



The Role of The Business Sector in National Healing in Zimbabwe

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Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
CSOT	Community Share Ownership Trust
CZI	Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
GNU	Government of National Unity
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
NPRC	National Peace and Reconciliation Commission
ONHRI	Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration
PBNZ	Peace Building Network of Zimbabwe
PF-ZAPU	Patriotic Front-Zimbabwe African People's Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
US	United States of America
USD	United States Dollar
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZIM ASSET	Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation
ZIMPREST	Zimbabwe Program for Economic and Social Transformation
ZIMSTAT	Zimbabwe Statistics Agency
ZNCC	Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce



Foreword

When violence occurs it is a symptom. In the majority of circumstances violence is the result of conflict that has not been dealt with constructively and those involved resort to destructive behaviour in an attempt to resolve the conflict. Over time, Zimbabwe has experienced violent conflict where its episodic escalation has been marked by the Liberation wars, Gukurahundi and the 2008 election violence. In acknowledgement of the traumatic effects of these periods of violent confrontation, the Government of National Unity (GNU) established the Organ on National Healing Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) as outlined in the Global Political Agreement. Consequently Zimbabwe's 2013 Constitution provided for the establishment of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC). As informed by similar reconciliation processes that have taken place around the world, the focus of the NPRC is the healing of the hurts experienced during violent conflict that has occurred at various periods in Zimbabwe's history.

While acknowledging the very critical need for the NPRC to deal with the traumatic effects of violence on individuals, communities and the nation at large, it is important to recognise an equally critical need to understand why violence occurred in the first instance. If violence is a symptom what is the root cause; understanding the root cause results in an informed diagnosis of the problem that leads to the creation of a holistic treatment regimen.

In considering this question the PBNZ has carried out two researches, the first in 2010, in order to establish the causes of societal degradation in Zimbabwe and the current publication which examines the role of the business sector in National Healing in Zimbabwe. The first research identified the economic downturn and

Violent conflict occurred in the political arena in response to unresolved conflicts within the economic sphere.

subsequent crisis as being at the centre of the Zimbabwe's societal disintegration and lack of community cohesion. By linking the everyday experiences of ordinary Zimbabweans to Macro level events it was clear that events in the economic and political arenas were indissolubly linked. Violent conflict occurred in the political arena in response to unresolved conflicts within the economic sphere. These findings informed the current research where, in light of the establishment of the NPRC, it was critical to investigate the extent to which the economic sector must contribute to Zimbabwe's National Healing Agenda. As such, the report highlights the economic dimension of Zimbabwe's violent past. It explores the role that must be played by the business sector in National Healing as commensurate to the impact economic events have had on the nation's current state.

It is expected that the report will be a crucial tool in beginning the conversation between the three sectors of government, civil society and business who each play a pivotal role in the healing of the nation of Zimbabwe. They must ensure that the violent conflict from Zimbabwe's past does not happen again through supporting the NPRC in the design and implementation of a process that deals with both the causes of violent conflict and its effects.

By Stembile Mpofu



Introduction

This research paper argues that Zimbabwe's business sector is an essential but overlooked participant in the debate on National Healing and Reconciliation. It seeks to initiate a long-overdue conversation between business leaders, civic leaders and the Zimbabwean government on how to address the wide range of economic injuries that Zimbabweans have suffered in the past two decades. While Zimbabwean businesses, like all Zimbabweans, stand in need of healing, the focus of this paper is forward-looking, and therefore highlights the crucial contribution that the business sector can make to national healing.

Zimbabwe's new constitution, which came into effect in 2013, establishes a National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC). As policy-makers and civil society organisations debate and prepare for the coming into effect of the NPRC, this research indicates that business leaders should be an integral part of this discussion, and ideally of the NPRC itself.

The business sector plays an essential role in the welfare of every nation through employment and contributions to the national fiscus, but also – perhaps more importantly – through the development of public leadership beyond the confines of government. These roles are often closely intertwined; in the absence of leadership from the private sector, private enterprise will struggle, reducing opportunities for socioeconomic advancement.

Much so-called political violence is the result of failure to address acute socioeconomic issues, including poverty and inequality. A case in point is the occupations of white-owned farms in Zimbabwe beginning in 2000. Many participants in the occupations were motivated by the highly visible failure to remedy gross racial disparities in the ownership of the country's most productive agricultural land. The occupations disrupted both Zimbabwe's agricultural sector and

tourism industry, setting in motion the economic collapse of the following decade, which in turn led to massive emigration of Zimbabweans in search of economic opportunities.

The Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) was formed in 2009 as part of the Inclusive Government created after the controversial and violent elections in 2008. After consultations with a range of stakeholders, the late Vice President John Nkomo, Chair of the Organ, presented the National Policy Framework for Peace and Reconciliation to Cabinet in 2012. The Framework addressed a wide range of issues, and laid the groundwork for the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC). The Framework recognises that “Violent conflict retards human development – and if not firmly arrested, can fracture social cohesion and reverse important gains in developmental progress.” However, the Framework does not acknowledge the converse: that economic and developmental failure themselves generate conflict.

The failure to draw this connection is to be expected. Most national healing processes across the world have neglected the role of the business sector and the economic dynamics of



conflict. Likewise, the stakeholders consulted by ONHRI in producing the Framework did not include business leaders of any kind, reflecting this blind spot. The exclusion of the business sector as a stakeholder in national peace and reconciliation is also self-inflicted to some extent. Business leaders have failed to engage with ONHRI and have not articulated a coherent and unified position on the requirements for building peace in the country. Without input from business, the national healing process will not address the full range of conflict dynamics and hurts experienced by Zimbabweans.

Throughout Zimbabwe's history, the economy has been a zone of conflict. Prior to Independence, white settler capitalism sought to exclude the country's black majority from participation in the economy in any form except unskilled labour. After Independence, labour, capital and the state had an uneasy relationship characterised by mistrust and exclusion. As Zimbabweans seek to heal the wounds of the past, the economic dimension of the conflict and suffering must not be ignored.

Zimbabwe is entering a new phase, both economically and politically, following the 2013 elections. ZimASSET, the government's economic programme, has so far failed to stem the tide of deindustrialisation wreaking havoc in the country's economy.

This analytical report seeks to restore consideration of the economy and business sector to its necessary place in Zimbabwe's dialogue on national healing. It seeks to establish a baseline from which policy makers, business people, civil society and workers can begin to discuss the economic injuries of the past in order to secure a better, more peaceful and prosperous future. It argues that business, civil society and the state are three legs holding up the process of national healing and; the absence of any one of these sectors will cause the whole process to fall.

Research methodology

Research was conducted through semi-structured interviews with a diverse array of business people, from SME entrepreneurs to senior leadership of major corporations. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted targeting business leaders, and individuals in both the formal and informal sector. Data was collected in Harare, Bulawayo and Mutare. A total of 99 respondents were interviewed, including 27 women, 46 men, 16 youth. Participants responded to questions around their understanding of national healing and reconciliation, the role that they can play in the national process of healing and reconciliation, the creation of linkages among sectors, events that have affected the economy, and their recommendations for the national healing and reconciliation process, among others. To encourage candour and protect respondents, responses are presented anonymously. Interviews were conducted by PBNZ representatives in mid-2013, in the period between the constitutional referendum of March 2013 and the July 31 elections. This was a period



of considerable uncertainty, and this is reflected in many of the responses.

Key secondary data reviewed included the Churches and Civil Society Forum's submissions towards the development of a National framework for national healing, reconciliation and integration in Zimbabwe as well as ONHRI's policy framework for peace and reconciliation.

Purpose of Research

Zimbabwe is entering a new phase, both economically and politically, following the 2013 elections. ZimASSET, the government's economic programme, has so far failed to stem the tide of deindustrialisation wreaking havoc in the country's economy. Proposed solutions, such as Special Economic Zones, pose the risk of deepening economic conflict by further exploiting Zimbabwe's impoverished workers by eliminating regulatory protections¹.

Furthermore, Zimbabwe has reached a turning point in its dialogue on national healing. The Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission has recently retained its secretariat, and is now

set to begin operating. The government has solicited nominations for the other Section 12 independent commissions, including the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission. At this crucial juncture, it is essential that Zimbabweans recognise the economic dimension of the crisis that has gripped the country for the past 15 years.

With this in mind, this analytical report proceeds as follows: Section One presents The Economic Dimensions of Conflict in Zimbabwe, beginning with the pre-Independence era, and proceeding up through the contemporary crisis. Section Two describes the interaction between Business and National Healing in contemporary Zimbabwe, detailing the scope of economic injuries suffered by Zimbabweans in the course of the contemporary crisis. Finally, Section Three proposes some crucial Contributions of the Business Sector to National Healing, presenting recommendations for the appropriate role of business in the ongoing process of national healing and reconciliation.

¹See Veritas (Zimbabwe) commentary on Special Economic Zones, online at <http://www.veritaszim.net/node/907>.



The Economic Dimensions of Conflict in Zimbabwean History

Introduction

An assessment of the history of Zimbabwe reveals a close relationship between policy decisions around economic development and conflict, including structural violence and conflict. This Section examines this relationship, beginning with a brief consideration of the pre-Independence regime and continuing with the three decades after independence. This analysis demonstrates that economic issues lie at the core of the causes of conflict in Zimbabwe. The national healing agenda must therefore include a strong economic component, as suggested in subsequent sections.

Pre-independence - racial economic exclusion

The pre-Independence Rhodesian regime combined racist ideology with the economic subordination of the country's black majority. One respondent speaking about this period said, "White settlers controlled the political, economic and social spheres and as a result business was dominated and controlled [by whites]. Power resided in them [whites]." The political disenfranchisement of black Zimbabweans, who were not permitted to vote or stand for office, went hand in hand with economic policies that marginalised black Zimbabweans. The Land Apportionment Act of 1930 allocated the vast majority of the country's prime agricultural land for exclusively white use, forcing millions of black Zimbabweans to subsist on marginal land in the "Native Reserves" (which later became the "Tribal Trust Lands" and then, at Independence, the Communal Areas).

This combination of political and economic subjugation led directly to the armed liberation struggle, in which black nationalist parties sought to dislodge the white settler regime. This war reached its peak in the late 1970s in a mutually hurting stalemate, which produced

a negotiated settlement that eventually led to Zimbabwean independence.

1980-1990 The (economic) honeymoon?

The year 1980 marked the independence of Zimbabwe. Many investors and businesspeople were sceptical about their prospects under the new socialist government. However, the new Prime Minister Mugabe allayed their fears when, on the eve of independence, he proclaimed a policy of reconciliation between blacks and whites².

In the first two years of independence, the Zimbabwean economy began to recover from the war, with growth averaging 12% per year³. Foreign Direct Investment returned. External confidence in the new government was further strengthened by its adherence to the provisions of the Lancaster House agreement, particularly the willing buyer willing seller policy in relation to land. Sound economic policies facilitated the growth of businesses, as there was relative peace and stability after a devastating armed liberation struggle. Economic inequality decreased, and provision of education and healthcare improved⁴.

²See "Mugabe's independence day speech 1980," online at <http://www.swradioafrica.com/mugabes-independence-day-speech/>.

³James Muzondidya, "From Buoyancy to Crisis, 1980-1997," in *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the Pre-Colonial Period to 2008*, Brian Raftopolous & Alois Mlambo (eds.), Weaver Press (Harare), 2009, p. 169.

⁴Ibid., p. 168.



He concluded that Gukurahundi centralised power and the resources of public administration in Harare, making it impossible to successfully manage a business in the Matabeleland region.

The Zimbabwe government pursued socialist policies characterised by strict foreign exchange controls and favourable working conditions for the largely black labour force. It should be noted that at independence business was a preserve of white people, a situation that changed little in the next decade⁵. As a result, government and labour allied themselves against the white bourgeois business elite. Government passed several laws in regards to the minimum wage and working conditions, which were announced during the annual May Day celebrations. Public spending rose, especially in the areas of civil service employment, spending on social services, drought relief, and subsidies for government-owned companies. Private investment was crowded out by shortages of credit stemming from the fiscal deficit, high taxes and shortages of foreign exchange. Government felt that they needed to appease labour, as they were aware of the danger of a dissatisfied working class, possibly recalling that the white colonial government had been toppled by a party that grew from the Rhodesian Railways workers committee.

Although the economy was stable, the failure to pursue ethnic and political reconciliation

permitted conflict to fester in Matabeleland. Top ZAPU officials were dismissed from government in 1982 after the discovery of an alleged arms cache, leaving Matabeleland without adequate representation in government and perpetuating the economic and political marginalisation of the region. Between 1983 and 1987, the government deployed the 5th Brigade to Matabeleland and Midlands under an operation termed Gukurahundi, which resulted in an estimated 20,000 deaths⁶. The operation was supposed to combat “dissidents” and those who harboured them. Many innocent civilians were killed, eliminating breadwinners and leaving many families in poverty and further contributing to the underdevelopment of the region.

On 22 December 1987, the leaders of PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF signed a Unity Accord that brought an end to the atrocities in Midlands and Matabeleland. However, the Unity Accord was seen as an elitist pact and fell short of addressing the plight of the victims of Gukurahundi operations. One respondent described the Unity Accord as ZANU swallowing ZAPU, and described those from the region who were taken on board as opportunists who did not care about the interests of the region. He further observed that this led to Matabeleland being ignored by government development processes and systems and to this day most of the people who manage businesses in Matabeleland are alienated from processes of national policy formation and implementation. He concluded that Gukurahundi centralised power and the resources of public administration in Harare, making it impossible to successfully manage a business in the Matabeleland region.

⁵Ibid., 171.

⁶Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe, *Breaking the Silence, Building True Peace: Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands, 1980-1989* (Harare: CCJPZ and LRF, 1997).



The Unity Accord left the country with only one major political party; this party then sought to further consolidate power by imposing an official one party state. This resulted in violent protests by various groups including University of Zimbabwe students. These protests coincided with the end of the Cold War and the collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe. By the close of the decade it became apparent that the world was moving towards a capitalist system dominated by free market economies and trade liberalism. Zimbabwe needed to follow suit. The economic honeymoon had ended.

1990-2000: Facing reality

In the early 90s the relationship between government and business continued to be frosty because the pre-Independence mind-set that business was the exclusive preserve of white people still held sway. The relationship between government and business was strained, with one respondent saying, “there was suspicion of business people and profit was viewed as theft.” The failure of the willing buyer willing seller policy on land to effectively redistribute agricultural land was blamed on white commercial farmers who were either refusing to sell their land or charging exorbitant prices for it. The tension between government and landowners heightened.

Throughout the 80s and early 90s, the government tried to create a cadre of black commercial farmers as well as a black middle class by implementing the land reform programme and some black empowerment economic policies. In 1991, 50% of the population received less than 15% of total annual incomes and about 15% of total consumption, while

The initiative to create a black bourgeoisie in the absence of necessary economic, legal and regulatory reform resulted in the stifling of enterprise and the consolidation of economic resources in the hands of elites.

the richest three per cent of the population received 30% of total incomes and were responsible for 30% of total consumption⁷. The 1992 Land Acquisition Act dispensed with the willing seller, willing buyer approach, permitting the government to compulsorily acquire agricultural land. However, relatively little land was redistributed and these attempts ended up only benefiting a few black elites with political connections. In 1996, the government established the National Investment Trust to hold shares for “indigenous Zimbabweans” in privatised parastatals. However, the initiative to create a black bourgeoisie in the absence of necessary economic, legal and regulatory reform resulted in the stifling of enterprise and the consolidation of economic resources in the hands of elites.

In 1990 Zimbabwe, like much of the rest of the developing world, implemented the controversial Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes (ESAPs) that were promoted by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In Zimbabwe, ESAP resulted in massive retrenchments and the reckless privatisation of parastatals, which had previously made up 45%

⁷World Bank, Poverty in Zimbabwe: Current Knowledge and Issues for the Future, 1995.



Government had in 1980 attempted to compensate war victims under the War Victims Compensation Act (Section 11:16). However, the fund was insufficient to cover all victims and was looted by high-ranking politicians.

of gross domestic product⁸. For example, the Dairy Marketing Board reduced its staff by more than half, from 3,600 to 1,500 in the course of three years⁹. The working class bore the brunt of ESAP, as public expenditure on healthcare declined by 39% in 1994-95, inflation averaged over 20%, and over 55,000 Zimbabweans lost their jobs¹⁰. In 1992, doctors and nurses began referring to “ESAP deaths,” caused by patients’ inability to pay user fees¹¹. The relationship between government and labour collapsed; starting in 1993, there were riots and boycotts protesting the price of bread and other staple foods, which culminated in widespread food riots in 1998.¹²

Though the goal of ESAP was the transformation of Zimbabwe to a “more open, market driven economy,” in reality heavy state borrowing crowded out domestic private investment in the early 1990s while domestic industry was abruptly exposed to foreign competition.¹³ The

government sought to restore its credibility with the Zimbabwe Program for Economic and Social Transformation (ZimPREST), announced in 1996 but not formally introduced until 1998, which sought to encourage entrepreneurial initiative and provide a safety net for the disadvantaged. Attempting to bolster stakeholder participation after the unpopularity of ESAP, government launched the Tripartite Negotiation Forum (TNF), bringing together organised labour and business with government. However, the TNF has had no serious impact and that was largely attributed to the intransigence on the part of the Government, particularly its failure to implement agreements.¹⁴ Popular dissatisfaction with state economic policy came to a head in 1998 in the wake of the state’s attempt to address another long-neglected obligation, this time to the country’s war veterans.

Government had in 1980 attempted to compensate war victims under the War Victims Compensation Act (Section 11:16). However, the fund was insufficient to cover all victims and was looted by high-ranking politicians. In the 90s government set up a War Veterans Compensation fund but it was again looted by top government officials. It emerged during an inquiry that some cabinet members had individually claimed as much as 800 000 ZW\$ (approximately US\$70,000) because they had suffered 98% disability. This angered the ordinary war veterans who responded by holding protests. In 1997, under pressure from

⁸Rogers Dhlwayo, “The Impact of Public Expenditure Management under ESAP on Basic Social Services,” Department of Economics, University of Zimbabwe; available online at http://www.saprin.org/zimbabwe/research/zim_public_exp.pdf.

⁹A. Mandiwanza, “Privatisation in Zimbabwe: The Experience of Dairiboard Zimbabwe Limited,” Report produced for Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Seminar on Privatisation: The Way Forward, Harare 23-34 November 1999, available online at <http://library.fes.de/fulltext/bueeros/simbabwe/01056toc.htm>

¹⁰Richard Saunders, ESAP’s Fables II, Southern Africa Report (SAR), Vol. 11, No 4, July 1996, Page 8

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Independent Evaluation Group, “Structural Adjustment and Zimbabwe’s Poor,” World Bank Group Report, online at <http://lnweb90.worldbank.org/oed/oeddoclib.nsf/DocUNIDViewForJavaSearch/15A937F6B215A053852567F5005D8B06>. Teddy Brett and Simon Winter, “Origins of the Zimbabwe crisis,” Helen Suzman Foundation, online at <http://hsf.org.za/resource-centre/focus/issue-30-second-quarter-2003/origins-of-the-zimbabwe-crisis>. Also Saunders (supra).

¹⁴Lucy Mazingi and Richard Kamidza, “Inequality in Zimbabwe,” in *Tearing us Apart: Inequality in Southern Africa*, Deprose and Muchena and Herbert Jauch (eds.), (Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa: 2011), p. 339.



the war veterans, the government agreed to pay each war veteran a 50 000Z\$ allowance (then about US\$4,500), for approximately 50,000 veterans.¹⁵ This allowance was unbudgeted, and the impact on the economy was devastating. On 14 November 1997 the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange crashed and the Zimbabwean dollar fell by 74% in one day.¹⁶ This became known by the business sector as Black Friday.

In 1998, Zimbabwe intervened in the ongoing civil war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). In response, some countries suspended international economic aid to Zimbabwe.¹⁷ This suspension of aid and the millions of dollars spent on military intervention further weakened Zimbabwe's troubled economy. The cost of living rose sharply and in mid-1998 and there were widespread food riots across the country and a massive strike by civil servants. With elections due in 2000, the ruling party sought to regain its popularity with its base.

Government introduced a new constitution that would have addressed the "land question" by permitting seizure of agricultural land without compensation, amongst other reforms. However, the government's draft constitution was defeated by a "No" campaign led by the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), which brought together labour unions and civic organisations with financial support from business. This further soured relations between government and business. Political opposition by trade unionists and civic organisations came together in the formation of a new political

party called the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

In the immediate aftermath of the constitutional referendum "No" vote, the government permitted widespread occupations of white-owned farms, spearheaded by self-proclaimed war veterans. The government's unwillingness to enforce property rights scuttled investor confidence in the country. The farm invasions also left 200,000 farm labourer households homeless and with no livelihood.¹⁸ In the 2000 parliamentary election, the opposition fell just short of winning a majority of seats in parliament, despite a coordinated campaign of political violence by the incumbent party.¹⁹ As the political conflict came to the fore, Zimbabwe's economic decline began to accelerate.

2000-2009 Decade of shame

In the new millennium, the Zimbabwean government continued to compulsorily acquire land from white farmers without regard for legal title or procedure. Investor confidence continued to decline, particularly over concerns about the standing of private property. Some Zimbabwean businesses benefited from the situation by taking advantage of poor enforcement of financial regulations to exploit ordinary Zimbabweans through criminal strategies such as money laundering, as in the case of ENG Capital.²⁰

Zimbabwe exported less, failed to service its accrued international debt and faced diplomatic and economic isolation from multilateral

¹⁵Muzondidya, 198.

¹⁶Brian Raftopolous, "The Crisis in Zimbabwe, 1998-2008," in *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the Pre-Colonial Period to 2008*, Brian Raftopolous & Alois Mlambo (eds.), Weaver Press (Harare), 2009, p. 219. See also "Zim Marks 10 Years since 'Black Friday'," Mail & Guardian (SA), 10 November 2007, online at <http://mg.co.za/article/2007-11-11-zim-marks-10-years-since-black-friday>

¹⁷See, eg, "Dutch Government Suspends Aid to Zimbabwe," Pan-African News Agency (PANA), 29 September 1999, online at <http://allafrica.com/stories/199909290204.html>; Zimbabwe's intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo was also cited in the United States' Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZIDERA) of 2001, which suspended US aid to Zimbabwe.

¹⁸Sachikonye L.M (2003) *The Situation of Commercial Farm Workers after Land Reform in Zimbabwe*. A report prepared for the Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe.

¹⁹ZESN 2000 Parliamentary Elections Report.

²⁰Bothwell Fundira, "Money Laundering in Zimbabwe, 2006-2006," Institute for Security Studies (South Africa), Monograph No. 132, May 2007.



The decline of industrial activities in Zimbabwe led to the emergence of a thriving parallel market and significant growth in the informal sector. Many professionals fled the country in search of greener pastures.

institutions and Western countries. The impact of these sanctions measures is hotly debated. The current economic policy document issued by the Zimbabwean government, the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio Economic Transformation (ZimASSET) attributes the country's economic decline since 2000 to "illegal sanctions."²¹ Other observers have responded that the sanctions target a small number of Zimbabwean individuals and enterprises, and would not by themselves undermine the country's economy.

In response to sanctions by western governments, the government engaged partners from the East particularly China, India and Malaysia. This exposed the Zimbabwean market to cheaper and low quality Chinese products. This "Look East" policy produced short-term improvement in the availability of consumer goods, but the long-term impact on the economy was negative. Local industry could not compete with cheap Chinese products, which resulted in the closure of big companies in Manicaland and Matabeleland. In Manicaland companies such as Border Timbers, Mutare Board & Paper Mills, PG Glass

(now called Afri-Safety), Karina and Border Power Mill either closed shop or scaled down operations. In Matabeleland some businesses were forced to relocate to Harare with the hope of capitalising on economies of scale, including ZimPharm, Hunyani Printopak and National Foods. The Distressed and Marginalised Areas Fund (DiMAF), launched in October 2012 to support industry outside of Harare, failed to make an appreciable difference to widespread deindustrialisation, releasing less than a quarter of its small budget for loans.²²

The decline of industrial activities in Zimbabwe led to the emergence of a thriving parallel market and significant growth in the informal sector. Many professionals fled the country in search of greener pastures. Zimbabwe lost much of the human capital in which it had taken pride for many years.²³ Exacerbating this situation was the perception that independent entrepreneurs were persecuted, rather than encouraged, by the government.²⁴

This economic decline also led to severe shortages of cash, and many indigenous owned banks like Barbican, Royal, Trust and Time were put under curatorship, resulting in many people being unable to access their savings. There were massive job cuts in the banking sector. One respondent noted that "In 2008, one bank had 184 000 accounts and only 13 000 survived, another had 270 000 and only 15 000 survived." He further noted, "This scenario dissipated the lives of ordinary people. One bank employed 1 500 people now it has 480 people and so it is operating on a third of its capacity."

²¹Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio Economic Transformation, p. 8.

²²See "Dying Bulawayo's sad story," Southern Eye (Zimbabwe), 24 February 2014, online at <http://www.southerneye.co.zw/2014/02/24/dying-bulawayos-sad-story/>

²³Raftopolous, 222-3.

²⁴See Ken Yamamoto, "Zimbabwe Mugabe and the Disempowerment of Blacks By Blacks," NewZimbabwe.com, 28 May 2014, online at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201405290465.html?viewall=1>.



In 2005, government implemented a controversial policy codenamed Operation Murambatsvina (Operation Drive Out The Trash) which saw 700 000 people being displaced from their homes, many of which were demolished with little or no warning.²⁵ An even larger number of Zimbabweans, mainly from the informal sector, lost their sources of livelihoods as the state forcibly closed markets and arrested vendors, again with little or no warning. Following the mass retrenchments of ESAP, the informal sector had mushroomed and become a key player in sustaining the economy. The implementation of Operation Murambatsvina caused immense pain and suffering because government failed to provide alternative housing or livelihoods.

In addition to the structural violence inherent in this steep economic decline, this decade also witnessed grave political violence, particularly in the run-up to elections in 2002, 2005 and 2008. Although the first round of voting in 2008 was relatively peaceful, the presidential runoff period witnessed the worst violence seen in the country since Gukurahundi in the mid-1980s. ZPP recorded more than 100 deaths in the period between January and August 2008.²⁶

The year 2008 was one of the worst years in recent memory for many Zimbabweans. As the nation plunged into political uncertainty the economy continued to decline rapidly, inflation rose to record-setting 6 figures, and an already depleted economy haemorrhaged jobs forcing breadwinners to leave their families. By the end of the year most transactions were being conducted using foreign currency.²⁷ Finally,

public service delivery collapsed. Schools were forced to close down due to widespread strikes by teachers as well as the absence of water and sanitation facilities. Major hospitals ceased operations putting a heavy strain on the public that was already struggling with the HIV pandemic and a deadly cholera outbreak.²⁸

The disputed elections and critical economic situation in the country forced ZANU PF to negotiate with the two MDC formations at the insistence of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). In September 2008 the three biggest political parties came together to form a Government of National Unity (GNU). The new government promised the nation that they would prioritise economic recovery, peace and stability. To fulfil these promises, government established the Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI), which was headed by representatives from three political parties.

One of the major victims of the political and economic crisis in the country was the Zimbabwean dollar, which by the end of 2008 had become almost obsolete. In February 2009 Zimbabwe adopted the multi- currency system: the United States Dollar (USD), South African Rand and Botswana Pula became legal tender, replacing the local currency. However, the government did not follow proper procedures during the currency transition. Firstly, there was no agreed exchange rate to use when converting debts and savings. Secondly, government did not require banks to convert money held in savings accounts and other investment

²⁵Anna Tibaijuka, "Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe to assess the Scope and Impact of Operation Murambatsvina by the UN Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe." (United Nations: 2005).

²⁶Zimbabwe Peace Project, "Run Up to 27 June 2008 Presidential Run-Off Election: Human Rights Violations and Food Distribution Monitoring," (July 2008), online at www.zimpeaceproject.com.

²⁷Raftopolous, 220.

²⁸See "ZIMBABWE: Staff return to hospitals, but not to work," Irin News, 23 February 2009, available online at <http://www.irinnews.org/report/83095/zimbabwe-staff-return-to-hospitals-but-not-to-work>.



portfolios, allowing banks to use the zero balance system, erasing the savings of millions of Zimbabweans.²⁹ Finally the government authorised local authorities, the power utility and telecommunication companies to convert debts accrued prior to the transition to USD. Many people ended up with huge debts that to this day they cannot pay whilst at the same time their savings were wiped out and their salaries were not backdated. Business suffered as well because they could not claim from their debtors but had to still pay for bills accumulated during the Zimbabwean Dollar era.

Conclusion

The Constitution making process took centre stage during the period 2010-2013, while the

national healing agenda took a back seat. The ONHRI was underfunded and operated without a framework. It therefore did little to address the circumstances of victims. Its primary achievement was the production of the National Policy Framework for Peace and Reconciliation. The Framework seeks to address the healing of physical and psychological wounds resulting from political unrest. Ultimately, this means that the economic aspect of healing is neglected. Zimbabwe needs to revisit the current framework so that it is not only premised on political hurts but also recognises the centrality of economics to the national healing agenda.

²⁹'Compensate for lost Zim dollar savings to restore confidence,' NewsDay (Zimbabwe), 17 March 2014, online at <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2014/03/17/compensate-lost-zimdollar-savings-restore-confidence/>.



Business and National Healing in contemporary Zimbabwe

This section draws on interviews conducted by PBNZ in order to illustrate the contemporary linkages between the business sector and the national healing agenda in Zimbabwe. The concerns raised by interview respondents are grouped under three thematic headings: The Exclusion of Business from Policy Formulation; The Absence of Transparency; and The Failure to Address Economic Injuries. Each of these themes demonstrates that national healing and business are intimately linked, and that neither can proceed very far without the other.

To date, Zimbabwe's policy leaders have made little effort to engage business leaders in the public dialogue concerning national healing. The Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI), which held consultations with many sectors of Zimbabwean society, including youth and women, neglected to schedule a consultation with business leaders. Business leaders themselves have not insisted on their participation in the national healing process, despite having been profoundly affected by the crisis of the past 15 years, and despite the fact that business must play a central role in ensuring a peaceful future in Zimbabwe by helping to break the vicious circle of impoverishment and conflict that has characterised recent history.

National healing processes in other countries have also often overlooked the role of economics and the business sector. A case in point is the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), established in 1995 after the transition to majority rule. The TRC heard extensive testimony on political violence and its psychosocial effects, but did not address economic deprivations or conditions. As a result, after two decades of majority rule, many South Africans feel that independence has not yielded broad economic benefits but has merely given birth to a small black business elite. Frustration with this state of affairs has led to conflict, as

was the case when police in Marikana township shot 44 striking mineworkers in 2012.

This crucial nexus between peace and prosperity is what motivated the Marshall Plan, under which the United States financed the reconstruction of Europe following the Second World War. In his speech launching the program, US Secretary of State George Marshall announced that its purpose was "the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist."

To date, Zimbabwe's national healing debate and process has, like the TRC, avoided consideration of the economic sector. Excluding economic issues from the purview of national healing and reconciliation produces an inadequate picture of the root causes and motivations underlying conflict. It also undervalues the experience of economic suffering and hardship by prioritising narratives of physical violence to the exclusion of structural violence, and discounts the experience and leadership of the business sector. Such an impaired approach cannot aspire to fully heal the wounds of the past.

The Exclusion of Business from Policy Formulation

Zimbabwean business leaders are not typically given space to participate in the formulation



The Business Sector has failed to sustain independent umbrella bodies capable of lobbying on behalf of matters of sectorial and national interest independently of the state.

of either economic or national healing policy. According to respondents, this exclusion reflects both the government's mistrust of independent entrepreneurs as presumed opposition sympathisers, and the wariness of business leaders to publicly espouse policy positions that expose them to accusations of political partisanship. Excluding the business sector from policy formulation results in an impoverished public debate and deficient policies. Business cannot flourish by simply accommodating government policy made without regard for its needs. Equally, policies on national healing formulated without input from business will have major blind spots.

Interview respondents expressed a desire for collaboration between business and government in formulating policy, both in the economic arena and in the area of national healing. Respondents emphasised the cost to business of inconsistent, opaque and unpredictable policies. For example, one respondent indicated that the abrupt introduction of the multicurrency regime in 2009, which effectively cancelled insurance policies held in Zimbabwe dollars, had made people reluctant to purchase insurance in Zimbabwe. Respondents indicated that input from business leaders would help to identify consistent policies to promote sustained economic growth. One respondent indicated that such collaboration

used to take place: "In the past there was a direct link with government, with meetings every month. But with the GNU everyone is fighting everyone and there is a lot suspicion. Cooperation needs to be re-established. There used to be monthly luncheons with the relevant minister." Another respondent pointed out that business leaders are not invited to join policy conferences or national trade delegations to other countries, unlike the practice in other countries.

However, government is not solely responsible for the exclusion of business from policy debate and formulation. Business leaders are themselves wary of the potential pitfalls of engagement in a highly charged and partisan environment. Some are concerned that they may be included in the targeted sanctions as a result of being associated with political leaders. Others are concerned about suffering political reprisals if they speak out on national healing issues.

The Business Sector has failed to sustain independent umbrella bodies capable of lobbying on behalf of matters of sectorial and national interest independently of the state. Commenting on the fractious and politicised state of business' advocacy, one respondent observed, "Business associations are now used as political springboards. Government likes this disjointed group they can manipulate. Business is not united because of petty jealousies. What is needed is to find a way or a directive from government on what they will listen to."

Many respondents indicated that they were not aware of the National Policy Framework on National Healing. Others, who were aware of the Framework, felt that it did not respond to their needs, and pointed out that they had not been involved in its formulation, despite



the fact that business could play the role of an apolitical “honest broker.” These comments, like many others received during the research, clearly indicate that Zimbabwean business has been left out of the process of public policy debate and formulation, to the detriment of both business and the Framework on National Healing.

The Absence of Transparency

Zimbabwean policies in the fields of both economics and national healing also suffer from secrecy, unpredictability and associated perceptions of crony capitalism and political patronage. In 2013, for example, the Chairman of the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission – a body legally committed to political impartiality – became Speaker of Parliament for the ZANU (PF) majority. Such moves undermine the standing of the Human Rights Commission and its fellow Chapter 12 constitutional commissions, including the NPRC, by demonstrating that supposedly independent commissioners are the beneficiaries of political patronage. A similar message is sent when Philip Chiyangwa, one of the country’s most prominent businessmen, attributes his success to political connections³⁰.

One respondent, a businessman in the ICT sector, summed up the absence of transparency as follows: “Business is based on trust and when there is a lot of mistrust business transactions are compromised. In an environment with no peace, business becomes partisan and you are evaluated along partisan lines. This affects business coming up with new projects and results in brain drain. Skill can’t be attracted.” This failure of trust follows years of state hostility

to private enterprise.

The same respondent pointed to the mining industry as a case in point, describing the situation with respect to mining licenses as “lawlessness.” He continued, “Until January 2013 Mbada Diamonds wasn’t a registered company. If you deal with a company that is not bonafide you are not secure.” A similar situation obtains in the offices of the Registrar General and the National Statistics Agency, both public offices with functions that should enable and inform business. “Why is the census report not being released? As business that is what we rely on. We are not getting critical statistics. Suspicion is scaring away potential investors,” argued one respondent.

A similar failure of trust affects taxpayers, another respondent argued. “We need to create confidence in taxpayers, in the provision of water, schools and hospitals. Public resources should not be squandered on officials.” This comment is particularly relevant in light of the recent “Salarygate” scandal concerning huge compensation and benefits afforded the managers of cash-strapped parastatal organisations, at taxpayer expense³¹. Indeed, the persistence of parastatals despite the privatisation drive of the 1990s is indicative of the state’s desire to continue to dominate the economy, treating independent businesses as rivals.

Other respondents echoed this concern over the absence of transparency and its effects on business, including with respect to Zimbabwe’s indigenisation policy. Several respondents applauded the principle behind both Zimbabwe’s

³⁰See “Debt-ridden Chiyangwa Splashes Cash,” Nehanda Radio, 4 April 2012, online at <http://nehandaradio.com/2012/04/04/debt-ridden-chiyangwa-splashes-cash/>

³¹See Takudzwa Munyaka, “Zim: The politics of ‘salarygate,’” Mail & Guardian (SA), 14 February 2014.



indigenisation and land reform policies while also raising concerns about perceptions of patronage in their implementation. Such perceptions can breed conflict, several respondents warned: “Indigenisation is noble but has no credibility.” The absence of clarity in the implementation of these policies undermines their success: “Indigenisation policy has affected the investors, but do we have the money to finance our people to buy the shares? We are shooting ourselves in the foot.” The failure to consult Zimbabwean businesses in drafting indigenisation legislation alienated even those who stood to benefit from the law³².

A similar failure of transparency and implementation has afflicted the Community Share Ownership policy, which respondents indicated has not resulted in meaningful investment for the region³³. “People in Mutare are looking for development and creation of jobs, but the Chinese are employing the Chinese instead of locals who can be trained to do the jobs.” These responses comport with the ongoing controversy over the operation of CSOTs, including claims by major mining companies that they are “unaware” of the existence of CSOTs in their areas of operation³⁴. The opaque management of CSOTs has contributed to the perception that they benefit a select few rather than ordinary community members.

Such conflicts over policy implementation may also take on a regional dimension as they draw on past conflicts, such as Gukurahundi in Matabeleland, as discussed in more detail below.

The Failure to Address Economic Injuries

In addition to challenges in the formulation of policy and implementation thereof there remains an extensive legacy of economic suffering and injustice among the Zimbabwean populace that has not been addressed by the national discourse on peace building and national healing.

Matabeleland is a case in point. As discussed above, Matabeleland endured the Gukurahundi massacres in the 1980s, which began the process of underdevelopment and neglect in the region, the effects of which are still felt today. During the 1990s Matabeleland was considered the manufacturing hub of Zimbabwe. However the region was hardest hit by the economic meltdown of the 2000s. Businesses in Bulawayo closed down, and one respondent said, “Most factories have been converted into churches, illustrating the level of hopelessness at recovery.” Although there have been attempts to revive the economy in the region through the Distressed and Marginalised Areas Fund and Zimbabwe Economic Trade Revival Facility, one interviewee said “some of these funds never came through to the region and the few that did benefited a few companies.” A male interviewee in the manufacturing industry said “government is not serious about the revival of Bulawayo and pays lip service to our pain and demise.”

The people of Matabeleland have become increasingly disgruntled as they feel that the government has not done enough to revive the economy in the region. Respondents

³²Gerald Chateta, “Kasukuwere did not consult Zimbabweans on indigenisation – ZANU-PF activist,” ZimEye.org, 24 March 2010, online at <http://www.zimeye.org/kasukuwere-did-not-consult-zimbabweans-on-indigenisation-zanu-pf-activist/>

³³Community Share Ownership Trusts (CSOTs) are intended to benefit communities through development in areas where natural resources are being commercially exploited. In principle, the community takes ownership of donated shares in the extractive business, and uses revenue to fund development projects. The statutory basis for Community Share Ownership Trusts is not entirely clear, but appears to derive from the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act of 2010 (14:33). The National Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Board apparently intends to establish CSOTs in every district in Zimbabwe.

³⁴Shame Makshori, “Scam Fears In Community Trusts,” Financial Gazette (Zimbabwe), 13 March 2014.



Similarly, the hurts experienced by Zimbabweans as a result of the depreciation of the Zimbabwe dollar and the introduction of the multicurrency regime have had a huge impact on the lives of Zimbabweans.

felt that the de-industrialisation could be politically motivated and an attempt to further marginalise the province. For national healing and reconciliation to be successful there is need for political will to discuss the injustices that the people of Matabeleland have experienced, not just politically but socio-economically as well³⁵. Women in Matabeleland felt particularly left out with one woman saying “Another problem is the discrimination of provinces to the extent that people in Bulawayo are discouraged and we do not think we can do anything meaningful for us to be happy. Women in Harare are happy because they are well taken care of by government and civil society.” Such perceptions follow from the limited public debate around economic policy, particularly as it concerns regional and ethnic cleavages and demands for national healing and reconciliation.

The failure of businesses has left many people unemployed and destitute. Economic flight escalated as people relocated to countries such as Botswana, South Africa and the United Kingdom in search of economic opportunities

so as to take care of their families³⁶. This had a profound impact on the social fabric of the nation. One female respondent in the SME sector mentioned that “Companies closed and the main bread winner lost their job. Women were affected because they had to make sure children had eaten, rent and school fees was paid. The economic downturn destroyed the family system. Husbands would leave to go to foreign countries to look for jobs and women struggled to make ends meet. There was an escalation in broken marriages.”

Government’s imposition of price controls in the years before the multicurrency regime was introduced was not commercially viable, resulting in nationwide shortages of fuel and other necessities. Price controls also effectively made running any sort of business a criminal project. Businesses were compelled to shut down or break the law in order to make ends meet³⁷. Businesspeople that allegedly flouted regulations were arrested, including the general manager of Colcom Foods, a general manager with Jiggers and the Financial Director of Edgars³⁸. This experience did little to foster trust between business and government.

Similarly, the hurts experienced by Zimbabweans as a result of the depreciation of the Zimbabwe dollar and the introduction of the multicurrency regime have had a huge impact on the lives of Zimbabweans. The multi-currency system introduced in 2009 to stabilise the failing economy was brought in literally overnight without warning or consultation. People lost

³⁵For a discussion of perceptions of underdevelopment in Matabeleland, see Maurice T. Vambe (2012) “Zimbabwe genocide: voices and perceptions from ordinary people in Matabeleland and the Midlands provinces, 30 years on,” *African Identities*, 10:3, 281-300.

³⁶It is difficult to establish the full extent of this economic migration, as much of it is undocumented. In 2008, estimates of the number of Zimbabweans in South Africa varied from 1 to 5 million. See Tara Polzer, “South African Government and Civil Society Responses to Zimbabwean Migration,” *Southern African Migration Project*, SAMP Policy Brief No. 22 (December 2008).

³⁷See, for example, Michael Wines, “Zimbabwe Price Controls Cause Chaos,” *New York Times*, 3 July 2007.

³⁸“Price War – 33 Managers in Prison Cells,” *The Herald* (Zimbabwe), 9 July 2007.



their savings, pensions and insurance policies³⁹. Meanwhile, state owned utility providers converted arrears from Zimbabwe dollars to US dollars at an undisclosed rate. Thus ordinary Zimbabweans found their savings erased while their debts were magnified. One female respondent noted that “All of a sudden things went haywire and I lost a lot of money and am now in debt and looking for healing in this regard.”

A woman who owned a small business commented, “The process and rate of dollarization was not consistent and transparent and at the end of the day people lost and could not sustain their businesses. In addition there was a lot of cheating among people because the exchange rate when converting to USD from Zim dollar was not clear.” People feel short changed by the government. A process that acknowledges the economic losses of ordinary Zimbabweans is crucial for the broader national healing process.

Conclusion

The effects of the economic meltdown of the late 2000s are still being felt. The industry and business sector has not revived, with more entities closing down and increasing the unemployment rate. The current economic blueprint, ZimASSET, attributes the country’s economic woes to sanctions and does not address the longstanding economic wounds experienced by Zimbabweans. Looking to the future and Zimbabweans’ need for healing, there is need to broaden the debate on national healing to include economic issues. Addressing the National Policy Framework on National Healing and Reconciliation, one respondent said, “There is need to revisit the model that was used by the late Vice president as it was just touching the surface and not the roots.” For national healing to be holistic policymakers must deal not only with the country’s history of physical violence, but must also address economic injuries that underlie conflict.

³⁹See, for example, Nelson Chenga, “Pension Funds Still Haunted by Hyperinflation,” *Financial Gazette* (Zimbabwe), 23 May 2013.



The Contribution of Business to National Healing

The previous section illustrated the absence of the business sector from the national discourse on healing and reconciliation, and the harmful effects of this absence. This section now turns to strategies for redressing this absence. The section proposes avenues for business to participate in the process of national healing going forward, primarily through engagement with the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC). These recommendations are not intended to be exhaustive; rather, they seek to open a conversation on the appropriate role of business in the process of national healing. A successful national healing process requires input and leadership from civil society, the state and business. Each sector must play its role and collaborate with its partners, particularly as the NPRC begins to take shape and prepare for implementation.

The NPRC has numerous functions prescribed by the constitution, including “to ensure post-conflict justice, healing and reconciliation [and] to develop and implement programmes to promote national healing, unity and cohesion in Zimbabwe and the peaceful resolution of disputes.” The recommendations below suggest how the business sector, by adopting a cross-sectoral approach, can appropriately contribute to the orientation, formation and function of the NPRC.

1. NPRC to Consider Economic Factors and Injuries

In order to promote durable national peace and reconciliation, it is necessary for the NPRC to consider economic injuries and the economic dimensions of conflict in Zimbabwean. This recognition must guide the NPRC in the exercise of all of its functions, especially “to receive and consider complaints from the public and to take such action in regard to the complaints as it considers appropriate” and “to conciliate and mediate disputes among communities, organisations, groups and individuals.

Business leaders must insist on such an approach in advance of the formation of the

NPRC, collaborating with civil society to ensure that government drafts and passes enabling legislation that recognises this crucial element of the national healing process. The business sector must insist on the central relevance of its experience in addressing Zimbabwe’s legacy of conflict.

The NPRC will confront an immense task as it begins its work. The temptation will be to focus only on physical injuries, as many previous commissions in other countries have done, to the exclusion of economic injuries. This is both because the NPRC will need to focus its work in order to arrive at a manageable caseload, and because economic injuries have only recently come to be widely seen as appropriate for consideration by such commissions.

The NPRC’s consideration of economic factors should therefore follow from public dialogue concerning the history outlined in the previous two chapters, as discussed further in the next recommendation.

2. Business To Participate in National Healing Dialogue

Before the NPRC has been formed and



commissioners appointed, the business community must participate in the ongoing national dialogue on healing and reconciliation. In the current phase of this dialogue, contributing will involve representatives of business stepping forward publicly to indicate their concerns and priorities, which have largely been neglected to date, despite repeated suggestions of initiatives such as a land audit and the liberalisation of labour laws.

Business leaders and representatives should come together with labour and civil society to debate and share experiences in order to articulate their agendas, without expecting perfect consensus. Business interests will diverge, and the objective of such debate is to provide opportunities for a range of voices to be heard. The voice of business in national healing will be strengthened to the extent that the range of parties speak in a coherent and organised way, and especially as it includes labour and SMEs rather than only a small number of wealthy business owners.

Such a quorum of business leaders and representatives could be convened by existing umbrella organisations such as the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI), the Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce (ZNCC), or else by forming a new coalition specifically to address the question of national healing.

In whatever forum business chooses to articulate its agendas, it will then be essential for business to collaborate with civil society and with government. Civil society has taken the lead in national healing work to date, and business will need to draw on this body of work in formulating its own agenda. The state, meanwhile, is the

facilitator of the process of national healing. Although the relationship between business and both of these sectors has been strained and mistrustful in the past, as discussed in the previous section, this history must be overcome in the interests of national healing.

3. Business Leaders to be Represented in the Membership of the NPRC

Recognising the important economic dimension to conflict in Zimbabwe indicates that those entrusted with responsibility for ensuring justice, healing and reconciliation should include individuals with experience and expertise in economic matters. The Committee on Standing Rules and Orders, which has responsibility for nominating candidate Commission members for appointment by the President, should therefore include representatives from the business community amongst its nominations.

The constitution requires that “Members of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission must be chosen for their integrity and their knowledge and understanding of, and experience in, mediation, conciliation, conflict prevention and management, post-conflict reconciliation or peace building.” Business leaders could certainly fulfil these criteria. Leading a business requires experience in mediation, conflict prevention and conflict management. As with all commissioners, care would have to be taken in the selection to ensure the perceived integrity of nominees, especially given reports of rampant corruption in many industries and parastatals. The presence of business leaders on the commission would also help to diversify the makeup of the commission, giving it greater stature in the eyes of the Zimbabwean public.



4. Mainstreaming National Healing as a Business policy priority

Government and the private sector should “mainstream” National Healing as a policy priority. Mainstreaming means including aspects of healing and reconciliation in all major policies, as has been done with other crosscutting socioeconomic priorities such as HIV/AIDS and gender. Policies should be framed in ways that promote national healing and that take into account what various sectors in society need in order to achieve healing.

In practical terms, this could have a wide range of impacts. Human Resources policies might apply an “affirmative action” model to individuals or groups who have suffered the most, or encourage community work oriented towards National Healing. Business expansion plans could take account of communities and

regions that have suffered violence when siting new factories and other projects. Finally, business leaders could adopt a proactive policy of strong cooperation with the NPRC in all of the Commission’s operations.

5. Advocate for a National Healing-oriented business policy environment

Business leaders should advocate for the Zimbabwean government to create economic policies that support national healing. As suggested above, greater transparency and participation in the policy-making arena would in itself go some way towards supporting national healing, by reducing unnecessary economic harm to ordinary Zimbabweans. Support could take a number of forms, including for example tax incentives to promote entrepreneurship in historically underdeveloped or victimised regions of the country.



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