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THE ZIMBABWE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

THE REPORT ON THE DELIMITATION EXERCISE FOR THE 2008 HARMONISED ELECTIONS

**TO His Excellency, the Honourable R.G. Mugabe,
G.C.Z.M., President of the Republic of Zimbabwe
and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of
Zimbabwe.**

May it please Your Excellency:

INTRODUCTION:

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission is an election management body established under section 61 of the Constitution.

It is charged with *inter alia* the function of delimiting wards and constituencies into which the country is to be divided for purposes of elections. In this regard its terms of reference are set out in subsections (1) to (8) of section 61A of the Constitution as follows: -

“61 A Delimitation of wards and constituencies

- (1) The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission shall, no later than the date notified to it by the President, being a date no later than three months before the date fixed or to be fixed by a proclamation as the date on which Parliament is dissolved under section 63(7) or, as the case may be, the date of the dissolution of Parliament under section 63(4), determine, in accordance with subsections (2) to (7), the limits of the wards and constituencies into which Zimbabwe is to be divided for the

purpose of electing members of the governing bodies of local authorities and members of Parliament respectively:

Provided that the Commission shall produce a preliminary report in terms of subsection (8) no later than one month before the date fixed or to be fixed by a proclamation as the date on which Parliament is dissolved under section 63(7) or, as the case may be, the date of the dissolution of Parliament under section 63(4).

(2) For the purpose of the election of members of the governing bodies of local authorities, local authority areas shall be divided into such number of wards as the Commission shall determine.

(3) Zimbabwe shall, for the purpose of the election of members of Parliament, be divided into two hundred and ten House of Assembly constituencies and sixty senatorial constituencies.

(4) Subject to subsections (5) and (6), the boundaries of the House of Assembly constituencies shall be such that at the time of delimitation the number of voters registered in each House of Assembly constituency is as nearly as may be equal to the number of voters registered in each of the other House of Assembly constituencies.

(5) In delimiting-

- (a) the boundaries of wards, the Commission shall ensure that no ward is divided between two or more local authority areas; and
- (b) the House of Assembly constituencies, the Commission shall ensure that no ward is

divided between two or more House of Assembly constituencies.

(6) In dividing Zimbabwe into wards and House of Assembly constituencies the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission shall, in respect of any area, give due consideration to -

- (a) its physical features;
- (b) the means of communication within the area;
- (c) the geographical distribution of registered voters;
- (d) any community of interest as between registered voters; and
- (e) in the case of any delimitation after the first delimitation consequent upon an alteration in the number of House of Assembly constituencies, existing electoral boundaries;

and whenever it appears necessary to do so in order to give effect to the provisions of this subsection in relation to House of Assembly constituencies, the Commission may depart from the requirements of subsection (4), but in no case to any greater extent than twenty *per centum* more or less than the average number of registered voters in House of Assembly constituencies.

(7) After delimiting the wards and House of Assembly constituencies, the Commission shall divide each province into six senatorial constituencies by assigning to each senatorial constituency a House of Assembly constituency or two or more contiguous House of Assembly constituencies, and in so doing the Commission

may be guided but not bound by any principle or consideration specified in subsections (4) and (6).

(8) The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission shall submit to the President a preliminary report comprising-

(a) a list of wards and House of Assembly constituencies delimited by the Commission, with the names assigned to each and a description of their boundaries;

(b) a list of senatorial constituencies delimited by the Commission, with the names assigned to each and a description of their boundaries;

(c) a map or maps showing the wards and House of Assembly and senatorial constituencies into which Zimbabwe has been divided by the Commission; and

(d) any further information or particulars which the Commission considers necessary; and the President shall cause the report to be laid before Parliament within the next seven days after he has received it.”

Our first task was to attend to the administrative and operational structures of the delimitation exercise. In order to enhance the participation of stakeholders and the electorate at large the exercise was decentralized to the provincial and district levels. Accordingly provincial and district delimitation committees were set up throughout the country. Their composition, venues, sitting times and means of communication hereto were published through the print media.

The major task of each district delimitation committee was to delimit the wards in the district under its jurisdiction. In doing so it gave due regard to *inter alia* the physical features of the area concerned, the means of communication within the area, the geographical distribution of voters, the community of interest as between registered voters and the existing ward boundaries. Each district delimitation committee was to consult widely with stakeholders and invite contributions from members of the public within the district. Its proposals would be submitted to the provincial delimitation committee for scrutiny and endorsement.

Each provincial delimitation committee supervised all district delimitation committees within its province. In addition, using the district wards as building blocks, it proposed in consultation with stakeholders and the general public, House of Assembly constituency boundaries within its province. Further, it similarly proposed which combinations of House of Assembly constituencies within the province should form the six senatorial constituencies allocated to it. Like the district delimitation committee it took into account the principles spelt out in the constitution, namely, the physical features of each area, the means of communication, the geographical distribution of voters in the area, the community of interest as between voters and existing electoral boundaries.

Further, with regards House of Assembly constituencies, each provincial committees was bound by statistics provided by the Commission intended to ensure that in accordance with the law all House of Assembly constituencies were, in terms of voter population, as nearly as may be equal to one another subject to the twenty percent latitude above or below the average number of voters per constituency. The provincial committee submitted its proposals on all electoral

boundaries within its province to the national delimitation committee for scrutiny and endorsement.

The national delimitation committee comprised the Commission Secretariat under the overall supervision of the Chief Elections Officer. Its day to day deliberations were chaired by the Chief Inspector. Its function was to supervise and direct the provincial delimitation committees throughout the country and to receive, scrutinize and endorse provincial proposals on all electoral boundaries.

The national delimitation committee also invited stakeholders and the public at large to make contributions. It also toured the districts and provinces monitoring progress on the ground.

The national delimitation committee in turn reported to the Commission comprising the seven Commissioners assisted by two advisors, namely, Dr M. Bhala the Acting Vice Chancellor of the Lupane State University and Dr A. Murwira a lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe. The Commission supervised the national delimitation committee and its subcommittees. It met all the provincial delimitation committees during tours organized for that purpose, assessing progress and giving on the spot advice. It received, scrutinized and confirmed the proposals presented to it by the national delimitation committee. (For the purposes of this exercise the Commission was internally referred to as the “national delimitation authority”.)

The Chairperson and the two advisors comprised the Technical Committee of the Commission. The Technical Committee provided advisory services to all structures of the delimitation exercise.

The statistics pertaining to the voter population were received from the Registrar General of Voters on 4

December 2007. According to the figures the total number of registered voters in the country as at that date was 5612464. A detailed breakdown of these statistics appears in each of the ensuing chapters.

In terms of the law, the number of voters in a given House of Assembly constituency must be as nearly as possible equal to the number of voters in each of the other House of Assembly constituencies. Following this principle, we established that, on paper, the average number of voters in each House of Assembly constituency is 26726.02. We did so by dividing the total number of voters in the country by the number of House of Assembly constituencies into which the country is to be divided, that is, 210.

In accordance with established practice, we treated the country's ten administrative provinces as separate entities. In order to determine the number of House of Assembly constituencies to be allocated to each province we divided the total number of voters in the province by the average number of voters per House of Assembly constituency, that is, 26726.02. In the first instance, the result in each province was rounded off to the nearest whole number. The rounded off figures gave a total of 211 constituencies instead of the stipulated 210. (See column 4 of the table on distribution of constituencies).

While in the second, just the whole figures under column 3 were added up and the total number came up to 204 constituencies, leaving 6 constituencies unaccounted for. (See column 5.)

The anomaly of the extra constituency in column 4 and the 6 unaccounted for constituencies in column 5 was resolved by using the highest remainder formula. In the first scenario decimals or remainders of the figures representing the number of constituencies per province

were arranged in descending order as illustrated in Table B.

Only provinces with decimal figures of 5 and above were first considered for rounding off to the nearest higher whole number. Seven provinces had decimal figures of 5 and above. If all were to be rounded off to the nearest higher whole number the anomaly would be perpetuated. Thus only those provinces with decimal figures of 6 and above were rounded off in order to get rid of the extra constituency. The desired result is as shown in column 5 of Table B.

With regard to the second scenario, one additional constituency was allocated to each of the six provinces with the highest remainders or fractions in descending order. The result is shown in Table B.

Accordingly the last column in Table B depicts the number of constituencies allocated to each province. This formula and these results were made public through a Press Statement issued on the 6th of December 2007. The Press Statement was also distributed to all political parties.

Distribution of Constituencies

TABLE “A”

Province	Voter Population	Result of dividing No. of Voters per province by average No. of voters per House of Assembly Constituency	Number of constituencies Allocated per province after rounding off	Number of Constituencies Allocated per province before rounding off
Bulawayo	313459	11.72861	12	11
Harare	766478	28.67909	29	28
Manicaland	709664	26.5533	27	26
Mash Central	488477	18.27721	18	18
Mash East	624638	23.37191	23	23
Mash West	583503	21.83277	22	21
Masvingo	699200	26.16177	26	26
Mat North	345263	12.91861	13	12
Mat South	342280	12.807	13	12
Midlands	739502	27.66974	28	27
TOTAL	5612464		211	204

TABLE B

Province	Voter Population	Result of dividing No. of Voters per province by average No. of voters per House of Assembly Constituency	Ranking Order	Number of constituencies after rounding off
Mat North	345263	12.91861	1	13
Mash West	583503	21.83277	2	22
Mat South	342280	12.807	3	13
Bulawayo	313459	11.72861	4	12
Harare	766478	28.67909	5	29
Midlands	739502	27.66974	6	28
Manicaland	709664	26.5533		26
Mash Central	488477	18.27721		18
Mash East	624638	23.37191		23
Masvingo	699200	26.16177		26
TOTALS	5612464			210

In the execution of our mandate we were guided by the provisions of section 61A (6) of the Constitution which directs that we give due consideration to an area's physical features, its means of communication, the geographical distribution of voters and any community of interest amongst the voters resident in the area. We also ensured, in terms of subsection (4) thereof, that "the number of voters registered in each House of Assembly constituency is as nearly as may be equal to the number of voters registered in each of the other House of Assembly constituencies". In principle, the average number of voters in each constituency should be 26726.02 or when rounded off, simply 26726. However, given the diversity of the areas under consideration it was not possible to achieve that ideal figure in every instance.

The Constitution allows for twenty per cent above and below the average number of registered voters per House of Assembly constituency. Simple arithmetic division shows that twenty per cent of 26726 is 5345.2 rounded off to 5345. Using this formula we ascertained that the maximum number of voters in any constituency would be 26726 plus 5345 which equals 32071 and the minimum number would be 26726 minus 5345 which equals 21381.

Accordingly, the number of voters in the House of Assembly constituencies we delimited ranges between 21381 and 32071.

We also took into account the existing electoral boundaries which are always an important factor in delimitation as they serve as an important point of reference for both the electorate and the election officers. An existing electoral boundary is also an indication of an historical community of interest amongst voters in a given area.

In order to cater for the increased number of House of Assembly constituencies we opted to create new constituencies within some of the old constituencies, rather than carve new entities altogether. Accordingly, wherever possible we divided an existing constituency into two or more new constituencies leaving the outer boundaries of the old constituency intact. This way the community of interest as well as the name of the old constituency was retained, in most cases be it under subdivision.

We also delimited 60 senatorial constituencies in accordance with the provisions of section 61A (7) of the Constitution and maintained, wherever possible, the existing senatorial constituency boundaries with adjustments where necessary. In some instances we were unable to follow this route due to changed statistics.

The first step was to delimit the ward boundaries in each of the country's administrative districts. A total of 1958 wards were delimited throughout the country. Wards are significant in two ways: firstly, they form the building blocks upon which House of Assembly constituencies are constructed, and secondly, and most importantly, the ward is the unit within which the electorate shall vote in the pending harmonized elections. Ward voters' rolls and not constituency voters' rolls shall be used for the voting process. **This means that voters can only cast their votes within the ward in which they are registered.**

In the majority of cases, the existing ward boundaries were retained. However, some wards had their boundaries rationalized in order to better reflect the community of interest among voters therein. Others were demolished altogether and new ones created for various reasons. For example, some wards were perceived to be too extensive in comparison to other wards in the same

district while others did not accord with the pattern of the geographical distribution of voters in the areas concerned. In some instances existing ward boundaries ran against the grain of prominent physical features and against the lines of communication in the given areas. We were able to rectify these anomalies by effecting the necessary boundary adjustments.

We invited all stakeholders and the public in general to make submissions with regards ward and constituency boundaries in their locality and nationally. The response was encouraging, particularly at the district and provincial levels where the delimitation committees received representation from *inter alia* political parties, civic and other groups MP's, chiefs, councillors, headmen and ordinary citizens. These submissions profoundly informed and assisted the Commission's deliberations.

A new approach spearheaded by one of our technical advisors, Dr A. Murwira, was developed and adopted to facilitate mapping and description of electoral boundaries. Using Geographical Information System (GIS) we were able to digitize ward and constituency maps for storage in our computer system and for use in the delimitation exercise. We were able to store on the computer information pertaining to wards and constituencies as well as geographical coordinates of important physical and social features. The GIS increased the Commission's technical capacity and, through it, we were able to accomplish the delimitation task within the shortest possible time. In addition we created a database for use in future exercises.

Despite the above achievements, the delimitation exercise was from the outset beset by numerous challenges. The mobility of our delimitation committees was severely limited by the shortage of vehicles and fuel. We lacked sufficient resources by way of computers, computer accessories, maps and stationery. However, we

were able to borrow some of these items from some government departments and local authorities. In all cases members of our delimitation committees went for long periods without receiving their subsistence allowances. They must be commended for their patience, resilience and devotion to duty.

The Commission is pleased that this monumental task has been successfully concluded. The enormity of the task is better appreciated when regard is paid to the fact that, apart from the 210 and 60 House of Assembly and Senatorial constituencies respectively, there were no less than 1958 wards to be delimited, described and mapped. In an exercise of this magnitude, there may be errors of one kind or another. The Commission hopes that any such errors will be brought to its attention for rectification.

As is now the tradition, this report is divided into ten chapters which deal with the individual provinces. In addition to the main report, there is Annexure A which has the detailed ward and constituency descriptions and Annexure B which has maps showing the ward and constituency boundaries.

Our special thanks go to Dr Maclean Bhala and Dr Amon Murwira for lending their expertise which facilitated the work of the Commission throughout the delimitation exercise. Their contribution proved most invaluable.

We thank the Surveyor General, the Director of Physical Planning, the Secretary for Local Government, Central Statistical Office, the Registrar General of Voters, local authorities and other institutions that seconded various experts to the Commission during the exercise. Without their assistance we would not have completed our task within the present time frame.

For printing this report our thanks go to Printflow and Denmuc Private Limited Companies.

We also thank all our stakeholders, that is, political parties, civic and other groups, members of parliament, chiefs, headmen, councillors, institutions, individuals and the general public for their contributions and suggestions throughout this exercise.

Finally, our thanks go to our Secretariat led by the Chief Elections Officer and the Chief Inspector. They worked tirelessly and diligently to make this project a success. We also thank all members of the provincial and district delimitation committees throughout the country for their hard work and commitment, despite numerous logistical and financial constraints.

This report, which lists and describes the proposed boundaries of the 60 Senatorial constituencies, the 210 House of Assembly constituencies and 1958 district wards, is signed and respectfully submitted in terms of subsection (8) of section 61A of the Constitution by all the members of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission on this 21st day of January 2008.