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COTRAD AIMS TO INCREASE YOUNG FEMALE PARTICIPATION

Community Tolerance Reconciliation and Development has stepped up efforts to address the prototypes associated with low female participation in national processes. Young females have continuously been disenfranchised in the national processes due to the violent nature associated with such processes. Trends in the past have revealed the increasingly shying away of young females in elections, budget consultancy and policy making issues. As part of an ongoing process the COTRAD has initiated the establishing of structures where confidence and capacity building will be imparted to the mostly marginalised females who are restricted to abuses like rape in the times of elections. This will be a new initiative in the province where young females will be organised in small groups of 15-20 where they will often meet and discuss issues affecting women in their local chapters under the tutelage of the COTRAD. The groups will therefore be named young female clubs and will also constitute the human rights defenders team that will increasingly work to mitigate political violence in their communities.

VICTIMIZATION CONTINUES TO BE PART OF GRAIN LOAN SCHEME

Traditional Leaders in Masvingo province have continuously clashed with civilians on the manner of entitlement of the grain loan scheme. Mwenezi North ward 17 Councillor Mr Hlamalani Chauke on 21 July 2012 was hacked by chief Neshuro at Neshuro Business Centre during the distribution of grain loan scheme.



Villagers remain stranded after the eruption of violence at the distribution of grain in Mwenezi

Violence erupted before the distribution further delaying the distribution of the grain. Youths that were among the beneficiary intervened and clashed the process was delayed for about three hours and later resume after the police intervention. Traditional leadership in Masvingo province have continued to paralyse the responsible councillors in executing some of their duties who are supposed to compile the names of the beneficiaries.

There has been a sharp increase in the number of cases of partisan victimization since the unilateral and unwarranted banning of 29 organisations in Masvingo province despite that the province face great food shortages year after year. The grain loan scheme continues to be marred by political victimization with traditional leadership playing a central role in victimizing the beneficiaries across the political lines. Straight from its inception it was jacked by political players who due to their fast waning support bases and popularity manipulated the scheme in exchange for political favours as well as serve personal vendettas in the allocation of the grain loan scheme. There is great need for political tolerance and traditional chiefs should be urged to desist from executing political duties. Chiefs need to be reminded that their duty is to play a fatherly role in the communities imparting cultural and social knowledge within their area of jurisdiction.

WHO'S BENEFIT? -THE INDIGENISATION AND EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME

The intentions of the indigenisation programme remain shrouded in uncertainty and turmoil that it remain questionable whether it can be likened to the controversial 2000 land reform programme which left the once so called jewel of Africa and bread basket of Southern Africa a number one world beggar with lowest Poverty Datum Line (PDL). There is great need to visit the policy framework that makes up the superstructure of indigenisation programme if Zimbabwe is not to fall in the dungeon it fell in 2000, lest we fell to learn from mistakes. The cases of land invasions continue to rise under the auspices of the indigenisation programme. There are 37 cases of land invasions recorded in the province of Masvingo since January this year. The question that remains

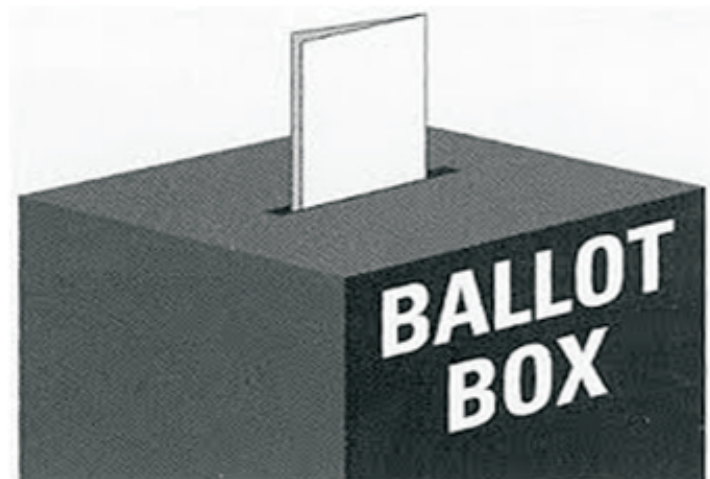
unanswered is who benefits from the positive and negative benefits programme? The following is one of the many cases which show why the process should never be implemented only and until there are agreed formulations in consultation with all the stakeholders.



MYPBA Offices in Masvingo province

A farm which was confiscated by ZANU PF youths in 2008 from a white farmer Mr Billy and later allocated to Masvingo Young People in Business Association (MYPBA) under the controversial youth empowerment has been seized from the youth association by Mr Makwarimba a ZANU PF member and also the Chief Executive Officer of Masvingo Rural Council. COTRAD recorded reports that Mr Makwarimba is under fire because the war veterans are now sympathising with the youth association. MYPBA members spent the whole of Saturday 14 July 2012 chanting slogans and singing revolutionary songs. The police later intervened on Sunday morning to quell the crowd of the militant youth who were calling for Mr Makwarimba's head. This is a clear indication that the youth empowerment programmes have been hijacked by greedy senior government officials and ZANU PF officials. The programme has been marred by corruption, chaos and lack of transparency. Senior government officials are on a looting spree in the name of youth empowerment and indigenization

YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN ELECTORAL PROCESSES CRUCIAL IN THE COMING REFERENDUM AND ELECTION.



Ballot matters with COTRAD

Young people are critical in the development of every nation, however in Zimbabwe effective participation of this demographic unit in electoral processes has remained an elusive concept. Young people need to play a vanguard role in ensuring the attainment of democratic institutions that are accountable to its citizens. The electoral processes which Zimbabwe is to undergo require an overwhelming youth turnout. The need for the necessitation of a robust civic engagement exercises with the young people especially those in rural areas is critical and essential. This should serve as an enlightenment crusade meant to inform the youths on the importance of effective and meaning participation in governance matters.

Young people need to guard against manipulation and become ambassadors of peace in their communities in a bid to increase youth participation. The forthcoming elections are crucial in the fight against unemployment, economic growth and the attainment of the millennium development goals. Such matters require the youth to play a central role in electing leaders that are accountable and can create policies for the effective development of the nation

Fostering positive youth participation in national processes