



## FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

Plot 284 Omelo Mumba Road, Rhodespark P O Box 32387, Lusaka, Zambia

Tel: +260-211-236281; Tel/fax: +260-211-236275

E-mail: [fodep@zamnet.zm](mailto:fodep@zamnet.zm) Website: [www.fodep.org.zm](http://www.fodep.org.zm)

---

### **Interim statement on its findings on the pre-election period for the 2008 Presidential By-Election**

#### **Introduction**

The Foundation for Democratic Process (FODEP) monitored the conduct of all stakeholders in the campaign period as well as electoral processes, including printing, packaging, transportation, and verification, of the ballot papers in South Africa and Zambia. It is from this experience that FODEP has found it necessary to state its observations and concerns ahead of the forthcoming Presidential Election on Thursday, 30<sup>th</sup> October 2008.

As an ardent believer in the attainment of a truly democratic society and promoter of free, fair and credible electoral process, FODEP believes that a successful electoral process is one in which key institutions operate independently and impartially and make it difficult for one to fortify even a temporal electoral advantage over other contestants.

We also believe that only if all contestants are allowed to compete, have equal chances to win and assume office can the process be considered democratic, free, fair and credible.

Since its inception, FODEP has raised, exposed many concerns in relation to electoral malpractices and corruption and made recommendations to relevant authorities in a hope that the exposed anomalies could be addressed.

#### **Voter Registration**

FODEP regrets the large numbers of eligible voters who will be disenfranchised, because the registration process was not reopened. At the same time, FODEP understands that the requirement to hold the election within 90 days did not offer the time necessary to reopen voter registration. Therefore, FODEP renews its calls for a continuous voter registration exercise to avoid disenfranchising many would-be voters.

The ECZ provision for providing replacement voter's cards was a welcome move. However, the process for providing these cards experienced problems. The period given to the affected people to have their cards replaced was a source of worry to many stakeholders. Many people who lost their cards were unable to do so because of either the distance to registration centres or due to time factor. Voters applying for cards were given no receipt to claim their cards at the polling station on election day. FODEP is concerned that this process may lead to confusion and mistrust on election day.

## **Electoral Processes**

FODEP applauds the decision of the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) to post polling station results within the polling station immediately after the counting is complete. This move represents a welcome introduction of transparency in the counting and tallying process. However FODEP is concerned with the ECZ's instruction to Presiding Officers to combine the ballots from multiple streams into a single counting process, rather than counting where the votes are cast. Combining ballot boxes from multiple stations reduces the transparency and observeability of process. Particularly given concerns about the additional ballots, the ECZ should be making efforts to keep the counting process as clear and transparent as possible.

## **Bribery, donation and other philanthropic activities**

FODEP has observed with concern the influence of the huge sums of money, bribery, electoral corruption and malpractices and voter blackmail through donation of materials such as goods and services as enticements by contesting political parties. This election has been characterized by several illegal activities connected to treating, public and private donations and other means of unduly influence on the voters and this started before the official campaign period commenced. FODEP has also noted with concern the extensive use of government resources in the campaign. FODEP calls on senior Government officials to set pace in providing leadership in the fight against electoral corruption and malpractices and ensure that the free will of the electorate stands clear of any form of distortion and undue influence.

FODEP maintains that the first step in combating these practices is to introduce legal reforms that would compel political parties to disclose the source of their funding and their expenditures. FODEP also encourages the government to consider setting some limits on campaign spending. Finally, FODEP renews its calls for a fixed election date, enshrined in the constitution, in order that the election calendar cannot be manipulated to serve a political agenda.

## **Political Campaigns**

FODEP is however concerned with some statements from some politicians that they would not accept the election results outcome should they do not go their way. We cannot gamble on peace. FODEP calls on all parties to preach peace throughout the election and to respect the political and legal processes for resolving grievances.

## **Media**

The role of the media in a democracy is to educate and inform citizens. The media has not fulfilled their obligation to provide substantive, unbiased information to allow citizens to make an informed decision in this election.

## **The Role of Traditional Leaders**

FODEP has observed that many traditional leaders violated the constitutional provisions which bar them from actively involved in politics. In this election, we have observed with concern that our traditional leaders have openly taken positions and supported candidates. FODEP would like to advise our traditional leaders to continue playing their rightful role during and after elections-that of being neutral.

## **FODEP's Observation and PVT**

FODEP through its election monitoring process hopes to promote a healthy democratic society in which individuals cannot only pursue their own personal goals but one in which citizens' willingness to use their rights and freedom to participate in the affairs of their country through election is safeguarded. FODEP and its civil society partners will post observers in nearly every polling stream on election day. These observers will be collecting information to inform the final statement and to protect the rights of citizens to vote and to have their votes counted.

From 2001 to 2006, the electoral process has been okay but the problem has been the result management. It is from this backdrop that FODEP in collaboration with other civil society organisations (CSOs) decided to utilize the Parallel Voter Tabulation (PVT) technique in this election. PVT is a technique which puts more emphasis on the final stage of the election monitoring process—the vote counting. The general purpose of the PVT is to verify the accuracy of the election results reported by electoral authorities as they are transmitted from the counting centres to the central levels of the election administration and if properly implemented, the technique helps to deter fraud by increasing the prospect that manipulation during the tabulation process will be discovered, suggest a true vote count when fraud is attempted and enhances confidence in and acceptance of, official results if they are consistent with the PVT. FODEP is undertaking this exercise with the technical expertise from the National Democratic institute for International Affairs (NDI).

In addition, FODEP is appealing to all political parties contesting this election to assign vigilant and alert monitors at polling stations.

## **Conclusion**

FODEP acknowledges that despite isolated incidents of violence, in general the conduct of the campaigns was peaceful, respectful and free from violence and intimidation. While the campaign period saw many irregularities and willful violation of the Electoral Code of Conduct in the form of campaign bribery, blackmail and enticements, FODEP believe that on October 30<sup>th</sup> Zambians will be provided an opportunity to vote their conscious. FODEP calls on all voters to vote in this important Presidential Election. When the election is over and results have been announced, FODEP calls on all parties to maintain peace and order. In this regard, FODEP will be launching a white ribbon as a symbol of peace during and after the elections and is further advising all politicians to respect the will of the people in this election and allow the legal and political systems to resolve any tension that might arise after the election.

God Bless you

Thank you all.

For more information contact:

Elijah Rubvuta            0955 754175

McDonald Chipenzi    0977 874198

fodep@coppernet.zm