

Zimbabwe updated position

Saturday, 9th May 2009

ACTSA welcomes the agreement which has led to the inclusive government in Zimbabwe. We hope the agreement does work and brings about an end to human rights violations, restores democracy, tackles the economic crisis in a humane way and ensures an inclusive and effective response to the humanitarian crisis. It offers some hope to the Zimbabwean people that there is a solution to the political, economic and humanitarian crisis that has gripped their country and affected them for so long.

Zimbabwe will need international support to recover and rebuild. Such support needs to be sustained over a period and provided in such way that Zimbabwe sets the priorities. The government of Zimbabwe and international donors need to be open and include Zimbabwean civil society in the setting of priorities and use of international aid.

ACTSA continues to call for humanitarian aid for the people of Zimbabwe. However, the issue of when western donors should resume direct government to government aid programmes is one that ACTSA has discussed with its partners in Zimbabwe and the southern Africa region. SADC (Southern African Development Community) and the MDCs have called for such aid to be resumed. ACTSA, based on its values and experience is suspicious of donor conditionality on countries in the south. Our partners have however advised there should be caution in re-engagement by western donors with the Zimbabwe government. Our partners have not called for the dropping of the targeted measures adopted by the EU against individuals deemed to be significantly involved in human rights violations in Zimbabwe. Our partners have expressed the view that there should be clear, demonstrable and irreversible actions taken to restore democracy before donors who ceased bilateral aid support, resume and possibly increase it. There remain concerns that human rights continue to be violated; that repressive laws are still on the statute books and that the police, army and civil service instruments are still largely supporting one political party.

ACTSA notes the proposal to have a process of potentially 18 months to produce a new constitution for Zimbabwe. We also note our key partners have expressed concern over this process, that it is not "people driven".

ACTSA will seek to influence major donors (UK, EU, IMF and WB) policy and actions toward Zimbabwe based on close consultation with our partners in Zimbabwe, the region and internationally. We will continue to maintain a close dialogue with our partners in civil society in Zimbabwe.