



*sowing the seeds of human rights peace and sustainable development*

## **Growing public discontent to sluggish implementation of good governance policies and practices in Zimbabwe**

On President Mnangagwa guaranteed the nation that his government “will ensure policy consistency, transparency, predictability underpinned by fiscal discipline and responsive bureaucracy” in his state of the nation address to the Parliament of Zimbabwe on 18 September 2018. Contrary to the practice of good governance, the 2017 to 2018 auditor general’s reports presented to Parliament recently, revealed abhorrent disregard of statutory laws and fiscal indiscipline by the Mnangagwa administration. Bureaucrats from Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Agriculture recently confirmed before the Public Accounts Committee(PAC) in Parliament that government paid approximately US\$1 billion to command agriculture without seeking approval from Parliament. The bureaucrats also confirmed to the PAC that off budget financing of command agriculture had no paper trail and could not be accounted for. In spite of the massive investment into command agriculture by government, Zimbabwe remains threatened by food insecurity. The government attributes its failure to promote food security to the drought experienced in the last farming season despite the abundance of water bodies in the country. Meanwhile, government is dithering on flushing out multiple farm ownership and carry out a transparent and equitable land tenure system that promote productive utilisation of land and improved food security.

In his state of the nation address to Parliament the President implored on the 9th Parliament of Zimbabwe to give greater impetus to policy reforms in line with his government’s economic agenda. On the governance of natural resources, he made an undertaking to bring before Parliament, the Mines and Minerals Bill to address some inadequacies, the Provincial and Metropolitan Councils Bill to facilitate the devolution of power and responsibilities to Provincial and local authorities, the Rural District Councils Bill to give rural councils greater autonomy, the Gold and the Precious Stones Trade Bill to curb leakages of precious minerals and the Forestry Amendment bill to provide measures for sustainable management of the country’s forestry resource. In proposing this legislative agenda, the President was cognisant of the importance of aligning laws to the current constitution of Zimbabwe that was adopted in 2013. Against this background, it is discouraging to note that not a

single bill has come to parliament a year after the assumption of duty by the Mnangagwa government. After making wide consultations on the Mines and Minerals Amendment Bill and the Provincial and Metropolitan Councils bill, government was expected to have tabled these bills in Parliament by now. The mining sector remains the mainstay of the economy contributing 68% of the foreign currency earnings in the first half of 2019 according to the finance minister's midterm budget review. The delay in expediting policy reforms that embodies transparency and accountability in the mining sector is unsustainable, typical of a self-serving government.

The President also vowed that his government will not accept "lethargic and non-implementation of government policies and programmes." In diamond mining for instance government made a commitment to introduce a transparent and accountable policy framework to balance business and human rights. Thus President Mnangagwa announced that the new diamond policy will make it obligatory for mining entities to remit shares directly to Community Share Ownership Trusts (CSOT)s whilst regularising artisanal diamond mining. The implementation of these reforms by his administration has been characterised by policy inconsistencies that have culminated in secretive diamond mining practices that are more harmful to host communities in Manicaland Province.

The President also assured the nation that his government will continue to "entrench transparency, accountability and good governance in all public entities and institutions." President Mnangagwa inherited policies from the previous government that gave members of the executive discretionary powers in policy implementation. It cannot be overemphasized that cabinet ministers conspired with office bearers in the plunder of resources in public entities and institutions in Zimbabwe. The Mnangagwa administration has not foreclosed those policy gaps to effect transparency and accountability on members of his executive. Consequently the institutions of government and parastatals have remained entrenched in corruption and poor corporate governance practices as reflected by the recent auditor general's reports on Appropriations and Fund Accounts, State Enterprises and Parastatals and oral evidence availed by various officials from government ministries and state entities to the 9th Parliament of Zimbabwe.

In his state of the nation address the President Mnangagwa also described the Parliament of Zimbabwe as a sacred institution that his government was committed to work with to deliver the people's hopes, dreams and aspirations. President Mnangagwa administration has however evaded parliamentary oversight to all state contracts that his government has signed with investors since coming into office in 2018. In light of all these developments the CRD

would like to remind President Mnangagwa to uphold the constitution and allow pillars of the state to exercise their functions of implementing policies and legislation for the good governance of the nation.