
Friends of Zimbabwe, 2013 Communiqué

27-03-2013

1. The Friends of Zimbabwe met in London on 26 March 2013, re-confirming our governments continued strong commitment to the Zimbabwean people and support for a prosperous and democratic Zimbabwe. Underlining our desire for engagement based on partnership, we were pleased that representatives from the Zimbabwe Government of National Unity parties and regional representatives joined us.

2. We welcomed and supported SADC's lead role as guarantor of the Global Political Agreement. We also commended SADC's continued efforts, in particular those of the South African facilitation team, in encouraging Zimbabwe's political parties to work together for the full implementation of necessary reforms ahead of elections. The breakthrough leading to the recent constitutional referendum was testament to these efforts. We re-emphasised our commitment to support SADC in their efforts to facilitate the GPA and the roadmap for elections.

3. In our discussions, we strongly welcomed progress on the new constitution and the referendum that was held on 16 March. We looked forward to the implementation of the remaining democratic reforms in the GPA and roadmap, and recognised the work of the Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC) in supporting this.

We welcomed calls by Zimbabwe's political leaders for peace and non-violence and the statements by party leaders that Zimbabweans should be able to choose their own government in free and fair elections, and to be able to vote without fear or intimidation. We look to all Zimbabweans, including state institutions and the security sector, to heed these calls. We expressed concern about current harassment of civil society and reports of political violence and strongly urged that such incidents should cease. We stressed the importance of a vibrant civil society to Zimbabwe's development.

4. We welcomed the effective SADC observation of the constitutional referendum and SADC's stated intention to observe the elections, consistent with the SADC Guidelines. We discussed the importance of long term SADC observers covering the period in the run-up to, during and after elections. A wide range of international observers would contribute to building confidence and help enhance the credibility of the poll and the strength of the government elected.

5. We took note of views from all representatives from the Government of National Unity including on; the importance of full implementation of the GPA, the facilitation role played by SADC, their request for a lifting of international sanctions, peaceful free and fair elections, and respect for the rule of law.

6. In our discussions, we reaffirmed the commitment of our governments to work with any government emerging from free and fair elections, which are credible, peaceful and transparent. Where relevant, we confirmed our governments' plans to review their targeted measures following such elections.

7. Since the inception of the Government of National Unity the international community has increasingly shifted its support from humanitarian aid towards transitional and longer term development assistance. Over this period, our transitional development support has amounted to around US\$2.6 billion. We noted that aid from international donors, deployed in line with Zimbabwean priorities, has been instrumental in improving food security and agriculture, in delivering of basic services such as health, education, and water and sanitation, and in the strengthening of democratic processes.

8. We acknowledged the good work being done by the GNU to stabilise the economy and welcome the ongoing engagement and support of the multilateral agencies and international financial institutions. We recognised the importance of Zimbabwe tackling its external debts. We stand ready to support the GNU to discuss this further with the IMF, and welcomed progress by the GNU and IMF towards a Staff Monitored Programme.

9. We stressed that transparency and integrity in economic and financial governance and extractive industry management are essential to combat poverty and corruption, and contribute to inclusive economic growth. It is critical that Zimbabwe's natural resources are utilised for the benefit of all Zimbabweans and that ownership and revenues from mineral extraction are fully transparent and accountable. We look forward to strengthening our commercial ties with Zimbabwe to help accelerate its path towards prosperity.

10. We will continue to work closely with partners in the country, region and wider international community. For our part, we collectively stand ready to broaden, deepen and harmonise our engagement and support as the country moves further down the path of democracy and respect for human rights, with credible elections being a crucial element in this respect. This would create the conditions for Zimbabwe to develop its natural potential, attract foreign investment and move beyond the need for international development assistance.

11. We look forward to continuing to engage constructively with the GNU and the region in order to support the Zimbabwean people in achieving a peaceful, prosperous and democratic future.

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, the EU, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States of America.