**Press Release on Voter Registration Regulations**

The Statutory Instrument1 is a result of submissions by various stakeholders on the regulations including the critical one on what constitutes proof of residence. The requirement for proof of residence is a legal obligation and is not being used to disenfranchise any person who is eligible to register and vote. Voting in 2018 is going to be polling station specific. What it means is that a voter will be limited to a specific polling station where one`s name will appear, hence the importance of proof of residence as a requirement for voter registration.

In line with the Regulations, a document to prove residency may be in any of the following forms, among others:

* title deeds or a certificate of occupation;
* a lodgers permit;
* utility bill i.e. rates, water, electricity, telephone or credit store statement on which is shown the applicant’s name and physical address;
* a written statement from the landlord, parent or friend of the applicant confirming that the applicant resides at the stated place of residence;
* a statement made by the head of a school, hospital or other public institution where the applicant resides confirming that he or she resides at the stated place of residence;
* a statement by the applicant’s employer confirming his or her address;
* a confirmation letter by the relevant village head, headman or Chief;
* a confirmation letter by farm owner or resettlement officer;
* an offer letter;
* a hospital bill or a clinic or hospital card or an envelope with post office markings reflecting the applicant’s address.

Where one is unable to produce any of the listed documents, one can depose to an affidavit stating their place of residence and that affidavit shall constitute proof of residence.

The documents that one can use to prove residency are many vast and are not only limited to only those that are prescribed. Part of Section 23(5) of the Act states that prescribing of such documents shall not preclude a person from proving his or her residence by other means.

ZEC has come under fire from various women’s organisations who allege that statements made by the Chairperson of ZEC suggesting that women who do not possess property in their name or who receive utility bills in the name of their husbands may obtain a statement from their husbands in whose name the property is listed, which statement shall constitute proof of residence as regressive to women empowerment. The allegations are regrettable. ZEC was merely drawing a parallel and suggesting a means by which one can obtain proof of residence akin to the scenarios presented above where one can obtain a statement from a landlord, a parent, friend, employer, or head of an institution where that person resides.

ZEC’s intention in the forthcoming voter registration exercise is to ensure that every eligible voter is registered, women and youth included.

ZEC would like to assure the public that it remains committed to ensuring that every eligible voter is registered in line with the Electoral Law and encourages all eligible voters to ensure that they have the necessary documentation in place.

ZEC is determined to ensure that the registration exercise is an unqualified success.

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Chief Elections Officer

**Zimbabwe Electoral Commission**

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