

THE PROMISE THAT NEVER WAS!!!

“2008 in
retrospect:
Challenges and
opportunities for
2009. Perspectives
of young people.”



**YOUTH AGENDA
TRUST**

**SUITE 10,
WHITECROFT
BUILDING,
57 CENTRAL AVE,
HARARE, ZIMBABWE**

**263 4 2936385
263 912 281 352
263 913 011 179**

youthagenda@gmail.com

Compiled by
Jeremiah Mutongi Bamu

“The hope that was cherished in 2008 could not be sustained as the year progressed. Gradually, this led to despair and disillusionment, which has been carried on, into 2009. On a comparative note, 2009 seems to be more of a continuation of the wailings of 2008 rather than be a beacon of hope for better things to come.”

A: INTRODUCTION

1: BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

This report covers the developments, which took place in Zimbabwe between January and December 2008. The views reflected in this report are a collection of the views of the young people, concerning how they witnessed and interpreted the events which transpired within the course of 2008 and documents their projections into 2009. These views have been collected within the course of the year through several modes of information gathering employed by the Youth Agenda Trust. These include views taken from various activities undertaken by the organization such as public discussion forums, public seminars, community dialogue groups, workshops, seminars etc. it also includes an analysis of events given by young people through researches and other exchange programmes commissioned by the Youth Agenda Trust among other several modes of information gathering.

2: PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report captures the views of the young people of Zimbabwe over the developments, which took place in 2008 and encapsulates the aspirations of the young people for the year 2009. It is an introspection of the role of the youths, concerning how they contributed to the developments during the period under review and encompasses their commitment to play a more positive role in the transition of Zimbabwe into a prosperous nation.

3. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The facts presented in this report have been obtained through formal and informal consultations and interactions within the Youth Agenda membership and with other like-minded organizations and progressive individuals. Accordingly, the views in this report, while as they are as broad based as

possible, may not reflect the views of some youths who may not identify with it. Nonetheless, Youth Agenda Trust has no regrets at this, as it is an institution, which respects diversity and views it as an effective tool for social progression. The views expressed in this report are a compilation of several and diverse opinions of the young people. Such views cannot be directly ascribed to any specific individual, board, or group of persons. The Editorial team takes responsibility only for the typographical related errors.

B: THE YEAR 2008 IN RETROSPECT

4. OVERVIEW

2008 was a year full of so much promise for the young people, the generality of the Zimbabwean populace and the world at large. Through the harmonized elections of 29 March 2008; it gave hopes for the coming in of a new political dispensation together with the possibility of a new beginning and a revival of Zimbabwe's ailing fortunes. As the year progressed, this hope was lost. The elections did not provide the solution that had been hoped for and this led to deeper despair, disillusionment and general frustration. The economy tumbled into a royal circus; there were increased cases of systematic torture, enforced disappearances and gross human rights violations. The education sector crumbled. The Health delivery system also crushed and there was a general failure to contain the resultant cholera outbreak. The nation went on without a government for several months and up to date, the nation is operating without any approved funds for the year 2009. These among other ills seeped into the bone marrow of hope and resilience of the Zimbabwean populace leaving a majority of the populace without any hope for 2009. Many others were left skeptical of any positives and as a result, 2009, instead of being a fresh start or rejuvenation of hope; it has become a continuation of the wailings of 2008.

5. THE 2008 ELECTIONS

5.1 THE HARMONISED ELECTIONS AND THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RUN OFF

Following the enactment of Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment No. 18 Act, Zimbabwe held its first ever-harmonized elections on 29 March 2008. These elections were for the selection of representatives into the local authorities, the House of Assembly, the Senate and for the selection of the Executive President.

The elections were held in a relatively peaceful and calm environment. There were reports, however, of violence, intimidation, denial of access into some campaign areas, harassment of opposition party supporters etc in the run up to the elections. In spite of all these pre-election era irregularities being witnessed, the will of the Zimbabwean people was not easily frustrated. This was to be the first ever election for ZANU PF to relent and acknowledge having lost its stranglehold on the populace by publicly acknowledging having lost parliamentary majority to the MDC.

Both parties did not readily accept the results of the elections. Several election petitions, about 105 in all were filed at the Electoral Court¹. These were eventually all thrown out on the basis of technical defects in the filing of the petitions². Apart from this, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, under unclear circumstances, ordered a recount of the votes in 23 constituencies³. This culminated in the arrest, prosecution and even conviction of several ZEC personnel on allegations of violating the electoral laws⁴.

¹ Source: Summary of 2008 Election Petitions - summary compiled and produced by the High Court of Zimbabwe

² Source: Interview with one of the Legal practitioners handling the petitions – a follow up to the election petitions conducted by Youth Agenda trust

³ There are several media reports confirming this, both state controlled media and the independent media. Further, there have been several correspondences and court related challenges against this mounted in the Courts, such details are in the public domain by virtue of all court proceedings being public record.

⁴ These details are also within the public domain by virtue of being court process.

As all these things transpired, the results of the presidential election remained unannounced for a period of more than four weeks. This increased levels of anxiety among the populace. Legal challenges were mounted in vain to compel the release of presidential election results⁵. The Secretary General of the MDC, Hon Tendai Biti MP was arrested on charges of treason, being accused of purporting to announce the presidential election results, which was deemed to be exclusive function ZEC despite the fact that poll results were posted outside all polling stations after polls had ended. As such since the poll results of each polling station were on the public domain and any independent tabulation of the poll results would give an almost accurate prediction. When the results were eventually released, they were said to have been inconclusive since the leading candidate Morgan Tsvangirayi of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) had 48% of the vote and was trailed by Robert Mugabe of Zanu PF who had 42% thereby necessitating a run off within 21 days⁶. Subsequently, there was a trail of violence and terror mainly against the opposition although there have been reports in certain quotas that the opposition also embarked on retaliatory acts of vengeance thereby adding on to the escalation of violence and terror. No elections were held within the stipulated twenty-one day period and in the face of escalating violence, there were several calls for the postponement of the runoff elections to a later date.

The MDC presidential candidate, Morgan Tsvangirayi, signaled his intention to pull out of the race through a letter addressed to ZEC. ZEC refused to accept this and pressed on with the elections on 27 June 2008 in spite worldwide condemnation. Needless to say, it became a one-man race and there could be only one winner, Robert Mugabe. The elections of 27 June 2008 were roundly condemned from all quotas and were even described as a farce and a mockery to democracy. The SADC Observer Mission categorically stated that these

⁵ This is also in the public domain

⁶ This is in terms of Section 110 (2) of the Electoral Act {chapter 2:13}

elections did not reflect the true will of the people of Zimbabwe⁷. The African Union Observer mission unreservedly condemned the elections as not fitting the set African standards and guidelines of conducting free and fair elections.

5.2 THE GOVERNANCE CRISIS

Following the inconclusive nature of the elections, Zimbabwe has remained without a substantive government since March 2008. The elections of 27 June 2008 have not been accepted by the general populace and have also been rejected regionally and internationally. The Robert Mugabe regime faces a serious legitimacy crisis and as a result no government was formed after the elections.

SADC spearheaded dialogue between the principal political players under the facilitation of the then South African President Thabo Mbeki. This resulted in a Memorandum of Understanding signed on 21 July 2008 and a subsequent global political agreement signed on 15 September 2008. The Memorandum of Understanding of 21 July precluded the convening of Parliament or setting up of government before a conclusion of the talks. This crippled the operation of parliament and subsequently lengthened the period under which Zimbabwe was ruled by executive decree. This resultant scenario had no basis in the Constitution and has led to a constitutional crisis. Parliament was not convened within the stipulated time frames in the constitution and ministers who had lost their parliamentary seats retained their ministerial positions outside the provisions of the national constitution. Hence to date the country is being managed by a caretaker government with much of the civil work being done and spearheaded by humanitarian agencies.

In spite of the parties reaching an agreement on September 15, new problems regarding the implementation of this agreement emerged. These difficulties emerged in the form of equitable portfolio allocations particularly in relation

⁷ SADC Election Observer Mission Preliminary Statement

to key ministries such as defence, home affairs, finance and justice. This only confirms that the September 15 Agreement was a half backed document as it created loopholes which made its implementation an onerous task. As a result, Zimbabwe has remained without a national government and is still run by executive decree. While Parliament was subsequently convened, parliamentary portfolio committees are yet to be set up in anticipation of the formation of a cabinet to streamline these parliamentary portfolios in line with the structure of cabinet. This means parliament has been limited in its scope of operations.

Hopes of an all-inclusive government remain an unfinalized and perhaps a futile attempt. Neither party is willing to budge on certain apparently non-negotiable provisions such as an equitable allocation of ministries, composition of the Security Council, appointment of provincial governors and key appointments of senior civil servants and diplomats. While all parties make public commitments to implement the September 15 Agreement, it does not seem that either party is willing to compromise on these fundamental points.

Robert Mugabe extended invitations to Morgan Tsvangirayi and Arthur Mutambara to come and be sworn in as Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister respectively. Morgan Tsvangirayi was finally issued with a passport to enable him to travel back from Botswana where he has been in self-imposed exile for quite a while. He however turned down this invitation arguing that he could not be sworn in when Constitutional Amendment No. 19 has not yet become law and when there are still outstanding issues to be discussed and agreed upon. SADC has turned down Morgan Tsvangirayi's requests to facilitate a meeting with Mugabe to have these issues ironed out. Some countries and donor agencies are beginning to lose faith in an all-inclusive government in Zimbabwe. America has publicly pronounced that it is withdrawing its support for such a government and the European block has also hinted on their diminished faith in the inclusive government. In the result, 2009 began with prospects of an all-inclusive government hovering in uncertainty. This

negatively impacts on Zimbabwe's ability to speedily extricate itself from the dungeons of being a failed state to enable its transition into the league of prosperous nations.

By and large, the September 15 Global political agreement has been received with mixed feelings amongst most civic players and the general populace, notably the failure of the agreement to capture fundamental issues such as the composition of the government as well as key appointments and control mechanisms. Another major shortcoming of the agreement is exposed on the constitutional making process which is not people driven and leaves the mandate to the parliament. On the other hand many believe that the deal provides the opposition and other pro democracy forces an opportunity to further advance the change agenda. Another major disappointment for many young people was the omissions and limitations in relation to youth representation and participation and Article XV of the agreement has short-sightedly reduced youth participation to the National Youth Service/Training which has been streamlined to orientation on patriotism and nationalism. It does not provide major shake ups to the Zimbabwe Youth Council which has been partisan since it has been an extension of Zanu PF despite it being created through an act of parliament i.e. Zimbabwe Youth Council Act (as amended in 1997). Public funds allocated for the council have been channelled towards the recruitment of Zanu PF youth militias.

5.3 THE WORSENING HUMAN RIGHTS CRISIS

In the period before 29 March 2008 elections, human rights abuses recorded were mainly in relation to the freedoms of assembly and association, freedom of speech, the right to freely participate in the government of one's country. This was largely evidenced in the high incidence of arrests of opposition party supporters, civil society activists and the several cases of denial of free campaigns to the opposition.

Immediately after the election of 29 March 2008, the human rights violations took a new and ugly twist. There were several reports of cases of systematic torture, violence and other forms of inhuman and degrading treatment perpetrated mainly against opposition party supporters⁸. State sponsored violence became rampant during this period with more than 3000 militia bases being set across the country where acts of torture, including rape, beatings, arson and other atrocities were spearheaded and implemented from⁹. There were several cases of enforced disappearances/abductions resulting in horrendous murders¹⁰

Cases of enforced disappearances and abductions did not stop with the conclusion of the 27 June runoff elections. They continued beyond that date. Several MDC activists were subjected to enforced disappearances and were victims of systematic torture. These include the widely publicized cases of Terry Musona, Fidelis Chiramba, Concillia Chinanzvavana and several other MDC activists forcibly abducted from the Zvimba and Banket areas. Civil society activists and the media were not spared of these enforced disappearances and notable examples include employees of the Zimbabwe Peace Project such as Jestina Mukoko, Broderick Takawira and Pascal Gonzo. The attacks also targeted journalists such as Andrisson Shadreck Manyere and Regis Mujeye.

Some of the persons who were abducted between October and December 2008 were subsequently located in police stations around Harare where they suddenly surfaced around the 21st December 2008. The whereabouts of the

⁸ See the monthly reports produced by the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum on these cases

⁹ Morgan Tsvangirai also advanced some of these allegations as his reasons for pulling out of the run-off. His letter of withdrawal from the runoff is readily accessible on the internet and as such it is in the public domain.

¹⁰ The MDC claims it lost more than 210 supporters in this make of abductions and murders – see the MDC Roll of Honour published by the MDC Information and Publicity Department. The Interim Statement of Pan African Parliament Election Observer Mission to the Presidential Run-off and Parliamentary by-elections in Zimbabwe also confirms this position as all the other statements issued after the June 27 elections

others remain unknown. Those who have been located are now ironically being prosecuted for alleged criminal activities while their captors are walking Scot-free. This confirms the widely held view that the government is the chief, if not sole perpetrator of the worst forms of human rights abuses in Zimbabwe. The prosecution of these victims is continuing in the Magistrates Courts despite several High Court Orders directing the release of these people.

5.4 THE ECONOMIC CHALLENGES - ZIMBABWE: A CASINO ECONOMY¹¹?

The challenges on the economic front remained as daunting as ever. The government evidently failed to check inflation and it continued to rise beyond stratospheric heights. The Reserve Bank slashed a record ten zeros from the Zimbabwean currency and scrapped off the bearer cheque that had become the de facto Zimbabwean legal tender, replacing it with a new family of notes and coins while at the same time retaining the face value of the coins that had fallen into disuse. This made many people rich overnight and many assets were acquired by those who held loads of coins while those who did not have were further impoverished.

These new measures were introduced at a time when the principal political parties were giving positive signs of reaching a consensus and this helped to stabilize the economy for a brief period. However, when deep-rooted differences began to emerge, the economy tumbled into all time declines. The zeros quickly re-surfaced and the Central Bank responded by printing higher denomination notes while keeping a tight lid on the bank withdrawal limits at ridiculously disproportionate levels in the light of the sharp increase in the prices of goods and services. Germany withdrew its supply of paper for printing money on leading to higher panic and higher denomination notes being printed while rendering the lower denomination notes worthless.

¹¹ It is reported that the Governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, published a book titled, Zimbabwe – A Casino Economy

Around September 2008, The Reserve bank of Zimbabwe introduced Foreign Exchange Licensed Warehouses and Shops (Foliwars), for an initial period of 18 months until 31 March 2010. This strategy permitted some selected warehouses and shops to charge for their goods and services in foreign currency. This also extended to several service stations. With time, the Reserve bank permitted local authorities and ZESA to charge the provision of utility services to select target groups in foreign currency. Further, the Reserve bank gave the nod for the three major mobile telephone service providers, ECONET, TELECEL and NETONE to charge for their services in foreign currency.

The value and demand for the Zimbabwean dollar became increasingly insignificant. There was a rapid upsurge of licensed and unlicensed forex shops, which translated into a de facto dollarization of the economy despite the protests of the Reserve Bank that it will not fully dollarize the economy. The result was that the ordinary Zimbabweans were left to bear the brunt of a failing economy. Employees were paid in local currency, which they could not access in the banks owing to the restrictive withdrawal limits and yet at the same time, they were expected to pay for their basic necessities such as food, accommodation and transport in foreign currency.

In December, the Reserve bank increased the withdrawal limit threshold selectively. Upon production of a pay slip, an individual could now access higher amounts from the bank. These measures however were rendered insignificant by the parallel forces at play such as inflation, which engulfed the entire withdrawal limits before they were even accessed. This effectively reduced the Zimbabwean currency into a mere waste of paper.

It does not appear as if there is an end in sight any time soon for this casino economy. 2009 dawned without an approval of national expenditure for the year in the form a national budget. Apart from stipulating government

expenditure, the budget also contains measures to address wide ranging economic challenges such unchecked inflation and the erosion of the buying power of the Zimbabwean currency. In its absence the nation is cast into uncertainty as to the ability of the government to function effectively as well as to address the critical economic challenges bedeviling the nation.

The banking sector faced a near collapse in 2009. A new phenomenon rose in the banking sector, which became loosely known as burning money. In practice this entailed the illegal exchange of foreign currency through a direct deposit of money into an individual's account. Several artificial bank balances were created and astronomic figures began reflecting in people's accounts. People became millionaires, billionaires, trillionaires, quadrillionaires, quintillionaires, and sextillionaires overnight.

These amounts could not be supported by the real money held in those banks leading to a liquidity crunch for some banks. In the result, some banks were thrown out of the clearing houses for failing to honor cheques drawn against them and the Reserve Bank refused to bail them out. The use of cheques and the transfer system declined up until these were no longer accepted reducing Zimbabwe into a strictly cash economy where no other alternative forms of payment were accepted. This rendered the banking system irrelevant in Zimbabwe. Most industries operated way below operational capacity and most of them had to shut down due to lack of viability. The agricultural sector was not spared as there was no production and the country had to rely on importing essential grains. As a result of these social ills, one third of the country is facing hunger and starvation and another third is migrating out of the country.

5.5 RISING SOCIAL DISCONTENT

There have been unprecedented levels of rising social discontent. This has culminated in several protests and demonstrations led by several civil society initiatives. These have been ruthlessly suppressed. The worse however was to follow. There was mutiny in defence forces as several soldiers went on a rampage leaving a trail of destruction, looting and violence. This mutiny was ignited by the unrealistic withdrawal limits prompting some elements within the army to revolt, pour onto the street targeting illegal forex dealers, seizing their hoards of cash and looting some shops in the process. Civilians were quick to join in these mutinies resulting in scenario almost akin to the food riots of 1998. Again this was quickly and ruthlessly suppressed. These however are evident signs of increasing social discontent and if this remains unchecked, the seeds for a civil uprising are being sown. The failure by the Zanu PF regime to publicly acknowledge its failure and quickly move to incorporate other players in a bid to resolve the crisis has led to rising discontent even amongst its rank and file as they are not spared either by the ravaging woes facing the country. The regimes major instruments of oppression have been demoralized and weakened and Mugabe no longer enjoys the unbridled loyalty he was once given. Open defiance by his loyalists is a clear indicator that it is only a few greedy and inconsiderate army generals and Mugabe's' close chefs who are holding the country at ransom. Indeed change is now inevitable and slowly the revolution is redefining itself and gathering momentum to sweep out the remnants of dictatorship which have stubbornly remained.

5.6 COLLAPSE OF THE EDUCATION SECTOR

Owing to the vagaries of the economy, teachers were reduced into paupers forcing them to embark in a paralyzing industrial action, which reduced the country's education sector into tatters. Teachers failed to turn up for duty on the pretext of being unable to do so arguing that their salaries did not enable them to turn up for duty. In most schools, there were no teachers in the

classrooms. In the few instances where pupils had the benefit of being taught by their teachers, their parents had embarked in an innovative scheme of providing groceries and other provisions as incentives for the teachers to turn up for duty.

In spite of these critical problems, ZIMSEC pressed on with national examinations even if many pupils had not received any education at all for the greater part of the year. Needless to say, there were no examiners to mark the examinations and by 31 December 2008, results of the Grade 7 examinations were still not finalized. This made it impossible for those who sat in those exams to secure secondary school places, as these results are a critical component for the securing of a form one place.

This rot in the education sector also crept into the tertiary institutions with lecturers going on long strikes crippling the timeous opening of these institutions. The academic year for most of the institutions has been greatly affected and the education standards have been seriously compromised. 2009 has begun with these problems in the education sector unattended to.

5.6 COLLAPSE OF THE HEALTH DELIVERY SYSTEM

The Health sector has had its own fair share of problems. Health personnel engaged in multiple strikes, there were shortages of medication and the dilapidation of obsolete medical equipment and facilities. Towards the end of the year, most health institutions, including referral centres, reduced their scale of operations and only attended to cases of critical emergency. There was a countrywide cholera outbreak, which hit most high-density suburbs in almost all urban areas resulting in several deaths which were just above 1100 at the end of the year. As 2008 came to an end, there were reports of the cholera epidemic spreading across the country and even spilling beyond the country's borders. Several international non-governmental organizations such as UNICEF and WHO, as well as individual countries and other donor agencies swiftly

reacted and sent in relief to contain the cholera outbreak. The major setback was however the failure by the water management authority, Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA) to provide safe and clean drinking water in all urban centres. This curtailed efforts to contain the spread of the disease and the number of deaths. Despite all these efforts, 2009 began with these challenges still daunting the health sector.

5.7 WORSENING HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

The Humanitarian situation has remained dire in the face of the foregoing challenges. A huge chunk of the Zimbabwean populace is in dire need of humanitarian aid. A bigger chunk of the able bodied populace is being reduced into dependency owing to a combination of wide ranging political and economic factors which render employment a futile exercise. Zimbabwe has failed over the last decade, to produce adequate levels of food produce to ensure its own internal food security. The country continues to rely on food imports from neighbouring countries. Towards the end of 2008, it became increasingly evident that the State had run out of maize supplies.

Zimbabwe began to place extensive reliance on imported maize meal, a phenomenon last experienced during the 1992 drought. The maize meal being imported has several dietary consequences for the Zimbabwean populace as some of the maize meal is clearly labelled as not recommended for individuals below the age of 13. To make matters worse, this maize meal is being sold in hard currency and yet very few Zimbabweans have access to foreign currency. The basic necessities of life such as food, water, accommodation and health are being charged in foreign currency creating an acute humanitarian need for the greatest portion of the Zimbabwean populace who have no direct access to hard currency.

The humanitarian need for Zimbabweans has risen now more than ever. It is noted that this humanitarian need has been induced by more failed government

policies and without addressing the governance crisis; this humanitarian need is bound to increase in 2009.

C: PROJECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2009

6. EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITIES

6.1 POSSIBILITIES FOR REAL TRANSITION

2009 has begun on a bad note. The daunting challenges brought about in 2008 may take some time to overcome and may remain for some years to come. Within the first quota of 2009, even if an all-inclusive government is eventually put in place, not much will change. If anything, the situation may continue in its rapid state of decline. On the other hand, the formation of a unilateral government by ZANU PF will lead to an inevitable decline of an already bad situation. The third option will be to call for fresh elections under international supervision as a way of ensuring that the state terror witnessed in the run up to the June 27 presidential runoff election.

All possibilities are equally applicable. On the one hand, the parties may be constrained to form an all-inclusive government with the hopes of salvaging the situation. However, it may end up as a failed marriage of convenience if the parties enter into the government without an agreement on the current issues, which have stalled the formation of the government of national unity over a long time. If, as ZANU PF and SADC are calling for, the all inclusive government is formed straight away without resolving the outstanding differences, the government will be hindered from effectively discharging its duties and it is bound to spend most of its time haggling on these issues. It is therefore not desirable to rush into a government that is doomed to fail.

The most preferable route would be for the parties to come to a workable compromise on resolving these differences. This should be done speedily to

enable an expeditious formation of an all-inclusive government that will immediately focus on restoring the national hope. There should be a clear time frame within which this must be done. If at all, an all-inclusive government is to be formed, it has to be done within the first quota of 2009. In the event of failure, the September 15 Agreement must be deemed to have died in all respects and focus should be placed on exploring more viable options.

In the event of a failure to come up with an all inclusive government, ZANU PF is likely to come up with a unilateral government, arguing that the nation cannot continue without a substantive government for long. However, ZANU PF has presided over the current reeling of Zimbabwe's fortunes and cannot be expected, neither is it possible for it to execute a reversal of the same. It has allowed the situation to extend beyond control and ability. It will largely fail to bring about any change in the current situation. This is not a viable option at all, but it remains a strong possibility.

The other possibility is for the calling for new elections. Interestingly, these new elections seem to be what all the parties are pressing for, even if a unity government were to be put in place. The only difference is the timing for such elections. In terms of the September 15 Agreement, a new constitution must be in place within 18 months of forming a unity government. This follows that elections may follow soon thereafter. The all inclusive government therefore has a potential lifespan of only two years, or rather slightly over 18 months. It is hoped that within these 18 months, sufficient progress would have been made to restore Zimbabwe's lost fortunes. These elections will be held in terms of a new constitution and possibly a new electoral framework. However the nation is not prepared to go into an election under the current circumstances since Zanu PF still possesses its evil institutions and instruments of terror.

Zanu PF on the other hand, seems to be gearing up for immediate elections once it is certain that an all-inclusive government is impossible. This would mean elections using the current electoral dispensation. The need for elections by ZANU PF seems to be that of ensuring that it gains parliamentary majority, by hook and crook as the current electoral dispensation favours a ZANU PF victory. By this, ZANU PF hopes to achieve legitimacy to govern the country but this will barely enable ZANU PF to restore Zimbabwe's lost hopes, fortunes and glory.

The MDC, together with the civil society and the international community on the other hand, would wish to see, in the event of immediate elections, internationally supervised elections under a reformed electoral dispensation. For as long as ZANU PF exists, these may be futile hopes.

It is quite obvious that in the absence of immediate resolution to the governance crisis, the Zimbabwean situation in all other sectors will continue to decline. So much is the uncertainty engulfing 2009. However, hope remains, and this hope largely depends on how the young people of Zimbabwe and the rest of the Zimbabwean population will seize upon the moment to influence positive change and a genuine Zimbabwean transition.

6.2 THE ROLE OF YOUTH IN ENSURING GENUINE TRANSFORMATION IN ZIMBABWE IN 2009

The problems being faced by Zimbabwe remain multi faceted. However their primary outlet is the governance crisis, which has encroached onto all the facets of human life in Zimbabwe like a cancerous epidemic. The young people of Zimbabwe are therefore urged to adopt specific advocacy and lobbying action points and demand the following: -

- The immediate formation of a transitional national government to spearhead the day-to-day functions of government.

- The immediate setting up of a National Humanitarian Board to assess the full scope of the humanitarian needs of Zimbabweans as well as facilitate ways in which these needs can be met.
- The immediate setting up of a National Commission to examine cases of human rights violations and implement a workable transitional justice strategy
- The immediate drafting of a new and people driven constitution under which new elections can be held. This must be done within a specific time frame.
- An urgent adoption and implementation of an economic rescue plan to resuscitate the economy and ensure confidence in the nation's currency. This should also include an immediate inquiry into the current economic meltdown and taking specific disciplinary and corrective action against those responsible for the current economic turmoil.
- The immediate adoption of a plan to ensure food security in 2009 and beyond.

Several other demands can be made. What is key however is to lobby for the immediate resolution of the current impasse. The young people are urged to adopt a specific key point plan of action to ensure Zimbabwe's transition, both in the short and long term.

D: CONCLUSION

The hope that was cherished in 2008 could not be sustained as the year progressed. Gradually, this led to despair and disillusionment, which has been carried on, into 2009. On a comparative note, 2009 seems to be more of a continuation of the wailings of 2008 rather than be a beacon of hope for better things to come. Whatever hope there is in 2009 is conditional upon the particular action and role-played by its citizens in ensuring expeditious transition otherwise the situation will continue to deteriorate.