

**Testimony by United States Agency for International Development
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House Foreign Affairs Committee
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International
Organizations
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“USAID Assistance to Zimbabwe: Post Election”**

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass, and Members of the Subcommittee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I appreciate your continued interest in how U.S. policies and assistance can help the people of Zimbabwe build a peaceful and stable democracy in which prosperity is available to all. I would also like to thank the Assistant Secretary and the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Africa at the Department of State for their leadership on this issue.

Since the political and economic crisis of 2008, Zimbabwe has been in the process of a protracted and difficult transition toward economic normalcy and greater democracy. But the nation's intermittent progress has often been matched by daunting setbacks. While the economy has slowly stabilized since the disastrous crisis of 2008, the recent, deeply flawed elections represent a disturbing political and democratic setback from the cautious and sober optimism five years ago at the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU).

Since the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) in 2008, the United States and other international donors have played an important role in promoting reforms and providing humanitarian and development assistance in order to promote economic and social stability. Although we've seen measurable progress in certain areas, the recent elections in Zimbabwe raise concerns regarding how the United States should continue to support democratic and economic development. The international community questioned the fairness and credibility of the election results and called on the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to investigate reports of serious irregularities. The Deputy Assistant Secretary has spoken in substantial detail about the elections and the reaction of the United States Government to them. They were neither credible, nor free nor fair.

In the weeks leading up to the July 31st elections, domestic, regional and international observers began to signal that the Government of National Unity had failed to uphold or enforce the implementation of critical electoral reforms, which threatened the prospects for a credible election process. Just after the announcement of a landslide victory for ZANU-PF and the incumbent president, Robert Mugabe, the United States questioned whether the election results truly reflected the will of the Zimbabwean people. In his statement on August 3rd, Secretary

Kerry described circumstances that point to a deeply flawed election process, including irregularities in the provision and composition of the voters roll, the candidates' unequal access to state media, the failure of the security sector to safeguard the electoral process on an even-handed basis, and the Zimbabwean government's failure to implement the political reforms mandated by Zimbabwe's new constitution, the Global Political Agreement, and the region.

In the same statement, Secretary Kerry also reaffirmed that "the United States shares the same fundamental interests as the Zimbabwean people: a peaceful, democratic, prosperous Zimbabwe that reflects the will of its people and provides opportunities for them to flourish." In the aftermath of the Zimbabwean elections, it is critical that the USG continue its commitment to stand by the Zimbabwean people in their quest to improve their lives and participate in their own governance. The U.S. Government declared its solidarity with the people of Zimbabwe and will continue to examine ways of providing support to them for democratic reform, improved health, food security, and nutrition, as well as ongoing humanitarian aid.

USG assistance in the past few years has contributed significantly to improving the lives of ordinary Zimbabweans. The USG provided support to get the health sector functioning after a near collapse in 2008/2009 and to improve livelihoods and agriculture production in order to help Zimbabweans escape dependence on external food aid, but the USG also was able to effectively promote political and economic reforms that promoted stabilization and growth of the economy. The United States should support interventions that preserve the gains of the past few years—working jointly with Zimbabwean partners of good will, including civil society, private sector and local organizations, to prevent backsliding on economic and constitutional reforms. For example, should macroeconomic reforms occur, USAID will look for opportunities to encourage prudent fiscal management and also build public-private dialogue on economic issues. Other incremental but positive changes, embedded in Zimbabwe's new constitution and endorsed by the public in a national referendum, expand protections of liberties under the bill of rights and enhance gender equity. Protecting and consolidating these and other reforms will require continued action by the Government of Zimbabwe, vigilance by Zimbabweans, and, where appropriate, development assistance if action is to lead to sustainable change.

The United States will need to assess the choices that are made by the newly elected Zimbabwean government. While opportunities to pursue broad economic and political reform may recede, it is in the interest of the United States to maintain our commitment to helping the Zimbabwean people avert crises and live healthier lives. As a new Zimbabwean parliament takes office and a new cabinet is formed, the United States Government will strategically look for opportunities to enhance transparency and open democratic spaces. The USG stands with and supports Zimbabweans of good will both inside and outside of its institutions, including the nation's next generation of democratic leaders. Conversely, USAID will watch for signs of backsliding away from economic and political reform, political repression, and policies that

could lead to the types of interrelated shocks and crises that have engulfed Zimbabwe over the last decade and pose a threat to regional stability. Programs and interventions will be adjusted according to economic, political and humanitarian realities.

Going forward, USG assistance will focus primarily on humanitarian-plus approaches that address key concerns such as food security, nutrition economic resilience and basic health, while simultaneously promoting good governance and economic growth. At the same time, USAID will look for and act upon opportunities to influence policy formation and the development of regulatory systems with the aim to support Zimbabweans in their quest for economic prosperity and democratic governance. In FY 2012, USAID's program worked with six Commodity Industry Groups (CIGs), several industry associations, and several farmers' unions to develop their advocacy capabilities. In addition, the program assisted with the analysis of various policies and regulations, development of revised/new policies and regulations, facilitated stakeholder consultations, and assisted the industry groups in presenting the recommendations to the legislature or appropriate ministry. USAID will continue to evaluate effective ways to engage and work with Zimbabweans who share mutual goals. These may include national level partners, but equally those at the regional or local level with whom we partner on achieving sustainable results for the Zimbabwean people.

To increase food security and nutrition, a critical issue for Zimbabwe, USAID will continue to support a range of activities to provide economic opportunities to the poor, to improve their nutrition and hygiene practices, and to help rural farming communities to adopt better agricultural practices. These efforts will build Zimbabweans' economic resilience, reduce reliance on patronage systems for inputs such as seed and fertilizer, improve their crop yields, increase their incomes, expand their connections to markets, and facilitate much-needed access to credit. USG funded programs will also bring together agricultural input suppliers, producers, buyers, farmers' unions, and commodity associations to improve industry competitiveness and sustainability and advocating for improved policies and regulations at the national, provincial, and local levels. During FY 2012, the livelihood and value chain activities assisted 93,319 individuals engaged in rural farming and trading activities, through food security and nutrition technical assistance and training, as well as product and market development support. USAID programs also resulted in 73,576 hectares under improved management; 48,647 farmers applied new technologies or management practices, and 88,296 micro, small and medium enterprises received business development services.

A recent vulnerability assessment indicates that due to a poor agricultural season, as many as 2.2 million vulnerable people may require food assistance during the upcoming hunger season (September 2013-March 2014) - an increase from 1.6 million estimated in need from the prior year and the highest level since 2009. In anticipation of this season's humanitarian response, USAID has already provided nearly \$15 million in food commodities and anticipates providing

additional emergency food assistance resources before the end of this fiscal year. Support for emergency food needs provides the USG with an opportunity to directly, positively impact the most needy citizens in Zimbabwe, signaling our continued support of the people of Zimbabwe. USAID will also remain vigilant in reducing the risk for disasters and responding where urgent need occurs.

In the health sector, USAID's programs will continue to ensure access for Zimbabweans' to basic health care. This includes interventions to address the biggest causes of mortality in Zimbabwe, including HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. U.S. funding supports testing, diagnosis, treatment and prevention through medical commodities as well as training for health care professionals. In line with the president's Global Health Initiative (GHI) and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the USAID program in Zimbabwe aims to make sustainable improvements to the overall health status of Zimbabweans. The number of persons reached with HIV testing and counseling services continues to increase dramatically. In FY 2012, PEPFAR-supported projects conducted 863,000 HIV tests for men, women, and children, against a target of 777, 950. The President's Malaria Initiative is also improving treatment for malaria patients and prevention for pregnant women – as a result 215 health facility workers and 1,851 community health workers are now able to test and treat malaria at the community level. USAID interventions in Maternal Neonatal and Child Health (MNCH) resulted in the percentage of women receiving treatment to prevent postpartum hemorrhaging immediately after birth increasing from 73 percent to 99 percent in two pilot districts. USAID support also helped to improve management of preterm newborns through revitalizing low-cost approaches such as Kangaroo mother care units in supported districts. Additionally, although the national maternal mortality rate remains high, in the two districts where USAID supports field-level maternal and child health service improvement effort, the crude maternal mortality rate has dropped from a baseline of 265 (per 100,000 births) in FY 2011 to 232 at the end of FY 2012.

In addition to support for the social sectors, USAID will continue to work with Zimbabwean civil society organizations whose missions include the promotion of human rights and democratic values, as enshrined in Zimbabwe's new constitution. Earlier this year, the Zimbabwean people peacefully and overwhelmingly endorsed this new constitution in a referendum with record voter turnout. USAID supported government and civil society efforts to advocate for key improvements as the document was being developed. On the government front, USAID was one of nine development partners contributing to the constitutional review process led by a Parliamentary Select Committee, under a program managed by the United Nations Development Program. To complement these efforts, USAID supported six Zimbabwean civil society organizations (CSOs) that identified key issues and advocated for critical legislative improvements. The new constitution explicitly incorporates key positions advocated for by these partners including an expansion of human rights protections, enhanced devolution of authorities, and increased gender equity. USAID efforts also enhanced community resilience to violence by equipping local leaders with skills to identify, resolve and manage conflict and concurrently

supporting multimedia campaigns to promote peaceful participation in democratic practices so Zimbabwe's history of election related violence was not repeated.

Looking forward, USAID will focus on activities that will help Zimbabweans to realize the rights and freedoms promised by their new constitution and to move toward more transparent and accountable governance. At the community level, USAID programs will assist citizens and local leaders to effectively prevent and manage conflict.

Zimbabwe is now in the midst of transitioning from a unity government to one dominated by a single party as it was for the first twenty years after independence. In coming days, President Mugabe is expected to appoint the members of his cabinet. Despite the announcement of a clear political victory for Zanu PF, many uncertainties lie ahead. USAID will closely monitor: how the new government intends to turn campaign pledges into concrete policies and which priorities it will pursue first. We will closely follow how the market responds to political developments, signs of political repression and indications of the politicization of humanitarian assistance. These are all factors that will shape U.S. foreign assistance in the near future. One thing remains constant, however, and that is the USG's commitment to stand by the Zimbabwean people and through its assistance programs, offer support to those Zimbabweans who are committed to a more democratic and prosperous Zimbabwe.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Bass and members of the Subcommittee for the continued commitment you have shown to the people of Zimbabwe and your support for reform within their government. I welcome any questions you might have.