

Zimbabwe's civil society draws alternative blueprint

Submitted by [AA](#) [1] on 18 August, 2015 - 17:51

ZIMBABWE



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Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio Economic Transformation (Zim-Asset) document

CIVIL society organisations, under the umbrella organ Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition (CiZC), have drafted their own economic blueprint as an alternative to government's Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio Economic Transformation (Zim-Asset).

The blueprint code-named the Zimbabwe Social Market Agenda for Recovery and Transformation (ZIMSMART), will be launched in Harare on Thursday.

The announcement also comes as CiZC appointed renowned academic, Phillan Zamchiya, as its new executive director.

Zamchiya takes over from McDonald Lewanika, who briefly held the position following the turbulence which rocked the organisation last year following turbulence that rocked it which saw the resignation of former board chairman, Dewa Mavhinga, and the departure of dozens of affiliate organisations in protest.

Zamchiya told journalists in Harare on Tuesday that civil society organisations had come together to draw an alternative economic blueprint after realising that the government initiated Zim-Asset had failed to bring results.

"We realised that we need smart ideas, smart leaders for a smart economy and that is why we, as the civil society, have come up with this alternative economic blueprint," said the former Oxford University lecturer.

"We have come to realise that Zim-Asset is not taking us anywhere. It has failed. Government promised to create over two million jobs by 2018 under Zim-Asset but 25 000 have lost their jobs in just two months. The government is clueless," he said.

Zamchiya said he would work reunite and strengthen feuding civil society organisations and depoliticise CiZC.

"Today we are making an honest admission that the coalition is not at its best. It needs organizational strengthening. We need to improve our internal and external relational capacity so that we restore our status as the thought leader and convenor of national dialogue in Zimbabwe," he said, adding that he has since extended the olive branch to aggrieved former affiliates who severed ties with the coalition during the Lewanika era.

Zamchiya said CiZC would soon roll out programs were debates on topical national issues would be held as a way of helping shape national dialogue.

The programme, he said, would include both traditional foes and friends of CiZC who would be brought together on the table, the series kicking off with a public discussion on the draft labour bill currently being debated in Parliament at a local hotel on Thursday evening.

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Published on Architect Africa Online (<http://architectafrica.com>)

“What we need to do is improve relational capacity to build trust, which can’t happen overnight. We cannot only meet with people who always tell us what we want to hear,” he said.

“Our duty is to speak truth to power, like all civil societies in the world. There has also been the perception that we the coalition has closer ties to the opposition party. We are going to work to demystify that and show that we are not partisan.

“We are not politicians and we do not seek state power. Our aim is to find common national ground necessary to move the country forward,” he added.

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