

### New faces emerge for the National Executive (2017-2021)



The newly elected National Executive taking their oath of office.



**A** new ZIMTA National Executive is now in place and is expected to run from April 2017 to April 2021. The elections which were held on the 26<sup>th</sup> of April at the 36<sup>th</sup> ZIMTA Annual National Conference, saw Richard Gundane being re-elected as the National President unopposed. He will be president for the next four years.

Thomas Muzondo, Violet Mutize and Elizabeth Mahiyana were vying for the National Deputy President post but Thomas Muzondo and Elizabeth Mahiyana emerged as the winners.

This year's conference saw Edgar Moyo and Shamiso Makumbe retiring from ZIMTA. Edgar Moyo who held the National Treasurer's post for nine years was replaced by John Mulilo who was once the National Secretary General for four years.

The National Secretary General post had three contestants namely, John Mulilo, Winnie Kabanda and Tapson Nganunu Sibanda. As the race drew closer John Mulilo and Winnie Kabanda withdrew their candidature leaving Tapson Nganunu Sibanda as the unopposed winner.

The National Women Teachers' Representative seat was highly contested with 5 contenders, Elizabeth Mahiyana, Mercy Muradzikwa, Esther Gunda, Mirriam Mandizvidza, Faith Mangani and Winnie Kabanda but it was Esther Gunda who was once Primary School Teachers' Representative who emerged as the final winner.

New comers Eunice Bhobho and Mugari Mutumbi contested against Innocent Gumunyu who was holding the post for the Secondary Schools Teachers' Representative. Mugari Mutumbi lost leaving Eunice Bhobho and Innocent Gumunyu as the title holders.

For the Primary School Teachers' Representative post, there were five candidates namely Sibanda Leonard, Chikomo Juliet, Mangani Faith, Manyanye Philip and Chiponda Erasmus. A dramatic twist of events saw Chikomo Juliet, Leonard Sibanda and Mangani Faith grabbing the post.

National Tertiary Educators' Representative Elisha Ndanga retained his post after competing with Simon Masiwa. A candidate from Harare Province Foustier Mhlanga was elected National Advisory Council Member after knocking out his rivals Gift Musafiri from Harare Province and Bekhisisa Ngwenya from Matabeleland South Province.

Women representation remained unchanged at 25% with 7 women elected in the National Executive.

The National Executive Committee saw a number of new women coming into the game with the likes of Faith Mangani who secured the Primary School Teachers' Representative post and Eunice Bhobho taking the Secondary School Teachers' Representative position.

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# Limited social dialogue cause for concern

Intransigence and unilateralism promoted by government in dealing with labour issues have become major impediments to the achievement of social dialogue a scenario that has eroded morale in the civil service, says ZIMTA President Mr Richard Gundane.

In his address to the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual National Conference held at Cresta Lodge in Harare, Mr Gundane bemoaned the slow pace of social dialogue between government and its workers blaming it on the employer, accusing him of making decisions affecting the welfare of teachers without consulting them.

He said while the year 2016 had been characterised by major policy changes made by the government such as the unexplained removal of vacation leave, it had also seen limited social dialogue under the National Joint Negotiating Council (NJNC).

“Our journey in 2016 was littered with industrial landmines, which ranged from lukewarm social dialogue processes, delayed salaries, decimated leave conditions and delayed harmonisation of the labour laws,” said Mr Gundane.

The President noted that the current set up where the government and unions are supposed to meet under the NJNC is not sustainable as it is a consultative forum to which government had shown little commitment thereby rendering it useless.

As an indication of government's lack of commitment, Mr Gundane said, the NJNC had not held a meeting for the past five months because the government was yet to appoint a new chairperson following the expiry of the term of office of the previous chairperson.

Issues that had been stalled due to lack of social dialogue, according to the president, included manpower development leave and vacation leave which government had cancelled, forcing the association to take the legal route, but the Labour Court with held judgement on the issue, and the non-recruitment of teachers leaving those in practice with huge class sizes and distorted teacher pupil ratios.

He also blamed government for creating an environment in which workers were loosely organised under the Apex Council. “Any union that registers even if it has five members can be recognised by the government and automatically becomes a member of the Apex Council, currently there are 16 civil service unions and each wants to send a representative rendering the council a politically weak entity,” he noted.

As a way forward, the president said teachers and other civil servants were pressing government to speed up the alignment of the Public Service Act to the new Constitution which guaranteed the formation of a Civil Service Bargaining Council



**Re-elected President Mr Richard Gundane gives thematic address to conference.**

as provided for by Section 65 of the Zimbabwean Constitution.

Under the Public Service Act, NJNC's resolutions have to be forwarded to the minister responsible for labour for consideration and this defeats the purpose of collective bargaining. On the contrary if enacted the Civil Service Bargaining Council would provide legal power to make binding agreements.

Turning to the issue of the new curriculum, the president said, ZIMTA had played an active role in the Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training (CIET) 07 of 1999 whose recommendations had informed the updated curriculum adding that the implementation challenges being faced by teachers today could have been avoided had the commission's recommendations been implemented immediately after their unveiling.

He also told conference delegates that ZIMTA had engaged the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education regarding the chaotic implementation of the curriculum and the ministry had agreed to set up a budget to conduct workshops on syllabus interpretation, purchase of tech-voc equipment and textbooks.

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New faces included Foustier Mhlanga who took the National Advisory Council Member post with Alec Buthelezi grabbing the Matebeleland North Provincial Representative seat while Constatino Madhuyu attained the Midlands Provincial Representative office and Hove Mutsigiri took Manicaland Provincial Representative seat.

Speaking soon after the elections, some members who had participated in the voting process expressed hope and confidence in the new team saying the energy levels were quiet promising.



# VACATION SCHOOL NOT BANNED, SAYS DOKORA

The Minister of Primary and Secondary Education Dr Lazarus Dokora says his ministry has not barred schools from conducting vacation lessons as long as they adhere to laid down regulations regarding the conduct of such lessons.

Dokora who was responding to questions from delegates attending ZIMTA's 36<sup>th</sup> Annual National Conference held in Harare said the ministry had not barred vacation lessons, but individual

schools still had to apply to their respective provincial offices to be given the green light to conduct such lessons.

"Vacation school is allowed for examination classes and that position has not changed," said Dokora, adding that learners should be accorded the chance to rest during the holiday.

The Minister, who in a departure from the norm was not given the opportunity to present a prepared speech, but took questions from the delegates, put the blame on the school heads, some of whom he described as rigid.

Delegates had raised concerns over the effect the vacation school "ban" was having on learners who now had to seek tuition from unscrupulous people some of whom conducted lessons in deplorable conditions not conducive for teaching and learning.

He said, heads of schools were aware of the procedure where they were required to apply for permission to conduct vacation lessons through the district office and that permission would be granted by the PEDs.

The majority of schools in Harare, for example, did not apply for vacation lessons amid claims that the minister had issued



Minister of Primary and Secondary Education Dr Lazarus Dokora addressing conference.

a directive to the effect that schools will only be allowed to conduct such lessons during the August holidays.

As it turned out, in some provinces lessons were allowed to go ahead, a scenario that led to confusion regarding the ministry's position on this issue.

Turning to the issue of the Teaching Professions Council (TPC) where delegates wanted to find

out how members of the council were going to be appointed, Dokora said, appointment of councilors fell under his jurisdiction as the minister responsible for education.

"If we set up an authority like that (TPC) there must be a procedure for appointing members to council," he said, stressing that unions' role would be to propose names, but he would have the final say.

On a positive note, the Minister said negotiations were at an advanced stage with CABS for the acquisition of more than 1 000 housing units in Budiriro for teachers.

He said, the ministry had set up a committee to assess the suitability of houses. The building society which owns the project had indicated its willingness to allow teachers to occupy the houses after payment of a small deposit fee.

Dokora said, teachers needed not to worry about the deposit as schools would be mandated to pay for their teachers adding that each school must now prioritise teachers' accommodation and no new school would be allowed to open without accommodation for teachers.

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## Educators castigate re-introduction of health scheme



Deputy Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, Tapiwanashe Matangaidze speaking to conference.

Deputy Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, Tapiwanashe Matangaidze says government is set to introduce a National Health Scheme in a bid to assist workers to access affordable medical cover.

Addressing delegates at the Zimbabwe Teachers Association (ZIMTA) conference in Harare recently, the Deputy Minister said, the scheme was being spearheaded by National Social Security Authority (NSSA) as one of its 9 contingencies, as according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 102 of 1952.

“NSSA will enter into strategic partnerships with seasoned sectors in the healthcare sector in order to benefit 91% of workers who have no medical insurance in Zimbabwe.”

Some teachers however criticised the scheme saying it was a duplication of the Premier Service Medical Aid Society and that the new scheme only sought to create revenue for government.

ZIMTA Mashonaland West Chairperson, Goodwill Tadeerera said, the scheme is unnecessary as civil servants have another medical scheme that they are not fully benefiting from.











“Government is already deducting money for PSMAS and introducing another health scheme will not only be fleecing the civil servants but also cheating them of their hard earned cash”, he said.

During the conference, Matangaidze further highlighted that despite the reduction in revenue currently being experienced in the country, government was still committed to improving the welfare of its employees.

At least 250 delegates from ZIMTA's 10 provincial regions represented educators and they all put the minister to task as he had to respond to several questions from the teachers who were keen to know how far the ministry had gone in addressing their labour related issues and conditions of service.

However most of the responses remained vague and non-committal.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

-  **Member:**  
Do you offer loans for ZIMTA members and what is needed?
-  **ZIMTA:**  
Dear Member,  
Yes we do, all you need to do is bring your pay slip and proof of membership, and your application will be considered for processing.
-  **Member:**  
Any information on vacation leave for teachers?
-  **ZIMTA:**  
Dear Member,  
Not yet, we are still awaiting for the judgement from the courts.
-  **Member:** Morning, may I know our position on the housing stands?
-  **ZIMTA:**  
Dear Member,  
ZIMTA housing stands are currently being administered by the provincial offices, please kindly contact your provincial office to get the most recent updates on availability and status of current housing stands in your province. Government is running a new scheme where teachers voluntarily join and contribute.
-  **Member:**  
Where can I get my diary please?
-  **ZIMTA:**  
Dear Member,  
It's really sad and some form of misnorma on our part that your ZIMTA diary has not yet been delivered to you by this time of the year, but diaries are distributed to schools from the provincial offices every year. Please call your provincial office number and ask them to deliver your copy to you. If not, Head office will be happy to assist.
-  **Member:**  
I want to join but there's no representative at my school, what should I do?
-  **ZIMTA:**  
Dear Member,  
Please send us your details, EC number, phone number and the name of your school and we will get back to you or download the ZIMTA form from the ZIMTA website. We want you to be part of ZIMTA's big family. If the above fails you are welcome to visit us at head office in Harare. Better still you can be active and become the representative of that school.