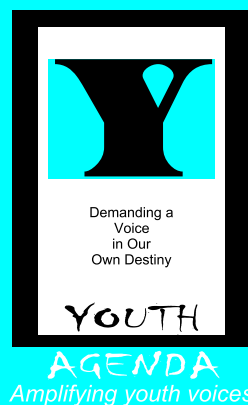


The New Age Voices



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Youths, civil society scoffs at anti-sanctions propaganda

YOUTH leaders, civil society and political activists in Zimbabwe have scoffed at the anti-sanctions crusade that is being propped up by Zanu PF which climaxed with a petition campaign launch and outreach that is chaired by Zanu PF second secretary, John Nkomo.

The New Age Voices visited several high density suburbs on the day of the launch and saw that shop owners and roadside traders had been forced to close shop and attend the launch.

Some residents who spoke to **The New Age Voices** said that many people in their areas failed to report for work while others got into town late for fear of being hauled into trucks and buses that were ferrying people to the event.

At the launch, Zanu PF leader President Robert Mugabe unleashed a tirade against his arch rival Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai accusing him of inviting sanctions at the Harare show grounds which was attended by Zanu PF supporters, sympathizers and thousands others who were force marched to the venue by marauding youths.

However, Youth organizations have poured scorn at the anti-sanctions rhetoric that the party has been feeding into the state media saying that it is sheer deception that is meant to mislead the nation ahead of general elections expected later this year.

Youth leaders and civil society activists who spoke to **The New Age Voices** accused Zanu PF of trying to hide their failure over the years to bring a solution to the country's problems on non-existent sanctions.

Coordinator of the Students Solidarity Trust (SST) Masimba Nyamanhindi said that Zanu PF wanted to divert people's attention from the real issues affecting them by employing the blame game tactic which has been their hallmark ever since.

"I am of the opinion that this sanctions mantra is just a blame game by Zanu PF, whereby they are attempting to identify anyone and anything other than themselves, to blame for the political and economic malaise that we find ourselves in as a country.

"They are trying to play victim when they are the aggressors who have put sanctions on the people they are supposed to lead," said Nyamanhindi.

Youth Agenda Trust Coordinator and Board member of the Zimbabwe Youth Council (ZYC) Arnold Chamunogwa said, "Sanctions have become an albatross on the

peoples' struggle as they have stood at the road to democracy in Zimbabwe. Zanu PF has found a smokescreen to shield its crimes committed against the people and justify its looting and plundering of national resources.

"Zanu PF has intensified its war against the people and this has been guised as a "war against sanctions". It is young people who have been casualties of Zanu PF's "war against sanctions". It is therefore important for both the local political leadership and international community to make meaningful steps aimed towards removal of sanctions. The restoration of human rights and dignity is definitely a pre requisite and when such reforms begin the international community should also make steps towards reengagement," Chamunogwa said.

National Constitution Assembly (NCA) press and liaison officer and former Zinasu spokesperson Blessing Vava castigated Mugabe and Zanu PF of trying to fool people into believing that travel restrictions imposed on his inner circle are sanctions.

He said that the party's bigwigs had been used to squandering tax payers money through endless expeditions in the west and so cannot stomach the EU restrictions."Mugabe and his cronies have caused untold suffering to the people of Zimbabwe and therefore they deserve to be put on sanctions and now they want to pretend as if the sanctions are economic when it is an open secret that they are travel restrictions.

"However, they have managed to dupe many into buying their propaganda blaming the failure of government programs to sanctions. They have been enjoying the comfort of their children learning in overseas universities at the expense of taxpayers," Vava said.

Youth Forum said that these sanctions were called for by Mugabe himself. "We believe Zimbabwe should not become a cry baby and blame everything on sanctions. Ian Smith managed to 'bypass' real sanctions and not these that Zanu PF is bickering about.

"It is also funny that Mugabe, who once shouted for the whole World to hear, 'So Blair keep your England and I will keep my Zimbabwe', is the one who is crying foul on sanctions. The West is simply doing what Mugabe called for. Let us not lose focus on important issues and concentrate on the so-called sanctions.

"Are the sanctions responsible for the closure of UZ halls of residence? Are they



EU President Jose Manuel Barroso

responsible for the violence rocking Harare, lack of media reform and the non functional human rights commission?" asked Youth Forum.

In an interview with **The New Age Voices**, Political analyst and activist Promise Mkwanzani said that it was important for the West to keep perpetrators of human rights abuses under tight check.

"I think that there is a need to maintain a ban on the individuals who have been at the forefront of perpetrating human rights violations in Zimbabwe.

Secondly, the sanctions have been instigated by Zanu PF top officials who have continued to behave in a manner that bastardizes the rule of law in Zimbabwe."I urge Zanu PF officials on the sanctions list to expedite the full implementation of the GPA leading to the conducting of free and fair elections whose outcome will be respected. This way the Zanu PF officials will remove themselves from the sanctions list.

"Ray Kaukonde is a classic example of a Zanu PF leader who condemned violence and was removed from the list, he can now trade freely, others should follow suit," Mkwanzani said.

Political analyst with pro-democracy Institute Idasa Sydney Masamvu argues that the two recent calls by President Jacob Zuma of South Africa and Ian Khama of Botswana are an attempt "to be politically correct".

"These leaders know that right now there is a need for a compromise between the EU, the US, SA and the whole SADC region," he said.

Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition Programmes manager Pedzisai Ruhanya says the latest calls are an attempt to "redeem an illegitimate regime". "We have a serious problem with SADC, they do not seem to understand that Mugabe has put internal sanctions on the country through murder, torture and kidnapping.

"As I speak to you right now, I do not know what will happen to me within the next hour, there is no freedom of expression here," Ruhanya was quoted as saying in Business Day of South Africa.

In a statement on its website, the British Embassy said that the European Union has had a series of restrictive measures in place on Zimbabwe since 2002, an arms embargo, a travel ban and an assets freeze targeted at a list of individuals and entities responsible for human rights abuses, disregard for the rule of law and undermining democratic freedoms.

The Embassy said that the measures had no impact on the lives of ordinary Zimbabweans.

"The EU has also consistently made clear that the measures would be reviewed at any time in response to genuine reform and respect for international norms," said the Embassy.

...as EU puts the record straight

Meanwhile, the European Union (EU) has denied statements by President Robert Mugabe that the bloc imposed sanctions on the country and revealed that the bloc has actually been increasing its development assistance to the country over the years. In a press statement, the EU said that it had not imposed sanctions on Zimbabwe but reiterated that it had taken measures against individuals and companies whom it views as having contributed to the violation of human rights. The bloc said that since Zimbabwe was a signatory to the Cotonou Agreement, it was supposed to uphold human rights and other liberties covered by the treaty. The EU said that it had taken measures that it felt would ensure that the rule of law is restored. The measures include the suspension of government to government cooperation, targeted measures against individuals and companies and an arms embargo. They also entail that funding is redirected to United Nations organizations and non-state actors. The bloc said that contrary to assertions that the

sanctions are targeted at ordinary Zimbabweans, it had actually channeled US\$2 billion since 2002 and said in the period 2009-2010, the contributions increased considerably which saw them channeling 365 million Euro. The European Commission has also contributed between 90 million and 100 million Euro annually. Zimbabweans have over the years been fed political rhetoric to the effect that the reason why the country's economy has been failing to perform is because it is under sanctions. Recently Zanu PF launched what it termed 'the anti-sanctions campaign', where the party's leadership took turns to denounce Western countries notably Britain, America and the European Union. The EU has repeatedly said that the onus was on Harare to change its ways by ensuring that the rule of law is returned to the country and many other democratic norms. So far 35 people have been removed on the hall of shame with the bloc citing marginal progress since the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA).

News In Brief

PERSECUTION OF MDC-T MEMBERS CONTINUE

The persecution of members of the MDC-T has gathered momentum with the latest stunt being the arrest of Energy Minister and negotiator of the GPA Elton Mangoma on charges of unprocedurally ordering fuel from an S.A company. However, this is against the latter and spirit of the GNU and shows the selective application of the law.

Speaker of Parliament Lovemore Moyo has also been a victim of politically motivated maneuvers after the Supreme Court decided to nullify his election as leader of the lower house. His election was contested by Zanu PF's comeback kid Jonathan Moyo. This is a clear sign that the party is no longer committed to the GPA.

By the time of going to press, Nyanga North member of Parliament Douglas Mwonozora was still in police custody, 3 weeks after he was arrested on trumped up charges of inciting violence. Although Zanu PF has been implicated in the skirmishes, victims continue to bear the brunt of the skewed law application by members of the ZRP.

Editorial:Reforms stall

WHEN the Global Political Agreement was signed two years ago, it was met with jubilation by many people and it provided hope for a new Zimbabwe built on the foundations of the agreement.

The GPA led to the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) with Zanu PF's Robert Mugabe getting the position of President while his arch enemy Morgan Tsvangirai of the main Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-T) taking the position of Prime Minister while the smaller faction of the MDC seconded Professor Arthur Mutambara to deputize Tsvangirai.

The set up seemed okay at first sight and many were made to believe so. However, on the ground, what it looked like on paper turned out to be only academic because it did not change the status quo which is responsible for the reasons why a compromise arrangement had to be made in the first place.

Mugabe retained his executive powers and so did the powers of his loyalists. The structures of violence that turned the country into a war zone are still there and so is the violence planning team known as the Joint Operations Command (JOC) that is comprised of Mugabe's feared military junta.

Reforms that were promised in the agreement have stalled. Despite the ushering into office of commissioners to various bodies such as the Zimbabwe Media Commission

(ZMC), The Human Rights Commission and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) among others, there has been no reasonable movement as far as genuine reforms are concerned.

The constitution making process which began last year has also stalled. From the beginning, the process has been marred by violence, maladministration and political meddling which has reduced the exercise to a comedy that would leave Mr Bin green with envy.

Some outreach meetings had to be abandoned last year after bussed youths from other areas turned violent and this year some data which was canvassed by the outreach teams was reportedly removed from the database.

Now we hear that treasury has released US\$5 million towards the process but unfortunately there is nothing COPAC will do with the money because one of the co-chairpersons Douglas Mwonozora is languishing in remand prison on trumped up charges of violence.

The Human Rights Commission has not done a single thing as human rights violations continue to escalate. Democracy activist Munyaradzi Gwisai and 46 others were arrested over two weeks ago for organizing a peaceful meeting on allegations that they wanted to incite an uprising on the Harare government.

Mwonozora was arrested on his way out of Parliament over violence that took place over a month ago in Nyanga, he

has been in remand prison for 3 weeks now.

WOZA, ZCTU, ZLHR, NCA, ZINASU and many other civic society institutions have either had their employees or members arrested or dragged to court on politically motivated charges.

The commission has maintained deafening silence on all these issues.

The ZMC has all but become an over the counter institution that only waits to receive money from new media players while turning a blind eye to the hazards in the media environment.

Since its inception, a lot of journalists have been arrested and in almost all the cases, the state has failed to prove its case against these media professionals especially from the Alpha Media Holdings stable.

ZEC has not been doing anything meaningful despite calls from many sectors for the complete overhaul of the voter's roll which opposition political parties say contains a lot of non-existent people, their inactiveness remains worrying.

Now Energy minister Elton Mangoma has been arrested, Lovemore Moyo has been dethroned in politically motivated moves engineered by Zanu PF member disguised as the Attorney General Johannes Tomana, himself an outstanding issue to the full implementation of the GPA.

Only God Knows where this country is heading to.

UNICEF highlights promise on young girls

AS women the world over celebrates the 100th anniversary of the International Women's Day, the United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) has highlighted the promise of adolescent girls on International Women's day.

UNICEF drew attention to the 515 million adolescent girls in the developing world who can help their families, communities and countries to prosper if they are empowered with education and skills.

The UN body said that secondary education is key to girls' development, empowerment and protection and greater civic participation and helps to combat violence, sexual harassment and human trafficking.

UNICEF said that extending education lowers infant mortality, delays age of marriage, reduces incidences of domestic violence, lower fertility rates and improve child nutrition. Analysts say that education is the best known defense against HIV and AIDS to which adolescent girls are vulnerable.

Worldwide, more than 60 percent of all young people living with HIV are female, and in sub-Saharan Africa, this figure rises to nearly 70 percent. Today, almost 71 million adolescents are out of school and more than half are girls.

The UN body said most girls are poor and live in the least developed countries and by making schooling compulsory in the secondary level, governments provide a stronger incentive for families to ensure that their children complete primary education.



U.N. Secretary General Ban Kin Moon has pledged support for the girl child

UNICEF has urged the abolishment of primary and secondary school fees and said efforts must be put to especially cater for the marginalized adolescents.

Adolescence is the time when girls and boys shift into adulthood and are faced with the challenge of fitting into gender roles.

Zim celebrations at a glance

THE International women's day celebrations in Zimbabwe were marked with heavy police presence that deterred civic activists and progressive Zimbabwean women from peacefully commemorating the day.

This year's celebrations mark 100 years since the first celebrations were held.

In Bulawayo, 16 women were reportedly ordered by the police to remove ZCTU's t-

shirts and ordered to walk half naked to Bulawayo central police station where they were detained. Police were seen patrolling around ZCTU's offices the following day, in a clear sign of trying to instill fear on the labour body.

Recently, about 23 Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) were arrested for engaging in a peaceful demonstration while two others from the Uthwakazi Liberation Trust were also arrested under unclear circumstances, an indication that the Zimbabwe Republic Police is not prepared to discharge its duties professionally.

In celebrations that were held countrywide, The Zimbabwe Women Writers organization took time to mark this remarkable event under the theme, "Promoting equal access to education

through literacy". Chairperson of the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ) Thokozile Chitepo was the guest of honor.

Zimbabwe's women fine artists in Harare celebrated in style by converging at the Culture Fund of Zimbabwe Trust for an art forum that was dubbed, "Women and Art" which was graced by women from all walks of life.

What they said....

On the day's messages, Southern Africa Information Dissemination Service (SafAids) executive director Mrs Lois Chingandu bemoaned the issue of women's perceived inferiority.

"We therefore see the International Women's Day as an annual launching pad to set agendas for change which will thereafter drive the operations of plans," she said.

Deputy Prime Minister Ms Thokozani Khupe said that women were nation builders who must be treated with respect.

"Women are nation builders because without them, they would have been no-one in this world, so they should be respected in anyway an individual can.

"That is why I always insist on them getting free maternal health care because they are flowers of this world," DPM Khupe said.

Regional Integration and International Cooperation Minister Ms Priscilla Misihairambwi Mushonga said: "We have wars because of these men who cannot work together. So ladies should stand tall and help in building this nation since they give birth to it".

Epworth slowly sliding into anarchy

AT LEAST 10 youths were attacked and injured after they were attacked by Zanu PF youths in the remote suburb of Epworth recently, **The New Age Voices** is informed.

Allegations are that violence started after losing Zanu PF shadow member of parliament Amos Midzi addressed Zanu PF members at Epworth Secondary School last month on February 6.

After the meeting, Zanu PF youths allegedly went on to destroy flea markets at Solani shops situated in Epworth's Ward 5. The youths proceeded to Overspill shops where they also destroyed flea market stalls which are being constructed under the Government's Constituency Development Fund (CDF).

On the same day, 7 Movement for Democratic Change youths' houses were destroyed at around 1AM. The youths were led by James Sabarau, Langton Murehwa and some youths from Dhonoro Farm in Harare South.

The youths are reported to be staying at Juana Mawire's house, who is Zanu PF's councillor for Ward 7.

Allegations are also that two weeks ago, Zanu PF mobilized youths from all 7 wards in Epworth to once again destroy flea markets at Overspill shops where they faced resistance from 8 youths who were manning the premises.

The New Age Voices is reliably informed that youths who are leading violence in Epworth are Brighton Tsvakai, Alfred Guvheya, Mahiya, Tinashe Nyikayaramba, Egesta Jack, one mai Chibanda and another one only identified as Bernard, all from Ward 6.

Members of the neighborhood watch committee are also accused of fanning violence in the area. The details could only be identified as Shadaya, Paraffin, Churu and Manenji.

The list also includes Mawire, Sabarau, Murehwa, Rashid, Sheila Masango and Tinashe Makangira.

Violence in Epworth continues to flare despite denial by Zanu PF that they are not responsible for the violence. The MDC says that it will be difficult to control violence in the country because in most instances, members of the police are involved in the acts.



Rowdy Zanu PF youth have turned Epworth into a warzone

Youth Agenda Statement on International Women's Day

Youth Agenda Trust joins the rest of the world in commemorating the International women's day that fell on Tuesday 8 March. This year also marks the 100th anniversary of the celebrations and was running under the theme, "Equal access to education, training and science and technology: Pathway to decent work for women".

This year's celebrations come at a time when young women in this country continue to live under the yoke of a regime that has failed to provide answers to the numerous challenges that they face on a daily basis.

Women in Zimbabwe continue to live under a repressive government that has since independence, failed to respect numerous sections of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other International Instruments.

Since the days of the liberation struggle, the abuse of young women has continued to rise with the intensity increasing at the turn of the new millennium. The early 2000s witnessed the first real accelerated resolve to undermine the rights of young women where they began to be used as handy cheap political tools by politicians after the then ruling Zanu PF party began to react to then a new political party, the

MDC.

The period saw an increase in physical, sexual, verbal and other forms of abuse on women during the time of the land invasions, the 2000 parliamentary elections and the 2002 presidential elections. Subsequent elections could not bring relief to women as abuse became worse and was mainly fueled by a political class that was still in a denial mode.

The recent harmonized elections which were held in 2008, was the climax of a series of women abuse orgy that swept across the country. In the run up to the bloody and widely discredited presidential run- off election, young women were forced into bases by marauding Zanu PF youths which were manned by security agents, youth militias and war veterans and the involuntary recruitment of young women into the national youth service training camps that were consistent with a plethora of rights abuses where defenseless young girls were raped by the militia.

Many young women today continue to reel from the effects of the satanic abuses that they encountered during the last elections, some were left with unwanted babies, some

were left with the deadly HIV/AIDS virus while others were left with scars and sadly some were killed during the period.

The young women of this country continue to bleed from the effects of a regime whose love for power has overtook its resolve to respect women's rights. The beginning of this year has seen an upsurge in violence against women as election rhetoric continue to dominate the political and media spheres and we have started to see the resurfacing of the infamous bases across the country.

It is a pity that despite efforts by various women's groups to curb abuses on women, some dubious political figures have started to undermine the rights of this vulnerable group. In solidarity with women and especially the young women of this country, Youth Agenda Trust joins them in their fight against abuse and has been going around the country advocating for the inclusion of clauses that uphold their rights in the new constitution and the elimination of all forms of violence against them.

We call upon political parties to cease forthwith using young women as political tools and call upon the Inclusive government to act decisively in curbing abuse on women.

Clergy calls for lasting peace

CHURCHES in Zimbabwe have called for lasting peace in the county and have called on the government to ensure that the rights of citizens are upheld.

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' conference (ZCBC) and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) said that it is the duty of the government to ensure that a conducive environment is created so that citizens are able to exercise these rights and in the process to attain their potential.

"In pursuit of its vision of justice, peace, prosperity and total salvation for all, the church acknowledges and appreciates the progress that has been made so far by the Inclusive Government to bring about peace and healing to the nation.

"Cognizant of the responsibility that we carry to ensure that we secure a peaceful future for our nation, and desirers of preventing a repetition of the political violence that rocked our nation in 2008," the churches said.

They called for the full implementation of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) and also called on SADC, the guarantors of the agreement to ensure it is implemented accountably and timeously. They said that the church was ready to facilitate dialogue

between the principals and political parties to ensure the resolution of outstanding issues.

The Churches also took a swipe at the constitution making process. "The constitution making process should ensure that the views of the people are respected. It should take cognizance of some flaws in the outreach process that might have subverted the views of the people in some areas".

The clergy said that the timing of elections is wrong bearing in mind the unhealed state of the nation and the fragile state of the economy.

They also said that they are deeply concerned about reports of politically motivated violence in the provinces of Mashonaland, Masvingo, Manicaland and Harare caused by the structures that perpetrated violence in 2008.

They called on all the political parties to exercise restraint and avoid making statements that can fuel violence and for the security forces to maintain peace and security for all citizens.

They said chiefs should play a pivotal role in ensuring peace and tranquility within their areas.

The churches took a swipe at the hate language being published in the media. "The

church is concerned about the hate language published in the media and calls on journalists to adhere to professional ethics and to exercise justice and fairness in their reporting".

They said they were concerned with the lack of a clear framework of the Organ on National Healing and Reconciliation and

Integration and said the church would continue with its Biblical mandate of reconciliation.

"We urge the church community to organize prayer vigils and be part of the Campaign for Peace as God leads our nation into a new, peaceful and prosperous New Year," said the Churches.



Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe President Dr Goodwill Shana

Youths organisation blasts Zanu PF ally

Platform for Youth Development Trust (PYD) is concerned that while this raining season (2010-11) is proving to be very promising, the residents of Chisumbanje stay confused and intimidated by one Bill Rautenberch who operates as Macdom Investments. Chisumbanje area is one of those regions that is currently experiencing good rains and boosts of Ndowoyo -Basalt soil, black, rich and fertile. It is worrying that as most peasant farmers elsewhere in the country are busy planting their crops, the residents of chisumbanje are handicapped. Although the government has been making frantic efforts to encourage and support this promising farming season, this has not been extended to the residents of Chisumbanje. In Chisumbanje, the farming activities have been grounded and people watch as the good rains get wasted with no means and no land to plough.

The plight of the people of Chisumbanje looms large and begs for attention from the government through the relevant Ministries of Agriculture and Lands. The story of the matter is that, for three farming seasons now, Macdom Investments has claimed the land which traditionally belonged to the people as their communal land. In the 2008-9 season, Macdom destroyed over 135 hectares of

maize and cotton belonging to the residents on the strength that he has offer letters from the government signed by the President of Zimbabwe Cde R.G Mugabe and the Deputy President Cde Joyce Mujuru. The same scenario was repeated in the 2009-10 season where up to 150 hectares of ready maize and cotton were ploughed down. As we write, the residents are contemplative and unsure of what will happen to their land. The fear is that if they start planting, the same fate will befall them again. We strongly feel that there is reason for intervention lest the residents will take the law of survival as part of their options.

Platform for Youth Development has since assisted the community by raising an alarm. At a residents meeting held on the 28th of November 2010, the organization was mandated to seek clarity on the kind of relationship that exists between Macdom Investments and Agricultural Development Authority (ADA) as well as the government of Zimbabwe. A letter was written via the Minister of State and Enterprises Mr. Goden Moyo and copied to the President and Cabinet, Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, Minister of Lands and Agriculture. The channel used was agreed as a measure to establish the correct facts about

the matter in question and also as a guideline for intervention. As we write, not much has been yielded from the state to provide clarity to this potentially flammable dispute. The Government of National Unity has a responsibility to respect the people of Chisumbanje.

In view of this, it is our legitimate expectation and that of the residents of Chisumbanje to have this matter resolved peacefully but with the urgency it deserves. The people heavily depend on their yields to make a living therefore now forced to rely on food aid from humanitarian organizations. This dispute is far reaching for it raises poverty levels that will even affect the socio-political and economic activities of the area. The residents have started to raise charge against Macdom Investments for claiming a land size of up to fifty thousand hectares as opposed to the five thousand hectares that used to be occupied by Agricultural Development Authority (ADA). Infact, the understanding of the community is that Macdom Investments is merely occupying the land size that was traditionally occupied by Agricultural Development Authority (ADA). Despite the fact that Macdom Investments has provided employment opportunities to other community members,

he stays accused of unfair labor practices which must be investigated.

Chisumbanje residents affected by this dispute are over 16 000 (sixteen thousand) and it may be important to note that up to 80% of Chisumbanje communal and residential area is being claimed by Macdom Investments.

In view of the above, PYD therefore makes the following recommendations

- That a formal response be made by the government of Zimbabwe as to clarify the nature of relationship that is shared by Macdom Investments, the government of Zimbabwe and Agricultural Rural Authority (ARDA).

- That Macdom Investments be officially barred from interfering with the communal land belonging to the residents of Chisumbanje as the technical details are being clarified.

- That the residents of Chisumbanje be assisted by the government of Zimbabwe to start their planting season with all the support needed for a bumper harvest.

- That Macdom Investments be schooled on the importance of living peacefully within the community he is doing business, inclusive of fair labor practices.

International Children's Day of Broadcasting eludes Zim

THE International Community last week celebrated the International Children's day of broadcasting which falls on the first Sunday of March, and sadly in Zimbabwe the day went largely unnoticed as most children failed to take part in the celebrations.

Only a handful of kids from visibly elite families were handpicked to be part of the commemorations which are sponsored by the United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF).

The children's broadcasting day provides an opportunity for broadcasters around the world to 'tune into kids' and where they will air quality programs by, for and about children.

The broadcasters would also allow children to be part of the programming and production process to talk about their hopes and dreams, to share information and exchange views with their peers in other parts of the World.

The theme for this year's celebrations was, "GIRLS ARE, BOYS ARE", which tries to explain what it means to be a girl or a



Many such children were left out of the celebrations of the International Day of Broadcasting

boy. It also tries to examine whether there are any innate behaviors, abilities or interests that go along with being a girl or a boy and things that they cannot do because of gender and also interrogates whether they have the same opportunities in life.

The day came at a time where there are a lot of conflicts in many parts of the world,

presenting a gloomy picture of life to young children and an uncertain future as adults engage in conflicts and wars that have put lives of children at risk.

The Zimbabwe media industry has been subject to state monopoly for a long time and the broadcasting arena has been no exception. There is only one broadcasting

station in the country, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) which despite being a public broadcaster, has failed dismally to discharge its duties professionally.

Children and young people in the country are subjected to Zanu PF propaganda every day where political jingles and messages are discharged with relentless abandon, a situation which has seriously compromised the integrity of the organization as a national broadcaster.

Children and youth continue to be subjected to unsolicited political rhetoric which more often than not has degenerated into violence.

When other children in other parts of the world where enjoying the children's broadcasting day, in Zimbabwe the day was kept a secret to a few privileged children whose parents happen to be well connected to people at Pockets Hill.

Kids who were interviewed by **The New Age Voices** professed ignorance on the existence of the day.

Sanctions propaganda-mass deception!!

Youth Agenda Trust notes with regret the recent anti-sanctions petition campaign by Zanu PF and its apologists recently where thousands of young people were forced to join a lifeless campaign only serves to show the shallowness and desperation of a party that is fast sinking into oblivion.

The fact that businesses and market stall holders were forced were coerced to close shop and join the Zanu PF bandwagon was a clear sign that the party does not tolerate people with divergent views which is one of the basic tenets of democracy.

Youth Agenda views the said sanctions as targeted to a few functionaries of Zanu PF that are led by its leader Robert Mugabe. It is common knowledge that these so called sanctions are hurting Zanu PF's leaders who have been used to globetrotting squandering tax payers money in Western capitals in the

guise of government business.

It has since become the nature of Zanu PF to blame imaginary boundaries on its failure to deliver to the people of Zimbabwe for the past 30 years it has been running down this country. As Youth Agenda, we feel that the restrictive measures that were put on Mugabe and his inner circle were invited by the regime itself because of its continued blatant disregard of the rule of law and the deliberate ignorance of international norms that Harare is a signatory.

The leadership of Zanu PF had been used to enjoying privileges of sending their children to better schools and colleges in Europe and America and also seeking medical attention in the same countries while running down facilities in their own country.

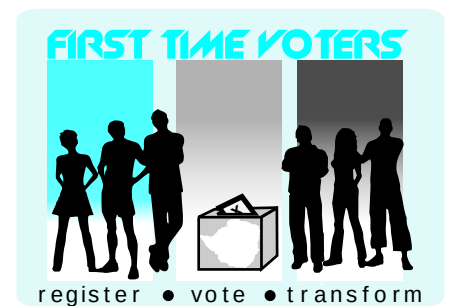
It is very disturbing to note that the same

leadership now wants to use the same people that it has repressing over the years to fight the ills of their misdeeds. We have seen the continued incarceration of members of the Movement for Democratic Change, the removal of the Speaker of Parliament Lovemore Moyo, the arrest of Munyaradzi Gwisai and other civic society activists and women's rights defenders among others in recent days. This is a clear sign that the Zanu PF regime is not willing to repent and hence the restrictive measures should remain in place.

The party says that there is no foreign direct investment coming into the country but Mugabe himself has threatened to take over foreign owned firms. Recently, a Zanu PF youth movement, a loose coalition of thus disguised as an economic pressure group, Upfumi Kuvadiki, has been causing

havoc in the city threatening to take over parking company Easipark, with whom Easihold of South Africa holds 40 percent. This is a clear sign that the party does not want investment coming into the country.

We call upon the International community to continue keeping the regime under tight check and we feel the current measures that are in place should remain.



Legislators Mr Innocent Nyandoro (L) and Margaret Matienga at a youth workshop



YAZ Director Tatenda Songore follow proceedings at the Young Peoples Initiative launch



Young people who converged in Harare for the Young Peoples Democracy Summit



Don Curtis of the U.S Embassy recites the "I have a dream" poem in Harare recently