

THE WEEKEND READER

“Your Weekly Read on Debt, Development & Social & Economic Justice”

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Performance Contracts: Implementation is Key for Success

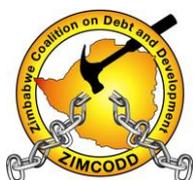
Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) applauds the government of Zimbabwe for introducing Performance Contracts for public office bearers as we believe performance contracts are one of the key accountability tools for holding duty bearers to account in the discharge of their duties and ultimately improving public sector performance. Poor performance by public officials has for years been impacting negatively on citizens who bear the brunt of poor public service delivery amidst corruption and mismanagement of public resources. However, it is important to note that this is not the first time the government has introduced measures to improve public sector governance. On 19 March 2018, President Emmerson Mnangagwa released a list of 1,844 alleged ‘externalisation’ cases implicating mostly corporate organisations and a few individuals, but we have not really witnessed decisive action being taken against perpetrators. In the same year, the President issued an asset declaration order to top officials, but regrettably citizens are not aware of what happened thereafter.

Transparency and accountability are imperative in the management of public resources/funds. As such, performance contracts are important in paving way for responsible and responsive leadership and ultimately good governance which is very critical in the attainment of Vision 2030 in accordance with constitutional provisions. Section 196 (3) of Zimbabwe’s Constitution provides for public officers in leadership positions to abide by the principles of leadership — objectivity and impartiality in decision making; **accountability to the public for decisions, actions**; discipline and commitment in the service of the people. Performance contracts are indeed an effective tool to manage and evaluate public officers’ work to ascertain whether they are performing as expected and in the event that one is underperforming, he/she is expected to be relieved of his/her duties. Therefore, the signing of performance contracts must not be a ceremonial event and it is against this background that ZIMCODD recommends the following:

1. Implementation and Follow Up Anchored on Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation

When implemented fully and in earnest, performance contracts can motivate and incentivize duty bearers to fully execute their mandates and place their respective agencies at competitive positions informed by the key governance principles specifically transparency, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness. Nevertheless, without earnest implementation, the desire to turn around public sector performance in Zimbabwe will remain a pipedream. The implementation of performance contracts must be guided by a thorough and impartial results-based monitoring and evaluation exercise.

2. Punitive Action for Non-Performers



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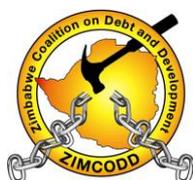
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The process of performance contracts should not just end with the signing of the contracts but should include decisive and punitive action to be taken on nonperforming public officials. Action against nonperforming officials must include dismissal from office. This will go a long way in motivating public office bearers to excel and instilling public confidence and trust in all the government endeavors to turn around the public sector

3. Curbing Political Interference in Senior Public Officials' Duties

Public sector corruption is one of the major causes of poor service delivery in Zimbabwe. In as much as performance contracts are a welcome move, they do not effectively address corruption since there is too much political interference in public sector governance. This inhibits duty bearers from independently discharging their duties; hence performance contracts can be misused to advance partisan politics. There is an urgent need by the President to curb political interference in senior public officials' duties. This can be done through ensuring that appointments for public offices are based on merit and not political connections.



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