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A REVIEW OF SOCIAL SERVICES DELIVERY (SSD) ELECTION PLEDGES



**Electoral Promises Review by
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Introduction & Rationale

Elections in Southern Africa are a vital cog of citizens' participation in democratic processes which help strengthen the social contract between the governed and the governors. This is important in bestowing legitimacy on those who would be in charge of affairs of countries. Legitimacy ensures peace and stability of individual countries and the region at large which are essential ingredients for development. It is against this background that Citizens in Action Southern Africa (CIASA) is providing this analysis of electoral promises by mainly two largest parties in Zimbabwe according to the 2018 elections. This is a focused and evidence-based service delivery analysis of electoral promises which provides insight into citizens' lived realities since the election of 2018. It is also important for citizens to be informed of how political parties have fared as measured by their own yardstick provided in election manifestos they presented to voters. In addition, the analysis focuses on service delivery sectors which have significant impact on women who are the primary care givers in homes. This puts them at a position of vulnerability to any shocks and inadequacies in service delivery sectors. The analysis focuses on health care, education, access to water and access to energy and access to transport. These constitute five key areas which the ruling party and the main opposition underscored to improve in its 2018 election manifesto. CIASA used a simple perception and opinion-based approach to evaluate performance of the ruling party in implementing its manifesto in government. It also gives insight into the performance of the opposition in house of assembly.

Methodology

This performance assessment provides an overview of the key findings on the analysis of fulfilment and honouring of the 2018 election pledges by political parties in Zimbabwe in respect of improving quality Social Services Delivery. The assessment adopted a mixed approach where qualitative analysis of SSD was employed from a social audit perspective and quantitative analysis of the reports produced by various institutions such as sectoral report and the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment (ZIMVAC) 2020. The generalised conclusion were made basing on the findings and expert opinion from different population groups across Masvingo, Manicaland and Midlands Provinces of Zimbabwe such as sectors or pillars which are women, youth, disability, elderly, students amongst other vulnerable and disenfranchised groups which are normally left behind. There was deliberate efforts to solicit views from vulnerable population groups especially women, youth and persons with disabilities in line with the desire to capture the voice of the voiceless. The length and breadth of consultations in the consolidation of this assessment is deemed adequate representation of the citizens' voice in Zimbabwe from which meaningful insights into the fulfilment of the election pledges can be drawn

Analysis of Social Services Delivery by Political Parties



Health Care and Well Being

The ruling party promised to deliver quality health care for all including free primary health care for citizens at all levels. However, since 2018, the health sector has been in constant deterioration of the public health system coupled with dilapidation of the existing infrastructures with most hospitals understaffed and lacking basic medicines and equipment

for basic medical procedures. Resultantly, maternal mortality rate has been very high; around 462 in 2019 (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2019). Health workers have also been perennially entering into industrial action in form of strikes and go slows owing to poor remuneration, (which is below 50% of what their peers in regional countries like South Africa, Botswana, Zambia and Angola earn) and pathetic conditions of service.

According to WHO Zimbabwe, the population has been suffering from high burden chronic communicable and non-communicable diseases. Hypertension and diabetes are among the leading causes of morbidity for chronic non-communicable diseases. Statistics show that one in three children in Zimbabwe suffers from malnutrition. A Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment (ZimVac) report for 2020 has shown that the percentage of children receiving the minimum acceptable diet necessary for growth and development declined from 6.9% in 2019 to 2.1% in 2020. According to the same report, Matabeleland provinces has recorded the highest cases of acute malnutrition, with an estimated 74,267 children under the age of five affected, including at least 38,425 with severe acute malnutrition.

Currently every district has at least 2 doctors, every primary healthcare centre has at least 2 qualified nurses, 59% of administrative wards are serviced by an Environmental Health Technician and 60% of villages have access to a village health worker. This current predicament makes Zimbabwe fall far short of the World Health Organisation's recommendation of the minimum threshold of 23 doctors, nurses and midwives per 10 000 population. The country has 2 central hospitals, 8 provincial hospitals, 106 district and rural hospitals, 106 primary facility clinics, polyclinics, rural health centres, 30000 village health workers which are not adequate to service the population. Per capita spending of US\$21 as of 2020 in health care is below the WHO recommended threshold of US\$86. The health budget allocation has never met the 15% Abuja benchmark threshold signifying lack of political will.

It is also important to note that the health expenditure as a % of GDP continued to oscillate between 1% and 2% for the past 5 years signifying less improvements in boosting the country's public health expenditure. 40% of health spending in Zimbabwe comes directly from donors, representing the largest source of health financing in Zimbabwe. Out of pocket spending account for the 25% of the total health spending whilst 35% constitutes the public spending which includes expenses directly paid by citizens and payments covered through health insurance which sucked in a shadowy company Drax International into a US\$28 million COVID19 procurement scandal. After public outcry on social media platforms, the President dismissed the then Minister Obadiah Moyo who had prior to that been arrested and charged with abuse of office. However, accessibility of information on roll out plan for the vaccines remains a serious concern.



Education

The right to education is fundamental and enshrined in section 75 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe. The ruling party promised free basic education for all and also quality and state funded tertiary education. However, since 2018, access to basic education has been a privilege for the elites leaving out disadvantaged learners especially those with disabilities and rural learners.

For long periods of the schooling calendar, since 2018, teachers have been on industrial action owing to poor remuneration and working conditions. Teachers are demanding a restoration of their pre-October 2018 salaries which were pegged at US\$520 basic salary for the lowest paid teacher.

Currently, the lowest paid teacher is earning an equivalent of about US\$180.00 which is also below the Total Consumption Poverty Line which is conservatively estimated at ZWL34,666.00 for a family of six by the government's statistical agency. In terms budget, the government of Zimbabwe has failed to meet the Dakar Declaration threshold of 20% of the national budget. In the 2021 budget, the government allocated ZW55,221 billion to education which is 13.09% of the total budget. This means that the education sector lack adequate support to effectively ensure that the right is enjoyed by all. The COVID-19 induced lockdowns has worsened already bad situation in the education sector. Millions of learners were disenfranchised from accessing education especially those in poor rural areas and the urban poor at the same time widened disparities in terms of access to basic education in Zimbabwe.

The education 5.0 for the tertiary education and education 15 for the primary and secondary education is commendable. However, incapacitation of schools and teachers is a major cause for concern which in our view is driving the deepened inequalities currently obtaining in the country. Resultantly, the country recorded some of the lowest pass rates in public examinations for 2020 with the grade 7 pass rate dropping by 9.79% to 7.11% from 46.9% in 2019. This drop in pass rate was more pronounced in rural and extremely underdeveloped provinces such as Matabeleland North where 32 schools had zero percent pass rate. This situation underscores the disparities of rural underdevelopment when it comes to educational infrastructure and how the COVID 19 pandemic has exacerbated.

It is apparent that the government has abandoned education and has a carefree attitude towards ensuring enjoyment of this right and the most affected have been the girl child. There has been an upsurge in pregnancies among school going girls and also early and child marriages within the same category because of school closures as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic induced lockdowns. The parliamentary portfolio committee for primary and secondary education reported that 5,000 teenage girls of school going age have been impregnated between January and February 2021.

Access to Water and Sanitation

Water is life and availability and accessibility of clean and portable water anchors the enjoyment of all other rights including the right to life itself. In its 2018 manifesto, the ruling party promised to address the water and sanitation challenges by building more dams and providing adequate chemicals for treatment of water. The country has 38 major water reservoirs which supply its main cities and towns. These have varied carrying capacities but years of siltation and draughts have significantly reduced their capacity to supply water to urban centres with the City of Bulawayo being the hardest hit.



In addition to the dwindling capacity of the water reservoirs, the urban areas often suffer from shortage of water purifying chemicals such as chlorine gas which are imported and thus require hard currency which is often in short supply.

On 28 July 2010, through Resolution 64/292, the United Nations General Assembly explicitly recognized the human right to water and sanitation and acknowledged that clean drinking water and sanitation are essential to the realization of all human rights. It is from this UN resolution that CIASA would like to express its distaste at the state of potable water provision across the country. The country's capital city, Harare, and second largest, Bulawayo, are faced with severe water challenges which are a ticking health time bomb requiring urgent interventions. Overall, about 70% of the population lack access to clean and portable water which is an indictment on the government of the day. Inaccessibility and unavailability of water poses a health time bomb especially in congested urban centres while it also exacerbates gender inequalities as women spend more time fetching water.

The District Development Fund (DDF) has the mandate to be providing water infrastructure services such as drilling and rehabilitating boreholes (especially in rural areas) and this has been an on-going effort. It is however dogged by inefficiencies and lack of adequate funds as well as corruption where fuel meant for activities is sometimes diverted for personal use. The central government has tried improve procurement of water treatment chemicals especially for Harare by availing forex timeously and commissioned the Nyamandlovu water project for Bulawayo.



Access to Sustainable Energy Systems

In its 2018 election manifesto, Zimbabwe's ruling party promised that it would address the country's perennial energy problems. In respect of energy, CIASA specifically refers to fuel and electricity which have a huge impact on service delivery. Since 2018, the country has experienced several cycles of challenges relating to shortages of fuel and electricity. So, acute has been the situation that in January 2019 there were massive protests which were quashed violently over increase on fuel prices. Through a combination of foreign currency reserve secured for fuel dealers, restructuring of the debts owed by ZESA, the country's electricity utility, to South African electricity utility, Eskom and improved efficiency of Hwange and Kariba plants; there was a somewhat marked improvement in access to energy.

However, recent breakdowns in Hwange due to obsolete equipment and also resurgence of the Eskom query have increased frequency and duration of load shedding in attempt to optimise available electricity. It is apparent that the government is failing to provide adequate energy for industry and households and this is curtailing the country's efforts to advance industrialisation and the manufacturing sector of the country. The famed Gwanda solar farm which has been marred in corruption has all but stalled killing any hopes of increasing clean energy into the national grid.

The licensing process for independent power providers has been characterised by corruption, bribery and red tape making

the process unnecessarily cumbersome. Against energy inaccessibility and unavailability weighs disproportionately on women who have to look for alternatives that exacerbating gender inequality. In terms of clean energy options, the country has a zero-import duty policy on the import of solar energy equipment which is a positive trajectory however more need to be done to encourage research and development into clean in the country beyond just solar.

Access to Accessible and Affordable Transport Services

Efficient transport services are key enablers of growth and development of the country. The sector has been vital in country's efforts to curtail the spread of COVID-19. It is the lifeblood of modern economies and access to key social services such as health facilities. In its election manifesto of 2018, the ruling part promised to guarantee world class transport services underpinned by an efficient public transport system through ZUPCO and the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ). Road rehabilitation and resuscitation of railways was top of their promises to improve transport services



However, since 2018, the transport sector has degenerated from bad to worse and the banning of private players in the urban transport ecosystem unless they register with the inefficient and highly corrupt state owned ZUPCO has resulted in widespread transportation shortages especially in urban areas.

This has affected both households and businesses. Women commuters are vulnerable as cases of women being mugged, robbed, and sexually exploited for traveling at night or while using pirate taxis because of transport challenges are on the rise. Further, cases of sexual assault in ZUPCO queues are also rampant making the public transport system unsafe for women. The crowding at bus terminuses and in ZUPCO buses is worryingly resulting in a spike of COVID-19 cases across the country. Based on this foregoing; CIASA notes that ZANU PF has failed dismally on this election promise and scores. There is dilapidation in the road or transport infrastructure and while positive steps are being made in the Beitbridge-Chirundu highway project and also under the Emergency Road Rehabilitation Programme (ERRP) this remain inadequate to address the challenges in the transportation services which require a holistic approach encompassing railway rehabilitation.

The Role and Contribution of Opposition Parties on SSD

For the opposition in parliament, the MDC Alliance, it had several promises in its SMART election manifesto. However, its failure to have significant representation in parliament as the ruling party had a constitutional majority has made its ability to push for implementation of its policies through parliament largely academic. The failure to fully implement devolution as set out on Chapter 14 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe has made it difficult for the opposition to effectively implement its policies in the urban centres where it has a mandate. Infighting within the opposition has seen mass recalls of elected officials further hampering any chances that it could effectively implement its manifesto.

However, the opposition has also tried to use the portfolio committees under its control to push for accountability in government. Of note is the Public Accounts Committee which held several hearings on how the government was using taxpayers' monies and sought to hold duty bearers to account. This was highly informative for the citizens and is an important role of the opposition.

Due to infighting and factions, the opposition has not been able to set up a formidable shadow cabinet that can mirror government and proffer clear alternative policies. Given all this, CIASA is of the opinion that the opposition is weak and divided and thus is failing to hold the government to account and push for implementation of some of its promises.

Recommendations for Citizens, Civic Society and Social Movements

Citizens, civic society organisations and social movements have an integral role to play in holding political actors to account over promises made in manifestos. Political actors must not be given free rein to make promises they will never keep and thus hoodwink citizens into re-electing them. As such CIASA makes the following actionable recommendations:

- Citizens must exercise their urgency by constantly pushing for local political actors to provide feedback on the state of implementation of electoral promises. This can be done through letters, text messages or WhatsApp messages directed to councillors, Members of Parliament and senators under whose constituencies citizens live in.
- Civic society organisations must regularly programme to provide interface between citizens and political actors so they can give feedback on their electoral promises.
- Civic society must also set up an online mobile manifesto tracker which would release periodic data on the state of implementation of key electoral promises. This tracker should be readily available to citizens so that they are in the know.
- Social movements must organise and mobilise citizens to actively demand fulfilment of electoral promises through advocacy campaigns and nonviolent actions. Advocacy campaigns must be linked to a public scorecard which is widely shared by citizens showing the state of implementation of electoral promises.
- Social movements must coordinate regional and international solidarity to amplify their advocacy campaigns centred on electoral promises by political actors.
- CSOs and other non-state actors should blend their lobby and advocacy work with social enterprising initiatives to achieve improved SSD in communities targeting the most vulnerable who are often left behind.

Conclusion

As Zimbabwe heads towards the 2023 elections and campaigns are already gathering momentum, it is clear that the ruling party has not been able to deliver much with regards to its pledges to the citizens signified by the discussion provided in this assessment. On the other hand, the opposition is too weak to enforce any of its promises due to a number of exogenous and endogenous factors resulting in a paltry performance. It is important now more than ever for citizens to exercise their agency and vote for politicians who deliver on their promises as part of improving developmental goals of the country and building active citizenry. This is the crucial role which civic society and social movements must play.



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