



Bulawayo Youth Council

B.Y.C

Policy Position Paper iii

THE INCLUSIVE GOVERNMENT'S 100 DAY PLAN: A REFLECTION OF HOPE OR DOOM.

Background

The National Youth Development Trust, through the Bulawayo Youth Council, launched a series of meetings to review the Inclusive Government's (IG) first 100day plan in the month of September. The 100 day plan which was launched on the 29th of April 2009 came to its conclusive end on the 6th of August 2009. The plan, which was described at its launch by the Prime Minister as being reflective of a realisation that it is only through working together that the parties in government can overcome significant challenges in the country, was launched primarily as an implementation plan of achievable goals set out in STERP and in the GPA.

The 100 day plan states that as a measure of increasing efficiency Ministries were grouped into five sector specific clusters namely Rights and Interests, Economic, Social, Infrastructure, and Security. It is understood that during the Ministerial retreat which produced the document, Ministries were expected to come up with targets of what they can achieve in a 100days. These targets were not to be imposed on respective ministries but were to be set out looking at the amount of work that needs to be done and the time period at hand.

The series of meetings launched by the organisation under the theme; ***The Inclusive Government's 100 Day Plan: Successes and Challenges*** were meant to provide young people with an opportunity of evaluating the successes and failures of government in implementing the 100day plan. Secondly these meetings were meant to establish if youths really know what the 100-day plan was all about and if it meant anything to them.

The organisation adopted a multitier strategy in conducting these consultative meetings. The first stage was that of conducting ward based focus group meetings. The youth councillors mobilised young people in their wards to participate in these meetings. An average of 25 youths attended the meetings and a total of four meetings were held. The next stage was that of public meetings at constituency level. At each of these meetings a presenter was engaged to give direction to the meeting after which young people were given an opportunity to share their views. The last stage was that of compiling the information gathered into a policy paper with recommendations. The position paper will then be distributed to the strategic stakeholders.

Their views and recommendations on the issue are hence as follows:

Preamble

We the youths who met in Bulawayo between the months of August and September 2009 to discuss the Inclusive government's 100 day plan under the theme ***The Inclusive Government's 100 day Plan: Successes and Challenges.***

Appreciating that there have been major improvements in the lives of many Zimbabweans ever since the formation of the inclusive government;

Acknowledging that the transformation of Zimbabwe's economy, politics and social life needs more than 100days;

Aware that the failure to implement the Global Political Agreement to the full remains a major stumbling block towards achieving total stability and setting good ground for democracy, good governance and economic growth;

Appreciating that Zimbabwe's economic stabilisation and growth needs the confidence and support of the regional and international communities;

Realising that the considerable drop in the rate of inflation from an eleven digit figure to minus 3% has not affected the country's unemployment rates;

Alarmed at the rate at which Zimbabweans are fast accumulating debts as a result of the dollarization of the economy more than during the hyper inflationary period through the sudden and continuously increasing charges by ZESA, Tel One, city councils and other service providers;

Concerned that repressive laws like POSA, AIPPA, BSA are still in place and being used to violate the basic rights of freedom of expression, freedom of association, a free press as well as easy access to information and that arbitrary arrests and detention of civic activists and members of political parties are still going on in violation of basic human rights and the rule of law.

Do hereby recommend that:

The inclusive government of Zimbabwe needs to work cohesively in order for there to be a synergy of activities as well as the free-flow of benefits from one sector to the other as no ministry can survive without the existence of other ministries. The respective ministry heads should stop serving party interests and begin to consider the plight of ordinary Zimbabweans.

As such these are our recommendations;

a) ECONOMY – It had 11 member ministries led by the Ministry of Economic Planning and Investment Promotion. The cluster vision was *“A growing economy that is generating adequate resources for increased incomes and employment for Zimbabwe”*

In relation to the fact that we come from a period when Zimbabweans could no longer save nor invest in property due to the hyper inflationary environment, the current situation in terms of basic goods availability is a great improvement. However the prices of these goods in comparison to the rates of salaries tell a different story, so do the charges for social services like electricity and telecoms. Unemployment levels are still very high and Zimbabwe is currently not producing nor exporting any goods to grow the economy or employment numbers.

The following are recommendations on this sector:

- i)** Introduce a one currency system in order to:
 - Curb the distortion of retail prices and exchange rates.
 - Limit black market trade in foreign currency,
 - Create a relatively uniform value of salaries countrywide
 - Rehabilitate parastatals' infrastructure before charging consumers high rates in order to equal the charges to efficient service delivery.
- ii)** Companies should be mandated to dedicate a stipulated amount of their profits to salaries so as to:
 - Guarantee the financial /economic protection of the Zimbabweans that are working hard to revive the economy.
 - Balance the success of local businesses with the standard of living of workers in those businesses.
 - Ensure that the Zimbabwe's economy does not grow at the expense of its work force which continues to be under paid.
- iii)** Parastatals charges for services should be in line with or below regional charges for the same services because:
 - a. Current service delivery by ZESA, Net One, TelOne, City Councils and other such service providers does not match the rates being charged for them.

- b. The services being offered are not being imported hence the charges should reflect this fact.
- c. Zimbabwe is now using stable currencies, therefore services should not continue to be exorbitantly priced in these currencies.

b) INFRASTRUCTURE- Led by the Ministry of Public Works, it has 8 member ministries. The cluster's vision is a *"Well functioning, efficient, available, affordable, improved infrastructure and services supporting the economy."*

While moves like that of putting up toll gates on Zimbabwe's roads might be for a plausible cause, we believe the government should have first rehabilitated the roads using funding from different sources before charging the already cash strapped consumer for this project. As it stands it is unclear what government's specific plan is for the money collected at these points. How long will ZIMRA collect money before government embarks on the actual road works?

Also in consideration of the fact that ZESA is facing serious challenges in providing an efficient service, we do not expect it to be charging the high rates it is disconnecting consumers for not affording to pay. The same goes for Tel one whose telecommunication system does not offer the best of connections thus far but whose charges are so exorbitantly high that many residents find themselves in insurmountable debt.

Our recommendations in this cluster are as follows:

- i) Rehabilitate facilities at parastatals and city councils first in order to justify the rates being charged as this will;
 - Create more jobs for example through the renovations and rebuilding of collapsed facilities.
 - Justify the high foreign currency rated prices being charged for these local services,
 - Encourage rate payers to pay on time as the services will be worth paying for,
 - Increase state and local revenue
 - Boost employee moral through the improvement of working conditions
 - Increase efficiency and output at these institutions.
 - To a great extent reduce cases of skilled people leaving the country to seek better working conditions elsewhere (Brain drain).

ii) Prioritise the rehabilitation of Youth Centres, Council Sports and recreational facilities so as to

- Identify and nurture young talent at community level for the benefit of the community and the individual in particular.
- Reduce cases of idleness amongst youths which has contributed to a large extent to a rise in cases of crime, teenage pregnancies and HIV/AIDS related illnesses, as well as the migration to other countries by young people.
- Allow young people to have constructive environments in which to gather, learn and share experiences and ideas about their future and that of the nation.

c) RIGHTS/INTERESTS, is led by the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs and has 5 member ministries. Its Vision: “A democratic, independent, peaceful, sovereign, prosperous and gender sensitive Zimbabwe that is rights-driven, participatory and interactive in the global context and which is in line with the commitment of the GPA”

To us, the new (people driven) constitution should be the starting point to guarantee us and the rest of the Zimbabweans their rights in full, supported by the laws of the land and protected by the security arms of the state which at present are not playing their role as defenders of all citizens of Zimbabwe but to a small clique of elite Zimbabweans.

The failure by government to realise the plight of students by not extending the Exam fees deadline well in time, nor reducing the rates altogether is one indication that the right to education is still a pipe dream for many Zimbabwean children. As we speak several parents hold letters from schools purportedly authorised by the Ministry of Education sports and culture threatening to attach house property for school fees debts as low as US\$20. Education is no longer a basic right in Zimbabwe, but a privilege for the few.

On this issue, we the young people recommend the following:

i) That all basic human rights for example a right to life, a right to education, a right to basic health care and medical cover, a right to shelter a right to good and affordable education, a right to a decent living wage, a right to freely associate, assemble and express oneself, recognised and adhered to internationally be enshrined in the Zimbabwean constitution in order to;

- Hold accountable by law, the government, its servants and or other appointed officials who hinder the observance of these rights in any way.
- Ensure that all Zimbabweans fully enjoy these rights which are at the moment being selectively recognised.
- Depoliticize and improve the justice delivery system for fair execution of justice and the full restoration of the rule of law in the country.
- Speed up the constitution making and national healing processes for Zimbabweans to start recognising and respecting each other's rights from a point of tolerance.

ii) It is also recommended that the inclusive government moves swiftly to free the airwaves and repeal fully the repressive laws like POSA and AIPPA in order to;

- Guarantee freedom of speech, expression, association and interaction. A right that every young person wants to exercise to the fullest in their most vibrant and active stage of life.
- Give space to differing opinions to be heard and challenged in private and public media
- Allow news gatherers to carry out their profession ethically and in a dignified manner which will also lead to more balanced and factual reporting.
- Allow Zimbabweans their yet to be proclaimed basic right to information without intimidation

d) SOCIAL cluster is led by the Ministry of Local Government, Urban and Rural Development and has 7 member ministries. Its Vision: *"Functional delivery of social services through mobilisation of adequate human technical and financial resources"*

Young people recognise the new opportunities that have been presented by the multicurrency system and the relative peace in most parts of the country after the implementation of the initial stages of the GPA. However the most fundamental aspects of their social lives have not been altered much due to the fact that service delivery is still below standard, polarisation still exists in government run institutions and most people do not have enough resources to fund the social aspects of their lives.

- i) It is therefore recommended that the Government of Zimbabwe embark on a skills retention exercise, as well as pass laws that encourage attractive remuneration and good working conditions in the social service so as to;
- Curb the emigration of skilled young workers from Zimbabwe to other countries.
 - Guarantee professional service delivery in the public sector.
 - Attract skilled workers back into Zimbabwe and retain the experienced workers for the growth of the economy.
 - Curb corrupt practices in the public sector that have seen people fork out fortunes for substandard services that are meant to be free.
- ii) It was also noted that the current and former governments have done little to improve on the youth skills development projects developed by the colonial government. Instead they have allowed these facilities to dilapidate and in some cases decommissioned or diverted the use of the infrastructure much to the disadvantage of especially the young people.

The recommendations are thus as follows

- Rehabilitate and fully resource the youth centres for the recreation and skills training of school going and out of school youths.
- In townships and suburbs where youth centres have not been set up, this should be done without delay as young people in these areas are being deprived of their basic rights and needs.
- Employ skilled trainers to oversee youth projects in these centres

e) SECURITY – Comprised of the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of State security and the Ministry of Home Affairs. Its Vision: *“A force that is adequate, affordable accountable and appropriate, guaranteeing peace, security and national sovereignty”*

Despite the signing of the GPA and the formation of an inclusive government, security is not guaranteed to Zimbabwe's citizens. This is a very sensitive part of Zimbabwe's transformation as all other improvements and enjoyments in a human being's life rely on one feeling secure and safe enough to do so. However, for many youths in Zimbabwe today this is not the case. Many were even afraid to attend Policy Dialogue meetings

called to discuss the 100 day plan and other issues because they did not feel secure enough to gather and freely express themselves. Surprising too is the fact that there is nothing in this cluster's key result areas that suggests that it will work to restore the faith of Zimbabweans in it nor that it will serve Zimbabweans fully regardless of party affiliation.

The youths therefore recommend that the government:

- i) Professionalize the Zimbabwe Defense Forces to become a national professional force in order to;
 - Guarantee the safety of all its citizens regardless of party affiliation, race, tribe etc from any form of national, international or regional threat to their lives, property or beliefs.
- ii) Depoliticize all state security arms;
 - To avoid one party abusing state security machinery for defense of party ideologies and the intimidation of opposing voices.
- iii) Resource the police force better;
 - To ensure efficient service to the public and an increase in crime control.
 - To curb corruption and ensure that criminals do not go unpunished but face the full arm of the law.
 - To have police officers bearing allegiance to the public not to government or political party officials.
- iv) Demystify the work and operations of the CIO;
 - To lessen acts of tyranny and oppression that continue to take place inexplicably and are being blamed on the mysterious and much feared Central Intelligence Officers (CIO).
 - To have the public witness and regard them as a necessary service to the nation rather than a torturous branch of the police force that has no limit to committing human rights abuses.
- v) Demilitarise/Depoliticise government institutions so as to guarantee:
 - Loyalty of service to Zimbabweans and not party interests in public offices.

- The curbing of corrupt tendencies within government offices and parastatals which have seen the misuse of tax payer's funds as well as the below standard execution of duties by members of the civil service.
- Office bearers do their job as professionally as possible without succumbing to party dictates.
- Protection of all other employees that might be subject to harassment by former military personnel some of whom have publicly declared their lack of support for one of the principals to the GPA.

The above are views and recommendations to the inclusive government from young people on the 100 day plan and the way forward on improving the different aspects of Zimbabweans lives. While we appreciate the progress made by the IG so far, we believe there is still a long way to go to turn the situation around and as young people we are part of that change.

"Enhancing Youth Participation through Dialogue"