



Report on the
Association of Rural District Councils of Zimbabwe (ARDCZ)

Inaugural Council Chairpersons Indaba

8 February 2018

Flamboyant Hotel,

Masvingo

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1. Introduction.

The Association of Rural District Councils of Zimbabwe (ARDCZ) held its one day inaugural Council Chairpersons Indaba on 8 February 2018 at Flamboyant Hotel in Masvingo.

The Minister of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing represented by Director Mazai officially opened the Council Chairpersons Indaba as the guest of honour.

The Inaugural Indaba was exclusively attended by Council Chairperson from all the Rural District Councils (RDCs) in Zimbabwe running under the theme **“Re positioning RDCs to spearhead Socio-economic Transformation in the New Dispensation”**

The overall objective of the Chairpersons Indaba was to train Council Chairpersons on Corporate Governance and to review performance of RDCs as well as to come up with best practises to re-focus RDCs to lead in socio-economic transformation of the rural areas in line with the New Dispensation.

The Indaba also discussed issues on ZINARA disbursements to RDCs, welfare of Council Chairpersons and to guide the operations of the Association in 2018.

2. Opening Remarks by the President of the Association.

The ARDCZ President Cllr K. Zivhu who is also the ZILGA President welcomed the delegates to the Inaugural Council Chairpersons Indaba 2018. He took the opportunity to address some of the



Figure 1: ARDCZ President Cllr Zivhu presenting his welcome remarks

sticking internal issues in the operations of the Association such as none payment of membership subscriptions among others.

The President urged RDCs to utilise ZINARA funds to procure equipment to avert high costs associated with hiring equipment.

He also expressed concern over the appalling welfare of Council Chairpersons during and after their tenure in council. He said Council Chairperson as any other elected policy makers such as Members of Parliament and Senators deserved better living standards as they oversee the running of RDCs.

Lastly he informed the delegates that the Association will host a Special congress where the delegates will adopt the ZILGA and ARDCZ constitution before the election are held sometime in July 2018.

3. Welcome to Masvingo by Minister of State for Masvingo Province

In a speech read on his behalf by Mr Machako from the Office of the President and Cabinet, the Minister welcomed delegates to Masvingo Province, a province he described as a foundation of our heritage as a nation.

The Minister called upon RDCs to embrace the new era of business unusual approach prevailing in the country to solve peoples' developmental and livelihood challenges. He also emphasised the

need for RDCs and line ministries to work together harmoniously under the whole of Government approach and desist from the silo mentality that has affected sustainable service delivery in the past.

Minister Hungwe also underscored the need for RDCs to employ cost cutting measures, financial recapitalisation strategies and innovativeness in drawing up alternative revenue bases.

As he closed, he urged RDCs to adhere to good corporate governance and shun corruption, maladministration, embezzlement and graft in their operations.

4. Key note Address by the Minister of Local Government

In a speech read on his behalf by Director Mazai, the Minister underscored the need for Local Authorities to play a leading role in championing economic development in the country in line with the vision of His Excellence President E.D. Mnangagwa.

He took the opportunity to emphasise that Government has returned the collection of land levies back to RDCs for sustainable financing of service delivery.

The Minister also took the opportunity to remind councils to submit progress reports on projects that they are implementing in their districts and to take advantage of various media platforms to publicise the good work they are doing in their districts for stakeholders and residents to appreciate.



Figure 2 : Director Mazai delivering the Key Note Address

The Minister also informed the Council Chairpersons that his Ministry will prioritise the alignment of various legislation affecting the operation of local authorities such as the Local Authorities Bill to the National Constitution to create a conducive environment to operate in.

Further he called upon councils to enact bylaws that will restore sanity in RDCs to curb illegal settlements, land barons. In the same intellect, he urged RDCs uphold high standards of good corporate governance and shun all forms of corruption.

5. Objectives of the Inaugural Chairpersons Indaba

The ARDCZ Secretary General Mrs L. Furamera presented the following objectives of the Chairpersons Indaba.

- (i) To appraise Council Chairpersons on their roles and responsibilities as elected leaders.
- (ii) To acquaint Council Chairpersons on the provisions of the Constitution and RDC Act.
- (iii) To import Corporate Governance principles as provided for in the Statutes, Policies and Regulations.
- (iv) To understand and appreciate the ZINARA disbursement formula.
- (v) To create an effective networking platform for Council Chairpersons.

(vi) For the ARDCZ to collate training needs of Council Chairpersons and other councilors.

6. Issues for the attention of the Minister of Local Government

1. Ministry to appoint Council Chairpersons as ex-officio members in Commissions set up to care take Councils business upon dissolution of councils towards elections.
2. Ministry of Local Government to consider authorising Council Chairpersons to be given their service vehicles upon leaving council.
3. Government to extend a Duty free waiver to councils to procure Council Chairperson service vehicles
4. Central Government to empower Local Authorities with arresting powers to enforce their bylaws
5. Ministry to expedite the alignment of laws affecting operations of RDCs with the National Constitution e.g RDC Act.
6. Ministry should reconsider some Directives and Circulars that are unlawful and detrimental to Councils e.g Salary rationalisation that contravenes the labour Act.
7. Council Chairpersons be bank signatories and to sit in procurement Committees in Council.
8. ZINARA taking too long to process acquittals and inspect works that delays disbursements hence some RDCs are failing to access their disbursements on time.

7. Good Corporate Governance by Provincial Administrator – Masvingo Province

The Provincial Administrator for Masvingo Province Mr Mbetsa presented a paper on Corporate Governance. He defined Corporate Governance as organizational compliance with relevant laws and regulations and conformance to ethical standards and best practices.

He stressed that RDCs should be guided by laid down laws governing their operations such as the National Constitution, RDC Act, Public Finance Management Act, Procurement and Disposal Act among others.

Turning to professional conduct by Council Chairpersons, Mr Mbetsa called upon Chairpersons to introspect and see whether their conduct reflects the ethos of the National Constitution as enshrined in sections 194, 195 and 196 which speaks to the conduct of public officers.

He also underscored the need for Council Chairpersons to properly supervise their councils and make sure all the systems put in place are functional and that there is a clear division between policy makers and management.

He stated that Council Chairperson as heads of RDCs should ensure that CEOs and Heads of Departments are following council laid down procedures in executing their duties.



Figure 3 Provincial Administrator Mbetsa presenting on Good Corporate Governance

8. ZINARA Presentation.

The ZINARA Technical Director Engineer Juma gave a summary of the 2017 Disbursements and commended the level of improvement in the road infrastructure works being done by local authorities country wide.

The Director informed Council Chairpersons that ZINARA had budgeted US\$ 33 million for RDCs and each RDC will get upward of US\$ 500 000.00 for 2018.

He also informed Council Chairpersons that all approved works for 2017 should be finished in the first quarter of 2018.

He went further to say ZINARA had set aside US\$28 million for road equipment acquisition by local authorities in 2018. Local Authorities are also authorised to utilise part of their ZINARA disbursements to procure necessary equipment following a request by ZILGA.

Engineer Juma also informed the Chairpersons that ownership of ZINARA Sunny graders had been transferred to Local Authorities with effect from 1 January 2018 and that ZINARA has budgeted US\$3 million for repairs of ZINARA graders that were down including other road equipment owned by local authorities.



Figure 4 : ZINARA Director Technical Eng Juma - ZINARA presentation

The Director further informed the Chairpersons that ZINARA would also assist in the refurbishment of selected functional council workshops for the repair of road equipment by councils and that ZINARA would train local Authorities staff on repairs and maintenance of road equipment including graders.

The Engineer commented RDCs on improvement of their financial and technical acquittals. Lastly he called upon RDCs to ensure they have qualified technical stuff and those without to urgently do so as this has a bearing on the quality of work.

9. Plenary discussions

- (i) The Council Chairpersons would like the Association to request the Minister to consider appointing them to be part of the Commissions set to care take council business upon dissolution of councils in preparation for elections as ex officio members to protect council interests.

The Chairpersons raised concern on some of the decisions made by these Commissions which in most cases serve to reverse and agree on former rejected matters by council and that most land is allocated and new stuff recruited during this time.

The best performing RDCs with their prizes flanked by the Secretary General and ARDCZ Finance Committee Chairperson Cllr Charakatenda.



(From left to Right)- Mrs Furamera ARDCZ Secretary General, Ald Mudede Mutare RDC, Cllr A. Dube- Umzingwane RDC, Cllr Mudzara- Manyame RDC, Ald Shelton- Umguz RDC, Cllr Tomu- Zvimba and Cllr Charakatenda – Chegutu RDC & ARDCZ Finance Chairperson.

12. Resolutions 2018

At the close of the workshop, the Council Chairpersons came up with following resolutions;

1. ARDCZ to follow up on issues flagged for the attention of the Minister.
2. Information from ARDCZ to RDCs to be copied to Council Chairpersons
3. ARDCZ to lobby for Council Chairperson to import vehicles duty free
4. That councils prioritise procurement of roads equipment using ZINARA funds.
5. ARDCZ should organise on going councillors and officials training on good corporate governance and their oversight role.
6. That ARDCZ to organise training for policy makers and management on the following;
 - (a) Roles and Responsibilities.
 - (b) Corporate Governance
 - (c) Information Communication Technology (ICT)
7. That RDCs take advantage of REA initiatives to spearhead rural electrification.
8. That Provincial Chapter Chairpersons conduct provincial outreach meetings with a view to encourage RDCs to pay membership subscriptions.



Plenary discussions

End of report