

NATIONAL INTEGRATION

Celebrating our unity in diversity

Zimbabwe is a nation that is made up of many different tribal and ethnic groups. Our people speak at least twelve languages and originate from many different parts of the continent and overseas countries. This linguistic and cultural diversity is typical of many African countries but brings with it many threats.

We are also a country populated by migrants – the Shona people began migrating to this country 1,000 years ago and were followed by many other tribal and ethnic groups. The arrival of the Ndebele people after 1820 and the white settlers from 1850 onwards are also significant both from a historical and a cultural point of view.

If these differences are not managed properly, there is always the danger that they can become issues leading to conflict. In the past, successive governments have used these differences to divide and rule and to ensure dominance of one group over others. The dominance of European culture and tradition during the period of colonial occupation has had a profound impact on Zimbabwean culture, languages and life. The Gukurahundi campaign in the early period of independence is a clear example of ethnically based conflict that has deeply wounded the national spirit.

As many other countries have shown, diversity can be turned into a strength rather than a weakness and the traditional cultures of a people respected and maintained within a modern society and economic context. But to achieve these elusive goals, countries such as Zimbabwe have to work at developing and maintaining their national unity and cohesion.

The MDC wants to build a nation that respects our cultural diversity, honours our traditions and differences, and builds on these foundations to create a progressive and dynamic society. While there are features of our traditional cultures that have a negative impact on our society (the status of women in traditional society, for example) the MDC is determined to foster a common culture that respects our diversity, tolerates differences and builds on our strengths. We are determined to remain an African country, with an African character and general philosophy.

Because this is regarded as an important national priority, an MDC-led government will have a full ministry to take responsibility for managing this aspect of national life. This ministry will take responsibility for those activities of government that impinge on culture, tradition and heritage, as well as those that will foster the unity of our people and the healing of past injustices and failures.

TRUTH, JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION

At independence in 1980, the issue of the truth about the human rights abuses and other violations that had occurred in Zimbabwe before then was never addressed. As a result many of the demons that were the product of that era have come back to haunt the nation. The perpetrators of those violations of human rights were never brought to book, and the victims were obliged to live with the memory of those events without any sense of justice or recompense.

Since 1980 there have been four main periods of gross human rights abuse:

- ✎ The struggle against PF-ZAPU during the Gukurahundi campaign that lasted nearly seven years and was only brought to a conclusion in 1987 when PF-ZAPU capitulated to ZANU(PF) and was effectively dissolved.
- ✎ The ‘fast-track land reform’ campaign that led to the destruction of the fixed assets of more than 10,000 farming properties, their unlawful occupation, and the consequential abuses directed towards the farm-owners and their staff.
- ✎ The Murambatsvina campaign in 2005, when several hundred thousand Zimbabweans had their homes and property destroyed and over a million people were displaced and lost their only means of livelihood.
- ✎ The violence and destruction of property that occurred during the struggle to restore democracy in Zimbabwe between 1998 and 2008, particularly around periods when elections were held.

In each of these four periods of intense political suppression thousands of criminal acts were committed, hundreds of thousands experienced human rights abuses, and even the death of loved ones, or suffered physical injury of one kind or another.

The MDC is committed to dealing with the needs of the victims of these four instances in a holistic and comprehensive way. By this means, it is hoped to give those affected by the abuse of their rights the satisfaction of knowing that the truth about what happened has been revealed and that the culprits have been brought to justice in some way. At the same time it is intended to provide a form of compensation for fixed property losses during these episodes of abuse.

The Truth and Justice Commission

It is the intention of the MDC to appoint a Truth and Justice Commission within three months of assuming office. The purpose of this Commission will be to do the following:

- ✎ To hear, in formal recorded sessions, the stories of the victims of these four episodes and to identify those responsible for human rights abuses and any associated criminal acts. These sessions will be open to the public.

- ✎ To determine who was responsible for the incidents being considered, and to decide whether or not to recommend further investigations by an appropriate authority and possible prosecution.
- ✎ To determine the personal losses incurred by these incidents, and to make appropriate recommendations to the State agencies involved for compensation and any direct assistance that might be adjudged necessary and justified.
- ✎ To prepare a detailed written record of these incidents, and to ensure that they are published in an attempt to ensure that the memory is retained and that this sort of abusive activity by the State is not repeated in the future.

Further Investigation and Prosecution

In the event that those identified as being responsible for these human rights abuses and the destruction of personal assets and property do not themselves, on a voluntary basis, offer to come before the Commission to tell their side of the story, the Commission may, at its discretion, direct the police to investigate the case to determine the potential for a criminal prosecution and, if appropriate, to submit a docket to the prosecuting authority in the area where the incident occurred.

Once in the courts the judiciary will deal with cases in the normal way and under the laws of Zimbabwe.

Compensation

An MDC government will establish special compensation courts in each of the main centres of the country, and the Truth and Justice Commission may direct that a court attend to the establishment of the degree and value of any financial prejudice that may have incurred in any specific case. In such cases the victims may claim compensation from the State.

Compensation will be restricted to the cost of any medical procedures that might have been necessitated by the abuse at the time, any consequential costs, and any future prejudice arising from the abuse. In addition, the value of the loss of any fixed assets that incurred as a consequence of the abuse will be considered for compensation.

In all cases, compensation will be tied to the restoration of the assets involved and will be strictly controlled by the agencies making the compensation. So, for example, householders who lost their homes in Murambatsvina will have their loss valued by the courts and compensation set. The householder can then choose to use these funds to buy another home, or to effect improvements to a home, or to replace the assets lost.

A farmer who had been deprived of his farm and subsequently lost many of the fixed assets associated with the property would receive compensation in the same way and on the same basis. In that case, the compensation package would be tied to the title deeds of the property and could be used only to restore the productive capacity of the property in question.

Where personal prejudice has been incurred – such as a physical disability or the death of a breadwinner – the Commission will direct the courts for a compensation assessment.

THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

It is the MDC's vision that Zimbabwe will be nation in which all women and men enjoy peace, democracy, freedom and dignity, where human rights are respected, all forms of gender disparities are eliminated, and there is prosperity without discrimination in all walks of life.

The MDC government will respect the right of every person to the following inalienable rights:

-  The right to work.
-  The right to a decent education.
-  The right to just employment opportunities.
-  The right to choice of employment and equal opportunity of promotion, job security and benefits.
-  The right to equal pay for equal work.
-  The right to respect.

The MDC aims to build a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society. A gender-equality perspective will facilitate the attainment of the goals of universal access to primary education, eradicating extreme poverty and empowering women to take care of every area of their lives. It will guarantee that women have equal and enforceable rights in the fields of school, university and college education, vocational training and career guidance.

MDC gender programmes will result in a sharp increase in the number of women who occupy decision-making positions in all spheres of society.

The MDC government will recognize the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant role they play in the economic survival of their families, including their work in the non-money sectors of the economy. It will recognize and respect the role of women as mothers, in the family and as care-givers.

Policy Objectives

Gender is a cross-cutting dynamic and Zimbabwe can be transformed only when men and women of all ages are able to meet their full potential. The MDC will put its gender policy at the heart of all other policies and programmes and ensure that the laws of the country reflect this.

It will monitor gender equality by looking at literacy rates, the number of women compared to men working in non-agricultural jobs, and the proportion of women in parliament and local government.

Legislation, following principles espoused by UNICEF, and especially those relating to the girl-child, will guarantee the rights of children. In particular, the MDC will ensure that all children receive equal education and that all girls of school-going age are in school. The MDC will facilitate the development of adult literacy and vocational training courses to enable women who have fallen through the education net to catch up.

Everyone in Zimbabwe will have access to information on family planning, and the subject of preventing unwanted pregnancies will be part of the sex education curriculum in schools, together with education on the rights of the child and women.

Women's health issues will be dealt with fairly and promptly by government clinics and hospitals. Women's rights to maternity leave will continue to be enshrined in law. The development of day-care centres close to business hubs will enable mothers to return to work confident that their children are being cared for properly.

The MDC government will develop tax breaks to encourage companies to partner and/or finance small and medium-sized enterprises, particularly those run by women. In order to correct historical imbalances, the MDC will give preference to companies that can demonstrate a commitment to the advancement of women. Sexist behaviour and sexual harassment, by either gender, will be outlawed, and the MDC will develop an education programme to ensure that women, particularly rural women, are aware of their rights.

The penalties for rape will be increased and enforced. The MDC will facilitate the reporting of rape to make it less painful for the woman involved and put in place counselling services for victims.

The MDC recognizes that rural women are particularly disadvantaged. It will encourage the formation of self-help groups and co-operatives to increase economic

opportunities through self-employment. It will ensure that married women receive equal treatment in land resettlement schemes and agrarian reform programmes. It will take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas and ensure that they participate in and benefit from rural development.

The MDC government will ensure that women have the right to:

-  Participate in the planning and development their districts.
-  Have access to adequate health care facilities, including information, counselling and family planning services.
-  Benefit directly from social security programmes.
-  Enjoy all types of training and education, both formal and non-formal, including those relating to functional literacy, community and extension services in order to increase their technical proficiency.
-  Participate in all community activities without discrimination.
-  Access agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities and appropriate technology.
-  Enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity, water supply, transport and communications.

The MDC will ensure that women have full representation in national employment councils. The MDC believes that parliament should reflect the ratio of women in society. It will adopt a policy that enables women to enter the political mainstream by allocating constituencies and resources to women candidates until parity is achieved.

A Gender Commission

Consideration will be given to the creation of a special permanent commission to monitor compliance with gender policy at all levels of society and government. Such a commission would have a permanent office and staff, and have toll-free telephones and postal services for the report of abuse and discrimination.

THE YOUTH

MDC's vision is of a nation that includes informed, responsible, creative and participating young people, who are fully developed mentally, spiritually, socially and physically, and who contribute to the economic prosperity of the country.

The MDC's policy toward the youth is incorporated within the broader context of its sector-specific policies, and follows the principles enshrined in the African Youth Charter of the African Union, which the MDC government will immediately take steps to ratify.

The MDC also endorses the United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, which identified ten priority areas for action aimed at improving the situation and well-being of youth:

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| 1: Education | 2: Employment | 3: Hunger and poverty |
| 4: Health | 5: Environment | 6: Drug abuse |
| 7: Juvenile delinquency | 8: Leisure-time activities | 9: Girls and young women |
| 10: The full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making | | |

Programmes will be undertaken to ensure that the situation of the youth in Zimbabwe is improved in these and other areas.

The Rights of Young People

The MDC government will fully respect the rights and needs of young people, including the right to a decent education, primary health care, shelter and basic needs. Every effort will be made to ensure that young people can develop their full potential and then find gainful work and employment when they leave school and college. Young people will be encouraged to fully participate in all aspects of national life.

Rights of the Child

The MDC government will fully respect the rights of children and will ensure that these are expressed in the new constitution for the country. In particular, the MDC will seek to foster conditions for all children that will ensure a secure family environment, security of basic needs and protection of their physical, social and mental well-being.

TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP

The MDC recognizes and respects the traditional leadership of the people in the form of Chiefs and Headmen. It also respects the traditions, values and culture of which they are the principal custodians. The MDC will maintain and respect the cultural basis upon which Chiefs and Headmen are selected and appointed by their communities. While they will not have any direct role in the administration of local authorities in their area, they will be consulted and briefed by local councils on all developments and any changes.

The special allowances and privileges of Chiefs and Headmen will be maintained and treated in the same way as the remuneration of judges. They will also be held responsible for the administration of traditional law in their areas of jurisdiction and their decisions respected.

All Chiefs will be entitled to attend the National Chiefs Council, which shall be convened at least twice a year and will be attended by both political and civic leadership. They will be encouraged to act as the custodians of the culture, traditions and languages of the people in their districts.

Because the proposed land reform measures will impinge on the functions and role of traditional leadership in rural areas, traditional leaders will be specifically consulted about such changes and, where possible, their permission and agreement obtained.

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND THE ARTS

The objectives of the MDC's national cultural heritage and arts policies will be to:

-  Affirm and promote the rich and diverse expressions of Zimbabwean culture. All people will be guaranteed the right to practice their culture, language, beliefs and customs. The freedom of creativity without interference, as well as the freedom of expression, will be guaranteed.
-  Promote the development of a unifying national culture, representing the aspirations of all Zimbabwe's people. This cannot be imposed; it requires educating people in principles of non-racialism, human rights and democracy. While it is recognized that the cultures of Zimbabwe are derived from many different sources, it will become necessary to give particular attention to the promotion and development of a unique and distinctive national culture to which all the people of the country can subscribe.
-  Ensure that resources and facilities for both the production and the appreciation of arts and culture are made available and accessible to all.
-  Preserve, revitalize and promote our national cultural heritage.
-  Fully reflect the many components of our cultural heritage through historical and cultural collections, resources and sites that are accessible to all communities. In particular, efforts will be made to conserve neglected and suppressed aspects of our people's culture.
-  Place arts education firmly within the national educational curricula, as well as in non-formal educational efforts.
-  Establish a language policy that encourages the growth of all of our people's languages within a multi-linguistic framework. This must include the preservation and development of all indigenous languages.
-  Develop the human resources pool available to cultural life by emphasizing training in the art forms, management and administration of the arts and culture, and heritage preservation.
-  Launch and sustain a national literacy campaign, with clear targets, through which the art forms, broadcasting, radio and the printed media will contribute to the development of our people.

- ✎ Link culture firmly to areas of national priority, such as the fostering of strong and stable family life, health, housing, tourism, town planning, architecture, etc., to ensure that culture is entrenched as a fundamental component of development, but also to ensure that a strong link is forged with the traditional art forms.
- ✎ Ensure the implementation of cultural research to promote those histories that have been marginalized, with specific emphasis on popular history.
- ✎ Promote specific cultures within the traditions, as well as the careful selection of aspects of culture that fit into national priorities.
- ✎ Involve people who are active in culture in economic activity, thereby resulting in their employment and the creation of institutions that strengthen the economy, and at the same time promote professionalism and artistic excellence.

Within the framework of these general objectives an MDC government will seek to ensure and maintain support for the work throughout the country of national institutions such as the National Museums and Monuments, Colleges of Music, National Galleries and the National Archives. It will also work towards the preservation of indigenous (particularly minority) languages and oral history.

The National Arts Council Act and regulations will be reviewed with a view to ensuring that its role in fostering and promoting the arts plays a greater part than its regulatory and controlling functions.

NATIONAL EVENTS AND SYMBOLS

The question of national holidays and celebrations of national events will be the subject of a detailed review by the MDC government and any changes put to Parliament for consideration and adoption.

No major changes are envisaged in respect to national symbols such as the Flag and the National Anthem or the various emblems used to distinguish State institutions. However, they will be subject to a review and any proposed changes will be submitted to Parliament for consideration and adoption.

While the MDC acknowledges the need to recognize those who participated in the liberation of the country in a special way, it is concerned at the partisan manner in which the process of identifying ‘heroes’ has been managed since 1980. In addition, the MDC feels that there are many individuals who might, because of their outstanding contribution to national life, also deserve national recognition. Accordingly, steps will be taken to ensure that the process of recognition and the nature of such honours are depoliticized and put on to a genuinely national basis.

SPORT AND RECREATION

The MDC recognizes that the physical well-being of a nation is an important foundation for the health of its people. Sport can also help stimulate our national capacity for the utilization of those skills that are necessary in a growing and complex society. Sport and physical education are an integral part in the maintenance of public health and social integration, playing an important part in uniting the nation.

An imaginative sports policy also has the positive effect of removing barriers based on race, creed, age, gender, religion and political preference. The MDC holds it as an article of faith that all citizens must be afforded an opportunity to take part in sporting activities of their choice. Consequently, the MDC government will:

-  Invest in sports development and the required physical infrastructure.
-  Ensure that hitherto underprivileged communities are afforded full opportunity to participate in a wide spectrum of available sporting activities.
-  Put in place a new, effective and accountable democratic structures for the management of sport.
-  Ensure the full participation of women in all sporting disciplines.
-  Strengthen the various national sporting associations while allowing them to function independently of government interference.
-  Offer incentives for private-sector funding of sport.
-  Establish a National Sports Federation that will manage all international sporting activities including the Olympic and Commonwealth Games.