



## Reflections on the #theAfricanCOP (COP 27): Balancing Mitigation, Adaption and Financing

Zimbabwe is a net greenhouse emitter – producing far less emissions than its forests can easily absorb. This, however, did not help save its crop from being fried this season as the country now stares, squarely, at yet another climate change-induced draught. The small southern African country needs climate adaptation. And that, very fast. Like any other developing country, it is having to bear the brunt of the adverse effects of climate change. Its underdeveloped economy spells doom for its populace who will have to look up to donors as the country can ill-afford the financing of the humanitarian crisis it is now

facing. Clearly, its agriculture-based economy is not climate resilient. This is something that it is hoping can be improved with greater cooperation with other developing countries across the globe and with fellow African countries in particular.

As the world prepares for the 27th session of the Conference of Parties (COP27) in Egypt later this year it will be hoping for developed countries to honour their commitments from the Paris Agreement to support developing countries' adaptation and resilience mechanisms to reduce their vulnerability to the climate change. As it is,

developed countries failed to fulfill their obligation to deliver USD 100 billion by 2020 for the implementation of mitigation and adaptation actions. The Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC) at a meeting convened on the February 6, 2022 in preparation for CoP27 noted that Africa is witnessing the worst impact phenomenon associated with global warming such as droughts, floods and cyclones.

Climate change impact is costing African economies between 3% - 5% of their GDP, CAHOSCC stated in a

speech presented by then outgoing coordinator President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa. Kenya president Uhuru Kenyatta took over the post. COP27, which will be hosted by incoming COP President, Egypt, will be considered to be a success by Zimbabwe and the continent based on how much is done to ensure that Africa moves towards climate resilience by ensuring that its special needs are prioritized. Africa has commendably been balancing its push for adequate financial and technical support with stepping up its contributions to addressing the global climate challenge despite contributing the least to causing the crisis. These include halting and reversing degradation of ecosystems and protecting carbon sinks.

The African Union has since developed the AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan to guide, coordinate and support the Continent's response to Climate Change for the period 2022-2032. Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat commended African countries at the CAHOSCC meeting for moving to domesticate the Paris Agreement. "Africa is engaging itself in domesticating the Paris Agreement which sets an ambitious target by agreeing to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels," Mahamat said.

He commended member States for presenting ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) targets. "It is truly gratifying to note that all African countries submitted ambitious targets under their NDCs,"

Mahamat said. He said with adequate financial and technical support, member States will be on track to fulfil their commitments and obligations under the Paris agreement.

Green Governance Zimbabwe Trust (GGZT), a community-based organization in Zimbabwe, has been working tirelessly to support the Zimbabwean government in response to the climate change realities and in making the necessary responses. GGZT in 2021 contributed towards the development of the NDCs, in the youth consultations that the country will use to address climate change as spelt out in the Paris Agreement. These have since been finalised and made into a policy document which should be adopted and mainstreamed across public and private sector economic activities. GGZT also plans to embark in the process of NDCs policy awareness to ensure that everyone supports them.

It has however not been all positive with regards to government's efforts. In August 2019, the government of Zimbabwe developed the renewable energy policy which lays out guidelines for Promoting Investment in Renewable Energy, Procurement Mechanisms for Renewable Energy in Zimbabwe, Promoting Off-grid Technologies and Other Clean Energy Solutions in Zimbabwe and Promote Local Manufacturing of Renewable Energy Technologies. If implemented well, the renewable energy policy would contribute towards climate change mitigation. The government implemented retrogressive energy solutions in recent years through coal production at the expense of the renewable energy agenda. Otherwise, there is need to continue working especially on promot-

ing climate finance mechanisms towards green energy transition.

The financing models to support green energy transition, innovation and even awareness are not clear therefore there needs to be a policy lobbying for governments, bi-lateral partners and private sector on the direction that should be taken to ensure that deliberate steps are taken. This is expected to be one of the major issues at COP27 as Africa continues to push balance between Mitigation, Adaptation and Finance as had been agreed in Paris whose obligations are yet to be made and may continue to be a challenge in the face of the impact of Covid-19 and now the Russian invasion of Ukraine which has adversely affected the global economy.

## The Private Voluntary Organisations Bill a threat to democracy

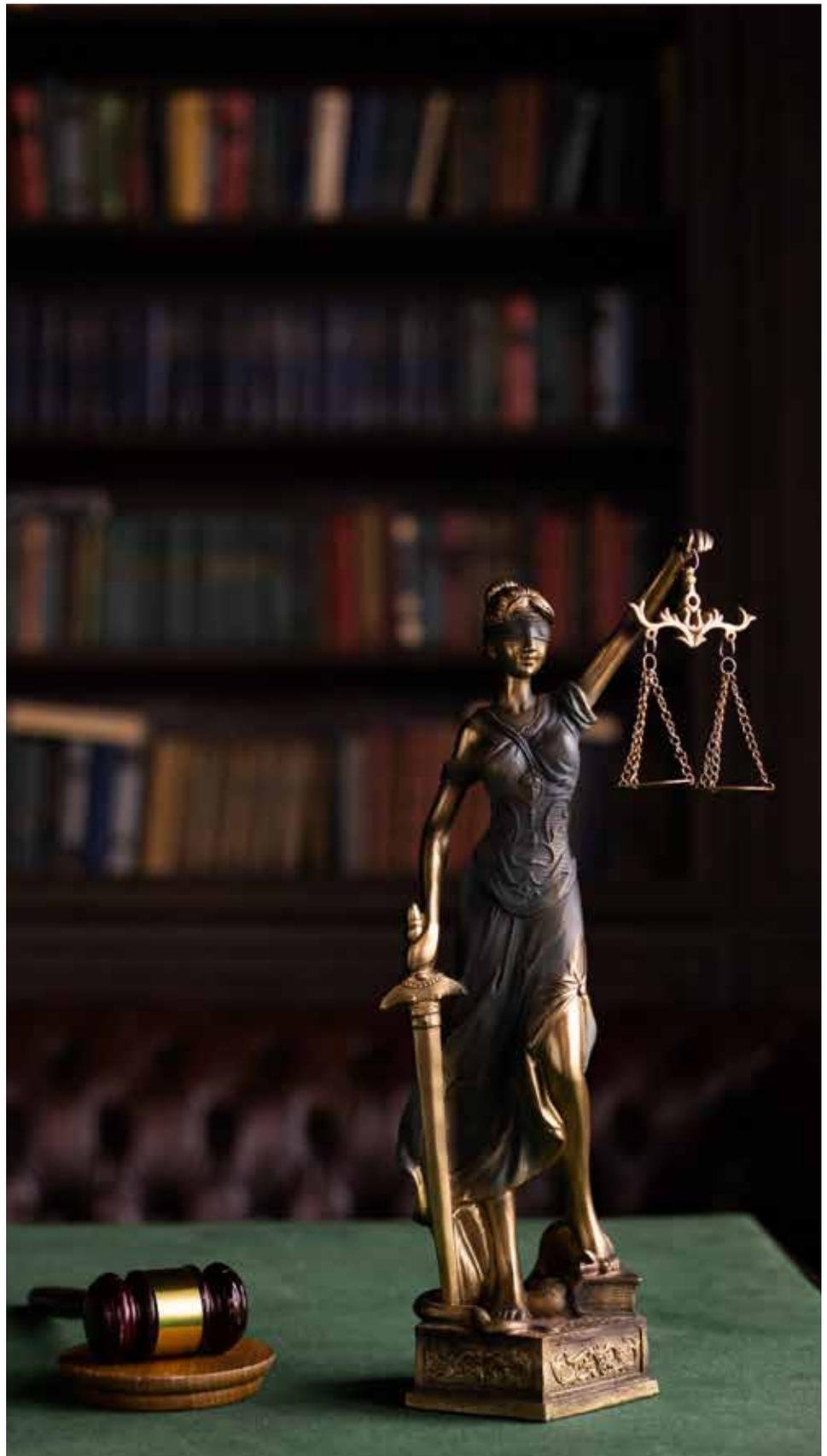
At its simplest, civil society is the arena in which people come together to pursue the interests they hold in common – not for profit or political power, but because they care enough about something to take collection, (V. Masunungure, 2014)

On the 5th of November 2021 the Private Voluntary Organisations (PVO) Amendment Bill was published in the Gazette. The PVO Amendment Bill is intended to monitor and regulate the opera-

tions of non-governmental organisations in Zimbabwe. Various critiques of the bill have defined it as unconstitutional and a piece of legislation that aims at essentially abolishing Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and their operations in Zimbabwe. The historical perception by the government of Zimbabwe which views NGO's, particularly those in the human rights and democracy cluster, as anti-establishment and pro-opposition could have propelled the idea behind the PVO Amendment Bill. Whilst the state has the autonomy to sustain its sovereignty, it should be guided by the principles of democracy which it is subservient to; where civil society is also a part of the body politic and is mandated to play its watchdog role in monitoring public sector performance.

### The PVO bill in summary:

- Is said to be in compliance with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) recommendations to align the country's laws with Recommendation 8 which seeks to ensure that NGOs/PVOs are not misused by terrorist organisations. However, an analysis of the Bill shows that, rather than aligning with FATF recommendations, the government could be using this legislation as an excuse to clamp down on civil society in Zimbabwe and to infringe upon the rights to association, privacy and expression enshrined in the Constitution.
- Would have the effect of criminalising the work of CSOs in Zimbabwe by proposing harsh penalties, including jail time of up to one year for NGO Registration framework related perceived offences, a new requirement that the bill seeks to



introduce.

- Gives the government and the minister responsible for CSOs and Trusts excessive power, which will enable him/her to interfere with the operations of these bodies. It further gives the responsible minister power to make an application to the High Court to appoint one or more people of his/her choice as trustees to run the affairs of an organization for a period not exceeding 60 days
- Trusts and common law university associations will also be required to register under the PVO Act, which will mean designated organisations will become unlawful entities unless they register under the new law. As the registrar of PVOs will be reporting to the Office of the President, the threat of deregistration could affect the ability of CSOs to speak out freely.
- Through this excessive involvement of the Executive, it is feared that NGO and CSO funds may be expropriated by with provisions of the FATF recommendations. There is a real risk that the expropriation of the funds can be done without due process of the law and without compensation.
- It seeks to govern CSOs' support for political parties, which flies in the face of the Constitutionally-protected right to freedom of association. The Bill prohibits PVOs from "political involvement", which is an overly broad and vague term that has the potential of being misused to target and persecute CSO leaders, pro-democracy activists, human rights defenders and NGOs that may

be involved in promoting and protecting civil and political rights guaranteed under the country's Constitution and major international instruments that Zimbabwe has signed and ratified.

Green Governance Zimbabwe Trust managed to attend the public hearings on the PVO amendment bill held in Rusape at Vhengere Hall where the proceedings were disrupted by certain individuals who felt they needed to hinder anyone who made recommendations on certain sections within the bill. This compromised citizens' participation in the public hearing and resulted in the public hearing to end prematurely.

In light of this incident that occurred at the public hearings and after thorough inspection of contents of the bill we recommend that;

Parliament should Delay debate on the PVO Amendment Bill until it embarks on a wide-ranging consultative process on the regulation of CSOs, Trusts and NGOs. This process should be in adherence of the Public Hearing Guidelines and reflective of the views of a wide spectrum of the Zimbabwean society.

If this bill is passed into law in its current form it would cause mayhem not only within Civil Society but to the various communities that plenty of CSOs have been working with. Most CSOs have demonstrated their ability to foster people-centred development through promoting ownership, inclusivity and participation. Some organisations have engaged in policy dialogue and sector analysis, conducted independent research, and shared valuable information on sustainable and

economic development. Others have provided development assistance or services to communities where government has failed to provide. Here's a testimony from a villager in Chimanimani; 'The most exciting, the most joyful, and certainly the most personally significant part of my life began within the Civil Society space. Through Civil Society I got empowered, I discovered my rights and realised my full potential as a human being and a Zimbabwean citizen whose responsibility is towards the protection and growth of my country. I know I speak for numerous Zimbabweans who are eternally grateful for the wealth of resources and information that they have received through various CSOs.'



## ADOPT SOCIAL LICENSE TO MONITOR MINING INVESTMENTS

Continued displacement of communities by Chinese mining investors violates free, prior and informed consent (FPIC); and business and human rights principles. In solidarity we stand with the people in Rimbi, Binga and Uzumba. We say NO to corruption induced evictions.

#indigenouspeoplesright