



BRIEF BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE ZIMBABWE ELECTORAL COMMISSION TO LOCAL AND FOREIGN OBSERVERS FOR THE 2018 HARMONISED ELECTIONS AT HARARE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE (HICC): 13 JULY 2018

Let me begin by welcoming you all to this 2018 Harmonized Elections brief for observers on the state of preparedness by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission. It is pertinent to note that the forthcoming elections are the second to be held under our country's new Constitution introduced in the year 2013. Further, it is also important to note that the country has continued to reform its electoral processes in line with regional and international standards and as a Commission we believe that Rome was not built in a day and as such, we are committed to the attainment of credible and conflict free electoral processes.

1. FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMISSION

The functions of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission are provided for in Section 239 of the Constitution as follows:

- a. to prepare for, conduct and supervise –
- (i) elections to the office of President and to Parliament;
 - (ii) elections to provincial and metropolitan councils and the governing bodies of Local Authorities;
 - (iii) elections of members of the National Council of Chiefs established by Section 285; and
 - (iv) referendums;
- and to ensure that those elections and referendums are conducted efficiently, freely, fairly, transparently and in accordance with the law,
- b. to supervise elections of the President of the Senate and the Speaker and to ensure that these elections are conducted efficiently and in accordance with the law;
 - c. to register voters;
 - d. to compile voters' rolls and registers,
 - e. to ensure the proper custody and maintenance of voters rolls and registers;
 - f. to delimit constituencies, wards and other electoral boundaries;
 - g. to design, print and distribute ballot papers, approve the form of and procure ballot boxes, and establish and operate polling centres;
 - h. to conduct and supervise voter education;
 - i. to accredit observers of elections and referendums;
 - j. to give instructions to persons in the employment of the State or of a Local Authority for the purpose of ensuring the efficient, free, fair, proper and transparent conduct of any election or referendum; and
 - k. to receive and consider complaints from the public and to take such action in regard to the complaints as it considers appropriate

1.2 Additional Functions

The Electoral Act [*Chapter 2:13*] in Section 5 thereof provides for additional functions and powers of the Commission as follows:

- a. undertaking and promoting research into electoral matters
- b. developing expertise and the use of technology in regard to the electoral processes; and

- c. promoting co-operation between Government, political parties and civil society in regard to elections; and
- d. keeping the public informed about -
 - i. the times and places where persons can register as voters and the progress of the voter registration exercise; and
 - ii. the delimitation of wards, constituencies and other electoral boundaries, and
 - iii. the location and boundaries of polling stations and when they are open for inspection; and
 - iv. voters rolls and the times and places at which they are open for inspection; and
 - v. political parties and candidates contesting every election and;
 - vi. voting; and
 - vii. generally all matters relating to the Commission's work and the electoral process;
- e. Making recommendations to Parliament on appropriate ways to provide public financing for political parties.

2. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Zimbabwean elections are governed by the Constitution of Zimbabwe and the Electoral Act [*Chapter 2:13*]. This legislation is complemented by subsidiary legislation in the form of regulations such as the Electoral Regulations, 2005 S.I. 21 of 2005 and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (Media Coverage of Elections) Regulations, 2008 S.I. 33 of 2008.

The conduct of referendums is governed by the Referendums Act [*Chapter 2:10*] and the Referendums Regulations, 2000 as read with the above legislation.

3. THE ZIMBABWEAN ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Our electoral system is a mixed system consisting of the Single Member Majority system, the Single Member Plurality System popularly known as the First-Past-the-Post system and the Proportional Representation System.

3.1 Single Member Majority

The Single Member Majority system is applied for the Presidential election. In this system the winner must obtain an absolute majority of votes the minimum being 50% plus one vote. If a candidate fails to secure an outright majority, a run-off election is conducted between the two candidates with the highest number of votes. Note it is not enough to receive more votes than the others; it has to be more than half the total votes cast. Further it cannot be just 50% of the votes cast because the law requires “**more than half**” so the one vote added to the 50% is what will tilt the scales.

3.2 Proportional Representation System

The Proportional Representation System is applied for 60 members of the upper house of Parliament i.e. the Senate, 60 members of the National Assembly all of whom must be women and for the Provincial Councils in the 8 non-metropolitan provinces.

To qualify a party must have filed its party nomination lists during the nomination court proceedings. So if a Party did not file its party-list nomination forms for all the elections under the PR System, then it will not be eligible to be allocated seats.

The Electoral Act [*Chapter 2:13*] provides a formula for allocating the seats to eligible parties under this system.

3.3 First-Past-The-Post System

The First - Past – the - Post, or Single Member Plurality System is used for elections in the lower house of Parliament (the National Assembly) and for local authority elections. Under

this electoral system the country is divided into 210 electoral constituencies and 1958 wards, each of which is represented by a candidate. The candidate who attains the highest number of votes is declared the winner. The winner in each constituency is the candidate who receives a minimum of one vote more than the other candidate(s).

4. DELIMITATION

The constituency and ward boundaries for the 2018 Harmonised Elections are based on the 2008 delimitation report. This is so because the Commission did not conduct boundary delimitation. In terms of the Constitution delimitation can only be done every 10 years after a population census. The next census is expected in 2022 and according to the Constitution a delimitation exercise will be conducted soon thereafter. It is pertinent to note, however, that due to voter migration, establishment of new settlement the voter population now exceeds the constitutional thresholds in some of the constituencies.

5. BUDGET

In terms of section 322 and 325 of the Constitution, it is the responsibility of the Government to ensure that sufficient funds are provided to the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission. The Commission was allocated \$95.9 million out of a bid of \$178 million budget for the 2018 Harmonised Elections. To date over 70% of the funds have been released into the Commission's account. Treasury has already committed in writing to avail the balance before the Election Day. The releases were on time and there was no prejudice to the preparations for the plebiscite.

The support from the government was also complemented by cooperating partners such as UNDP, EISA and IFES in areas such as voter education, communication, training and data centre upgrade. The African Union also played a key role in further facilitating the training of election officials.

6. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENTS

In line with the principles of transparency and inclusivity, the Commission has been holding stakeholder engagements to inform the electorate of developments at every stage of the electoral process and these are expected to continue before and after the elections. The stakeholders include political parties, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Faith Based Organisations (FBOs), Chapter 12 Commissions, the Police and the Media. The Commission has held 29 stakeholder meetings since the commencement of the BVR exercise in September last year.

Besides being informative, these engagements also act as trust building forums.

In the spirit of transparency and stakeholder engagement, the Commission recently invited stakeholders including representatives of political parties contesting presidential elections, local and foreign observers, embassies as well as civic society and faith based organizations to witness ballot paper printing at Fidelity Printers.

While there is no legal obligation which compels the Commission to invite stakeholders to the printing process, the Commission saw it befitting to allow stakeholders to witness the process in order to dispel unfounded and misleading myths. However, the Commission would be the first to admit that its overtures did not yield the intended objectives as some stakeholders insisted on outrageous, unlawful and unreasonable demands thereby scuttling a good process to consensus building.

7. **BIOMETRIC VOTER REGISTRATION**

This election, is also an election of firsts in that, it is the first election in which the country used biometric technology to come up with a new voters roll and it is also the first election in which polling station based voting will be implemented. All of these were implemented with a view to address stakeholder concerns and to improve election administration in our country in line with international best practice and recommendations made by some of the observer groups in 2013. The Commission officially launched the Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) exercise on the 14th of September 2017 through Statutory Instrument 109 of 2017 with 15 January 2018 as the last day on which applications were to be received. A total of 2600 BVR kits were procured by the Commission for the purpose. The BVR exercise was launched in the country's 63 district centres on the 18th of September 2017. The BVR blitz was conducted in four phases over a period of 72 days with each kit spending 16 days at the established registration centres. During the blitz, the registration centers were open between 07:00 and 17:00 hours every day of the week including weekends and public holidays.

The Commission also conducted a voter registration mop up exercise between the 10th of January and the 8th of February 2018 to cater for those who had missed registration owing to lack of synchronization between the Registrar General's office exercise of issuing identity cards and other documents required for registration and the Commission's registration blitz. The Commission also took cognizant of the fact that there had been another category of people who had been left out of the registration process (the so called aliens) who were granted an equal opportunity to register through the intervention of the courts. As of 1st of June 2018 the Commission has registered the following:

PROVINCE	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL NO. OF VOTERS
Bulawayo Metropolitan	138,238	120,329	258,567
Harare Metropolitan	457,350	443,378	900,728
Manicaland	415,116	318,254	733,370
Mashonaland Central	279,912	252,072	531,984
Mashonaland East	343,784	289,626	633,410
Mashonaland West	331,564	323,569	655,133
Masvingo	356,533	260,679	617,212
Matabeleland North	190,069	149,066	339,135
Matabeleland South	150,449	113,736	264,185
Midlands	410,175	351,807	761,982
NATIONAL TOTAL	3,073,190	2,622,516	5,695,706

7.1 Inspection of the voter roll

The inspection of the provisional voters' roll started on 19 May 2018 and ended on 29 May 2018. The Commission published all the **10 807** inspection and **2 019** registration centres in the press to enable registrants to visit and correct any observed anomalies.

Besides establishing inspection centres, the Commission facilitated the use of the Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD) platform *265# to enable registrants to check their details using their mobile phones. As at 29 May 2018 at 4pm, a total of **916 001** people had used this facility to check their registration details. This is over and above **1 917 691** people who physically visited the inspection centres.

In addition, the Commission sent out **3 256 440** bulk SMSs with registration details to registrants who supplied their mobile numbers upon registration. A total of 206 225 new registrants were recorded during the inspection exercise.

In addition, registrants also used the link byrinspection.zec.org.zw or the new ZEC website www.zec.org.zw to check their details on line.

These innovations resulted in inspection centres experiencing low turnouts as thousands of people were checking their details at their workplaces and in the comfort of their homes. It should be noted that the voter registration exercise is continuous as registration was also conducted during the inspection period

7.2 Polling Station Specific Registration

The new system has also erased the issue of perceptions related to multiple voting and voter fraud as a voter is now only limited to voting at one polling station of his or her choice in the ward they are resident. Previously a voter's name was repeated in the voters roll at any polling station within his ward or constituency

7.3 Gazetting of the voters roll

The Commission gazetted the new voters roll as envisaged by the electoral law on the 29th of May 2018. This meant that the country now had a voter's roll from which continuous voter registration could be made. The total registered voter population as at 1 June 2018 which will be on the final voters' rolls following the deduplication, adjudication processes, edits and corrections done to date is **5,695,706**.

- This total excludes about **92,745** registrants who will be on the Exclusion List for various reasons such as those who;
 - Have Invalid ID numbers **11,767**
 - Are sharing same ID numbers but with different details who are still to be confirmed by the RG's office as the true holders **510**.
 - Are sharing same ID numbers and details but are two different people who are still to be confirmed by the RG's office for the true holders **1157**.
 - Were confirmed to be not on the civil registry at the RG's office **25**.
 - Who are deceased **8146**
 - Duplicates arising from transfers **39,892**
 - Duplicates arising from double registration **31,248**

From bullet 1 to 5 the registrants names will not be on the voters roll except for those 6 and 7 their names will appear on the voters roll.

7.4 Provision of Voters Roll

Copies of the Electronic voters rolls are being provided to candidates and stakeholders upon request. Over 332 voters rolls have been purchased from head office. 1458 Constituency Rolls and 7075 Ward Rolls have been dispatched to provinces for distribution to candidates.

7.5 Printing of the Final Voters Roll

Generation of the Polling Station Voters Rolls in PDF Format was completed and submitted to the Printers for printing. Printing is now completed for all Provinces with proof reading and quality checks currently taking place.

8. ELECTORAL REFORMS

There were some electoral reforms undertaken through the Electoral Amendment Act which aligned the electoral law to the new Constitution. The highlights of the amendments are as follows:

- **Section 5** – ensuring that gender is mainstreamed into electoral processes. Ensuring that gender is mainstreamed into electoral processes. The Electoral Act now provides that the Commission advocates for regulations to ensure that women have fair opportunities to campaign and register to vote, and are protected from election-related violence. The Commission must now also provide adequate, accurate, **gender sensitive** and unbiased education;
- **Section 23** – the extension of the period of residence to be considered in deciding whether a voter's name should be retained on the voters roll from 12 months to 18 months.

Previously a voter's name could be removed from the voters roll if he or she was deemed not resident in the constituency for a continuous period of 12 months. Now that period has been extended to 18 months giving voters a longer period for which they can be away from their constituency and their names still retained on the roll.

- **Section 40F** – effectively allows foreign donations to fund voter education activities to be directly channelled to civil society organisations as opposed to via the Commission as was the case in the previous dispensation.
- **Section 22A** – now allows the Commission to establish more polling stations for an area that has a large voter population (to speed up polling on voting day);
- **Section 32** –relates to the removal of duplicates to bring it in conformity with the processes brought about by the introduction of biometric voter registration. According to the amendment no person shall be registered as a voter more than once on the voters roll for any polling station. Duplicates or multiple names of the voter shall be removed so that the name of that voter appears only once.
- **Section 126** – relates to the withdrawal of candidates to remove the cumbersome problem which the Commission was required to undertake on withdrawal of candidacy. Late withdrawals had a logistic and financial impact, as the law mandated the Commission to delete, from the ballot paper, the name of any candidate who withdrew after the ballot paper had already been printed;
- **Section 59** - is on assisted voters to allow visually impaired voters to be assisted to vote by a person of their choice without the Presiding Officer necessarily being present.

- **Section 26A** – provides that registration of voters now closes two (2) days after proclamation. It therefore means that the registration of voters for the purposes of the 2018 Harmonised elections closed on 1 June 2018. However those that are going to register after the cut-off date will be considered for future elections.
- **Section 52A** – was amended so as to provide that the number of ballot papers printed for any election does not exceed more than 10% of the number of registered voters eligible to vote in the election.
- There are also amendments regarding how election petitions are to be determined and the time within which such petition and appeals are to be determined, which period is within 6 months and 3 months respectively for the date of the petition or the date of lodging the appeal.
- **Section 133 A** – was amended to expand the definition of intimidation to include that persuading or attempting to persuade another person that they will be able to determine or discover how they have voted is an act of intimidation.
- **Code of Conduct of Political Parties and Candidates.** This has been broadened to include that of other stakeholders like CSO's, Civil Servants, Traditional Leaders and the members of Security should assist in ensuring compliance of the code by political parties and candidates.
- The Code also introduces the issue of setting up Multi-Party Liaison Committee's at least 12 months prior to the expected date of the election as opposed to the previous provisions where MPLSC's were established after the sitting of the Nomination Courts.
- The amendments also introduce a new section 40K on the observation of the elections by the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, Electoral Act, Code of Conduct, Regulations.
- **NB-**There are also minor amendments to the Electoral Act

9. ACCREDITATION OF OBSERVERS

The breakdown of accredited observers to date according to category is as follows:

LOCAL OBSERVERS	523
LOCAL JOURNALISTS	247
FOREIGN OBSERVERS	168
FOREIGN JOURNALISTS	29
TOTAL	967

10. PROCLAMATION

His Excellency the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe Honourable Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa issued out a proclamation for the 2018 Harmonised elections in terms of Section 144 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe through Statutory Instrument 85 of 2018 and fixed Monday the 30th day of July 2018 as the day a poll shall be taken in respect of Presidential, National Assembly and Local Authority elections.

The President also fixed:

- the 14th of June 2018 as the date that the nomination courts sat to receive nominations for candidates in respect of Presidential, National Assembly and local authority elections.
- the 11th of July 2018 as the date for the election of Chiefs to the National Council of Chiefs.
- the 18th of July 2018 as the date for the election of the President and Deputy president of the National Council of Chiefs.

- the 1st of August 2018 as the date for the election of the two (2) Senator Chiefs for each of the eight (8) non metropolitan provinces, and
- the 2nd August 2018 as the date for the election of senators to represent people with disabilities.

11. NOMINATION COURTS

Nominations courts to choose candidates to participate in the harmonised elections sat on 1 4 June 2018. A total of **23** presidential and **1652** National Assembly Constituency candidates were successfully nominated. A total of **55** political parties and **247** independent candidates will be contesting in the country's **210** National Assembly constituencies.

12. POLLING STATIONS

The commission has established a total of **10,985** polling stations throughout the country. The list of polling stations has been published in the press and they will be published again on polling day. These stations were established in terms of Section 51 of the Electoral Act which provides that the Commission should establish polling stations at places it finds suitable and convenient to voters.

The law compels the Commission to establish adequate polling stations in each of the country's **1958** wards with each polling station being located at a place that is readily accessible to the public, including persons with physical disabilities.

13. PROCUREMENTS

13.1 Ballot Paper

An initial 130 tons of sentinel paper was ordered to be used for the printing of the Presidential and National Assembly ballot papers. However, due to the large number of candidates for the Presidential Election and in quite a number of constituencies and wards, it was necessary to procure additional paper to cover for any contingencies. The State assisted the Commission with additional funding for the purchase of additional ballot paper.

13.2 Indelible Ink Marker Pens

This election will also be the first at which the use of marker pens will be resorted to. In the past elections, the Commission used dipping ink which was considered to be not user friendly and messy by voters. The Commission has procured sufficient quantities for use during the forthcoming elections.

13.3 Vehicles

The Commission has also procured vehicles to enhance its mobility during electoral activities. It has already received part of the delivery of the vehicles and is optimistic that the suppliers will meet the deadline.

13.4 Election Material

The procurement and printing of election material is work in progress.

14. RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF ELECTORAL OFFICERS

All Constituency Elections Officers and their deputies were recruited and their names and addresses published in the Government Gazette in line with the provisions of the law. They were trained during the period 2 to 4 July 2018 and have commenced their duties. Wards Elections Officers and Presiding Officers have also been identified and will be trained from

16 to 18 and 20 to 22 July 2018 respectively. The rest of the polling officers will be trained on 24 and 25 July 2018.

To facilitate training and referencing the AU technical Assistance team facilitated the production of Pocket Guide. (Approximately 11 000 copies have been printed and will form part of the Presiding Officers kit).

14.1 Electoral Staff Requirements

The 2018 Harmonised Elections require a total of about 131,000 personnel. Deployments are being done in stages until 28 July 2018. Constituency Elections Officers are already deployed to their Constituencies.

14.2 Training

- Train the Trainer programmes were held for ZEC Provincial Elections Officers, Deputy Provincial Elections Officers, District Elections Officers, Constituency Elections Officers and Deputy Constituency Elections Officers with assistance from the African Union Technical Training Team. The Commission appreciates this assistance.
 - Training for Wards Elections Officers, Deputy Wards Elections Officers, Presiding Officers and Polling Officers is scheduled to be completed by 24 July 2018.
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- For Voter Education, the recruitment process has been completed and the 1st training was of supervisors who trained on the 12th of July 2018.

14.3 Deployments

Polling staff are expected to be set up by 28 July 2018 manned fully by the Presiding Officer and Polling Officers.

15. LITIGATION

The Commission has been subjected to a barrage of litigation but most of which is based on fringe grounds to the electoral process. Apart from appeals against the proceedings of the nomination courts, there are no cases that have been filed which have a direct bearing on the Commission's preparations for elections.

16. BALLOT PAPER DESIGN AND PRINTING

The Commission has also been accused by some stakeholders of coming up with a ballot paper design which favours one of the contesting candidates. The aggrieved stakeholders have also gone to the extent of proposing how ZEC should have designed the ballot indicating that they would have preferred a one column design. The allegations are regrettable and ZEC wishes to advise that it did consider all possible options in coming up with the design of the ballot paper. The proposed one column design would have resulted in a very long ballot paper of A3 plus in size and required double the amount of paper. The cost benefit analysis revealed that the option would have required not only an increase in ballot paper but also an increase in production time. Thus the option had both financial and logistical implications on the Commission's preparations.

The two column design is the design that has been adopted for all ballot papers with candidates in excess of fourteen (14) people regardless of the type of election using its discretion after weighing the available options. The candidates' names will still retain the alphabetical order of surnames as provided for in Section 3(11)(b)(i) of the Electoral Regulations Statutory instrument 21 of 2005.

However, stakeholders were reminded that issues to do with the design and printing of the ballot paper remain the exclusive right of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission in terms of Section 239(g) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe.

The printing of the Presidential Ballot paper is almost complete.

More than 50% of the National Assembly and Local Authority ballot papers have now been printed. The Commission will publish the total number of ballot papers printed and their distribution in accordance with the provisions of the law once the printers complete the process.

17. INFORMATION DISSEMINATION STRATEGY AND VOTER EDUCATION

The Commission recognises the pivotal role played by information dissemination and voter education in the electoral process hence it has been conducting vigorous Voter Education and Publicity campaigns in collaboration with civil society organisations to ensure that the electorate is well informed of the Biometric Voter Registration exercise and other electoral processes leading to polling day.

The following strategies have been employed to enhance effective information dissemination and voter education on electoral processes.

- Adverts in the electronic and print media
- Regular Radio and Television programmes
- Road shows
- Bulk SMS
- ZEC website
- Promotional material and Pamphlets and
- Door to door information dissemination
- Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD) code

It should be noted that the use of the USSD code and on-line link to the voters' roll enabled registered voters to check their registration status and details at their various workplaces and in the comfort of their homes. This speeded up the inspection exercise and remarkably reduced queues at inspection centres, subsequently aiding a citizen audit of the voters' roll.

17.1 Accredited PVOs and Trusts to conduct VE

A total number of 78 PVOs & Trusts as well as faith based organisations have been accredited to conduct voter education. These have been given the soft copies of VE materials for reproduction and use.

17.2 Voter Education Strategies being employed

a. Call Centre

The electorate utilises the services of the call centre to seek clarification on election related matters. An average of 70 calls is received per day making enquiries on issues on the fate of those who registered after the cut-off date-pleading with ZEC to reconsider, how they can get the voters' roll, and on the voting process.

b. Road shows

A total of 61 road shows will be rolled out and these are already underway in all the ten provinces. The road shows started on the 4th of July and will be winding up on the 28th of July 2018.

c. Billboards

Billboards are being used as outdoor messaging technique. The setting up of billboards started on the 29th of June 2018 and completed on the 9th of July 2018. Those are distributed as follows:

PROVINCE	NUMBER
NORTHERN REGION	
Harare	11
Manicaland	5
Mashonaland West	5
Mashonaland East	5
Mashonaland Central	5
TOTAL	31
SOUTHERN REGION	
Bulawayo	8
Matebeleland North	4
Midlands	5
Masvingo	5
Matebeleland South	5
Total	27
GRAND TOTAL	58

d. Bulk sms

Two sets of bulk sms will be sent to the electorate, one 5 days before poll, and the other, a day before poll.

e. Jingles and adverts

Five different radio adverts have been produced and are now being aired. The jingles were also translated to other languages.

f. TV Skits/dramas

Four TV dramas have been produced and are currently being polished. The skits focus on explaining the election process, the harmonisation aspect of the election, documents required, polling station specific voting, first time voters and many other aspects of the forthcoming elections. They will start playing 2 weeks before polling day.

g. Social media campaign

A comprehensive social media campaign portfolio was produced and messages will be posted soon.

h. Printed materials

Brochures, factsheets, flyers and posters were produced and are being printed and distributed to Provinces.

i. Translation of materials to other languages

All printed materials were translated to 13 languages namely Kalanga, Venda, Sotho, Shona, Ndebele, Tswana, Nambya, Tonga, Xangani, Chewa, Barwe, Ndaou and Xhosa. These are being distributed to communities where these languages are spoken.

j. Braille

2000 Braille copies are being produced for the visually impaired and will be distributed to users through Provincial and District structures as well as organisations for the visually impaired. Production has been completed and distribution is underway.

VE commenced on 5 July 2018 in the form of roadshows, radio adverts, billboards and the call centre. The Commission will deploy on the ground VE officers from 17 July to 23 July 2018 to compliment the already existing public outreach initiative.

18. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The importance of Electoral Dispute Resolution (EDR) in Zimbabwe cannot be overemphasised more so that the country's fast approaching the general elections day to be conducted on 30 July 2018.

Zimbabwe has in place a sound legal system to deal with electoral conflict management supported by the Constitution and the Electoral Act.

Incorporated in the Electoral Act is the new Code of Conduct for Political Parties and Candidates. This has been broadened to include other stakeholders like CSO's, Civil Servants, Traditional Leaders and national security members who should assist in ensuring compliance of the code.

The Code also outlines that Multi-Party Liaison Committees (MPLCs) should be established at least 12 months prior to the expected date of the election as opposed to the previous provisions where MPLSC's were established after the sitting of the Nomination Courts. These committees have since been established country wide to deal with political violence, intimidation and other electoral disputes

The Commission is working closely with all stakeholders and all Chapter 12 Independent Commissions such as the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission and the Police to ensure that there is minimal conflict during the election period. Political parties contesting in the forthcoming harmonised elections have also signed a peace pledge publicly committing themselves to the observance of peace during the forthcoming elections.

19. POSTAL VOTE

In terms of section 72 of the Electoral act the following persons are eligible for postal voting:

- Persons on duty on polling day as members of the disciplined forces.
- Electoral Officers.
- Persons on duty in the service of the Government of Zimbabwe outside Zimbabwe and their spouses.

The Commission has received about 7 600 applications for the postal vote from the eligible voters. You are advised that the procedure for voting by post is set out in section 75 of the Electoral Act, this provision clearly stipulates that voting by such a voter is done secretly and not in the presence of any person. Allegations that postal voting is being conducted in the manner described in social media or depicted in a picture circulating in social media are regrettable. No postal voting stations have been set up or will be set up by the Commission. Postal voters are free to vote secretly for a candidate of their as provided for by the law.

20. ELECTION OF NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHIEFS

The election of the National Council of Chiefs took place on 11 July 2018 at various venues in the 8 non metropolitan provinces of the country. The elections were presided over by ZEC's Provincial Elections Officers.

21. ELECTION OF PRESIDENT AND DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHIEFS

All ballots are counted at the polling station level in the presence of election agents observers. All election agents present will be given copies of the count. Results are also posted outside each polling station ward centre and Constituency centre after collation. Once elected the National Council of Chiefs will meet as an Electoral College to choose the President and Deputy President of the Council of Chiefs. The election will be presided over by the Director Human Resources on 18 July 2018. All results are physically transmitted from one centre to the next. There will be no electronic transmission of results. Political parties and candidates are free to accompany the electoral officer physically transmitting the results.

22. TRANSMISSION OF RESULTS

All ballots will be counted at polling station level in the presence of election agents and observers. All election agents and observers will be given copies of the results. The same copies will also be posted outside each polling station, ward centre and constituency centre after collation.

With regard to the Presidential election, once the results have been collated at the Constituency Collation Centre they will be transmitted to the District Elections Officer for direct transmission to the National Collation and Results Centre. This fast route by-passes the Provincial Elections Officer to enable the results to reach the National Collation Centre early so as to meet the five-day period for announcement of the Presidential result. All results will be physically transmitted from one centre to the next. There will be no electronic transfer of results. Political parties and candidates are free to escort if they so wish the electoral officer physically transmitting the results.

23. NATIONAL COLLATION AND RESULTS CENTRE (COMMAND CENTRE)

The National Collation and Results Centre will be at the Harare International Conference Centre where the Presidential results will be collated and announced.

24. POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission has invited the Police to provide a security briefing to observers and therefore this will be covered in the brief by the Police. I will now hand over to Senior Assistant Erasmus Makodza to give a brief on the security situation.

CONCLUSION

Let me thank you all for coming to this briefing and wish you all the best in your endeavors. However, let me urge you to conduct your duties responsibly. As you may be aware, our country is on the path to recovery in many aspects and coming out of conflict. Be temperate in your approach and avoid language or conduct that is inflammatory. We need peace as a nation and look forward to have a normal life like all of you and therefore be honest in whatever you do.