



Bulawayo Youth Council

B.Y.C

Policy Position Paper II

NATIONAL HEALING: TRUTH RECOVERY, JUSTICE AND THE RECONCILIATION PROCESS IN ZIMBABWE

Background

When Zimbabwe's three main political parties, namely the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) led by Mr Morgan Tsvangirai, the MDC led by Professor Arthur Mutambara and the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) led by Mr Robert Mugabe, agreed to form an inclusive government on the 15th of September 2008. It was the first time in the history of Zimbabwe that political leaders had agreed to work together in government without necessarily having to merge their parties. This was a good sign of the toning down of the animosity and ill- will that had existed amongst them and their supporters for close to a decade. The Global Political Agreement (GPA) gave birth to an Inclusive Government whose mandate, among other pertinent responsibilities, was that of restoring Zimbabwe i.e. economically, socially, politically and in all other aspects that will allow for the revival of the integrity, prosperity and harmony among the people of Zimbabwe.

In fulfilment of the Inclusive Government's mandate to facilitate national healing (Article VII, part (c), GPA), an organ responsible for national healing was then formed. The parties to the GPA and in the Inclusive Government were represented by one member each; namely Sekai Holland of the MDC led by Mr Tsvangirai, Gibson Sibanda of the MDC led by Professor Arthur Mutambara, and John Landa Nkomo of ZANU-PF. On the 24th of July 2009, the inclusive government launched a national healing and reconciliation programme in which the country was to observe three days of peace and tranquillity from the 24th to the 26th of July, in recognition of what President Robert Mugabe called "our new found peace".

What remains questionable is the method used, the environment and timing of the process. It is with this background that the NYDT through the Bulawayo Youth Council (BYC) decided to

organise a series of policy dialogue meetings aimed at finding out from young people what kind of a process would be ideal for them to heal truly and completely.

The topic ***National Healing or Political Gimmick: Will the Current Process Achieve True Peace?*** was widely discussed through intimate focus group meetings at ward level and at public policy dialogue meetings at constituency level. The topic was taken to three constituencies in Bulawayo namely Emakhandeni, Nkulumane and Bulawayo Central. A rural outreach meeting was also organised which saw the NYDT conduct a meeting in Lupane, the capital of Matabeleland North Province. The NYDT enlisted the services of two resource persons to facilitate the discussions during the meetings and these were; Dumisani Nkomo the Chief Executive Officer for Habakkuk Trust and Nhlanhla Mpofu a civic society activist who also travelled with the NYDT team to Lupane.

The meetings drew an average of eighty participants each at public policy dialogue meetings and 30 participants at focus group meetings. While gender representation was somewhat disappointing due to the lesser number of female participants, their contributions to the lively discussions more than made up for this limitation.

The following is a compilation of young people's views and recommendations (communiqué/position) on the national healing process in Zimbabwe.

Preamble

We the youths who met in Nkulumane, Bulawayo Central, Emakhandeni/Entumbane constituencies as well as in Lupane, the Matabeleland North Provincial capital, between the 25th of July 2009 and the 16th of August 2009 to discuss the National healing process in Zimbabwe under the theme ***NATIONAL HEALING OR POLITICAL GIMMICK: WILL THE CURRENT PROCESS ACHIEVE TRUE PEACE?***;

Haunted by the historical tragedies of colonialism, the liberation struggle, the *Gukurahundi* Massacres; the "Third Chimurenga"; *Operation Murambatsvina*; the 2000, 2002, 2005, March and June 2008 election violence as well as other isolated but politically and socially linked tragic events of our past;

Horried by the fact that despite the formation of an inclusive Government, politically motivated acts of violence are still alive in different parts of our country;

Aware that different strategies to divide the Zimbabwean populace are still being applied including the circulation of documents such as "*The Grand Plan*" amongst so called majority indigenous and elite Zimbabweans, aimed at elevating their economic and social status through the marginalisation and economic deprivation of all other Zimbabweans they call settlers;

Acknowledging that the people of Zimbabwe in general and the youth in particular cannot continue living in fear and under the guise of artificial peace;

Realising that Zimbabwe's citizens cannot continue with a "business as usual" approach to issues while tragedy upon tragedy takes place in the country without any attempt at healing the wounds or uprooting the underlying cause of these problems;

Cognisant of the fact that no lasting healing can take place without truth recovery, transitional justice, forgiveness and reconciliation;

Conscious of the fact that only a new and people driven constitution can guarantee a conducive enough environment and guarantee for this process to take place in;

Conceding to the fact that Zimbabweans hail from different cultures and backgrounds hence the need for an all inclusive multicultural approach to the healing process;

Mindful that our national history as reported by the media, taught at schools and as recorded in the history books is not reflective of the diversity of cultures, religions, nor of the truths of our past as experienced by Zimbabweans in their different contexts.

Accepting that because we are all part of the problem and we should therefore be part of the solution;

Do hereby resolve that:

Justice for our families, friends, colleagues, communities and countrymen cannot be put off any longer. The tragic events of our past cannot go unanswered any longer. We as young people that have been affected the most by these events do hereby insist that the victims, witnesses and perpetrators of these physical, psychological, economic and social acts of violence on Zimbabweans should be allowed to freely speak the truth about what transpired, who was responsible and or involved, why it happened and how best the nation can be healed.

In ensuring that Zimbabweans get true justice and our nation goes through a process of true healing, we demand that the healing process takes place under the following circumstances:

a) A NEW AND PEOPLE-DRIVEN CONSTITUTION



A new and people-driven constitution should be the first phase in the process of national healing in order to guarantee:

- The free election of a government by and for the people of Zimbabwe that can then ensure an environment suitable for the process of National healing,
- An environment free of intimidation,
- A security system that is non-polarised and can dutifully protect all Zimbabweans,
- A justice system that is independent from the executive, transparent and incorruptible,
- Equal application of the law and inculcation of a value system that respects human rights
- A democratic governance system that ensures both public and institutional accountability,

b) INDEPENDENT PROCESS

A non-political and or non-partisan body must lead this process to ensure that:

- No perpetrator escapes the arms of the national and or the international justice systems,
- No victim is intimidated by the process,
- No victim can abuse their political or other affiliations to unlawfully get back what they believe is just,
- The process is not biased or lacks transparency,

bi) *As such a Truth Recovery Commission must be set up to serve as:*

- A non-partisan body in the truth recovery, justice seeking, reconciliation and national healing process.
- The investigative agency in this process
- The custodian of all testimonies and evidence brought forward by parties involved in the process.
- To report and document the testimonies from parties involved in order to ensure that the information is safely kept and is at hand as a reference point for future generations as well as the history books.
- To allow for a bottom up instead of a top down approach to the process in order to ensure that it is effective on a wide scale and not just amongst the leadership.

bii) *The commission should be fully funded by government in order to determine and achieve the following:*

- The Compensation of victims that have been affected economically and deprived of their sources of livelihood through acts of violence that have left them with permanent injuries or otherwise disabled.
- Adequate funding of outreach programmes that will facilitate the interviewing of victims and perpetrators on past instances of violence.
- A well resourced exercise that will run smoothly for positive results and a satisfactory outcome.



c) INCLUSIVITY

This process should be multi-cultural, multiracial and show religious tolerance to afford;

- Zimbabweans from different regions, cultures, religions, and social backgrounds the opportunity to exercise their own way of forgiveness, healing and reconciliation.
- People from different cultures and religions the respect and tolerance in the healing process that they have not received in the past and has led to the subsequent violation of their rights.

d) FREE MEDIA

A free media should be licensed and sanctioned to fully cover the process and publicise the testimonies in a bid to;

- Prevent similar occurrences in future,
- Prevent future denial by perpetrators of these evil acts,
- Ensure a transparent process that is witnessed and endorsed by the Zimbabwean public,
- For the purposes of documentation and archiving
- To facilitate public debate on the ongoing process as this will guarantee true healing and reconciliation.

The above is a summation of young people's desires on the process of national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. It is our hope that the leaders of our land seriously consider these views as they come from a generation most affected by these past events and is most likely to benefit or suffer from the success or failure of this process.

"Enhancing Youth Participation in Local Governance"

"Empower the Youth, Shape the Future"