



VOLUME ONE

# Dispatches on peace and sustainable development

A collection of 2011–2012 dialogue proceedings facilitated by AFSC in Zimbabwe

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**American Friends  
Service Committee**

## **About AFSC**

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is a Quaker organization that promotes lasting peace with justice as a practical expression of faith in action. Drawing on continuing spiritual insights and working with people of many backgrounds, we nurture the seeds of change and respect for human life that transform social relations and systems.

Our work in Africa began in the late 1950s and '60s, when we provided relief services and skills training to Algerian refugees in Morocco and Tunisia during the Algerian struggle for independence from France.

Today our work in Burundi, Kenya, Somalia, and Zimbabwe promotes lasting peace and reconciliation by helping youth, women, and men heal from the trauma of violence, develop marketable skills, and bring divided communities together.

Our Dialogue and Exchange Program (DEP) extends the impact of this work to an additional 20 to 25 countries. DEP brings together grassroots, civil society, and government leaders so they can learn, exchange ideas, and collectively solve problems. In addition, our Washington, D.C.-based Public Education and Advocacy Program works in the United States to educate people about Africa and engages African diaspora communities to influence U.S. policy on Africa.

## **Acknowledgments**

The American Friends Service Committee would like to thank all the contributors to this inaugural edition of *Dispatches on Peace and Sustainable Development*, Zimbabwe. We would also like to thank AFSC staff members Definate Mudzingwa and Nthabiseng Nkomo for their help with the final revisions to this report. And we would like to thank all the people who have regularly and without fail attended the AFSC learning group discussions.

We are grateful for the generous support provided by Porticus for processes that led to the development of this publication.

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# Dispatches on peace and sustainable development

Dispatches on Peace and Sustainable Development (Volume 1) is a collection of dialogue proceedings based on learning group meetings (LGM) facilitated between 2010 and 2012 by the American Friends Service Committee in Zimbabwe in collaboration with Development Education Innovations Southern Africa Trust (DEISAT).

We initiated learning group meetings in 2010 to provide a support, stimulus, and resource for the good work that already existed in the areas of conflict transformation and peace building in Zimbabwe. The meetings provided a free space where development practitioners working in various fields could meet regularly to discuss, study, share, explore, and learn from each other's experiences on issues that they considered of practical importance to their work and professional development. The meetings also offered them the chance to deepen their understanding and increase individual and collective capacities and contributions to sustainable development in Zimbabwe.

The meetings were held every third Thursday of the month and were highly interactive and participatory. Discussion topics and resource persons were identified through a consultative process. Short papers were presented to stimulate discussion and learning. Different participants attended sessions of interest to them. Each session began with group discussions that gave everyone an opportunity to engage with others and to share their own perspectives, values, passion, and experience on the topic being discussed. Group discussions were followed by input from a resource person and a critical analysis and discussion of the issues raised by this input. A summary of key learning points were noted at the end of each discussion.

This publication presents some of the documented discussions. We hope that readers will find the material informative, enriching, and useful in enhancing peace-building practices in Zimbabwe and other parts of the world.

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# Conflict analysis

## Zimbabwe as a reference point

BY JOHN STEWART

Often when we try to intervene in a conflict we find ourselves confused and caught in difficult situations because we know little about the situation or we try to apply lessons learnt from elsewhere thus ignoring the context. To increase our chances of success, we need to undertake a conflict analysis in order to understand the context of the conflict.

The purpose of the discussion was to help everyone understand what conflict analysis is, why it is important to analyse a conflict, and the tools to use when analysing a conflict.

### The what and why of conflict analysis

Conflict analysis was defined as a form of intervention that empowers those who engage with the process to increase their levels of awareness of the situation. For it to be meaningful, conflict analysis must be instrumental, leading to a strategy and organisation of action. The objective of conflict analysis is to increase our understanding of the real issues and design action models to bring people together (i.e., building relationships). Conflict analysis requires going beyond the rhetoric and identifying root causes of conflict. Its aim is to expose something, propose, impose, or depose.

Expose means bringing to the open in order to propose (i.e., offer solutions). In a conflict analysis, impose does not have negative connotations; it refers to a constructive channeling of energy. It is positive confrontation and instrumental. The information generated from conflict analysis is very important in designing an appropriate model or action plan.

It is important to note that conflict analysis is not a neutral process. It's influenced by interests, values, and power dynamics. The choice of how to do a conflict analysis is dependent on the interests of those involved (i.e., it is tailored to the needs of the end users). It is not about the truth but rather getting a perspective on the issue. It's necessary to question in whose interests the analysis is being done. To produce a good analysis, one must take into consideration different perspectives. This may mean bringing in many voices and going beyond a sense of being right in order to focus on possible collective action. However, the con-

flict analysis can become shallower as the group becomes broader. The analysis has to incorporate a sense of the future. What do we want to see happening?

### Tools to use when analyzing a conflict

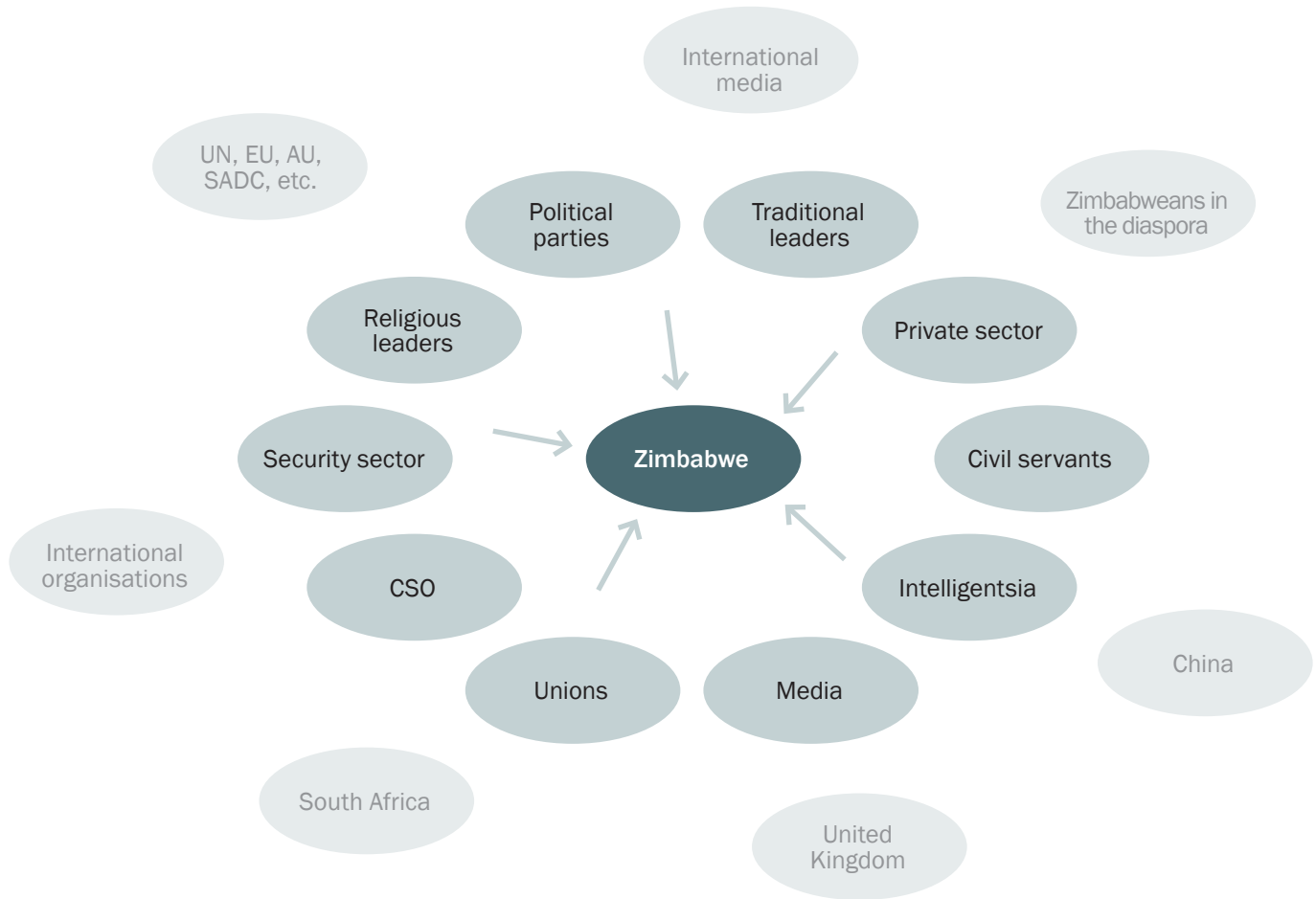
There are many tools that practitioners can use to establish a better understanding of the context in which they are working. The choice of tools is often influenced by the perspectives and the dynamics of the conflict. Some of the tools normally used in conflict analysis include conflict mapping, force-field analysis, and the conflict tree.

The conflict mapping tool is a group-based exercise that involves drawing diagrams of a conflict that depict the main actors, their relationships, and the dynamics of the conflict. The force-field analysis tool is also a group-based exercise that involves analyzing forces that help or hinder the resolution of a conflict. The conflict tree involves mapping the root causes and effects of violent conflicts according to the perspectives of the people in a conflict.

A practical exercise was done on mapping major actors in the Zimbabwean conflict. The map below represents outcomes of the process:

- Blue circles represent groups of people and institutions that have a direct bearing on the conflict in Zimbabwe. The institutions were perceived to have power to influence conflict escalation or de-escalation.
- Dotted circles represent groups of people, institutions, and countries that indirectly influence the conflict in Zimbabwe. They were also perceived to have the power to influence the escalation or de-escalation of the conflict in Zimbabwe.

## Group mapping of major actors in the Zimbabwean conflict



### Key lessons from the meeting

- Conflict analysis empowers those who engage with the process by increasing their understanding of the real issues before they design any action steps.
- Conflict analysis is not a neutral process. It's influenced by the interests, values, and power dynamics of those involved in the analysis.
- Conflict analysis is not about the truth but about getting a perspective on the issue.
- To produce a good analysis, it is important to consider different perspectives. This may mean bringing in different voices and going beyond a sense of being right in order to focus on possible collective action.



## Making our work for peace and development transformative

BY RONA MUGADZA

In contemporary development and peace building, the term transformation is used without critically thinking about what it means and what is required to operate in a transformative paradigm. There is a lot of inconsistency between verbalised transformation and the values and attitudes projected in practice.

The presenter started by pointing out that transformation is first and foremost about a paradigm shift in the way practitioners promote development. This involves developing new levels of consciousness in individuals, groups, communities, and society as a whole. Critical consciousness is regarded as the most important level, because it is here that transformation can take place.

Transformation requires that we understand the level of consciousness of the community or groups that we work with and the type of support we are giving.

Paulo Freire, a Brazilian philosopher and adult educator, provides a theoretical framework that can be used by practitioners to analyse and understand the levels of consciousness of a group of community. It can also be used to identify the type of support that can reinforce or transform people's situations.

The first level is defined as closed or broken consciousness. At this level, people have unquestioning consciousness. They do not challenge the world because they believe the way things are is natural, unchangeable, and the only way things can be. They do not see alternatives to the situation. Their unquestioning acceptance makes them see their situation as divinely ordained. Usually they have magical explanations of things because they have resigned everything to supernatural powers. They are impermeable to challenges outside the demands of biological necessities. Their interests are centered on matters of survival. Approaches that can reinforce the situation include focusing their attention on changes that come from outside, thinking for people, doing things that they should be doing themselves, setting the agenda with limited consultation, giving free handouts, failing to develop collective responsibility, and not getting involved in people's struggles. These approaches make people internalize social norms, which limits their range of possible behaviours. Approaches that can transform the sit-

uation and create positive peace include focusing on change that comes from within the people, thinking with people, and building their capacity to break the culture of silence so they can start to trust their own experiences and open up to engage in dialogue with others.

The second level is defined as awakening consciousness. At this level people have a consciousness characterized by over-simplification of problems and longing for the past. People are aware of inequalities and injustices but have no interest in finding out why things are the way they are. They are engaged in self-reliant activities and are interested in fanciful explanation of reality and engaging in a dialogue. Approaches that can reinforce the situation include taking quick action to meet immediate needs, promoting small community development projects with authorised leadership, and not training people in democratic participation and decision making. In these approaches, there is more concern with the success of the projects and not the development of people. Approaches that can transform the situation include allowing people to express their insights, expectations, and reasons for action, promoting a shared vision, and developing new patterns of decision making, joint planning, shared community responsibility and searching for causes of injustices.

The third level is defined as reforming consciousness. It involves shifting from perception to analysis and asking questions such as "Why?" and "But why?" This approach is often the start of the struggle for existing power positions though it does not challenge existing structural issues. Approaches that can reinforce the situation include formation of large organisations with centralised authority that impose ideologies on others, promoting economic growth but not questioning the type of growth, and seeing politics only in terms of elections. Approaches that can transform the situation include the involvement of the community in analysing their situation and in planning, implementing, and reviewing the activities.

The fourth level is defined as the development of critical consciousness (i.e., a liberating and transforming consciousness). It's a state where people question old values, express new ones, and engage in the creation of new types of

structures that reflect the new values. At this level people can know that freedom is never achieved “once and for all,” liberation is a permanent process of renewal, and one must constantly guard against new patterns of oppression. They are able to deeply interpret problems, test out their findings, and are open to revision and reconstruction through dialogue. At this stage individuals have a vantage point of viewing different perspectives on a horizontal plane. They are able to link learning with action and transformation. They find hope in creating a just and free society. Approaches that can weaken the situation include an over-emphasis on technology for the sake of efficiency, allowing tribal, racial, and cultural differences to divide those who basically share the same interests, failing to come up with a careful strategy of dealing with imperialism, and downplaying failures. Approaches that can strengthen the situation include encouraging building of movements that reflect personal and organisational life, establishing structures of self-management and active participation at all levels, keeping open communication in the groups, and building international solidarity with other groups involved in similar struggles.

desire and power to work collectively with others in transforming social actions.

### **Making peace building and development transformative**

Making peace and development transformative is about developing critical consciousness among the people and empowering them to be their own liberators. This is not something that happens by making public pronouncements. Instead, development practitioners must take time to critically assess people’s level of consciousness and work with them until they develop a critical consciousness.

When working with the people, practitioners should avoid using top-down approaches which foster respect of the status quo and the knowledge of the so-called “experts.” In top-down approaches people are made to fit obediently into pre-designed programmes. Ways should be found to make people creative, active, and responsible members of their society. The focus needs to be on change that comes from within the people and this requires thinking with them, building their capacities to trust their own experiences and open up to engage in dialogue with others.

Liberation starts when people have the opportunity to engage in a dialogue and share ideas on issues that are important to them. Liberating peace building and development requires focusing on the experiences of people, giving their immediate reality a new beginning, a present, and most importantly a future. It aims to awaken within people the



## Safety issues in a conflict situation

BY AFSC AND DEISAT

Development and peace can be risky activities in a conflict situation. Issues of safety and security are critical if an organisation is to respond and operate effectively. The concept of security has been shifting from territorial to human or inclusive security, particularly the contribution of citizens to human security.

Three meetings were held on the issue of safety when working in a conflict situation. Resource persons and panelists who gave their input to the topic included:

- Jestina Mukoko from Zimbabwe Peace Project
- Tineyi Mukweva from Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights
- Retired Colonel Godwin Nkosi from Zimbabwe Defence Forces
- Colonel Bassie Bangidza from University of Zimbabwe Centre for Defence Studies
- Samantha Sanangurayi from AFC
- Susan Ngugu from Chikukwa

### How practitioners can stay safe in a conflict situation

The discussion started by defining the meaning of the term “security” and then moved on to explore factors that give people a sense of security, conditions that create risks and threats, and security measures that are needed to make those who work in the field safe.

Key areas of security noted were the economy, energy, food, health, climate change, and national disaster, hard basic human needs and security of individuals, shelter, and employment. Factors that give people a sense of security when working in a conflict situation include development being in a familiar environment, among people who are trustworthy and who share similar goals and activities.

Conditions that created risks and threats included:

- Verbal labelling, physical attacks, and abductions of NGOs staff. In 2008, some staff members from NGOs

were said to have been abducted or forced to seek asylum in other countries for allegedly being a threat to national security. Levels of surveillance made on people’s residences or offices by unknown people were said to have increased in 2008.

- Both foreign and local NGOs were targeted as they were perceived as not neutral because they were receiving funding from countries alleged to have imposed sanctions of the government. Those that were pursuing social justice through advocacy, human rights, governance, and security were perceived to be at higher risk as they were accused of pursuing a “regime-change agenda.”
- In a polarised context many NGOs were finding themselves in a dilemma on issues of neutrality, impartiality, and independence in the face of gross violation of human rights, injustices, or where food aid was used to pursue political ends.
- The presence of the military in civil spaces (residential areas and in rural communities) took away people’s civil liberties and created psychological threats. In addition, some youth were said to have been moving around in high density suburbs singing and mobilizing people to attend overnight political meetings. The environment was becoming less safe and very susceptible to outbreaks of violence.
- Unemployment, brain drain, and economic meltdown were also creating insecurity.
- Because people fear for their personal safety, victims of political violence have not been supported in organizing and representing their issues.
- Security agencies were perceived as not always ready to secure the lives of ordinary individuals and communities but more concerned with protecting the rights and interests of those in power.
- Internal fragmentation of processes and too much of “talk shops” with very little implementation.
- The absence of the spirit of self-determination.

- Defining security sector only in terms of liberation laws.

### **Security measures that need to be taken by those directly working in conflict situations**

- First and foremost, people need to secure themselves before being secured by others. Personal security can be improved by having other people we know around us and being conscious of how others respond to our activities.
- The concept of a “security wheel” was introduced (i.e., positioning oneself in a way that you are able to get space or room to manoeuvre). This can be supported by a good community early warning system.
- Strengthening civil-military relations (i.e., trust and confidence building between security sector organs and the people). Civic education programmes for the military was perceived as one of the key strategies.

### **How citizens can contribute to the improvement of human security in Zimbabwe**

- Ideas shared included peace and human rights education, life skills development for young people, making the government accountable to the people, community dialogues, civil-military relations, and connecting different sectors. Security does not make sense without the others.
- Major challenges faced by people as they try to contribute to security in Zimbabwe include limited understanding of security systems and strategies of the country, limited commitment to the country due to lack of a common agenda, and misuse of power.

#### **iv. Learning from community efforts to organise for their own safety & security in a conflict situation**

##### **THE CASE OF CHIKUKWA ECOLOGICAL LAND USE COMMUNITY TRUST (CELUCT)**

CELUCT is a registered grassroots trust established in 1996. Chikukwa is situated in the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe. It is found in the mountainous area of Chimanimani District of Manicaland Province. The area has good soil and enjoys high rainfall levels.

The Chikukwa community is made up of six villages with about 7,000 people. In 1991, the organisation

identified key environmental problems affecting the community including soil erosion, deforestation, reduction of groundwater levels, and drying up of springs. Perma-culture clubs were formed in December 1991 and people began to work on identified environmental issues.

The community started working together to reclaim the gully. Activities included removal of homesteads built on slopes, runoff water channelled into pit beds and swale, planting bio-diverse plants to help improve soil fertility, planting trees, water harvesting methods-tanks, adopting organic farming methods, and planting of open pollinated pumpkin seeds plus beans. Other conflicts arose over land boundaries, livestock ownership, and equal sharing of natural resources (e.g., water, grazing, sex, HIV & AIDS) farming matters, and family quarrels due to communication breakdowns in the community.

A training centre was built to enhance the technical capacity of the community. The centre was open to farmers from other communities. A strategic planning workshop was held in 2001 where challenges were discussed and a vision, strategies, and objectives were set for a peaceful community and a programme for community enhanced development was formulated. Conflict transformation training was introduced based on a handbook on building constructive community relations, “The Three Circles of Knowledge,” developed through a participatory process with the community. Community trainers were trained and the process cascaded to the village level. The Chief, elders, teacher representatives, church members, younger and older women, school leavers, and men attended the workshops where they learnt how to deal with community problems and conflicts. Women and children were sensitised about peaceful ways of communication.

Child protection clubs were formed within schools with the aim of educating school children about child abuse and violence at early stages, while the Day of the African Child was regularly observed. Levels of violence drastically decreased in the community and in schools. Women and children generally suffer the most in political violence but with this programme the community knew how to handle cases of rape, child abuse, and other forms of violence. CELUCT networks with Child Line, Justice for Children’s Trust, ZWLA and Musasa project.

Fewer issues were dealt with at the traditional Chief's court because the community had become peaceful. At one time the Chief complained that he was now starving as there were very few cases at his court and no goats and chickens are paid as fines. During the 2008 presidential election runoff, no violence was recorded in Chukka because the Chief protected his people by refusing to have members of his community beaten for holding differing political opinions. Chikukwa was very passionate about peace and development, hence the protection of its community.

Factors that increased security included working together as a collective, village meetings, local ownership of development processes, mobilisation of all key stakeholders, involvement of the local leadership, and capacity building training in peace building.

### **Key learning points**

- Safety is more about people's sense of security.
- Security is usually associated with state security agencies but there is a new realization and from purely state-centred views towards a people-centred perspective that incorporates the role of citizens. Security goes beyond services provided by state security institutions. Civil society contributes to the growth of security in Zimbabwe.
- The new focus is now on building institutions or security systems that inspire trust and confidence in people (i.e., promotion of people-centred security).
- The media have a critical role in making people safe through dissemination of correct information.
- Citizens can have a role to play in enhancing their security and the security of others.
- Traditional Chiefs have a key role in promoting peace and human security in their communities.

# Humanitarian work

## And its role in peace building and conflict transformation in Zimbabwe

BY DOROTHY KADZIKANO

Can humanitarian agencies be concerned only with the provision of humanitarian aid without worrying about peace building and conflict transformation issues? The discussion explored ways in which humanitarian work could contribute more effectively to peace building and conflict transformation in Zimbabwe.

Key questions for group discussions were:

- What does the term “humanitarian work” mean to you?
- What are its strengths and weaknesses in relation to peace building and conflict transformation in Zimbabwe?
- How can we make humanitarian work more effective in this context?

### Humanitarian work

The group defined humanitarian work as the provision of basic human needs to needy people to ensure survival, as well as the prevention and alleviation of human suffering. Provision of food was seen as critical in preventing hunger and malnutrition (food is a basic human right). People are a valuable asset to a nation. However, humanitarian work/action goes beyond providing relief to individuals and communities. It covers a spectrum of activities, including disaster preparedness, humanitarian response, early recovery, and long-term recovery. Actors in humanitarian work include government, humanitarian agencies, civil society organisations, communities, and individuals.

According to the Sphere Handbook, there are four Protection Principles, which underpin all humanitarian action and encompass the basic elements of protection in the context of humanitarian response and the four basic protection principles:

1. Avoid exposing people to further harm as a result of your actions.
2. Ensure people’s access to impartial assistance (in proportion to need and without discrimination).

3. Protect people from physical and psychological harm arising from violence and coercion.
4. Assist people to claim their rights, access available remedies, and recover from the effects of abuse.

Actors usually focus only on actions aimed at protecting people from physical and psychological harm.

The major weaknesses identified in humanitarian work relate to lack of components for sustainability and empowerment of the targeted people. Perceptions on humanitarian work were that:

- It focused more on creating long-term dependence on external aid and less on building people’s personal capacities to do things for themselves—self-reliance. Generally there is limited investment in building the capacity of the people.
- In Zimbabwe the work has become protracted instead of being short-term. One line of thinking was that humanitarian organisations are prolonging relief work to avoid moving into recovery and development where they fear engaging with issues at the core of political conflict in Zimbabwe. In line with this thinking, critical questions asked were who is setting the agenda and whose interests are served by the protracted programme. Are the powerful not engineering their own interests as politics interveners? Is international financial aid free from political influences?
- There are no strong linkages established between relief, recovery, and development.
- Peace building and conflict transformation is seen as the mandate of “others.”

### Actions that make humanitarian work more effective in the context

- Improving the delivery approaches. The approaches which use selective distribution and categorization methods were perceived to be creating stigmatization,

introducing conflict in a community, creating dependence of the people and communities on external support, and failing to heal communities that are coming out of violent conflicts.

- De-politicizing the sector, ensuring productivity, food security, and preventing the communities from living on the edge.
- Avoid duplication and double dipping by engaging with local authorities and community leadership and coordinating with other organisations working in the same areas.
- There is a need for humanitarian organizations to make necessary strategic choices and work "outside" the normal parameters of their work and think ethic; consider peace building as a cross-cutting issue which needs to be mainstreamed; Ubuntu/hunhu in pursuit of broader development ideals.

## How can our work for peace and development contribute toward abating election violence in Zimbabwe?

BY AFSC AND DEISAT

The violence that takes place during elections is not always about elections. Part of the conflict emanates from bad relationships between people living in the same community; part of it is structural and related to a lack of basic human needs. Community conflicts tend to manifest themselves more vividly as we move towards elections. The article explored effective ways of reducing election-related violence during elections in Zimbabwe. The material is based on individual experiences of the 2008 election violence. Short-term activities that can be done to minimize violence during elections and long-term strategies for making peace and development more transformative were identified.

Effective actions to abate election violence in Zimbabwe require an understanding of community dynamics in order to begin devising strategies that will deal not only with symptomatic violence, but will also deal with the underlying causes that sustain the violence.

### Questions used in small group discussions

- What did you like or not like about the 2008 elections?
- What can we do differently as individuals and organisations to minimize incidences of election-related violence?
- What can we do to build political tolerance in communities in the long term?

### Positives and negatives experiences from 2008 harmonized elections

Positives from the 2008 harmonised elections were that the first round of the elections was relatively peaceful, political tolerance was high, party candidates and their supporters campaigned peacefully, there were few reported incidences of political violence, all political parties had access to the public media (ZBC and The Herald) for their campaigns, while people freely expressed their opinions on the political process, and a high turnout was recorded during the casting of voting ballots due to a relatively calm environment. The environment raised people's hope for peace after elections

and also signified possibilities of a successful multi-party democracy in Zimbabwe.

The negatives were that Zimbabwe did not adhere to all SADC guidelines on elections. External observers were not very observant, while delays in the announcement of results created anxiety in people and immediate posting of results outside the polling stations did not guarantee security to local communities. The presidential run-off was characterized by violation of basic human rights and high levels of crimes. People were extremely scared to engage in discussions around politics due to intimidation and trauma. The process destroyed all the hopes and expectations of a democratic society. Many people were internally displaced due to high levels of violence and impunity. Zimbabweans living in the diaspora were also divided along political lines.

### What individuals and organisations can do differently to minimize incidences of election-related violence

Pre-election monitoring of trends is very important. Early warning detection tools are needed for gathering and analyzing information to enable decision makers to act rapidly and combat potential electoral violence. Partnership building, as well as collaboration and coordination of activities and capacities among civil society organisations, are very important during the build-up to elections. We seem faulted at the strategy level—we lack of a clear vision. The perceptions are that many CSOs have become desktop people. They are afraid of demanding public accountability particularly in cases where their mandate is not very clear. “Where do we drive our mandate from? Are our agenda and needs people-based?” In addition, there is a dilemma between activism vs. nationalism.

It is argued that the use of indigenous knowledge systems can be very useful in preventing election violence (customize western knowledge). Election violence creates a situation where people are tired of elections—they need new hope and re-energizing. Individuals seek to have moral clarity to speak the truth.



Long-term strategies to counter electoral violence include:

- Intensify civic and human rights education and other peace projects. People need to know that casting their votes is more effective than using violence in expressing their political voice.
- Mobilize political will to end violence during elections. Political will is very critical in the prevention of election violence.
- This may require engaging community leaders, senators, chiefs, councillors, the judiciary, etc., in discussing issues of the violence that take place during elections.

An increased understanding of issues underpinning a democratic society such as roles and responsibilities of citizens, government, politics, the mass media, and business and non-profit sectors, as well as the significance of periodic and competitive elections, will go a long way toward reducing not only election-related violence but all forms of social violence.

Engaging police in day to day activities of organisations and exploring the areas for increasing human security and advocating for the opening up of the media and responsible journalism will play a role in promoting peace. In addition, isolating and exposing incidences of violence by naming and shaming perpetrators and sponsors of violence is crucial. Working with electoral commissions and stakeholders to address shortcomings or failures in the electoral process can ensure peaceful elections.

The points raised here indicate a great need for sustained dialogue involving key stakeholders, intensive civic education, partnership building, and monitoring of pre-election activities. Measures to promote social cohesion, local ownership, stakeholder involvement (civil society, political and security actors, in addition to the electoral commission) are important.

### **Long-term activities that could make peace and development work more transformative**

Economic empowerment of the population is necessary in order to build the material base of citizens (human and capital capacity) and to address issues of poverty and unemployment. Both bottom-up and top-bottom approaches to programming would enhance ownership of initiatives.

Local people need to set the agenda: identify and define own problems and fundraise locally to avoid domination by the donors. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness

and Accra Plan of Action could be used as reference points in planning future development and peace building work, mainstream civics and peace building into education and health programmes. All actors should work to build a national vision and citizenry. Collaboration is critical for effective transformation.

### **Causes of election violence**

A research project on conflicts that take place during elections focused on the possibility of a reconciliation process in Zimbabwe. One of the findings was that dysfunctional interpersonal relationships amongst community members caused community violence. It was perceived that the causes of some acts of violence were a result of social issues taking place within the community. However, from working at a deeper level with communities, the organisation found that the causes of these dysfunctional relationships and ensuing violent conflicts lie at a deeper level and are intrinsically linked with policy level issues.

### **Example 1: Ongoing conflict between traditional leaders and elected councillors**

The parallel local government structure that is legislated through the Traditional Leaders Act and the Rural District Councils Act is a structure whose framework creates a competitive space within which traditional leaders and elected councillors struggle for supremacy. There cannot be proper coordination because the structures are parallel. There is no arena where these two groups will meet. They compete openly, even though in theory, the incumbents are supposed to work together.

The power struggle therefore takes place in other spheres, such as issues of food distribution, and access to and distribution of resources (e.g. land, water, or pastures). This conflict is present outside the political party framework; it has been in existence long before the advent of political parties and taken on an added dimension since more parties have joined the political fray.

In addition to the power struggles between traditional leaders and councillors, there are conflicts amongst the traditional leaders themselves who are involved in land boundary issues and jurisdiction issues—questions on who has power over which area and who can allocate land where. Issues also arise around succession issues, and about which family will be the next to rule.

### **Example 2: Conflict between teachers and the community**

This conflict arises as a result of poor service delivery. It was found out that in many areas there exist high levels of tension between the community members and the teachers and school administration. These tensions exist as a result of the poor service that teachers deliver to pupils after parents have paid fees and struggled to buy uniforms and books.

Often teachers do not attend to their classes because they are carrying out income-generating activities to supplement their meagre incomes. In one area, a teacher told a meeting that the government pretends to pay teachers so teachers pretend to work. The salary issue is one that can only be resolved at the policy level, but it affects the community because parents who are paying school fees want to see their children being taught but during “normal” times, they have no power to force teachers to do their work. What then happens is when politicians open up the space at election time, the community moves into this space and very often it is the teachers who are the first victims of what is then called political or election violence. This violence has little to do with the actual elections, and everything to do with the community “disciplining” teachers.

### **Example 3: Element of organized militias**

When organized militia is introduced into this space they find willing participants within the community and it is easier to terrorize community members as they are well informed on the community dynamics. Again the nation is confronted by a socio-economic issue when looking at the reasons why it is easy to co-opt youth into these organized militias (i.e., they are unemployed and have no source of income and as a result are easily lured by alcohol and a little money).

### **Example 4: Access to market stalls space or housing**

Within the urban setting in areas like Mbare and Epworth, when violent conflicts erupt we are quick to call this election violence, whereas the underlying motivation might be to steal from people or to ensure access to market stall space or housing.

What becomes clear from the examples is that the occurrence of these two events—the implementation of the campaign strategies by national level actors and the subsequent opening up of the space at community level—is what results

in election violence, or more precisely, violence that takes place at election time.

A closer analysis of the events that happen at the community level reveals that the violence has little to do with the actual selection of political candidates, but more to do with the dysfunctions that already exist within a community long before elections are due.

The conclusion is that election violence is symptomatic as opposed to being a beginning and an end in itself. The fact that we have examples of communities where some traditional leaders have declared that they will not allow violence in their area and these communities have remained peaceful while surrounded by violence in neighbouring communities, indicates that for violence to occur there must be a meeting of the minds between the community and national level actors.

The study indicated that community violence during previous elections happen as a result of two specific events occurring close to election time, one at the national level and the other at the community level. The top and the bottom events feed into each other.

At the national level, political leaders come together and design strategies that they believe will assist them to either gain or retain power. They use the standard campaign strategies like developing manifestos and conducting rallies. Other strategies include relaxing the enforcement of laws governing the conduct of individuals or groups aligned with certain political parties, followed by a selective application of the law according to which political party the enforcement agent is aligned to, informal granting of power and authority to specific individuals within the community, and allowing them to commit any act with impunity.

When these strategies are put into operation by national level actors, a space opens up at the community level.

Members of grassroots communities who choose to move into the open can begin to act with impunity as they are guaranteed protection from the law. They do so not for ideological reasons or identification with the philosophy or ideals of a political party, but more for fulfilling of personal goals that they would otherwise not accomplish without the protection of the law. They use whatever means, including violence, to achieve their desires.

In other situations, elements of organized militia are introduced into the open space and unemployed young people, who have no sources of income, are often the willing participants used to terrorize community members as they are

well informed on the community dynamics. The socio-economic reality of the majority of Zimbabweans is that people are operating at a needs-based level to basic survival and are nowhere near the self-actualization levels where identification with political ideals lies.

The study noted that there were no reported incidences of violence in communities where traditional leaders did not allow people to fight in their area during elections, but levels of violence were higher in areas where there are poor relationships among members within communities. The conclusion was that the violence that takes place during elections has very little to do with electoral processes in the areas (i.e., the actual selection of political candidates), but more to do with the dysfunctions that exist within the community long before election time. It is symptomatic as opposed to being a beginning and an end in itself.

Once people begin to understand election violence in this way, we can begin as CSOs to devise strategies that will not only deal with violence, which is symptomatic, but will also deal with the underlying causes as well. What can CSOs do? There is a need to make a realistic assessment of our capacity and our mandate as CSOs. This would ensure that we do not set ourselves unrealistic goals that disappoint not only us when they are not met, but also the communities we work in and our funding partners. We must recognize that we have very limited resources, both financial and human, and that our skills in this area are limited. As a result there are very real possibilities of exacerbating conflicts when we enter communities with the intention to build peace. Some of these factors lead us to design interventions that are akin to treating a brain tumor with aspirin.

Our proposals carry the evidence of this thinking. We are all guilty making claims such as: after holding four peace-building workshops with 120 participants, community “X” will no longer tolerate violence, and that after three awareness-raising marches in community “Y” there will be an 80 percent reduction in violent incidents. If we are honest with ourselves, we know that such activities cannot solve the issues that cause the violence. As CSOs we must begin to think more deeply about our work and our interventions at various levels and the hope was that the discussion would stimulate this thinking.

### **Key learning points from the study**

- Not all violence that takes place during elections is election violence. Many of the incidences have very little to do with electoral processes (e.g., actual selection of political candidates), but more to do with the dysfunc-

tions that exist within a community long before elections arrive. Many people take advantage of the free space to settle their individual scores.

- Election violence is symptomatic as opposed to being the beginning and the end in itself.
- For election violence to occur at the community level, there must be a meeting of minds between the community and national level actors.
- Elections processes should promote human security before, during, and after elections take place.

### **Key learning points from these discussions**

- Multi-party democracy is possible in Zimbabwe.
- A peaceful environment is a prerequisite for exercising democratic rights.
- Different aspects of the electoral system, such as posting election results at polling stations, does not guarantee security to local communities after results are announced.
- Election violence creates huge internal displacement of people.
- The media has a very important role to play in promoting peaceful elections.

# National healing and reconciliation

BY GLADYS NTHABISENG NKOMO

Rebuilding the nation requires engaging with the healing and reconciliation agenda. It means painfully letting go of the past and engaging with the future.<sup>1</sup> Questions explored included: What would constitute a national framework for healing? What are the opportunities and challenges for such a framework? What are the necessary conditions for healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe?

The discussions were based on an assumption that “everyone wants peace.”

Two meetings were held on the issues of national healing and reconciliation. Contributions to the discussions were facilitated by AFSC and DESAIT. Gladys Nthabiseng Nkomo was a resource person to one of the meetings.

## What is possible and practical in a transitional phase?

The discussion focused on locating national healing and reconciliation in the context of Article 7 of the Global Political Agreement (GPA), and identifying forms of transition from violent to nonviolent conflict and what is possible and practical in a transitional phase. Participants shared ideas, understandings, and experiences on healing and reconciliation for the purpose of drawing lessons from the actual work being done.

The national healing and reconciliation programme is founded in Article 7 of the Global Political Agreement (GPA):

- The strengths of Article 7 is that it opens opportunities to deal with issues of the past, attempts to deal with issues of past injustices, provides enough impetus for a national process to ensue it has the following weaknesses:
- Its weaknesses are that it’s difficult to apply in local communities because it’s a political document formulated by politicians for implementation by the politicians without consulting people first hence it presents difficulties applying it in the communities.

- The wording and framework of the article is weak and non-committal, immeasurable, inconclusive, and somehow careless when compared with the gravity of the issues that it wishes to tackle. If the framework is weak, the process will undoubtedly be compromised because the framework is the vision that informs the mission of the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI).

There were other related challenges noted as well. For example, ONHRI was perceived as weak because it was built on agendas of political parties and needed to undergo a serious facelift in order to build trust with communities. Also, the problem with Zimbabwe is that the process of reconciliation is not accorded serious attention and normally is aborted, as evidenced by the way we handled the same situation in 1980, 1987, and now 2008. There is no consistency and other processes such as constitution making take primacy, resulting in the stalling of such an important course of action.

The typical forms of transition from violent to nonviolent conflict include:

- i. A negotiated settlement is reached between two parties that are more or less exhausted and do not see any realistic chance of outright victory of one over another.
- ii. A negotiated settlement between asymmetric forces, in which the weaker still controls sufficient resources to exercise a veto power.
- iii. The victory of one party over the other.

There is a close link between the types of settlement, the consequent power relationships during the post-settlement period, and the likely strategy to be adopted in terms of dealing with the past. The ideal situation is not presented here because it falls outside of the transitional period to post-transition—where there are free and fair elections, and a democratically elected government with the mandate and the trust of the people to carry the process of national healing forward.

1 Fr Harold Barry 2010.



- **Negotiated settlement**, where there is a balance of power, perpetrators are reintegrated into the society, no trials, no truth commissions, cultural cleansing and ethnic rituals towards reintegration of perpetrators into the community.
- **Power settlement**, where there is asymmetry of power and the prime value is seeking the truth through truth commissions. Prime concern is with the victims. Truth telling is therapeutic for the victims and society (i.e., traumatisation may occur). Amnesty may become necessary if confessions are required.
- **Imposed settlement**, which happens when there is victory of one party over the other and it allows for the due processes and rule of law to take place. It challenges the culture of impunity and advocates for retributive justice. Allows for due process and the ROL, and may also satisfy revenge. It may be a lengthy and expensive process.
- Civil society should make efforts to engage with the leadership to be effective.
- There should be a deliberate information drive on such issues to keep people abreast of the current affairs pertaining to healing and reconciliation and the general peace building.
- National plan of action should be informed by the people.
- Civil society should reclaim its voice and do more advocacy work and defend civilians.
- Build a culture of peace in children to ensure a violence-free generation.
- At the individual level, the process should be holistic and include the healing of the mind, heart, and soul. The terms “victim” and “perpetrator” should be used sensitively and fairly to avoid blanket labelling, taking into account that some people qualify to be both. Among the objectives of the process should be the humanising and healing of perpetrators as well.

### **What is possible and practical in a transitional setting?**

- Suggestions made indicated the need for organisations to go beyond academic discussions and go into the practical work in the communities, consulting with existing community structures such as churches and civil society organisations, building transformation and trauma healing skills, and providing security for victims of testimonies.
- A critical question raised was whether the environment was safe to delve into the real national healing and reconciliation. The responses indicted the need to avoid asking a lot of questions when embarking on such a process because that might make the task look insurmountable but should take the necessary steps in tackling the issue.
- In undertaking the national healing and reconciliation process, a holistic approach to violence should be taken to deal with a deep-rooted culture of violence to ensure non-recurrence.
- Increase effectiveness by coordinating civil society activities.
- People should look beyond the inclusive government and still be relevant after the GPA to achieve sustainable peace.

Possibilities for the success of the process have nothing to do with the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Re-integration, but independent initiatives.

### **Opportunities for establishing a national framework for healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe**

- The Global Political Agreement, particularly Articles 7 and 18, and the subsequent formation of an inclusive government offered spaces for discussing issues of national healing.
- National processes such as the writing of a new constitution, referendum, and holding free and fair elections were also perceived to be opportunities that can be capitalised on.
- Traditional leadership and the churches were seen as offering structures for implementing national healing processes.
- Small and joint initiatives undertaken by civil society organisations offered platforms for sharing of information.
- A lot of potential was seen within the young and alternative media.

- The lapse of time offered a healing factor—the fact that a number of people have been able to move on with their lives despite the hurt they experienced in the past. This is an indication of some capacity to live without being violent.

### **Challenges for establishing a national framework for healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe**

- No shared vision from the current leadership on where Zimbabwe is going, as well as disagreements over processes for elections, constitution making, national healing, etc.
- No shared history of where we are coming from and why we are where we are today. We should be able to answer these basic questions as Zimbabweans, freely and frankly as part of the truth-telling process.
- Current contextual environment—the culture of violence and impunity must be acknowledged. Ongoing violence, when past violence has not been addressed, is a cumulative factor that further complicates the process.
- The current environment has no guarantees for the participants, making it risky to fully engage with issues of the past, and the political will is highly questionable (e.g., COPAC meetings).
- There's the issue of resources to ensure a nationwide initiative that can be monitored, documented, and publicised. There is a need to have a transformational approach to national healing issues that recognises the relationship between individual trauma experiences and the institutions that allow trauma to be perpetrated.

### **Pre-conditions for establishing a national framework for healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe**

- A stable political environment: there must be some form of political tolerance of divergent views in society.
- Political will must be there among the leaders.
- A national healing institution must be established and run by independent people, not by government or politicians. The role of the government should be to create an enabling environment. The institution must be based on a legal framework—fairness, safeguarding of victims, credible, well-resourced to enable it to execute its work and be able to incorporate elements of truth

telling, transparency, justice, reparation, and amnesty (mercy and forgiveness).

- There must be a clear timeframe—how far back do we go in living memory.
- The role of the military in elections and politics must be clarified.
- Traditional structures must be revisited and made functional.
- The process must be locally owned (i.e., popular acknowledgment of the need for healing and a shared and common ground). It must also foster dialogue among stakeholders, safety, and security of the people, and freedom of speech (before and after).
- The process must also provide hope for the young people, free from media polarization, instill a sense of confidence in the people, and enhance a culture of peace.
- There must be space for people to engage differently with the healing process. For those working with grassroots women, healing might mean getting in touch with reality on the ground and dealing with it constructively.

### **Key learning points**

- There is need to initiate dialogue in communities torn apart by political violence and for true healing to take place. The process should be elective at the community level.
- Politicians can either be victims or perpetrators of political violence. They should not lead the process.
- Healing and reconciliation is the Zimbabwean term for transitional justice. Therefore all essential elements of transitional justice such as acknowledgment and apologizing for wrongdoing by the perpetrators, compensation, restoration, rebuilding relations, and prosecution should be covered by the process.
- Organisations should channel resources towards critical issues such as national healing.
- Working to improve people's livelihoods can also play a part in peace building.
- Approaches by civil society are sporadic and uncoordinated, which compromises the impact of their activities.
- Livelihood support is a key to the success of the process since some victims were left with no means of survival.



- Healing and reconciliation cannot be achieved when people do not feel safe. A deep peace building process is a prerequisite for true healing to take place.
- The process should be sensitive to the magnitude of injury caused by the violence so that victims do not feel insulted by the process.
- There should be a shared history and vision.
- Framing of the healing and reconciliation is a process.

# Climate change and sustainable development

How do we all contribute every day to climate change?

BY JEREMIAH MUSHOSHO

The following critical questions guided the group in reflecting on the issues of climate change and sustainable development:

- Is the climate really changing? If yes, what are the causes and manifestations of climate change?
- What are the political, social, economic, and environmental implications of climate change locally and internationally?
- What is the link between climate change and sustainable development?
- What can the government, communities, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders do to mitigate and adapt to climate change?

## Climate and weather

Climate change refers to long-term fluctuations in temperature, rainfall, wind, and other elements of the Earth's climate system. These changes are noticed over a period of a 35-year classical climatology.

Causes of climate change include greenhouse gases and aerosols. People contribute to climate change through emission of greenhouse gases, CFCs, and ozone-depleting substances. Examples of GHG gases are:

- **Carbon dioxide** ( $\text{CO}_2$ ), undoubtedly the most important greenhouse gas in the atmosphere. Changes in land use patterns, deforestation, land clearing, veldt fires, agriculture, and other activities have all led to a rise in the emission of carbon dioxide
- **Methane** ( $\text{CH}_4$ ). About  $\frac{1}{4}$  of all methane emissions are said to come from domesticated animals such as dairy cows, goats, pigs, buffaloes, camels, horses, and sheep, rice or paddy fields that are flooded during the sowing and maturing periods, landfills and other waste dumps.
- **CFCs**. Examples of CFCs are carbon monoxide ( $\text{CO}$ ), deodorants and sprays, halocarbons, carbon tetrachlo-

ride ( $\text{CCl}_4$ ) (its ozone depletion potential is 1.2), and hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC).

Electricity is the main source of power in urban areas. All our gadgets run on electricity generated mainly from thermal power plants. These thermal power plants are run on fossil fuels (mostly coal) and are responsible for the emission of huge amounts of greenhouse gases and other pollutants. Cars, buses, and trucks are the principal ways by which goods and people are transported in most of our cities. These are run mainly on petrol or diesel, both fossil fuels.

We also generate large quantities of waste in the form of plastics that remain in the environment for many years and cause damage. We use a huge quantity of paper in our work at schools and in offices.

Have we ever thought about the number of trees that we use in a day? Timber is used in large quantities for construction of houses, which means that large areas of forest have to be cut down. A growing population has meant more and more mouths to feed, and high-yielding varieties of crops require large quantities of fertilizers. More fertilizer means more emissions of nitrous oxide, both from the field into which it is put and the fertilizer industry that makes it. Pollution also results from the run-off of fertilizer into water bodies and industrial emissions during production and manufacturing.

## Climate change impacts on resources

- **Agriculture:** Rain-fed agriculture will be unreliable due to decreased precipitation (especially for small holder farmers who have limited resources and farm in marginal environments). Rising temperatures could lead to a decline in crop yields (impacting food security), depending on the crop and region.
- **Water resources:** Reduction in stream flow in major catchments, reduction in inflows to water storages, and reduction in recharge of ground water—a major water source for most rural areas

- Rising sea levels will result in saltwater intrusion leading to a reduction in the availability of freshwater. Water quality likely will change (degrade) due to evaporation and intense runoff.
- Energy: Reduction in power generation HEP capacity.
- Health: Water borne diseases are bound to increase as a result of flooding. Rising temperatures can give rise to heat waves resulting in people's deaths. Pollution caused by the presence of the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere can result in an increase in respiratory diseases. The cost of adapting to climate change is going to increase.

### **Climate change impacts on politics and national/international policies**

- Climate change is now a mainstream political issue. There is no substantive framework for policy which offers coherence and consistency as to how national governments should cope with the long-term political challenges of climate change.
- Change can be achieved by creating a political and public consensus for action by replacing the democratic penchant for partisanship and short-term results, within differing democratic cultures, by long-term and a consensus-based policy agenda. What can governments do to induce sustained support for combating climate change?
- There is a need to ensure that the impact of policies to address climate change are perceived as equitable by key groups in society and do not penalize those who are less fortunate.
- What are the prospects of ensuring that western democracies can be persuaded to carry the economic and political burden of climate change instead of countries in the developing world?
- By nature, democratic countries tend to be driven by the immediate concerns of voters at any one time. In such democratic systems, how can blind decisions be made that will override changes of government and political will?
- The role of the state (national and local) should be to provide an appropriate regulatory framework for climate change adaptation. Is it a priority at the present moment?

### **Climate change impacts on humans and society**

- Hunger: Poverty and diseases such as diarrhea and malaria, which disproportionately impact children, will increase.
- Security: Conflicts are typically extremely complex with multiple inter-dependent causes, often referred to as "complex emergencies." Climate change has the potential to exacerbate existing tensions or create new ones — serving as a threat multiplier. It can be a catalyst for violent conflict and a threat to international security.
- The threat of violence and armed conflict are particularly important because multiple destabilizing conditions are affected simultaneously.
- Displacement/migration: Climate change causes displacement of people in several ways, the most obvious—and dramatic—being through the increased number and severity of weather-related disasters which destroy homes and habitats causing people to seek shelter or livelihoods elsewhere.
- Slow onset phenomena, including effects of climate change such as desertification and rising sea levels, gradually erode livelihoods and force communities to abandon traditional homelands for more accommodating environments. This is currently happening in areas of Africa's Sahel, the semi-arid belt that spans the continent just below its northern deserts.
- Deteriorating environments triggered by climate change can also lead to increased conflict over resources, which in turn can displace people.

### **Climate change impacts on animals, plant life, and the overall ecology**

- Biodiversity: Some plant and animal species that may be unable to adapt to warmer conditions will become extinct (e.g., polar bears).
- Warmer oceans may negatively affect fish and other aquatic life.
- Climate change is dramatically impacting habitat loss. For example, arid conditions have caused the collapse of rain forests, as has occurred in the past.
- A further 1 degree Celsius of warming in temperatures causes dehydration and headaches.

- Up to 20 percent more months of drought.
- Up to 25 percent increase in days of very high or extreme fire danger.
- Increases in storm surges and severe weather events.

### **Climate change evidence**

- Global sea level has risen between 10–25 cm in the last 100 years.
- Global mean surface temperatures have increased 0.3–0.6°C since the late 19th century (0.74% in the past 100 years, 1906–2005).
- Overall warming may be 1.5° to 5.0°C, in the next 80–100 years.
- Melting of snows.
- Droughts are becoming more severe.
- A global trend of tropical cyclones becoming more intense.
- More frequent extreme temperature events—hot days, hot nights, and heat waves.

### **Climate change and sustainable development**

Sustainable development is a phrase often employed carelessly to imply that poverty, environmental degradation, disease, and other problems afflicting the world are predominantly caused by, and therefore are the responsibility of, wealthy countries. This is because poor people are less able to adapt than are wealthy people.

- Health (MDG6): Another alleged consequence of climate change is the spread of vector-borne and bacterial diseases.
- Poverty worsened (MDG1): As with climate in general, these diseases are a problem today and they affect the poor far more than the wealthy.
- The economy: Changes in the climate will have negative economic consequences, caused by a combination of changes in agricultural production, droughts, and water scarcity, movement of pests, and other ecological factors.
- Climate change cause environmental degradation and biodiversity loss—Agenda 21—MDG 7

- Empirical evidence from the past two centuries suggests that economic growth, human wellbeing, and a clean environment go hand-in-hand. Increased wealth is associated with improvements in nearly every aspect of human well-being and environmental quality.
- Wealthier people live longer, are better nourished, have lower mortality rates, have better access to clean water, sanitation, and education, and benefit from a cleaner environment.

### **Zimbabwe and climate change**

Zimbabwe has the least use of fossil fuel (net carbon sinks); least cause of GHG emissions (net carbon emitters); and is the least technologically developed.

### **Government and all stakeholders' response to climate change**

Nationally, we need to adapt more and initiate climate change mitigation. There is a need for a comprehensive national policy on climate change or a strategy by the government.

Effective national action on climate change requires a return in some form to long-term government planning. So, it is at the national-level in the developed countries that real progress first has to be made. And it is through decisive national leadership at this level that a global solution can eventually be induced.

Effective mitigation measures enhance adaptation strategies and both complement each other and are mutually reinforcing. Possible solutions to the problem of climate change adaptation in the developing world include technology transfer, financing mechanisms for adaptation, grassroots initiatives, and national adaptation. Support should be extended to international climate negotiations based on consultations with all stakeholders (universities and research centers, civil society organizations, local communities and indigenous peoples, women and other marginalized groups).

### **Conclusion**

The climate is changing and there are both natural and human driven causes such as industrialization, urbanization, and land use. Implications of climate change include food insecurity, malnutrition, political instabilities, displacements, and developed nations developing at the expense of developing ones who are left more vulnerable.

The government can put in place a legal instrument to ensure sustainable climate change mitigation measures, partner with CSOs to embark on awareness campaigns, avail resource, do more work on climate change through fiscal measures, prioritize green projects, and create entrepreneurial opportunities. Communities can participate in awareness programmes and involve themselves in national processes. CSOs can work on ensuring funding for research on how to mitigate the effects of climate change.

There was however a question of who is government as most of the “to dos” were targeted at the government. It was agreed that everyone has a role to play. The group also felt that when working with communities there is need to break down the subject into simple language so that it becomes something that people can relate to and see the urgency in the need to ensure climate friendly practices. For example encouraging the planting of trees, which have varied benefits, including augmenting their livelihoods, which acts as an incentive (e.g., mango, guava, and avocado trees should be encouraged).

One of the recommendations was the need to always look for clean alternatives. For example, resorting to using the railroads instead of roadways in transporting huge cargo. Policies that are narrowly focused on adaptation to possible negative effects are short-sighted and may even be counterproductive, and policies aimed at mitigation through control of atmospheric carbon are almost certainly counterproductive.

## “The future we want”

### Relevance of outcomes of RIO+20 conferences on sustainable development to our work

BY ROGER MUPANDE

The following questions guided the group discussion:

- i. To what extent is the UN definition of sustainable development relevant to our national issues and our work at the local level? What is missing in the definition?
- ii. What opportunities does the “green economy” strategy offer towards achieving sustainable development in Zimbabwe? What are the implementation challenges to the strategy?
- iii. What do we need to do to effectively apply the “green economy” concepts in our activities?

#### **The extent to which the UN definition of sustainable development is relevant to national issues and to our work at the local level**

According to the UN definition, sustainable development means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The definition relates to the environment, economy, and poverty, which are all relevant to the Zimbabwean context. It gives a starting point for addressing our developmental issues, thus making it a bit relevant. There are no renewable alternative power sources in light of shortages currently being experienced. The definition still needs to be tailored to fit into our context. Missing elements in the UN definition are that it does not clarify the needs, but only talks of utilization of resources and nothing about developing the resources.

Intergenerational equity (and generational equity) is not emphasised. There are other variables that have to be addressed by the definition such as level of technological advancement. Other issues raised were: Who is defining the needs? Why compromise our quality of life for the sake of others to come? What opportunities does the “green economy” strategy offer towards achieving sustainable development in Zimbabwe?

Opportunities offered by the “green economy” strategy towards achieving sustainable development in Zimbabwe

include: eradication of poverty, promotion of conservation, agriculture that is affordable and sustainable, job creation, production of environmentally friendly products, widening of livelihoods options, healthier lifestyles, and space for creativity and development of our own technology.

The climate is changing and there are both natural and human-driven causes such as industrialization.

#### **What we need to do to effectively apply the “green economy” concepts in our activities**

- Embark on an intensive conscientization of communities on greening concept.
- Develop green minds from a tender age (i.e., mainstream green education in schools).
- Promote research-oriented education.
- Develop political will to embrace the concept.
- There should be a deliberate move to link it to the indigenisation policy.
- Mainstream the green concept into people’s day to day activities.
- We need a policy that is directed at Greening Concept.
- Cooperation of different stakeholders (i.e., private sector, government, academia, and CSOs).

After the plenary discussions, Mr Rodger Mupande, a biotechnology-agronomist and currently studying international environmental governance at the UN University in Japan, gave a presentation on the outcomes of the Rio + 20 conference and the processes being initiated in Zimbabwe post-conference. Rodger was involved in the drafting of the document “The Future We Want” for the Rio+20 conference for Zimbabwe.

The challenges accompanied with the greening concept include the impending trade barriers for non-compliance



with the set standards for the greening concept globally. This does not take into account technological gaps.

- Green initiatives should be done in consultation with youth.

## **Recommendations**

- After Rio, six months are going to be set aside for consultations, so the document is not just for the conference but also for Zimbabwe. The process will allow stakeholders to deliberate on the issues respective to their sectors.
- CSOs are disjointed and need to be more structured for their voice to make an impact.
- The document and all discussions around climate change and the greening concept need to be translated into day-to-day life.
- There is a challenge with raising awareness on cheaper and sustainable green alternatives (e.g., the Rhizobium Project).
- Zimbabwe should take a national approach and prioritize green projects such as the Ethanol fuel project in Chisumbanje.
- Youth should organize themselves and engage with relevant authorities and institutions instead of just taking an activist approach.
- We need to have a locally driven financing strategy to shy away from donor funds.
- There is need for an implementation and monitoring framework for the successful adoption of the greening concept.
- Government should facilitate the establishment of a multi-stakeholder funded structure with a statutory instrument.
- City planning, judicial officers, and other stakeholders are also included in this process.

## **Key learning points**

- There is need for change in terms of perception from adults (i.e., “How can I not be an activist when I have nothing to do? We young people are crying for attention”).
- Africa is rich in resources. What have we been doing with our resources for the past 20 years? Let’s learn about philanthropy.