

CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The conference intended specifically to engage civil society on the role it should play in the current dialogue between ZANU PF Government and the opposition MDC. Civil Society representatives were also expected to debate on the issue of transition concentrating on the form, composition, duration and other related aspects of the Transition Government.

The objective of this conference is to develop a unified Civil Society position on:

- ◆ The process required to move Zimbabwe out of its current multi-layered crisis;
- ◆ The strategy necessary to promote this process and ensure its rapid facilitation; and
- ◆ The methods through which this position and strategy will be debated and engaged with by the broader Zimbabwean population.

To guide the proceedings of the Conference the Crisis Coalition after consultation with heads of Civil Society Organizations had prepared a paper (“the yellow paper”) for discussion with the stakeholders that the Conference would adopt or reject accordingly. The paper outlined the following:

- ◆ The Crisis Coalition position on the process and content of achieving an amicable solution to the current crisis in Zimbabwe
- ◆ Exposed the weakness of the current process led by Mbeki, Obasanjo and Muluzi and
- ◆ A suggested way forward that will be sustainable in the long term.

The Coalition developed thematic areas that the delegates used to focus their inputs in the final Resolutions of the Conference and to amend the contents of the Yellow Paper. Each thematic group was to feature a presentation by one or more speakers, and group discussion on the key issues. The following themes informed the delegates’ discussions:

- ◆ Land Reform – The Way Forward (Presenter – Lloyd Sachikonye)

- ◆ Economy in Transition (Presenters – Godfrey Kanyenze, Davie Malungisa and Deprose Muchena)
- ◆ Political Issues of Transition (Presenters – Prof Brian Raftopoulos)
- ◆ Human Rights, Truth and Justice (Presenter—Janah Ncube)
- ◆ Legal/Technical Questions (Presenter – Dr Lovemore Madhuku)

Expected outputs of the conference included:

- ◆ A broadly agreed civic position on concerns surrounding dialogue and transition;
- ◆ Specific civil society positions on key sectoral concerns surrounding transition (e.g. land, the economy, legal requirements and human rights concerns);
- ◆ A clear plan of action for civil society actors to implement in order to promote these resolutions in their own sectors.

The conference achieved the consensus it sought on “the yellow paper,” and succeeded in collecting additions and amendments from participants, so that the final yellow paper reflects the full cross section of civil society.

In addition, the thematic groups developed distinct resolutions on the concerns of a transition for each sector. These are included as resolutions at the end of each thematic group’s discussion section in the report.

The conference fell short, however, of developing a unified action plan for civil society to achieve transition. A one day conference proved insufficient time for the large number of delegates to fully develop an action plan and agree on the necessary strategy to ensure that any political transition takes civil society’s concerns into consideration. This is a shortcoming that must be addressed by the Crisis Coalition and member organisations if the platform presented in the yellow paper is to be achieved and respected.