

PEACE & DEMOCRACY PROJECT

"Action Now! Vision For The Future!"

ZIMBABWE SYMPOSIUM REPORT

**27 TH MARCH 2004
JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA**

**REPORT ON THE PEACE AND DEMOCRACY PROJECT (PDP)
ZIMBABWE SYMPOSIUM HELD AT CROWN PLAZA HOLIDAY INN,
SANDTON, JOHANNESBURG, REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA ON THE
27TH MARCH 2004 AS FROM 9:30AM TO 5:00PM.**

“ACTION NOW! VISION FOR THE FUTURE!”

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mr. Daniel Molokela of the PDP opened the floor with a presentation of the topic “*The Recent War Cabinet: Is Its Composition Qualified for Fighting Corruption and the Current Socio-Economic Problems in Zimbabwe?*” Mr. Bheki Moyo the DPD Vice Chairman chaired the discussion.

Mrs. Reyhana Masters-Smith, Chairperson of Media Institute of Southern Africa (Zimbabwe) made a presentation on the topic “*The Effect of Media Legislation on Activities Aimed at Producing a Democratic Transition in Zimbabwe: Any Hope for the future?*” This session was chaired by Mr. Danisa Zulu, a political activist, based in South Africa.

Third to take up to the stage was Mr. Trust Mamombe, the Executive Director of the Zimbabwe Foundation for all Youths Associations. His discussion session that was chaired by Nkosilati Tshuma of the PDP, was entitled “*The Intervention of the Youths and Student Organizations in Facilitating Development in These Times of Crisis: What Has Been Done and What Can Still be Done?*”

The final topic of the day was co-presented by Ms Janah Ncube, Chairperson of Women’s Coalition of Zimbabwe, and Ms. Jenni Williams who is the Chairperson of Women of Zimbabwe Arise. Their topic was on “*The Role and Activities of Women, Their Impact, Challenges and the Way Forward in the Pursuit of a Solution to the Current Crisis in Zimbabwe.*” Dr. Samukeliso Dube one of the few politically active Zimbabwean women, was the chair of this session.

Plenary Sessions were held at the end of each presentation.

All the presenters, except Mr. Molokela, were flown all the way from Zimbabwe by the PDP. At the end of the conference, a number of resolutions were proposed. The resolutions are to be circulated to all participants and all interest groups. The proceedings of the symposium are to be published in a PDP Journal and incorporated into the PDP website to be designed soon. A total of 63 participants were accredited.

This included the MDC Youth Secretary General Mr. Bekithemba Mpfu who flew into RSA to listen to the presentations. At the end of the day, all hailed the function as yet another success for the PDP. PDP was encouraged to continue providing such platform to discuss crucial issues affecting the restoration of democracy in the crisis-ridden Zimbabwe.

Of major interest is the issue of the opposition MDC's threat to boycott the next parliamentary election in 2005. It was recommended a symposium on that be staged within the next two months.

*A PDP Draft Report
27 March 2003, JHB, RSA*

1. PROGRAM FOR THE DAY

The program of the symposium included the presentation of papers on the set topics followed by plenary sessions after each topic. At the end of all presentations, there was a deliberation on all the presentations with the intention of coming up with symposium resolutions.

All invited speakers but the RSA Youth Commission Chairman Mr. Jabu Mbalula, attended and presented their topics. No apologies were received from the office of the Youth Commission Chairman. The program start was slightly delayed due to the technicality that some participants had initially gone to the Holiday Inn Hotel in Parktown instead of the new venue, so there was need to wait.

2. ACCREDITATION AND WELCOME ADDRESS

A total of 63 participants were accredited. The composition was made up of Zimbabwean civic leaders, political leaders mainly from the opposition, youth leaders, political activists and a number of media representatives notably the BBC.

Mr. Mathula Lusinga, Chairperson of the Peace and Democracy Project (PDP), opened by welcoming all present. He gave a brief detail of the activities of the PDP and how it was formed. He articulated that the major objective in forming the PDP was the need to foster dialogue within the Zimbabwean activists mainly the youths in exile in South Africa.

He however emphasized the idea was for PDP to continue growing and further extend its activities to a number of goals in the pursuit of a Democratic Zimbabwe. He described the program of the day as a continuation to the previous dialogue. He highlighted the PDP needed to move from the Hotel Conferences into mobilizing in the areas richly populated by Zimbabweans. Currently the PDP is in the process of Institutionalization and is being run by an interim committee of five.

3. THE PRESENTATIONS

1st Session: The Recently Appointed War Cabinet: Is Its Composition Qualified For Fighting Corruption And The Current Socio-Economic Problems In Zimbabwe?

Presenter: **Mr. Daniel Molokela**, Coordinator of PDP, Human Rights Lawyer, Masters in Fundamental Rights Law student at UNISA. Former Bulawayo Programme Officer of Transparency International Zimbabwe (TIZ), Former Field Officer with the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA). Founder and First Vice President of Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU). Former Secretary General, Vice President and subsequently President of the University of Zimbabwe Student Union.

Chairman: **Mr. Bhekinkosi Moyo**, PDP Vice Chairman, Researcher and Publisher on Women Rights with Tswaranang Legal Foundation, RSA, Holder of a Masters degree and PhD. Student with Witwatersrand University, Former Student Leader at the University of Zimbabwe.

Mr. Daniel Molokela did considerable justice to his presentation. He took the house on the stage-by-stage dynamics within the Voter attraction methods that have been carried out over the years especially towards important National Elections. He also explained where in History the term war cabinet has been used citing the actual world war cabinet set up by the British against Germany.

His motive was to eventually argue articulately that there is no such thing as the fight against corruption in Zimbabwe as indicated by the term war cabinet. He made the participants recognize that corruption was still rampant in the country with major players, who are supposed to be the fighters themselves, including the likes of the President, were also involved in corrupt business.

He drew an example of the vast empire of ownership possessed by the President in countries like Malaysia and China. He also pointed to the so widely spoken about properties that are suspected to be corruptly funded by the Finance Minister himself in Cape Town.

Mr Molokela argued that the war cabinet and so called fight against corruption was actually meant to detract the attention of the common man in the streets, who actually makes up the majority voter, from the actual issues on the ground to useless childish talk meant to buy time and votes for the beleaguered ZANU PF party to the next election in 2005.

Referring to the arrests on the ZANU stalwarts like Phillip Chiyangwa, Mr Molokela dismissed that as a political gimmick. He insisted all that was well calculated and orchestrated simply to raise public sympathy with the ruling party. He pointed out the ruling party could not be sincere in its fight against corruption at this time towards the

elections while maintaining draconian legislation like POSA, AIPPA and the recently passed “Makamba Act”.

If ZANU were to be sincere, we would not be seeing the intensification of militia camps in the country. The exodus of professional judges in the high court replaced by ZANU loyalist and thus shifting the justice system to entirely favor the ruling party would all be eliminated.

Mr Molokela’s discussion became even more exciting when he introduced the issue of MDC threats to boycott the forthcoming elections. The issue raised serious floor debate in the plenary session. Mr Molokela was arguing in support of the MDC’s threatened boycott citing the repressive legislation, the militia and war veterans’ involvement as well as lack of media coverage as factors that would swing the election to the unfair advantage of ZANU PF.

He also pointed out that there still exist a number of pending challenges filed by the opposition on the previous elections and the Zimbabwean justice system has been so manipulated they would not even be heard as all attention is being diverted to the so called “ War Cabinet and Fight Against Corruption”. He predicted a possible scenario where the opposition leader could be trailed and judgment passed in his treason case towards the election period, inflicting a great blow on the opposition’s morale.

Mr Molokela concluded the recent war cabinet and fight against corruption was not genuine. He lambasted it as a desperate bid by the ruling party to give it a face of a people caring party and divert all attention on the current Zimbabwean crisis in order to while off time and buy sympathy and support from home and abroad.

2nd Session: The Effect of Media Legislation On Activities Aimed at Producing A Democratic Transition in Zimbabwe: Any Hope For The Future?

Presenter: **Mrs. Reyhana Masters-Smith**, Media Consultant, Chairperson of MISA Zimbabwe. A Former Features Editor with the Daily News.

Chairman: **Mr. Danisa Zulu**, Professional Engineer and Political Activist.

Mrs. Masters-Smith gave a brief account of the problems affecting especially independent Journalists and Publishers in Zimbabwe. She highlighted how the draconian Access to Information and protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), has crippled responsible journalism in the country. She was mainly worried about the disappearance of a Daily Publication in Zimbabwe following the government’s closure of the Daily News that was an alternative to the Government’s mouthpiece the Herald. She blamed the closure on the AIPPA.

The current scenario is such that the State papers published on a daily basis are now the pace-setter of the current events. She deplored the reporters of those papers for irresponsible journalism characterized by resentment for the opposition and propaganda from the ruling party.

The weekly publications were not adequate as they only come out once a week and due to their high cost, cannot enjoy widespread circulation like the state media. She observed the lack of a private broadcast station with all radio and television channels being run by the state and there being no room for an independent player to come in.

Mrs. Masters-Smith gave some statistics of reporters who have been denied registration, including herself, due to the AIPPA's recognized Media Commission set up by the ruling party and consisting of its party cadres. She described the act as a clear suppression of the private media and orchestrated move to paralyze accurate dissemination of information in favor of the government propaganda. The private media is not only suffering from the effects of AIPPA, but also POSA as some registered private reporters have been arrested on POSA charges.

She also gave some statistics of reporters who have been allegedly tortured in police cells and by the state agents under POSA. Representation of such victims in court has been hindered by the deliberate procedures instigated to deny representation in the courts. A well known Human Rights Lawyer, Mrs Beatrice Mtetwa, representing the British Andrew Meldrum journalist on AIPPA and POSA charges, has found the courts inaccessible as she has had to seek CIO clearance first.

In her conclusion, Mrs. Masters-Smith acknowledged the media has a crucial role to play in disseminating accurate information to the entire nation. In a fairly democratic society, the independent media has a role to play and deserves space. However the AIPPA and POSA have denied that access.

The journalist unions are not really united at the moment, but there are plans to get all unions to unite and fight together against the draconian legislations, as the current individual fights seem not to yield enough pressure and results. She emphasized the closure of the Daily News was that the Publisher and Journalists chose to fight the issue of the unconstitutionally set up commission without registering with it first. On the other hand, other private publishers and Institutions had chose to register first and fight later. On either case she does not blame anyone.

3rd Session: The Role of Youth and Student Organizations in Facilitating Development in These Times of Crisis in Zimbabwe. What Has Been Done and What Can Still be Done?

Presenter: **Mr. Trust Mamombe**, Director of Zimbabwe Foundation for all Youth Associations (ZIFAYA), Writer and publisher on Youth issues. A former UZ Students Union Secretary for Information & Publicity. Holder of

Bachelor of Political Science degree, Masters degree in Policy Studies and currently doing his PhD with thesis entitled, "*The Relevance and Effectiveness of National Youth Service Schemes as Ideological Tools for Indoctrination and ideological Commitment – The Case Study of Zimbabwe*".

Chairman: **Nkosilati Tshuma**, PDP Secretary for Research and Advocacy, Former MDC National Youth Coordinator, Outgoing MDC Matabeleland North Provincial Secretary, Former Secretary General of Matabeleland Development Society at UZ, Former Junior MP for Pelandaba Constituency, former UZ's Student Representative Assembly Chairman for the Disciplinary Committee, Graduate of Mechanical Engineering now exiled in RSA.

Mr. Mamombe contextualized his presentation on notions of youth interventions, facilitating development and the crisis in Zimbabwe. He defined his limit of youths to exclude people above the age of 35 years. In developmental issues, Mamombe pointed out that the role of Zimbabwean youths is being overshadowed by the fact that the youths are still unable to do things for themselves, with any youth members occupying positions of authority in any society seemingly forfeiting their youths. He believes youth's participation is still non-youth oriented, non-youth committed and non-youth controlled.

On what has been done by the youths, Mr Mamombe recognized the variable background existing within the national youths. He articulated the role of the students youths who have contributed by raising topics of concern but noted how this has been stifled as intramural politics and participation by students only a youths preparation for national politics.

Youth organizations have suffered because their programs have been planned and simply handed to them for implementation. This has implied programs that are at best paternalistic, and at worst authoritarian in the way they are conceived and administered. He also identified a grouping of youths of colonial origin reminiscent of organizations such as Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, Young Women (and Men) Christian Associations (YWCA & YMCA) etc. and described them as being in existence to impart a new culture of service and obedience. These have no role in crisis solving.

For the youths in rural Zimbabwe and the church, he described those as conspicuously absent. The rural youths will concentrate on migrating to areas where there job opportunities while the religious youths are unstructured and have no autonomy over their own affairs whatsoever. The few programs in such organizations are also worsened by the non-participation of female youths. They are either 'girls' when they are still at school or 'women' when they leave school even if they are unmarried and stay in their parents' homes.

The youths in political parties were referred to as the largest conspicuous group. In the ruling party the structure consists of adults. In the MDC however all recommendations made by the young and dynamic youths merely reflect party priority more than youth concerns in development paradigm.

Generally, the youth's organizations may be burdened by a desire to do well but they have generally lacked strategies to attain their desired goal. The financial constraints

have been the biggest hindrance. The lack of proper guidance in youth programs is also evidenced in the latest ENG saga. Youths in organizational roles like HIV/AIDS campaign have been reduced to entertainment role providers. They are not even considered for the AIDS levy.

The Junior Parliament and the Junior City Councils do not even elicit support from fellow general youth because they are organized around issues of loyalty oaths and so do not serve the interests of the youths by and large.

In his recommendations of what can be done in these times of crisis, Mr Mamombe encouraged a multi dimensional, a multi sectoral and multi pronged solutions politically, socially and culturally for that matter. He encouraged the identification of youth structures are not homogenous and each category should be treated separately and allowed to operate independently.

He also recommended a total overhaul of the Zimbabwe National Youth Council Act of 1987 especially on the aspect of the National Youth Commission. The act is still the most important venue through which youths can contribute to national development discourse.

4th Session: The Role and Activities of Women, Their Impact, Challenges and the Way Forward in the Pursuit of a Solution to the Current Crisis in Zimbabwe.

Presenters: **1. Ms. Janah Ncube**, Chairperson of Women's Coalition in Zimbabwe. Executive Director of Women in Politics Support Unit, Former Vice Chairperson of Crisis in Zimbabwe. Former National Taskforce Member of the NCA.

2. Ms. Jenni Williams, Former Public Relations Practitioner, Chairperson of Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA), Former Spokesperson for Justice for Agriculture.

Chairperson: Dr. Samukeliso Dube, PDP Advisory Board Member, Political Activist. Medical Practitioner and Currently Part-time Student of Masters Degree in Public Health and also Full-time Masters in Business Administration Degree Student.

Ms. Janah Ncube opened the session by her moving introductory story of a 29-year-old female opposition activist in Zimbabwe who has been extremely active in the struggle and has been a victim of the evils of the system. She was gang raped by 10 soldiers, beaten up and has recently tested HIV positive. Her home has been vandalized, property destroyed or stolen and she cannot stay at her home and so she now rotates between people's places as her hosts would eventually be victimized by state machinery for keeping her.

Ms Ncube appreciates women have been enormously involved in the struggle to liberate the country under colonial law and now under ZANU PF regime. The Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe, which was set in 1999, has desired equal space for women. They have worked on pilot projects in dealing with women going through the same experiences as the introduction woman.

They are protesting against violence on women at home and all sectors of life. They have organized public meetings to raise such awareness. They continue to offer practical services for women such as legal services, health services, information services, educational rights, demand rights and space etc.

At a national level, Ms Ncube organization's contributions have been part of all pro-democracy activities. They contributed to the No Vote Campaign of the NCA's opposition to the unpopular Chidyausiku Commission draft Constitution.

They have been part of the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition since its formation. They have traveled the region and the world sensitizing of the Zimbabwean crisis. They also have a vibrant women's organization WOZA, which is the only willing women's organization to confront the regime.

As women in the struggle, they are however challenged by a number of issues. Women have been the worst affected by HIV/AIDS. Inflation has hardest hit the women, as the mothers have to feed the family despite the disappearance of food from the shop shelves. Health care is deteriorating and women are hardest hit, as they have to care for the terminally ill at home. Giving birth is now very expensive as well.

Women continue to fall victims of domestic dispute. Over 60 were reportedly killed by their lovers. They suffer sexual harassment in the streets, at home and in their parties. The political environment has not been favorable either. Organization suffers POSA. Publicity suffers AIPPA. At home the partners' egos of not wanting to have a wife who spends time out of home. On society, the judgment on any active women is negative.

On the way forward, Ms Ncube suggested the folding of egos and power dynamics perpetrated by men on women as equal participation will win the struggle. This will motivate more women to take part in the political discourse. She encouraged the participation of women in the mainstream decision-making. She encouraged all pro-democracy women groupings to strengthen alliances. Both at home and in the Diaspora, Ms Ncube thought that there was need now to take more action than seminars and conferences.

In conclusion, she also highlighted the fact that if all the groups involved in the struggle for the democratization of Zimbabwe could unite, then together we could play victor.

Ms Jenni Williams echoed similar sentiments as her counterpart. She narrated the formation of the group WOZA emanating from the need for women to actively confront the regime through organized disobedience of the draconian laws and outbreak of the rule of law in the country. Realizing the women suffer most from the effects of human

right abuses currently being perpetrated by the regime, WOZA was the ideal group that could organize meaningful mass women protests.

She deplored the POSA, AIPPA and other government's abuses to children especially in the Youth Service sector. As mothers they were touched by the gross inhumanity in the whole training and they condemn all the brutal actions the youths are forced to carryout. As women, she explained they are also worried about the nature of behavior imposed on the youths. Females are allegedly gang raped and bear fatherless children amid the risk of contracting the deadly virus.

WOZA has been able to carry out demonstrations that men could not do without getting a beating from the police. Ms Williams articulated that in all their demonstrations, not a single woman has ever been beaten up. They have however been arrested and charged in the courts of law. WOZA has structures however to support the women in the courts whose sessions are always filled with electrifying sympathy from the public giving a major influence to the judges.

WOZA has successfully partnered with other women's movements throughout the world with a sister group in London. They have also been in advocacy with organizations like the Churches' Peace & Solidarity Trust. Pastors who even boldly visit them in prison, bring them some tea and interrogate the officers on the arrest of the women have supported them.

Ms Williams articulated that her organization wanted to continue growing in stature and incite more action in support for a democratic transition in Zimbabwe. She also looked forward to partnering with the PDP in its future plans as well.

RESOLUTIONS

Mr. Daniel Molokela took the house through a topic-by-topic resolutions session. Amongst the symposium's resolutions, which would be circulated to all participants and interest groups, are the following:

1st Session: War Cabinet

- ✓ The symposium noted the war cabinet and so-called fight against corruption were not at all sincere. It was noted there is however rampant corruption in the country and need to curtail that. The symposium however deplored the war cabinet as unfit to practically fight the corruption and it was dismissed as a political gimmick well orchestrated to divert the populace from the actual pressing national issues to give more mileage to the ruling party in the forthcoming elections next year.
- ✓ It was resolved that those with access to this information should start disseminating it to the common men in the streets so that they have a correct picture of ZANU (PF)'s gimmicks and lack of sincerity.

- ✓ The symposium considered the threats by the MDC to boycott the forthcoming elections. It was however resolved the issue was rather too technical and so required an urgent separate symposium to discuss that. Thus PDP was tasked with organizing such a conference as soon as possible within the next two months.

2nd Session: Media Laws

- ✓ The symposium deplored the draconian AIPPA and the unpopular Media & Ethics Commission that serves Government's interests in the accreditation of journalists.
- ✓ The symposium condemned the closure of the Daily News and called for its immediate unconditional re-opening.
- ✓ The media unions in the country were encouraged to unite under one umbrella to fight against the cause of the breakdown of the rule of law in the media sector.
- ✓ An alternative means of disseminating information other than the publications and radio stations has to be invented to also enable the people in the rural areas to access the information.
- ✓ The symposium condemned all reporters in the state media who have literally forfeited their right to inform by unprofessional reporting and called for professionalism to prevail.

3rd Session: The Youths & Students

- ✓ The symposium condemned the national youth service program.
- ✓ The symposium noted that female youths were being discouraged from participation in youth activities due to a number of factors. It was resolved that an enabling environment be set up in all sectors to encourage the female youths to also actively participate.
- ✓ Political parties and other organizations are encouraged to start on working on an enabling environment to make the youths to be active participators and decision makers.

4th Session: Women

- ✓ The symposium deplored all shameless violence towards the brave women participating in political discourse.
- ✓ An enabling environment has to be instituted in all political parties and other organizations to make the women key players and decision makers.
- ✓ Women organizations were encouraged to form an alliance in the fight for their rights and against the regime.
- ✓ The positive role played by women was recognized and praised by the symposium.
- ✓ A multi-faceted approach has to be implemented to enable all Zimbabwean women to participate in the political discourse.

CONCLUSION

The symposium was unanimously hailed as having been yet another success to the PDP. The PDP was encouraged to continue with similar programs to afford exiled Zimbabweans with more of such discussion platforms. It was also urged to quickly institutionalize itself and set up an office in Johannesburg for administrative and mobilizing purposes.
