

ZCTU PRESS RELEASE: 29th September, 2008

RE: Meeting with Mr Tsvangirai and ZCTU ultimatum to Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe on cash withdrawals

1. Meeting with Mr Tsvangirai:

The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) General Council met with Mr Morgan Tsvangirai on Saturday 27 September 2008 seeking an explanation on the contentious issues on the agreement between the MDC and Zanu PF. The ZCTU had raised the following issues in the agreement:

That the agreement:

- Is a far cry from the ZCTU expectations and that it is an outcome of a flawed process.
- Is all about power sharing between Zanu PF and MDC, leaving out primary causes of the dispute which created the current political and economic impasse prevailing in the country.
- Was not all-inclusive as the civic society and other interest groups was not given an opportunity to participate. The exclusion of such critical sectors as labour, and the secretive manner in which issues were discussed, do not give credence to the deal.
- Creates a government that is in itself not a transitional government but a structure incorporating losers;
- Is not about the welfare of the ordinary people, but a political settlement by the elite;
- Is full of Zanu PF rhetoric, like that of sanctions and land, that are far divorced from reality;
- Does not provide power-sharing, rather it creates a ceremonial Prime Minister and an Executive President. It is the ZCTU contention that power involves making and implementing decisions, and this is all vested in the Executive President.
- Gives the Prime Minister a supervisory role of government business, and the Prime Minister is at the mercy of the President;
- Was a rushed document only meant for political accommodation of the MDC in an "inclusive" government;
- Is not clear on the issue of national healing and therefore it gives rise to a government of **national impunity** as expressly seen in the preamble that does not recognise the sacrifices made by Zimbabweans in their fight for democracy after independence in 1980, including the disturbances that took place in Matebeland prior to the Unity Accord of 1987 and the government sponsored Murambatsvina (clean up) of 2005 that left over 700 000 people homeless;
- Preserves and consolidates the power of the incumbent President, and that Zanu PF has veto power in all issues;
- Instead of reducing the number of Ministries to 15 as previously expressed, is an economic disaster for the country as it provides an octopus structure and a blotted government of more than 60 ministers and therefore does not help the ordinary people. In fact, the agreement creates a predatory State instead of a developmental state;
- Is silent on the issue of corruption
- Removes the concept of tripartism, relegating everything to the so-called National Economic Council, **and also making political parties major players of the council.**
- Makes a mockery of the Constitution making process by advocating for a Parliamentary Select Committee that will be responsible for the drafting of a new constitution. The ZCTU believes that this is a top bottom approach to Constitutional making process;
- Does not lead to a free and fair elections

After a briefing from Mr Tsvangirai, it was agreed there were some differences and some issues would be subject to further discussion. Mr Tsvangirai made it clear that this was not the best he hoped for, but a compromise agreement. In other words, the working methods of the new government is left to the behest of the President. It behoves to the MDC to prove that they will meet the people's expectations.

The General Council therefore resolved to maintain its earlier position that

- The agreement is far cry from the ZCTU expectations as it is an outcome of a flawed process. From a labour point of view, the agreement is not acceptable. Any country must be governed by a democratically elected government and the current arrangement means that the people would be led by an unelected government for the next five years
- The ZCTU views the arrangement as a temporary structure that denies Zimbabweans the right to put in place a government through a democratic process which includes a people driven constitutional making process
- The ZCTU will view the "new government" structure as a temporary (stop gap) measure and will engage it as such, in all its dealings with this "government" in the absence of an elected government
- The ZCTU maintains its earlier position on the need for a **Neutral Transitional Authority** as the panacea to the current electoral dispute. However, if the present arrangement is to continue, it must be a transitional arrangement that will lead to a free and fair election under a new, people driven constitution

2. On ZCTU ultimatum to Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe on cash withdrawals

As you might be aware The ZCTU General Council met on Saturday 20, September 2008 and gave the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) a seven day ultimatum to address the current deepening cash crisis affecting the generality of Zimbabwean workers.

This followed concerns that ordinary Zimbabweans, particularly workers, were finding it difficult to access their hard earned money from the bank.

Following moves by the RBZ to resolve the issue, the General Council noted the response by the Governor of the RBZ and that although it is not enough, it goes some way in alleviating the suffering of workers.

To this end, the Mass Action pencilled for 1st of October has been deferred while we assess, in consultation with our structures, the impact of the RBZ move to increase the daily maximum withdrawal from \$1 000 to \$20 000.

The General council also expressed its dismay at the move by the RBZ to allow shops to sell products in forex as this will seriously affect the ordinary people who have no access to foreign currency. The ZCTU reserves the right to take action as it may deem necessary.

Lovemore Matombo
ZCTU President
29 September 2008

Communiqué of the Special General Council of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) held on 20 September 2008 at the Quality International Hotel in Harare

We, the **General Council** members of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), meeting at the Quality International Hotel in Harare on 20 September 2008, to deliberate, among other issues, the recent signing of the so-called power sharing deal between the Zimbabwe African National Union -Patriotic Front (Zanu PF) and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and having;

- **Shared** experiences on other power sharing experiences like the Kenyan experience, the 1979 Lancaster House Agreement between Zanu PF and the Rhodesian Front, and the 1987 Unity Agreement between Zanu PF and PF Zapu.
- **Discussed** and **analysed** the contents of the agreement and its effects on the general workforce and Zimbabwe in general;
- **Explored** the nature and extent of the national crisis facing Zimbabwe;
- **Considered** the economic and legal impact of the agreement signed by the two political parties.

Recognising that ZCTU general council of 21 June and 12 July 2008,

- a. **CLEARLY** stated that the 27 June Presidential election was not an election, but a declaration of war against the people of Zimbabwe by the ruling party;
- b. **OBSERVED** that The Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Election Observer Mission said “**The elections did not represent the will of the people of Zimbabwe**” and that The Pan-African Parliament (PAP) Observer Mission concluded that the atmosphere prevailing in the country during the elections “**did not give rise to the conduct of free, fair and credible elections...**”; and that the African Union (AU) Observer Mission also noted that “**in the context of the AU Declaration of the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa, it is the considered view of the African Union Observers Mission that the Election process fell short of accepted AU standards**”;
- c. **OBSERVED** that the nature of the current dispute was about the 27 June 2007 Presidential Election Run Off, not the 29 March 2008 Harmonised Local Government, Parliamentary, senatorial and Presidential elections;
- d. **NOTED** that the composition and structure of negotiations should at least stick to the parties of the 27th June Presidential elections, that is, Zanu PF's Robert Mugabe and MDC's Morgan Tsvangirai.

Further noting that the ZCTU had observed that:

- The mediator in the talks, South African President Thabo Mbeki was perceived as sympathetic to the ruling party Zanu PF.
- Other players not connected to the Presidential election dispute have been included
- The talks were concentrated on the issue of power sharing and Government of National Unity (GNU) at the exclusion of other options

Also noting that the General Council had resolved that:

- The 27 July 2008 elections were not free and fair and did not represent the will of the people of Zimbabwe;
- That the mediation efforts should not have been left to President Thabo Mbeki alone, but expanded to include other AU members, preferably a retired President who would work full-time;
- The MDC fronted by Authur Mutambara was not supposed to be part of the talks since the election in dispute is that of 27 June 2008, of which only two Presidential candidates, Robert Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai took part;
- A Government of National Unity was a subversion of our National Constitution and only a **Neutral Transitional Authority** should have been put in place

with a mandate to take Zimbabwe to fresh, free and fair elections that would hopefully not be disputed by the parties.

The ZCTU General council **noted** that the agreement:

- Is a far cry from the ZCTU expectations and that it is an outcome of a flawed process.
- Is all about power sharing between Zanu PF and MDC, leaving out primary causes of the dispute which created the current political and economic impasse prevailing in the country.
- Was not all-inclusive as the civic society and other interest groups was not given an opportunity to participate. The exclusion of such critical sectors as labour, and the secretive manner in which issues were discussed, do not give credence to the deal.
- Creates a government that is not a transitional government but a structure incorporating losers;
- Is not about the welfare of the ordinary people, but a political settlement by the elite;
- Is full of Zanu PF rhetoric, like that of sanctions and land, that are far divorced from reality;
- Does not provide power-sharing, rather it creates a ceremonial Prime Minister and an Executive President. It is the ZCTU contention that power involves making and implementing decisions, and this is all vested in the Executive President.
- Gives the Prime Minister a supervisory role of government business, and the Prime Minister is at the mercy of the President;
- Was a rushed document only meant for political accommodation of the MDC in an “inclusive” government;
- Is not clear on the issue of national healing and therefore it gives rise to a government of national impunity as expressly seen in the preamble that does not recognise the sacrifices made by Zimbabweans in their fight for democracy after independence in 1980, including the disturbances that took place in Matebeland prior to the Unity Accord of 1987 and the government sponsored Murambatsvina (clean up) of 2005 that left over 700 000 people homeless;
- Preserves and consolidates the power of the incumbent, and that Zanu PF has veto power in all issues;
- Instead of reducing the number of Ministries to 15 as previously expressed, is an economic disaster for the country as it provides an octopus structure and a bloated government of more than 60 ministers and therefore does not help the ordinary people. In fact, the agreement creates a predatory State instead of a developmental state;
- Is silent on the issue of corruption
- Removes the concept of tripartism, relegating everything to the so-called National Economic Council, **and also making political parties major players of the council.**
- Makes a mockery of the Constitution making process by advocating for a Parliamentary Select Committee that will be responsible for the drafting of a new constitution. The ZCTU believes that this is a top bottom approach to Constitutional making process;
- The agreement does not lead to a free and fair elections

Therefore **resolved that:**

- The agreement is far cry from the ZCTU expectations as it is an outcome of a flawed process. From a labour point of view, the agreement is not acceptable. Any country must be governed by a democratically elected government and the current arrangement means that the people would be led by an unelected government for the next five years

- The ZCTU views the arrangement as a temporary structure that denies Zimbabweans the right to put in place a government through a democratic process which includes a people driven constitutional making process
- The ZCTU will view the “new government” structure as a temporary (stop gap) measure and will engage it as such, in all its dealings with this “government” in the absence of an elected government
- The ZCTU maintains its earlier position on the need for a **Neutral Transitional Authority** as the panacea to the current electoral dispute. However, if the present arrangement is to continue, it must be a transitional arrangement that will lead to a free and fair election under a new, people driven constitution
- Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) president, Mr Morgan Tsvangirai be invited to meet with the General Council on 27 September 2008 with a view to get the General Council’s view on the deal and also for the General Council to get an explanation on why he signed such a deal
- ZCTU conscientise workers on its position regarding the deal signed by Zanu PF and MDC

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Lovemore Matombo (President)