Do Economic Blueprints Work? Evaluating the Prospects and Challenges of Zimbabwe's Transitional Stabilisation Programme

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Abstract
Development approaches and paradigms influence the nature and rate of socio-economic transformation of a country. The approaches manifest in the form of plans, policies or programmes. This conceptual paper seeks to evaluate the prospects and challenges of the Transitional Stabilisation Programme implemented by the government of Zimbabwe in 2019 and draw lessons from other economic blueprints that were implemented prior to it. Zimbabwe has endured economic instability since the Fast Track Land Reform Programme of 2000. This has resulted in a lot of policy transformation in order to try to restore sanity. A desk review of secondary sources was done in collecting data and academic journals and papers were used as sources of data. Furthermore, some data was drawn from interviews made by economic analysts, government officials and academics. The researcher noted success stories and challenges from the different economic policies. We argue that Zimbabwe's socio-economic policies have been affected by poor implementation strategies, corruption and excessive political expediency. Thus, the paper concluded that Zimbabwe's economic status continues to degenerate despite a number of economic blueprints implemented from the year 2000. This is attributed to policy reversals and a lack of protection and security of property rights, leading to a lack of investor confidence. No meaningful investor is willing to pour out new capital when sovereign risk is high. The research recommends a human factor development approach militating against prudent economic management, while genuinely reengaging the world.

Keywords: economic policies, economic liberalisation, human factor development, human factor decay, economic blueprints, stabilisation

Introduction
Zimbabwe's attainment of political independence in 1980 raised a lot of excitement and rays of hope (Marango *et al.,* 2016). The excitement was punctuated by a desire to rebuild the country that had been ravaged by the war of liberation. There was incredible consensus and a lot of

enthusiasm to work together for the betterment of the nation. Interestingly, Zimbabwe's socio-economic status was very impressive to the extent that many industries were operating at almost 100% capacity level. Production was very high, employment opportunities were abundant and the country had its own strong currency (Mazulu, 2006).

The first 10 years after independence were characterised by developmental and reconstruction efforts that were directed towards growing a strong economy. Such efforts were supported by the enactment of various socio-economic development policies such as the Growth with Equity, Five-year National Development Plan and the second Five-year Development Plan, which was substituted by the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme in 1991 (ESAP) (Mumbengegwi & Mabugu, 2002). The main thrust of the policies was facilitating a sustainable and high-level economic growth as well as rapid development in order to raise the standard of living and welfare of the people. However, the inception of these policies faced a lot of criticism from scholars. For example, Matutu (2014) indicated that the coming in of the Economic Structural Advancement Programme (ESAP) in 1991 caused more damage than any other policy that the country adopted since independence.

When ESAP was launched, the economy started experiencing recession in almost all the sectors (Munangagwa, 2009). There was a high record of deaths in hospitals, school dropouts, closure of some industries, high unemployment levels and the devaluation of the Zimbabwean currency (Chitiga *et al,* 1998; Raftopolous & Mlambo, 2009). While this was the case in the economic sector, Zimbabwe blindly intervened in the 1998 Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) war, which costed the country many millions of dollars. Estimates put the average daily cost at US $1 million. A confluence of the payout of such a military expedition resulted in the ballooning of the budget deficit, an increase in inflation and the erosion of real earnings (Dziva, 2014). Consequently, both domestic and foreign debt grew, swallowing up urgently needed resources for key social amenities (Dziva 2014); the funds could have been channelled towards the country's development. The effects of that war intervention is still felt by the country to date. The 2007 unbudgeted gratuities paid to war veterans also affected economic growth. Many scholars in Zimbabwe, including Raftopolous & Mlambo (2009) and Dziva (2014) point to this as one of the policies that affected the Zimbabwean economy. Thus, the government of Zimbabwe's decision to pay $Z50 000 gratuities to liberation war fighters was another factor that exacerbated Zimbabwe's economic challenges (Dziva, 2014). Sachikonye (2006) further posits Zimbabwe's intervention in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo as economically disastrous.

This study seeks to examine the efficacy of economic blueprints to socio-economic transformation in Zimbabwe and is arranged as follows: it starts with this introduction, followed by a historical trajectory of Zimbabwean polices since independence to 2018, the new dispensation era. The new dispensation is a mantra used to symbolise the period after the demise of Robert Mugabe, who ruled since independence in 1980 up to November 2017. The article then discusses the prospects and challenges of the Transitional Stabilisation Programme (TSP) before ending with a conclusion and policy options. Methodologically, this qualitative study relied on a review of extant literature.

Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative approach, which is largely based on review of secondary sources of data. The document review sources include academic journals and a multiplicity of internet sources. A desk review approach aids in collecting, organising and synthesising information (Shuttleworth, 2008). Furthermore, data was drawn from interviews made by economic analysts, government officials and academics. Newspaper articles that carried stories on the TSP and other economic blueprints were also used. Newspaper articles and interviews help to clarify the economic situation in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, they help in our understanding of the possible prospects and challenges of the programme, thus enabling a deep introspective into understanding the country's long-term socio-economic trends. This makes it easy to come up with informed recommendations for future policy interventions. A thematic approach was used to present and analyse data.

Socio-economic dynamics since 2000

The social and economic dynamics in Zimbabwe underwent various phases from the period 2000 to date. There has been severe social and economic uncertainty since the government undertook the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) in the year 2000. The chaotic land reform caused white-owned commercial farms to be seized in an effort to empower the blacks (Mumbengegwi, 2009). While the effort was noble, it was disastrously implemented in that many of those who were in the forefront of farm seizure were not well informed about the strategy that was in motion. Vandalism of infrastructure and corruption crept in as some politicians were pursuing personal agendas. This caused structural human factor decay and from that point on, human factor development was necessary (Parsons, 2007).

The Human factor refers:

> to the spectrum of personality characteristics and other dimensions of human performance that enable social, economic and political institutions to function and remain functional over time. Such dimensions sustain the workings and application of the rule of law, political harmony, a disciplined labour force, just legal systems, respect for human dignity and the sanctity of life, social welfare, and so on. As is often the case, no social, economic or political institutions can function effectively without being upheld by a network of committed persons who stand firmly by them. Such persons must strongly believe in and continually affirm the ideals of society (Adjibolosoo, 1993, p. 142).

Due to the absence of the human factor dimension in the whole Fast Track land reform process, the international community imposed economic sanctions upon Zimbabwe in protest of the government's position. This brought many economic consequences and the country witnessed a sharp economic recession in almost all the sectors of the economy, as evidenced by low agriculture production, a high unemployment rate, low capacity utilisation and a high inflation rate in the country (Makina, 2009). Against this background, several social and economic blueprints were enacted to address these challenges. Some of these policies were introduced with a repackage of previous policy pronouncements and they can be provided in a series of timeline phases.

Zimbabwe Millennium Economic Recovery Programme (2000-2001)

According to Makwata (2013) the policy was enacted as a continuation of Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST). ZIMPREST identified poverty and unemployment as the main problems that had to be addressed in order to achieve sustainable growth. In contrast to these challenges, the fundamental objective of the macro policy was to achieve a sustained high rate of economic growth and speedy development in order to raise the incomes and standards of living of all people, and expand productive employment of rural peasants and urban workers (ZIMPREST, 1997). Some of the standing priorities of the Millennium Economic Recovery Programme (MERP) were to fight spiralling inflation, macro-economic instability, build mutual trust and confidence, ensure fiscal adjustments, ensure public sector reforms, boost investment and ensure sustained economic growth. Unfortunately, MERP realised many policy failures and there was a great loss of macro-economic balance due to the size of the budget the country was relying on (Mumbengegwi & Mabugu, 2002). Above all, the government did not do consultations and awareness programmes for buy-in by citizens. As such, it was a government programme and not the people's programme. Policies should be people centred; it is only the beneficiaries who understand the nature and severity of their problems. Moreover, livelihood options are not homogenous.

National Economic Revival Programme (2003-2004)

According to the African Development Bank (2009), Zimbabwe underwent a serious social and economic crisis from 2003. Some of the challenges had their roots from the ESAP era and the FTLRP. Due to the worsening economic environment from the economic sanctions imposed upon Zimbabwe, the country enacted the National Economic Revival Program (NERP) to respond to the harsh external and domestic environment, inflation, macro-economic instability, and to support land reforms through providing input support to farmers. Robertson (2003) acknowledged that NERP broadened economic policy decision-making to include government, the private sector and labour, in order to try and reach a workable answer to the myriad problems facing Zimbabweans. However, NERP did not live up to its strategic intent in the same vain as prior broad-based macro-economic policies were not successful – it was also difficult for sectoral policies to be successful in the same environment (Bonga, 2014). "There has been a downward economic trend in the last seven years, but one of the main reasons for the sharp decline in recent years is the land reform programme. Effectively, by appropriating 4,500 farms, the government closed down 4,500 big businesses that provided employment for thousands of people" (Moyo *et al,* 2009:37). Therefore, it is important to note that the failure or success of economic blueprints is highly influenced by politics.

Macro-Economic Policy Framework (2005-2006)

Coltard (2008) noted that as Zimbabwe's social and economic uncertainty worsened with an increased unemployment rate, closure of industries, growing political turmoil and inflation rate, the Government introduced the Macro-Economic Policy Framework (MEPF) to ensure sustained economic growth. The major objectives were to reduce inflation to a single digit, increase capacity utilisation in the manufacturing sector, and implement sectoral objectives to consider Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Mamvuma *et al* (2006) underscored that the policy succeeded in achieving some of its objectives since there was increased support to the agriculture sector, though targets were not wholly achieved.

National Economic Development Priority Programme (2006-2008)

Chikukwa (2013) indicated that, the National Economic Development Priority Programme (NEDPP) was a panacea meant to reverse the severe effects of the 10 years of recession within nine months. Some of the policy's standing priority areas were to stabilise the local currency, ensure food security, remove price distortions, remove foreign and external debts, restore a positive image of the country and stabilise the economy. The Macro Economic Convergence Report (2006) noted that the NEDPP died a natural death given the fact that the government was drafting another five-year development strategy that succeeded it. Therefore, this caused its termination before being fully implemented. The problem noted is a supposition that once the experts are done in drafting policies, they are abandoned. This would lead to a failure to follow the basic principles that would ensure success.

Zimbabwe Economic Development Strategy (2007-2011)

The Zimbabwe Economic Development Strategy (ZEDS) was a complete repackaging of previous policies and the major aim was to achieve sustainable, balanced economic growth (Bonga 2014). This policy was introduced when the country was experiencing acute shortages of basic commodities, fuel, electricity and foreign currency. The third decade post-independence period was generally characterised by turmoil (Cousins, 2003; Phimister & Raftopolous, 2004).

Short-Term Emergence Recovery Programme I (2009) and 11 (2010-2012)

The Short-Term Emergency Recovery Programme (STERP) came into being in 2009 when the Government of National Unity was formed between the governing party, The Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU PF), and Movement for Democratic Change – Tsvangirai (MDC-T). African Development Bank (2013) highlighted that the period under which the STERP

1 and 2 was implemented, a lot of success stories were recoded across all sectors. The country started to implement growth-oriented programmes, inflation levels were reduced, price distortions and foreign exchange markets were removed, economic stabilisation was ensured and the economy started to increase its exports. Additionally, capacity utilisation in the manufacturing sector reached 70% and the country introduced a cash budget system (African Development Bank, 2009). Notwithstanding the above noted success stories, the STERP also faced a lot of challenges among them, including poor capacity by some key national institutions, including the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) to move goods from source to end points. Likewise, some local authorities were struggling to provide clean water and the Zimbabwe Electricity Distribution Company was experiencing a lot of challenges to supply enough electricity in the country.

Medium-Term Plan (2011-2015)

The Biti (2013) indicated that the Medium-Term Plan focused on ensuring human-centred development and infrastructure development with emphases on rehabilitation of outstanding projects, employment creation, macro-economic stability and good governance. It was succeeded by the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Social and Economic Transformation. This policy was implemented during the Government of National Unity (GNU). The major challenge was that the policy was not clear on its implementation plan. The Movement of Democratic Change (MDC) preferred to reconcile with donor countries, while ZANU PF adopted more of a nationalistic tone. In actual fact, the GNU parties were divided on the need and ways to forge partnerships with the donor world (Dziva 2014). The study by Dziva (2014: 14) further quoted an independent newspaper that quoted Mugabe, the then principal of the GNU, to have stated that: "Zimbabwe will not be saved by any country or organisation, least of all Western. Let our partners in the inclusive government get that so we do not waste our efforts on useless initiatives. It is our mineral resources – all these helped by the ingenuity and entrepreneurship of our people – which will turn this economy and country around".

Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (2013-2018)

The Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET) was based on four main clusters, namely: Value Addition and Beneficiation cluster, Infrastructure and Utilities cluster, Social Services and Poverty Eradication cluster and Food Security and Nutrition cluster (Bonga, 2014). The ZIMASSET policy was a result-based agenda meant to ensure sustained socio-economic transformation. Its implementation was guided by the Office of the President and Cabinet with the support of various line ministries, government departments, development partners and the private sector. Several achievements were realised during the ZIMASSET era such as the dualisation of the Mutare-Harare highway, the establishment of various community centres across the country and food security was enhanced through the introduction of the Command Agriculture

Programme. However, the ZIMASSET policy failed to meet the target of constructing 20 million houses and creating two million jobs by 2018. This caused the policy a lot of criticism from policy experts and analysts that considered it a failed policy.

The Transitional Stabilisation Programme 2019

The Transitional Stabilisation Programme (TSP) was conceived when the Zimbabwean government noted that the economy was receding. Inflation levels were skyrocketing. Industries were closing down and there was an emergence of illegal foreign exchange markets as a result of the introduction of a surrogate currency known as the bond note, whose value was basically equated with the United States dollar. The government introduced measures to curtail these challenges through austerity measures for posterity such as passing a parliamentary bill to convict illegal foreign exchange dealers, and a 2% tax was introduced for every $10 transaction (Mangudya, 2019). Unfortunately, this created a serious economic crisis. This was evident as basic commodities disappeared from the shelves, hyperinflation for basic goods and services, and snake queues for money at the banks were witnessed everywhere in the country. The government responded to the market realities by increasing fuel prices, which caused the citizens to protest.

These realities on the ground were militating against the intention of the TSP, which was introduced to operationalise the country's vision of achieving a middle-income status by 2030. The President of the Republic of Zimbabwe Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, in his speech to launch the policy, indicated that:

> The Transitional Stabilisation Programme, over October 2018 December 2020, prioritises fiscal consolidation, economic stabilisation, and stimulation of growth and creation of employment. The adoption and implementation of prudent fiscal and complementary monetary policies will anchor return of investor lost over the past two decades, stabilising this economic environment, which is conducive for opening up more business. The Transitional Stabilisation Programme outlines policies, strategies and projects that guide Zimbabwe's socio-economic development intervention up to December 2020, simultaneously targeting immediate quick wins and laying a robust base for economic growth for the period 2021-2030.

According to a report produced by the Government of Zimbabwe (2019), the Finance and Economic Development Minister Mthuli Ncube announced that the Transitional Stabilisation Programme focused on key reforms and measures that sought to avoid duplication and non-essential services in the civil service, mergers of units or departments, reviewing public sector enterprises and ensuring privatisation, reforming the civil service, reviewing unstable budget outlays on vehicle procurement, reviewing sitting allowances for sitting Members of Parliament, reducing budget travel expenditures and ensuring fiscal stability.

The prospects of the programme

The TSP (October 2018 to December 2020) is the latest economic policy for Zimbabwe. Its main thrust anchors on Vision 2030, which intends to transform the country into an upper middle-income country by 2030. Some of the TSP thematic areas include the adoption and implementation of fiscal policy underpinned by adherence to fiscal rules as enunciated in the Public Finance Management Act together with financial rules. This is meant to curb unsustainable and prolonged fiscal deficits that perpetuate uncontrolled domestic borrowing by Government, which crowds out domestic private investment (Chiduku, 2019).

The TSP reprioritises capital expenditure through a commitment to increase the budget on capital expenditures. This is viewed as a positive development that is recommended as the ideal capital expenditure for low-income countries. With respect to infrastructure, the Programme prioritises quick-win projects in energy, water and sanitation, information communication technology (ICT), housing and transport, with a focus on expediting completion of ongoing infrastructure projects, thereby contributing to the revival of the economy. The programme also intends to restore Zimbabwe's agriculture contribution as a breadbasket of southern Africa. It presents investment opportunities for realisation of self-sufficiency and food surpluses that will see the re-emergence of Zimbabwe as a major contributor to agricultural production and regional food security in the southern Africa region and beyond. In the mining sector, the TSP targets re-opening of closed mines and the expansion of mines that are operating below capacity (Makamure, 2018)

In line with enhancing competitiveness, the government of Zimbabwe intends to align utility costs to rates prevailing in the region. This include Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) and municipal charges, prohibitive Environmental Management Agency (EMA) charges, high wages relative to productivity, high financing costs, including limited access to longer-term funding, high transport costs, including over dependency on road haulage given constraints undermining cheaper railway transport. The implementation of the TSP is expected to be followed by the implementation of two medium-term plans, the first five-year National Development Strategy for 2021-2025 and second Plan covering 2026-2030. Implementation of these economic blueprints is expected to lead to the achievement of the country's vision 2030 of being an upper-middle-income country (Ncube, 2019).

Challenges

The TSP has faced a myriad challenges, amounting to limited external inflows and foreign direct investments (FDI). Despite the new dispensation's 'Open for Business' mantra and efforts to engage with the West, the new government in Zimbabwe has received a bad global reputation just like its predecessor. This is due to the 1 August killings of unarmed civilian protesters by the military and huge debt the government owes the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and many other global financiers. Currently, the country has not been able to procure money from foreign lending institutions because of a lack of creditworthiness. No lending institution has been willing to give a bailout to Zimbabwe. In 2019, the Minister of Finance and Economic Development failed to secure almost 80 credit lines from international companies when he attended the World Economic Forum as a result of Zimbabwe's huge accumulated debt arrears. Investors have lost confidence and no investor would want to invest in a criminal state (Mushava, 2020).

Some politicians do not have the will to coordinate and implement government programmes and policies; instead they are in politics to achieve personal agendas. For this type of politicians, development is a surrogate of politics. Zimbabwe, as a multiparty state, has faced many policy failures due to a lack of political will from both the ruling party ZANU PF and opposition parties. In most cases, whenever the government introduces new policies and programmes, they are often criticised and viewed as partisan agendas. In fact, the challenge is that the ruling party ZANU PF politicise everything, including policies and programmes (Marango *et al,* 2016). According to Zaranyika (2019), rampant corruption has affected the implementation of TSP. Prisca Mupfumira, a senior government official and former Minister of Tourism, was accused of abusing state pension fund money when she was Minister of Labour and Social Welfare to finance political campaigning by directing investments of up to US $62 million into a bank against the advice of the pension fund's risk committee. Mupfumira was also accused of diverting pension funds into private property deals worth US $15.7 million. The charges arose from Mupfumira's tenure as Labour Minister between 2014 and 2018, when she oversaw the State pension fund. While some amounts have been identified, there are other amounts that the police and officers at the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission have failed to find. She was charged with criminal abuse of office in terms of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act.

The existence of the parallel market has affected economic planning in Zimbabwe. A lot of economic vulnerabilities have emerged as a result of informal money markets and the formal electronic payment methods such as Ecocash. Some illegal tax rates of up to 50% are charged on transactions, which stifle investor confidence. Further, a lot of economic vulnerabilities have resulted from high inflation, which is way above 200%. Basic commodities disappeared in most retail and wholesale shops, only to reappear with exorbitant prices way above the reach of the general populace. Snaking queues for fuel, money and groceries has become a common feature. All these are a result of the existence of parallel markets. In 2018, the Government instituted a Parliamentary Bill to apprehend and prosecute illegal forex dealers (Ncube, 2019).

The former Finance Minister of Finance and Economic Development in the Government of National Unity Tendai Biti once cautioned the Government that, "We must eat what we kill as a country" (Biti, 2014). His arguments were that if Zimbabwe was to have any socio-economic transformation, unnecessary expenditure should be reduced, such as the procurement of top-of-the-range vehicles for traditional leaders, district and provincial administrators, members of parliament and ministers abroad using scarce foreign currency. Top government officials have received medical treatment in South Africa, Switzerland, and India while the country has well-trained doctors that can provide them with medical attention. A lot of resources have been used in various foreign trips and others dubbed the re-engagement trips. In these trips, private jets were used for government officials and the presidium. The civil service wage bill is huge; it consumes almost 90% of the total revenue generated. From the onset, the government has indicated the need to streamline ministries, some of which were created as political mileage vehicles. In light of this view, the country has a huge developmental deficit and a lot has to be done if the TSP is to achieve its strategic intent. The country has faced a serious liquidity crisis since early 2000. Currently, the country does not have its own currency. Unavailability of cash affects domestic savings for the country to conduct its business (Iman, 2019).

Zimbabwe, like any other country in the world, has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce (ZNCC) projects economic growth to contract by 9% in 2020 as businesses across all sectors battle low production and revenue losses due to Covid-19-induced lockdowns. Zimbabwe effected a 21-day national lockdown on 30 March, 2020 as part of efforts to contain the spread of the virus. A survey by the ZNCC on the effects of Covid-19-induced lockdowns revealed that businesses are losing production time, subsequently resulting in reduced production output as well as revenue losses. As such, these effects are seen cascading to the whole economy, with GDP expected to decline. “From the 2020 budget projections, the economy was projected to register a 3% growth, which was too optimistic, given that in 2019 economic growth was revised downwards to -6,5 percent in 2019,” said ZNCC. Covid-19-led economic decline will not be unique to Zimbabwe alone, but is a global phenomenon (Mapakame, 2020).

Conclusions

Zimbabwe inherited a functional economy at independence. There has been a lot of socio-economic blueprints that have been implemented thereafter, with the objective to achieve macro-economic stability. Even with these policies, results continue to show a shrinking economy where unemployment is now rampant and food insecurity in both rural and urban livelihoods has been hampered. The TSP has also failed to address the socio-economic crisis. There is a general consensus among the populace, political and economic analysts that Zimbabwe is continuing to degenerate in terms of all socio-economic development indicators. Policy reversals, lack of protection and security of property rights, has led to a lack of investor confidence. This has led to a few risk takers who have political backing to take monopoly of production systems. The removal of subsidies in critical sectors such as electricity, fuel and essential cereals coupled by wage depression in the civil service, has resulted in poverty levels increasing – all as a consequence of the TSP. The liberation of the interbank market rate, together with parallel rate means that inflation levels are increasing each day. In terms of price stability, inflation will continue to rise as long as electricity and fuel prices are not capped.

Climate change has resulted in sub-Saharan Africa becoming more arid. There is climate variability resulting in climate hazards – Cyclone Idai being one of the recent tragedies. All these events and processes affect agricultural production, which has, to some extent, affected the TSP.

However, it is important to note that Zimbabwe's economic growth hinges more on mining, which is affected by fluctuations in international commodity prices and the lack of beneficiation and value addition. As for diamonds, there are serious transparency issues that also border on corruption. The contested elections means that the country is divided; unity is the bedrock for any economic transformation. There must be the will to transform and not the will to power. If a holistic integrated approach to planning, development and implementation Zimbabwe is adopted, it will have great potential for growth and development.

Policy recommendations

Policy implementation and consistence: There is need for rigorous policy implementation. Zimbabwe has been long on planning and short on implementation with regular changes to the programs, successive administration leading to policy inconsistences. Experiences shows that, it is better to have a poor policy that is rigorously implemented than to have a perfect policy that is never implemented. To this end, Government has to capacitate its programs with enough funding, human capital and other necessary tools needed to drive the Transitional Stabilization Program. It has become a syndrome in Zimbabwe to download responsibilities on lower levels of government institutions without capacitating them with adequate financial support.

Reducing government expenditure: It is recommended that, Government has to reduce expenditure and ensure fiscal transparency to fully support the Transitional Stabilization Program.

Rebranding the country: This has to focus on creating a good competitive identity for the country to attract Foreign Direct Investment and viable credit lines. Zimbabwe has for too long been putting lipstick on a pig to disguise the international community that it has instituted reforms being advocated for by the international community.

Halt corruption: With no possible exception corruption has to be uprooted by all means. Those convicted of corrupt practices have to be brought to book notwithstanding how big or powerful they are. Application of justice must not be selective to those only without power and those who belong to opposition politics.

Diversifying the economy and recapitalising the manufacturing sector: This has been long overdue for the country. Zimbabwe, has for too long been putting much priority to the Agriculture sector while paying little attention to recapitalizing the manufacturing and processing sectors. A country can only diversify its economy through opening viable domestic credit lines that promote entrepreneurial skills to everyone, retooling and recapitalizing old industries like ZISCO and prioritising production.

Trimming the Cabinet and conducting civil service reforms: The country has a hugely bloated Cabinet that is draining its fiscus. There is a need for reducing the number of ministers in the Cabinet. A small country like Zimbabwe can do without deputy ministers. It being the case, permanent secretaries can deputise them and work with principal directors to drive Government ministries towards transitioning the economy. Meanwhile, urgent action has to be taken to scrap senators in the Parliament since they don't have much relevance. Government must start reforming the civil service. Perhaps a national human resources audit must be conducted to do away with ghosting and unqualified workers.

Privatisation: A lot has been said about privatisation but the government still seems to want to control most State companies. State-owned companies such as National Railways of Zimbabwe and Zimbabwe Consolidated Mining Company are bleeding and should be completely privatised to ensure that they operate efficiently towards achieving the Transitional Stabilisation agenda.

National Development Plan that is above politics: Zimbabwe is in dire need of a National Development Plan that is above politics. Experience indicates that policy formulation has been very influenced by the governing party only, and such policies have faced a lot of criticism from opposition circles. A governing party can lose elections and run the risk of aborting such policies. The Zimbabwean vision should not change and those who would have won the elections should still pursue the vision envisioned in the National Development Plan. In light of this, the National Development Plan has to be supported by all political parties, civil society organisations, academia, business organisations and the citizens at large, if Zimbabwe is to realise its vision of reaching a middle-income status by 2030.

Political dialogue: This is the only solution that the country needs to solve the political crisis that culminated in deadly post-election violence, which left several innocent civilians dead and the current socio-economic uncertainty. In this case, neutral international arbiters should mediate between the governing party and other opposition political parties to put to rest political differences and focus on developing the country; Zimbabwe should learn from countries like Syria and Tunisia where dialogue worked very well.

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