, with over 60 per cent of eligible voters participating — the highest since 1980. Under the Zimbabwe Constitution, President Mugabe appoints an additional twenty members of Parliament (eight provincial governors, and twelve of his own free choosing), together with another ten proposed by the Council of Chiefs. Thus in the new parliament ZANU (PF) will effectively have a majority of 92 seats to the MDC's 57. It is, however, significant that with its 57 seats, the MDC can block any ZANU (PF) sponsored changes to the constitution, which require a two thirds positive vote.

Every election lends itself to instant analysis of the results and observations as to their meaning, and Zimbabwe's year 2000 results are especially rich in this regard. Time will lend further perspective, but what can be said now is at least this:

- Politically and economically the divide between rural and urban Zimbabwe was dramatically revealed by the election results - almost a tale of two countries.
- Also revealed, most notably in urban constituencies, was a generational divide between the better educated, better informed, post-liberation war generation and their elders. ZANU (PF)'s appeal to nostalgia, land, race and the British devil fell on deaf ears with younger Zimbabweans. They want jobs, not land. They feel the economic decline as it affects their life styles, and they want good governance. The MDC's message was well received.
- Zimbabwe is a vastly different country today than in 1980. The electorate is much better educated - almost 90 per cent literate (compare, say, with Pakistan and India at about 35 per cent and 50 per cent respectively). The government in the early 1980s controlled almost all information. Today, that control is gone except for the state owned media. Satellite TV is everywhere, and in the last few years cell phones have become the preferred means of communication. And a vigorous independent press plays an important role in informing the public despite government attempts to control it.
- That the MDC won almost half the contested constituencies and came within 27,000 votes of splitting the popular vote is all the more remarkable given the government's and ruling party's determination to squash its efforts and put obstacles in its path.

Only time will tell whether this election makes a difference in the way Zimbabwe is governed in the months and years ahead. As this is written, days after the election results were announced, there is unconfirmable speculation in Harare about debates

within ZANU (PF) across a spectrum of options — from President Mugabe stepping down and calling an early presidential election to talk of a government of national unity.

However events further unfold, this election did on any view mark a dramatic shift towards real democracy in Zimbabwe. After twenty years of essentially one party rule, a viable, credible opposition has emerged, real democracy has been given a firm footing by the electorate and, in the words of MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai, “Zimbabwe will never be the same again”.

What is most important now is how ZANU (PF) and the MDC adjust to the new reality, and how they lead Zimbabwe forward. There is no shortage of issues for them to address, the economy and land pre-eminent among them.

III. THE ECONOMY

Zimbabwe’s economy is sick and getting sicker by the day. It will need substantial outside assistance to get the economy back on track. Whether that help will be forthcoming should depend very much on the concrete steps the new government takes to address its problems. To appreciate the magnitude of the economic resuscitation task facing the new government, consider the following:

- Unemployment, inflation and interest rates are all running at well over 50 per cent and rising.
- Year 2000 GDP is projected to drop by between 10 and 20 per cent.
- Government debt stands at about Z\$110 billion¹ as of 26 June and is rising at the rate of Z\$2 billion plus a week, just on the basis that it is being financed at an interest rate of 58 per cent.
- The government budget deficit on the current account for the year 2000 is predicted to be in the range of 10-14 per cent.
- As a direct result of Zimbabwe’s negative image abroad, based on pre-election violence and political uncertainty, tourist bookings are down by 80 per cent. (Tourism had been the fastest growing earner of foreign exchange).
- For the same reason, tobacco sales (which normally make up 30 per cent of Zimbabwe’s export earnings) have fallen off dramatically as foreign buyers have stayed away from the auction floors.
- Wheat plantings are down by 22 per cent for the current season which will require in US\$100 million in imports if the people are to have bread. Similarly,

¹ This sum is equivalent to 2.9 Billion USD at the exchange rate of 37.9 ZWD to 1USD, 10 July 2000.

tobacco plantings for the next season are expected to fall by 10-20 per cent because of uncertainty linked to the government's land acquisition program.

- New domestic and foreign investment is non-existent due to the non-availability of credit, high interest rates, and political uncertainty.
- Foreign exchange for vital imports of inputs for the manufacturing, mining, and agricultural sectors is next to unavailable, as what forex there is goes to paying off already huge arrears for fuel and electricity imports and the costs of Zimbabwe's military deployment in the DRC.
- Both the IMF and World Bank have suspended their programs in Zimbabwe, as have most other international donors.

This is not a pretty picture, nor one that does the Mugabe government any credit. By all accounts, including that of the beleaguered Governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, the economy had performed strongly from 1993 until near the end of 1997. But in November 1997 President Mugabe had a very difficult meeting with the War Veterans, and, without consulting his Cabinet, gave into their demands for compensation. This involved a budget-busting one-time payment of Z\$50,000 for each of 70,000 veterans plus continuing payments of Z\$2,000 a month. At the roughly the same time President Mugabe announced his intention to acquire 1500 commercial farms for resettlement. The twin moves shattered domestic and international confidence and the Zimbabwe dollar dropped an immediate 20 per cent against the US dollar and continued to slide lower.

Mugabe's August 1998 decision, again without cabinet consultation, to deploy Zimbabwean armed forces to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) at an acknowledged cost of US\$ 3million a month added to the downward economic spiral. One source commented that the real costs were far higher, and that 2 million litres of fuel a week goes to support the 11,000 deployed troops while citizens queue for fuel back home.

Since the start of the 2000 political season (the constitutional referendum in February) both monetary and fiscal policy have been on hold and the domestic debt and budget deficit have ballooned. No affordable domestic credit or foreign exchange is available to the private sector. Some factories have closed and many are on short work weeks. Workers are being laid off in all sectors.

ICG sources lay the blame for this economic debacle almost entirely on President Mugabe, who made all the key wrong decisions on his own. Compounding the economic mismanagement, of course, were his post-referendum decisions to support War Veterans' invasions of commercial farms, the violent March-June intimidation of perceived political opponents, and his refusal to support High Court judgements ordering the removal of the trespassing war veterans. All this caused massive cancellation of lucrative overseas tourist bookings and destroyed whatever international credibility and confidence Zimbabwe had left.

Well-informed members of the Zimbabwe private sector understand the magnitude of the current post-election economic challenge, and so do some members of government. Most, however, have grave reservations as to whether President Mugabe, and whatever new government he chooses, will be willing or able to take the tough decisions that would, over time, return Zimbabwe to an upward economic trajectory. The private sector clearly wants to work with the new government to turn things around and is in broad agreement with the recommendations for Zimbabwe set forth in the concluding chapter of this report.

Clearly the economy demands urgent attention. In the absence of demonstrable progress to arrest the downward spiral and signal a turnaround there is a very real possibility of civil unrest or worse, particularly in the urban areas, by the end of this year. It is an open question just how much pain the urban population is willing to endure. Urban Zimbabweans have already demonstrated at the polls their disapproval of President Mugabe and his party by voting in the MDC in every urban seat countrywide. Now they want to see action on the economy and other issues.

IV. THE LAND ISSUE

Resolution, once and for all, of the question of land redistribution is perhaps the most urgent issue facing Zimbabwe today. It is an open, festering wound that divides the country. It is an issue with deep historic roots and was one of the principal reasons for the liberation struggle, which led to Zimbabwe's independence in 1980. Since 1980 land acquisition and resettlement has continued to resonate as a political, social, and economic issue.

At independence in 1980 the distribution of the most productive agricultural land was skewed heavily in favor of the white farmers and ranchers who owned or controlled most of it, leaving the generally less desirable lands to the black population. This was demonstrably inequitable and, in a black majority ruled country, politically unsustainable.

In the early years after independence, in an attempt to deliver on its pledges to the black electorate, the government resettled some 50,000 families on government owned land or on land acquired from white farmers on a "willing seller, willing buyer" basis. Unfortunately, these and later resettlement schemes which brought the number of resettled families to about 70,000 by the end of the 1990s were not very successful. For numerous reasons the government was unable or unwilling to provide the newly resettled farmers adequate supporting infrastructure, extension services, and access to credit. Importantly, moreover, the new farmers were not given formal title to the land they were allocated. The effect of this was that they had no collateral to borrow against, and hence were wholly dependent on an unresponsive government.

As a political issue during the 1980s and 1990s land percolated to the top during election seasons, but otherwise languished. The government continued to acquire farms, paying fair prices to the white sellers, but very little effort was made to

resettle the acquired land: it is believed that government presently has some 3 million hectares that could be resettled. For its part the Commercial Farmers Union (representing the white farmers), while recognizing and accepting the need for land reform and resettlement, generally took a "go slow" tack, protecting the short-term interests of its members. In a sense, for most of the period there was a *de facto* accommodation between government and ruling party and the CFU. As long as ZANU (PF) was confident of its black electorate and not feeling pressure from it on the land issue, then the party laid off the commercial farmers whom they knew to be the driving force in the economy. Some were cynical enough to believe that President Mugabe and the party preferred keeping land in reserve as a future political issue rather than forcing a definite resolution, which they could have done at any time.

From the end of 1997 to the present, the land issue has moved from simmer to almost continuous boil. The precipitating factors were the War Veterans' vocal demands for land and a loosening of the party's control over and confidence in its support from the black electorate. The rhetoric escalated, and the government designated some 1500 commercial farms for mandatory acquisition: after many administrative and judicial appeals between 1997 and the present, there are currently 804 designated farms.

All the acrimony over the land issue and the realization by both the CFU and government that it must be resolved led to a UNDP sponsored, government chaired Land Donors Conference in September 1998 which brought together all the concerned parties and international donors. They reached agreement on the principles to be followed in a two-year program to resolve the issue, and the donors pledged contingent support. Unfortunately, implementing the agreement proved difficult. Very little real progress was made in the ensuing year and a half — the sense being that there was no consensus within the government of Zimbabwe and ZANU (PF) to go forward. The real reasons are difficult to discern, but there are indications that the question of land tenure and title may have been a factor, as well as a desire to keep land alive as a potent political issue.

With the February 2000 referendum defeat of the new draft constitution, which contained a clause providing for land acquisition without compensation unless paid for by the British, the land issue exploded. President Mugabe and the War Veterans were furious. Within a matter of days the veterans and their followers began invading and occupying white-owned farms. President Mugabe clearly condoned and later vigorously supported their action — going so far as to refuse to execute court orders requiring the veterans to withdraw. Eventually some 1500 farms were occupied.

President Mugabe made the land issue the focus of his campaign to support ZANU (PF) candidates in the 24-25 June Parliamentary elections. His message was strident and racist, calling white farmers "the enemy", and making much of taking back the land being the unfinished agenda of the liberation struggle. As already noted, Mugabe's appeal had some impact on rural voters, but was rejected by those in urban areas who were more concerned with jobs and good governance.

Post-election, the land and the economy are the two crucial issues that the new government must urgently address and resolve. President Mugabe and his spokesmen have indicated they intend to continue with announced plans to compulsorily acquire the 804 farms. The MDC, which also supports land reform, wants to proceed at a more deliberate pace with transparency and due process. At the time of writing, it is unclear where President Mugabe and his new government will come down on the issue, and what will be the next step.

The view of most knowledgeable observers is that the way forward that would best serve the nation would be to go back to the agreement reached at the 1998 Land Donor's Conference, and proceed from there. Ideally, it should be agreed by all concerned that from now on land should be dealt with transparently, on a non-political basis.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, this is a bleak assessment, and in attributing responsibility for Zimbabwe's woes it is difficult to look beyond President Mugabe, whose personal role in recent years has been lamentably destructive. But there are positives as well. The brightest is that despite a horrific campaign of violence and intimidation Zimbabwe voters courageously turned out and firmly implanted democracy in Zimbabwe. Their example will be analyzed and written about for years to come, as it offers a hopeful example to other democracy-bereft countries.

A second positive is that Zimbabwe is a resilient country. It has survived a long civil war, two devastating droughts in the last sixteen years, and years of misrule. However daunting the current situation is, the public spirit looking forward is very positive, and optimistic that the current enormous problems can be over-come.

Thirdly, Zimbabwe has a well-educated, hard-working labor force, complemented by a younger generation of black managers in the private sector who are eager to put their country back on course. They accept that this will take a lot of effort, outside assistance, and probably three to five years, but their confidence is infectious.

For the government of Zimbabwe, the tasks are now clear:

- It must restore the rule of law. This would include enforcement of outstanding court orders with respect to the land invasions by the so-called War Veterans, and the arrest and prosecution of those responsible for the pre-election violence that claimed the lives of over 30 Zimbabweans of all races.
- It must resist the temptation to victimise the MDC opposition, and work with it cooperatively to address the formidable array of problems that the country now faces. The conciliatory words of President Mugabe's initial post-election address to the nation, in which he called for national unity and said that the results "bind us all, loser and winner alike", should be followed by appropriately conciliatory action.

- It must address immediately the ballooning budget deficit on the current account, estimated at 10-14 per cent for 2000.
- It must re-engage immediately with the World Bank, the IMF, and other potential sources of outside assistance.
- It must take serious steps to establish a partnership with the private sector to address the most serious economic and social issues facing the country. Both need the positive help of the other if Zimbabwe is to succeed.
- It must address the land issue in a transparent, non-political manner that takes into account the interests of all those involved, perhaps through the establishment of an independent land commission.
- It must withdraw the Zimbabwe armed forces deployed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Quite apart from issues related to the Congo peace process itself, Zimbabwe cannot afford this extravagance, especially when no vital Zimbabwe interests are at stake.

Zimbabwe's immediate neighbours, who are particularly affected by the situation in that country, should make their views known — clearly, but in ways they deem most effective - as to what courses of action they believe Zimbabwe should pursue.

For the rest of the international community, or at least those governments and international organisations who have some capacity to influence outcomes by offering or withdrawing economic or other forms of support to Zimbabwe, there should be a willingness to continue with programs that promote democracy and human rights and respond to genuine humanitarian needs. But beyond that, the response should be determined very directly by how the new government chooses to act in the period ahead.

If the new government takes concrete steps to address the agenda of recommendations described above, then the international community should re-engage with it - on a carefully calibrated basis, strictly conditioned to performance, not promises, by the government. No outside taxpayers should subsidize the bailout of anything less than a responsible government.

But if the government continues along previous lines, flouting international norms and ignoring the demonstrated will of the people as reflected in the election results, then the international community should stand back and let Zimbabwe feel the pain it is suffering, which is entirely the result of its own unwise policies and actions. More specifically, action should be taken to:

- Limit or downgrade diplomatic relations: in the case of the Commonwealth by moving to suspend membership, and in the case of the EU by considering suspension of Zimbabwe's privileged trade access;

- Isolate senior government and ZANU (PF) leaders by declining to receive them abroad: stop visa issuance to senior officials;
- Continue the near universal suspension of foreign assistance programs; and
- Make it clear, both publicly and privately, that until such time as Zimbabwe measures up to acceptable international standards on the rule of law, human rights, and general good governance there will be no return to “business as usual”.

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