

REPORT OF THE JOINT MEETING HELD IN MABVUKU BY THE LEADERSHIP OF MABVUKU-TAFARA AND HARARE EAST ON FRIDAY 22 MAY 2009 AT 2PM

Present:

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| 1. | Ms D. Mashumba | Tafara |
| 2. | Mrs S. Chivata | Tafara |
| 3. | Mrs I. Takaza | Mabvuku |
| 4. | Mrs C. Manyika | Mabvuku |
| 5. | Mrs F. Makwanda | Tafara |
| 6. | Mr A. Chirenje | Mabvuku |
| 7. | Mr M. Misha | Harare East Residents Chairman |
| 8. | Mr W. Daison | Mabvuku (Pensioners) |
| 9. | Mrs M. Choto | Mabvuku |
| 10. | Keith Charumbira | HRT Mobilisation Coordinator |
| 11. | Honourable Madamombe (MP) | |
| 12. | Precious Shumba | HRT Coordinator |
| 13. | Mrs G. Nyathi | Mabvuku |
| 14. | Mr T. Masika | Tafara |
| 15. | Mr Mataya | Tafara |
| 16. | Mr Mutambu | Mabvuku |
| 17. | Mr Agai Shumba | Mabvuku (Informal Traders) |
| 18. | Mr O. Mushonga | Tafara |
| 19. | Mr N. Butau | Mabvuku |

Agenda:

- Introductions
- Situational analysis and recommendations
- The induction on Harare Residents Trust (HRT) ideology
- MP's report back to residents
- Planning on Public Meeting
- Way Forward

Background: P. Shumba (HRT Coordinator)

The HRT was formed in February 2008 by concerned citizens drawn from different thematic groups who have the passion and the commitment to serve Harare residents. Our objectives are to;

1. To build the capacity of the citizens' of Harare to independently lobby and advocate for quality local government services at suburban level.
2. To facilitate the formation of suburban citizens' trusts to coordinate the activities of residents and ratepayers of Harare.
3. Strengthening the capacity of citizens to collectively advocate for the enactment and formulation of people-driven legislation and policies.
4. To forge alliances of various interest groups in Harare and other cities/towns for a coordinated response to the national local governance crisis.
5. To strengthen the capacity of women and youths to take up leadership and decision-making positions.
6. Addressing all emerging challenges facing the citizens of Harare, including but not limited to small to medium entrepreneurship, HIV and Aids, good governance, crime, environmental management, poverty alleviation and food security.

Harare has 46 wards. The HRT has established structures along suburban lines, and not as wards. So far we have functional structures in 39 of the 46 wards. To effectively deliver on our mandate to bring about quality service provision in and people-friendly policy formulation in the administration of the City of Harare, the HRT engages key stakeholders and service providers. We are consistently on the side of the resident. There are no sacred cows in our advocacy strategy. Anything that makes citizens feel short-changed is our business. We constantly demand value for money.

Situational Analysis: Mabvuku and Tafara leadership

Following the reading of minutes of the previous meeting, the Mabvuku and Tafara leadership narrated how they went about the establishment of their structures, highlighting the key challenges of lack of information on local governance, ignorance of what is happening in the City of Harare and steep rates. Apparently, the residents from the two structures are concerned with the way the City of Harare is being run and the calibre of councillors representing the residents. The majority of the councillors lack the requisite knowledge of local government legislation, administrative framework and locating their roles and responsibilities within the system.

During their last meeting, the residents critically examined the status of service provision in their communities and came up with 11 key issues that have to be dealt with as a matter of urgency. These include;

- the city budget,
- crime prevention,
- unaffordable health services
- the water crisis
- collapse in serviced delivery
- health problem
- education and culture services
- community participation- stakeholder involvement
- transport blues
- social services
- Question of home ownership and acquisition of title deeds.
- Other issues identified are the unaffordable rentals being imposed on lodgers, the unending rent-to-buy payments on properties, grave fees and unexplained evictions of people from their properties.

Recommendations to resolve issues:

After intense discussions on how to remedy the situation, the residents resolved to intensify their advocacy around service provision, accountability of elected representatives, especially councillors and parliamentarians, and to do a thorough **situational report** on the state of service provision in Mabvuku and Tafara. This report will be submitted to the parliamentary portfolio committees that deal directly with issues of local government, health and public works, the City of Harare, business, industry, residents, media and civil society partners for further engagement.

Below is what the residents of Mabvuku and Tafara have committed to do;

- Convene stakeholder meetings
- Intensify clean-up campaigns
- Teach-ins for councillor and residents on local government administrative framework
- Public or community forums on service delivery in Harare.
- Water and health campaigns
- Anti-vandalism campaigns- to involve the police, and key service providers- National Railways of Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA), TelOne and the business community.
- Research and documentation Of key issues affecting residents
- Production of regular reports on the performance of elected representatives
- Facilitating a regular forum for the engagement of stakeholders in health, gender, the elderly, women, and children.
- Establishment of fundraising structures to mobilize community resources to help discharge the mandate of the residents.

- To mobilize the big corporate to enter into strategic partnerships with the HRT for mutual benefit.

The residents' leadership in Tafara and Mabvuku has been formally introduced to the Zimbabwe Republic Police, the local councillors, the District Officer, the Member of Parliament, and the business community in the suburbs. Through these processes, the HRT seeks to ensure that there is an understanding of what it stands for and how it will achieve its objectives. Residents are using their own resources to ensure meetings succeed while they look for alternative sources of funding.

Honourable MP Madamombe's Report to the Residents:

The House of Assembly representative told the residents of how he has found the situation in Mabvuku and Tafara is negatively impacting on the livelihoods of citizens. Key challenges that he mentioned include the unending water crisis, the absence of electricity in several homes, the collapse in service provision, biting poverty, unaffordable health services and blocked sewerage pipes.

The MP said he has established a Constituency Development Committee (CDC) to spearhead constituency development and be the vehicle for community engagement. He said he would work closely with the community to ensure that their issues find their way to Parliament, at the same time bringing the people to work with development partners who will help them uplift their lives.

Most exciting for the residents was the partnership he entered with Innscor, a leading food manufacturing concern, to suck sewerage from residents' septic tanks, which are overflowing due to lack of attention, threatening disease outbreaks. Once the blocked sewer lines are unblocked, more work would be carried out to ensure a cleaner and healthier environment.

Before the meeting the MP went around the suburb with a senior official from ZESA to establish the challenges facing residents in terms of electricity supplies. He reported that the official had indicated that 15 transformers were needed to ensure electricity supplies but these required large sums of foreign currency to purchase. However, he has the commitment of the ZESA official to at least do some repairs on the vandalized electricity infrastructure within next three weeks.

The residents will monitor these developments to see to it that these promises are fulfilled.

The MP said he had first-hand information that most of the council's health centres have received donations of drugs and other essential materials but residents still had to pay exorbitant consultation fees of US\$5, raising serious questions of how the drugs are being utilized in the clinics. They are further charged US\$3 for anti-retroviral drugs per month to those who are on anti-retroviral treatment, making the cost rise to US\$8. Yet at the Simon Mazorodze based Beatrice Infectious and Disease Hospital, commonly known as Nazareth, patients on anti-retroviral treatment only pay US\$1 to receive their drugs every month. But residents said despite payment of huge sums of money in consultation fees, they still went home with mere prescriptions requiring them to purchase drugs in pharmacies, which were more expensive. This situation has left more residents, especially pensioners, orphans, the elderly and widows at the risk of dying in their homes due to lack of money to purchase the expensive drugs. There are not many employment opportunities or income generating economic activities to sustain them.

While some residents of Mabvuku, Tafara and Harare East keep the industries in Msasa and the Circle Cement going through their labour, there is very little that has been done by these companies to benefit the surrounding communities.

The MP said he would team up with his fellow Members of Parliament to approach these big companies and persuade them to plough back into Mabvuku and Tafara communities. Targeted companies include John Sisk, National Oil Company of Zimbabwe, Circle Cement (Lafaj) and the Grain Marketing Board (GMB).

Report by Senior Citizens: Mr Daison

It was felt that the City of Harare has deliberately failed to provide residents with title deeds for them to exercise full ownership of their properties. This has left them at the mercy of greedy and corrupt City of Harare officials who allegedly work in cahoots with officials in the Community and Housing Department who constantly threaten defaulting residents, widows and orphans with eviction. Targeted residents are subsequently evicted and replaced by city workers who become the new house owners.

Mabvuku and Tafara have gone for nearly two years without adequate supplies of tap water. Despite reports from the residents of this dire situation, originally to the city of Harare, later to the Zimbabwe National Water Authority and now back to the City of Harare, nothing has been done. Most taps have become rusty and meters no longer function. However the City of Harare has continued to charge them exorbitant rates for unavailable water. Interventions by non-state actors to drill boreholes have yet to have the desired impact of

adequate water supplies to each household. The few boreholes that have been sunk in the community have created a new problem for families. With HIV and Aids still a major threat to the population, adolescents now spent more time queuing for the scarce commodity, in the process engaging in risky behaviour that increases the frequency of unwanted pregnancies among young girls, and the opportunity for the transmission of the pandemic.

Way Forward:

- **Public Meeting:**

The residents resolved to hold a public meeting on Saturday 30 May 2009 at a community hall in Mabvuku at which the police will also address the community on vandalism and crime prevention. Other issues for discussion include city rates, service delivery and performance of elected representatives.

- **Membership:**

To become a member of either the Mabvuku or Tafara residents' structure, a citizen has to pay US\$1 per year, translating to less than a rand per month. People with financial management background have been elected as treasurers and they will properly account for every cent contributed. Trainings would be conducted to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge as well.

- **Stakeholder Engagement:**

People drawn from various thematic groups will be brought together to openly discuss or brainstorm on the nature of challenges they face as a community. When the stakeholders meet, they would choose a representative team to draft an initial report for further discussion with the community, service providers and policy makers. A single problem would be selected for further scrutiny by the stakeholder think-tank. A draft report would be produced, and submitted to the residents and all key stakeholders before a final report is produced, capturing all the concerns and recommendations of the community. Afterwards, an intense advocacy and lobbying strategy is employed to get the buy-in of the policy-makers and service providers in addressing the identified challenges and take aboard the proffered recommendations.

- **Strategic Partnerships**

Innskor has been commended by the community for being a responsible corporate after it donated hundreds of loaves of bread during a clean-up campaign in the community. It was resolved that further engagement with Innskor should open the way for a strategic partnership that would go beyond events but a long-term partnership that benefits both the community and Innskor. Delta Corporation was also identified as a potential partner of the residents in serving the community from which they derive their wealth.

- **Monitoring service provision**

The residents are opposed to the current situation where there is lack of supervision of council staff. It was agreed that the residents' leadership would periodically review how their rates are being utilized. They would monitor how their offices are operating. Serious issues to be looked into include the establishment of the number of households in Mabvuku and Tafara, how much is being realized every month from rates, and how much of that money is being utilized in the said community to improve service provision. The HRT advocates for total decentralization of services and utilization of resources.

Ends

For comments and feedback on our programming, contact the Harare Residents' Trust on hretrust79@gmail.com / hretrust@yahoo.com