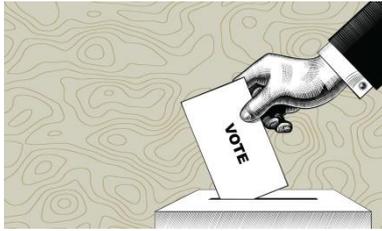


## Zimbabwe Diaspora Vote Initiative



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**30 January 2023**

Your Excellency  
President Hakainde Hichilema  
Chair  
SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Affairs

Dear President Hichilema,

**Re: Congratulations on your taking over as Chair for SADC Organ on Politics and Defence - Diaspora Vote a key Reform required in Zimbabwe.**

The Zimbabwe Diaspora Vote, a group of Zimbabweans living outside Zimbabwe, congratulates you on the occasion of taking over as Chairperson for the SADC Organ on Politics and Defence. We are confident that your term will see further improvements in the political environment in the region, based on the impressive reforms we have witnessed in Zambia since you took over as President of that country.

We hope that you will positively influence your peers in the region to be firm on fulfilling promises they make to the electorate. In the case of the Zimbabwean citizens living in the diaspora, we were relieved and full of praise for our President, Comrade Emmerson Mnangagwa when he, in September 2018, told Zimbabweans living in the United States of America that he would work hard to ensure that Zimbabweans living in the Diaspora would exercise their constitutional right to vote in 2023 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=onN0bCx3TI0>).

However, the Electoral Amendment Bill which is to be debated in Parliament almost at the same time as you take office, does not include amendments to allow the diaspora vote. The Bill is a Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Bill. Ironically, the Ministry of Justice reports to the Presidency, giving an impression that the President has been derailed from his vision by his subordinates.

The failure to include the diaspora vote in the Electoral Amendment Bill contradicts President Mnangagwa's declared policy of leaving no one out, and his recognition of the Citizens living in the Diaspora. In an article he personally penned and published in a national newspaper, President Mnangagwa correctly pointed out that Diaspora remittances have

surpassed the \$1 billion mark, making the Zimbabwean Diaspora community “a veritable factor in national development, indeed a force for greater good ” In that article he described citizens living in the diaspora as “equal to, and just as important and as deserving” as citizens living in Zimbabwe (Link to the Sunday Mail article here <https://www.sundaymail.co.zw/engaging-zimbabwes-diaspora-community-for-national-development> ). Why then has the President’s juniors not factored the diaspora vote in crafting the Electoral Amendment Bill?

We humbly and kindly appeal to you to present our case to SADC and encourage our President, who we believe may not have received our correspondence and petition, to exercise his executive authority and direct the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs to draft the necessary amendments to the legislation and/or constitution to make practical his promise to implement the diaspora vote in 2023 to fulfil our right to vote contained in sections 56 (1), 67(3a) and 155 (1c) of the constitution of Zimbabwe.

The Zimbabwe DiasporaVote Initiative looks forward to a fruitful engagement with the SADC Organ for Politics, Defence and Security Affairs. For further details, please contact Padmore Kufa, Spokesperson for the Zimbabwe DiasporaVote Initiative on +61 414 477 659 or email us on [zimdiasporavoteaussienz@gmail.com](mailto:zimdiasporavoteaussienz@gmail.com)

Wishing you and your team a fruitful term

Yours sincerely



Rosewiter Mangiroza  
Chair  
Zimbabwe DiasporaVote Initiative

Cc: SADC Secretary General  
SADC Parliamentary Forum  
African Union  
Pan African Parliament  
United Nations  
International Parliamentary Union  
Clerk of Parliament, Republic of Zimbabwe  
Speaker of Parliament, Republic of Zimbabwe  
Party Chief Whips in Parliament of Zimbabwe  
Hon. Themba Mliswa, Independent MP, Parliament of Zimbabwe