

A citizen reporting platform for Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe

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Young people's future lies in participation in elections

By Phillimon Jambaya.



A file photo of a man casting his vote during elections in Zimbabwe.

In life, they are different kinds of people, those who watch things happen, those who want things to happen and those who make things happen. Let us not be found watching or wanting things to happen when we are capable of making them happen.

As such, this verse is going to emphasize on the importance of us, young people to ensure that our voice is heard in all strategic decision-making processes like elections that affect us.

One major aspect to note is that young people constitute about 67% of the total population. It is from this background that we need not to underestimate the positive transformation that we can collectively impact by participating in the key decision-making processes of our country.

It is high time we unleash the potential in us for the benefit of ourselves, the upcoming generation and the general populace at large.

Electoral processes give us the right, as responsible citizens of Zimbabwe, to appoint, re-appoint or dis-appoint our political leadership. We all have the right or fundamental entitlement to a voice in choosing our representatives through voting. This can be at local, regional or even national level.

As such young people can benefit immensely through making choices that are driven by the permanent interests of the nation and putting in place a vibrant leadership that is accountable to the people it serves.

There is need to empower ourselves by totally transforming our mind-set regarding issues to do with electoral processes.

However participating in the electoral processes involves much more than just voting. It is the potential to partake in the conduct of public affairs, to register as a candidate as well as to campaign.

Nothing can stop us as progressive young people to be legislators, councilors and even ministers who are involved in the formulation and implementation of government policies.

These systems play a major role in determining the development of our dear country, including our day-to-day living standards. As such there is need for us to realize this gap and take practical approaches to participation in such issues.

In addition, it is of paramount importance for us as young people to participate in elections as they directly and indirectly affect our lives. An election can be defined as a formal decision-making process or method by which the general populace selects individuals to hold public office.

In Zimbabwe, elections are usually held after intervals of five years. This represents representative democracy as the people elected are given the authority to make decisions on behalf of the ordinary citizens.

As young people let's not be caught on the wrong side of always attacking whoever is elected when you are not even a member of the electorate because you are not a registered voter. It does not need one to be rich, have a business or to be very educated in order to participate in the electoral processes.

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ZESA start installing prepaid meters

By Isac Nyamayaro



A solarhart technician at work installing electricity prepaid meters in Zengeza 1 recently.

Zengeza 1—The Zimbabwe Electricity Transmission and Distribution Company (ZETDCO) has started installing pre-paid meters in Chitungwiza. The process started on Thursday 27 July in Zengeza 1 just after St Mary's police station.

The prepaid meters are being installed by Salorhart Zimbabwe, a Mutare based company which won the tender for Chitungwiza.

Previously, electricity consumers in Zimbabwe used to pay on a monthly basis after consumption using actual meter readings. This method however proved difficult for both consumers and the supplier with the turn of the millennium.

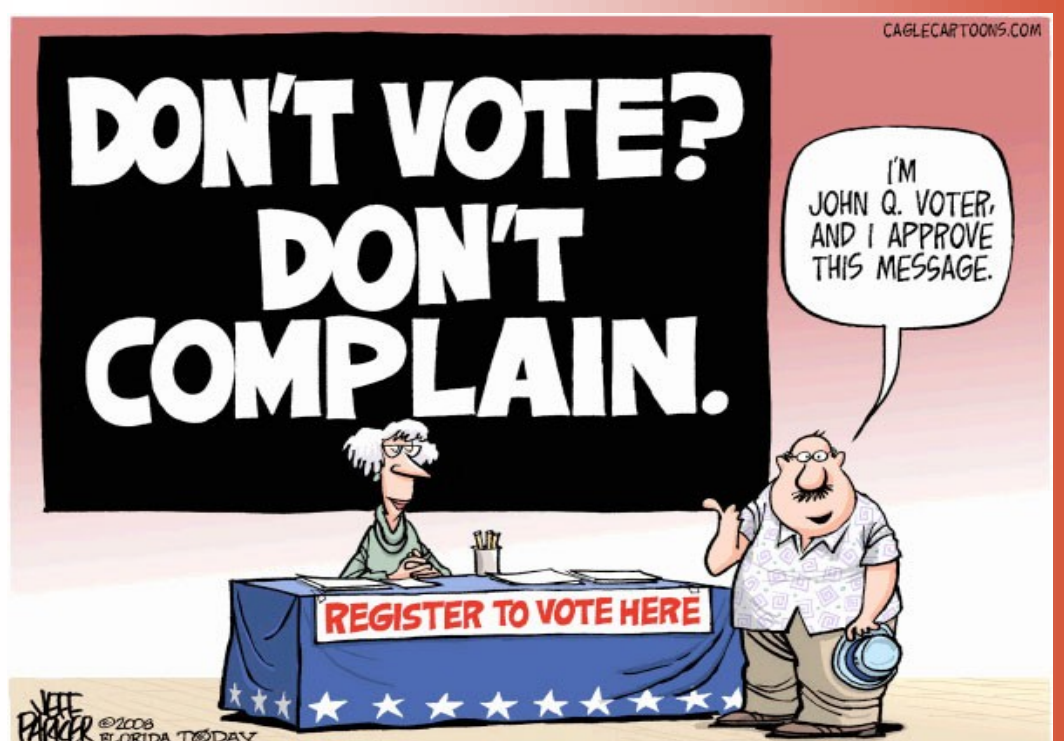
As retrenchments increased after year 2 000, the majority of households were left with meager or no disposable income to cater for such needs like paying for rates and rent. This led to ZESA being owed million of United States dollars by both domestic and commercial consumers.

The pre-paid system will work the way we operate our mobile phones whereby you have to juice your account first to enjoy the service.

The consumption meters are installed at the point of supply and each household is fitted with electronic device for servicing your account. This electronic device which plugged on an electrical socket is used to topping up your account and checking the balance.

Some residents were happy with the installation whilst others were not happy. Among those who are happy with the developments are single families who use the whole house. Lodgers were the majority of those who are not happy with the developments as they share with two or more families at the same house.

The pre-paid meters are juiced with 50 kilo watts on installation. Those who owe the power utility will have 20% of their payments deducted to pay up for the credit they owe the power utility until paid. **END**



Hazardous canteens loom at Chigovanyika.

By citizen reporter



A roadside canteen at Chigovanyika shopping centre, St Mary’s.

St Mary’s—A health hazard is looming at Chigonyika shopping centre in St Mary’s were informal economic activities like canteens and kitchens have sprouted along the side lines of the road.

The kitchens/canteens are erected less than 5 metres away from the main road thereby exposing consumers to food poisoning through air borne bacteria that will be blown by moving vehicles.

In a town where service delivery has collapsed and the environment fully littered with raw sewer and others waste disposals from individuals and households; these canteens are likely to prove disastrous to the health being of the population of citizens of St Mary’s and greater Chitungwiza community.

A visit to the shopping centre showed more than four canteens operating by the main road side from St Mary’s to the new Chitungwiza road. These canteens are proving to be popular among the Gwejas (those who ply various hands on trades) and vendors who survive through their participation in the informal economy. .

The prevailing harsh economic environment has forced the majority of high density urban citizens into vending and other health hazard income generating activities like canteens by the roadside. **END.**

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All it needs is one to have a national identity card. Take this opportunity to visit the registrar general’s offices together with your national identity card , proof of residence and be a registered voter! This will enable you to command an influential stake in the electoral processes.

Many people continue to chant whilst others declare that young people are the future leaders of tomorrow, but I take it that we are leaders in our own right as the future starts with the present. As such, elections represent us with a peaceful opportunity to choose our leadership and to be leaders as well.

It is no longer time to cite violence as a hindrance, but now is the time to appreciate that unity is the acceptance of diversity, shun violence in all its forms and promote a Zimbabwe that is built on the foundations of peace, love and harmony.

Be peace ambassadors. Through this, peaceful transfer of authority through elections is possible. We have a duty and obligation to positively transform the nation. Young people must always ask themselves what they can do for the benefit of their country.

Now is the our time as young people across the country, from Zambezi to Limpopo, to be proactive in shaping our destination through making informed decisions which enable us to be participants in the electoral processes.

Participation of young people in electoral processes is of great significance to the positive and immense development of our country. As Mahatma Gandhi once stressed, “Be the change that you want to see in the world”.

Let us be the ambassadors of spreading the gospel of informed and peaceful participation of young people in key decision making process like elections. **END.**

“Yesterday is not ours to recover, but tomorrow is ours to win or loose”,
~ Lyndon B Johnson.

Primary elections and democracy in Zimbabwe.

By Obert Kondohwe

The holding of primary elections by the two major players in the political landscape of Zimbabwe has given hope to ordinary grassroots party members and the nation that democracy is slowly seeing the light of the day.

A number of Members of Parliament who served during the seventh session and cabinet ministers failed to win primary elections in their constituencies for both Zanu PF and the Movement for Democratic Change led by Morgan Tsvangirai.

In both parties, some party members were forced to withdraw their candidature because of illegal violent external pressures that were exerted by party heavy weights.

In the Midlands province we read from the national newspapers that one amassed more than 17 000 “votes” during the recently held ZANU PF primary elections. What a “record” in primary elections.

The conduct of these primary elections was “relatively” peaceful with a few incidences of violence throughout the country and this need to be applauded among the political parties as the nation seeks solutions intra and inter party political violence.

Whilst the above pointers show glaring irregularities in the conduct of processes that nurture and protect our democracy, there are some positive aspects that can be drawn from these processes.

What needs to be applauded more is the opportunity that grassroots and ordinary members of political parties have demanded and grabbed their right to participate in choosing their leadership at the local and national level.

These are some of the positive gains that need to be protected if democracy is going to see the light of the day among the political parties and the nation at large. In my 15 years as active electorate, I have never seen primary elections being held throughout the country like I witnessed this year.

Whilst these elections were not held in all constituencies throughout the country in both political parties because of a variety of reasons which all show the audacity and propensity of the so called party heavy weights in threatening democracy.

Now that the grassroots are firmly in control of key decision and policy making processes in their political parties that promote democracy, they must vote out the untouchables who use illegal means to deny others their right to elect and be elected to lead their communities.



MDC-T St Mary’s constituency members during the MP confirmation process at Macheka square recently.

The grassroots must actively participate in choosing individuals who occupy the highest positions in presidium, politburo, national council and central committee among other key decision and policy making structures on a regular basis.

These party heavy weights are the major threat to democracy in their parties and the nation, as they do not want to relinquish positions of authority. They want to die in power whilst claiming top fight other dictators.

The grassroots members must also now mobilize for new a constitution in their political parties. The constitution must be showing the diversity of party supporters, aspirations and needs.

The constitution must also be clearly stating the term limits of the presidium and other key decision making structures so as to provide opportunities for each generation to lead itself than to be led by older horses.

The current constitution of the republic of Zimbabwe clearly states that one can hold office of the president for a maximum period of ten years whilst the constitutions of both ZANU PF and MDC-T are silent on that matter.

This apparent inconsistency is a threat to democracy within political parties and in the nation at large.

We all know that we cannot teach an old dog new tricks, hence it’s difficult for a political party president who has been at the helm of his/her party for at least twenty years before getting the opportunity to rule the nation to simply leave the country’s presidency after 10 years.

We have seen quite a number of past and current African presidents have tried to manipulate constitutions so that they prolong their stay in power. To the majority of them their actions had had very serious consequences to themselves, their families and their nations at large.

Democracy needs to have its roots well established at the local level if it can prosper at the national level.