



Transforming Youth, Transforming Zimbabwe



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS (NAYO)
IN COLLABORATION WITH
LEAVE NO YOUTH BEHIND (LNYB)**

30 JULY 2018 HARMONIZED ELECTIONS

STATEMENT

BACKGROUND

The National Association of Youth Organizations (NAYO) is an umbrella association of youth organizations working in Zimbabwe. The mission of NAYO being to redress the challenges that youth are facing and to work towards their active participation, NAYO appreciates that youth have an integral role to play in national development processes. NAYO at the national level is the Youth Representative in the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) as well as the Youth Sector Chair with the National Association of NGOs (NANGO). Anchored on its four clusters, NAYO in collaboration with the Leave No Youth Behind Campaign, a platform of 100 Youth organizations and campaigns spearheaded by a 22-member steering committee of Youth and Student Organizations under the Civic Participation Cluster joined hands to foster youth participation in the electoral processes.

Driven by the worrisome statistics of the 2013 election where only 8.87% of youth registered to vote (RAU report 2013), this campaign utilized its four key pillars, Go Mobilize, Go Educate, Go Register, Go Vote in encouraging the youth to engage more meaningfully in the electoral process not only as voters but also as election candidates. As key stakeholders of the whole electoral process from Voter registration, campaigning, voting day process and post-election proceedings, NAYO in collaboration with the Leave No Youth Behind note the following key points post the 30 July Harmonized Elections:

POST ELECTION KEY POINTS

Shrinking Civic space

Post the 30 July 2018 elections, NAYO notes with concern the continued shrinking of civic spaces for youth participation especially in electoral processes. With a much higher turn out of youth who registered to vote on 30 July 2018 at 43.5% (ZEC 2018), the continued violations of individual's political rights pose huge challenges in restoring confidence for a meaningful youth participation in electoral processes. We note with concern the targeting of youth activists and opposition members within rural and urban areas as ways to intimidate and instill fear in youth – this in violation of the freedoms to demonstrate and assemble. The recent skirmishes and incidences of violence have been given a youth-face, a trend that is worrisome as it reflects negatively on the agency of youth – youth are critical actors even in this post election period. In addition, the recent events have reminded youth of previous electoral periods marred with violence and intimidation which has been driving youth apathy in electoral processes. We risk losing the gains in youth agency post the election period.

Violence and Intimidation

NAYO appreciates the peace and calmness enjoyed prior to the 30 July 2018 Harmonized elections and the increased number of youth who registered to Vote credit to such efforts as the Leave No Youth Behind. However, NAYO notes with great concern the unpleasant violent scenes which engulfed the country on August 1 2018. This has continued with harassment of

youth across the country especially those of the opposition, CSOs and youth members who also include the general Zimbabwe citizenry. This can be noted for such areas as Mashonaland West, Manicaland and Mutasa and continues to be a threat to Human Rights. This in turn tends to hinder participation of youth in electoral processes going forward.

Independence of the Judiciary

The continued clampdown of opposition party agents and leaders is also noted with concern. This is also added to the interventions into the duties of the judiciary by the executive hence NAYO calls on the total independence of the Judiciary in executing their duties.

Conclusion

NAYO continues to urge all political party leaders to uphold the commitments of the National Peace Pledge which they committed to on 26 June 2018. In the same vain, NAYO urges all the youth to refrain from violence as all disputes can be resolved using peaceful means. As umbrella body of Youth organizations in Zimbabwe and a representative of Youth in the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC), NAYO continues to urge the Government to ensure full protection of its citizens as per the dictates of the Constitution. It remains the vision of NAYO to ensure a repositioned, redefined and enhanced role of youth in Zimbabwe's development agenda which can fully be achieved through the meaningful participation of youth in electoral processes not only as voters but also as election candidates.