MEMORANDUM BY AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ZIMBABWE

SUBMISSION FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE CONSTITUTIONAL PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDING INCLUSION OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS IN THE CONSTITUTION

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL



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The adoption of a new Constitution provides a unique opportunity for Zimbabwe to strengthen its commitment to the protection of internationally recognized human rights in line with the commitment expressed in the Global Political Agreement, *to act in a manner that demonstrates respect for the democratic values of justice, fairness, openness, tolerance, equality, respect of all persons and human rights.*¹ Amnesty International Zimbabwe is urging the Constitutional Parliamentary Committee to demonstrate this commitment by guaranteeing economic, social and cultural rights in the new Constitution.

Under international law binding on Zimbabwe, the State must progressively realise economic, social and cultural rights within the maximum of resources available to it. These rights allow people to monitor how their governments are using available public resources and prevent the government from deliberately interfering with economic, social and cultural rights already held by people. Economic, social and cultural rights are enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to which Zimbabwe became a party in 1991. The treaty includes the following rights:

- The right to work (Articles 6, 7, 8 and 10)
- The right to social security (Article 9)
- The right to food (Article 11)
- The right to adequate housing (Article 11)²
- The rights to water and sanitation (Article 11)³
- The right to the highest attainable standard of health (Article 12)
- The right to education (Articles 13 and 14)
- The right to take part in cultural life and to benefit from scientific progress (Article 15)

In 2008, the UN General Assembly, where Zimbabwe was represented, unanimously adopted the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights establishing an individual complaints mechanism and ^{inquiry} procedure for violations of these rights. By doing so, the General Assembly confirmed that these rights are enforceable.

Zimbabwe ratified the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights in 1986. Some of the rights in this treaty include:

- The right to work (Article 15)
- The right to health (Article 16)
- The right to education (Article 17)
- The right to freely take part in the cultural life of one's community (Article 17)
- The right to protection of the family (Article 18)
- The right of the aged and disabled to special measures of protection (Article 18)
- The right to shelter and housing (Articles 14, 16 and 18)⁴
- The right to food (Articles 4, 16 and 22)⁵

From the moment of its adoption, people within African countries that are party to this treaty have been able to seek a remedy from the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights if these rights are violated.

Amnesty International Zimbabwe urges the Constitutional Parliamentary Committee to ensure that provisions guaranteeing economic, social and cultural rights are included in the new

Constitution. Inclusion of these rights would, among other situations, allow people to hold the government accountable when they are arbitrarily denied access to health care or because they do not have access to primary education. They would allow people forcibly evicted from their homes to seek justice from the courts. If Zimbabwe fails to guarantee the protection of economic, social and cultural rights in its Constitution, the people of Zimbabwe will not have a remedy within the country for any violations of their economic, social and cultural rights. They would therefore have to seek a remedy from the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights, rather than seek justice from a domestic institution.

Many countries globally guarantee the protection of economic, social and cultural rights in their Constitutions, for example South Africa, Mozambique, Senegal, Brazil, Colombia, Bolivia, Indonesia and Thailand. There is a clear trend towards including these rights in Constitutions. Following a constitutional referendum in August 2010, Kenya's new Constitution now recognises the rights to health, which includes the right to health care services, including reproductive health care; housing, sanitation, food and freedom from hunger, water, social security; and education. It states that a person shall not be denied emergency medical treatment.

Kenya's Constitution, like that of South Africa, explicitly recognises that economic, social and cultural rights are subject to resource constraints. Therefore, if the right is claimed before the Courts, the State has the opportunity to demonstrate that it cannot fulfil the right due to lack of availability of resources. However, it must show that in its allocation of resources, it is giving "priority to ensuring the widest possible enjoyment of the right or fundamental freedom having regard to prevailing circumstances, including the vulnerability of particular groups or individuals." Any court reviewing State action on the allocation of available resources can only interfere with such a decision in the case of a clear violation, it will not be able to do so "solely on the solely on the basis that it would have reached a different conclusion."

ANNEX: EXAMPLES OF CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS ON ENFORCEABLE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

This Appendix provides a selected list of countries that include enforceable social and economic rights - housing, food, health, education, social security, water, sanitation. This list is not comprehensive, but includes examples of countries from each global region.

Africa

South Africa (1996 Constitution)⁶

Article 26. Housing

- 1. Everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing.
- 2. The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of this right.
- 3. No one may be evicted from their home, or have their home demolished, without an order of court made after considering all the relevant circumstances. No legislation may permit arbitrary evictions.

Article 27. Health care, food, water and social security

- 1. Everyone has the right to have access to
 - a. health care services, including reproductive health care;
 - b. sufficient food and water; and
 - c. social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants, appropriate social assistance.
- 2. The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of each of these rights.
- 3. No one may be refused emergency medical treatment.

Article 28. Children

1. Every child has the right

f.

- a. to a name and a nationality from birth;
- b. to family care or parental care, or to appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment;
- c. to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services;
- d. to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation;
- e. to be protected from exploitative labour practices;
 - not to be required or permitted to perform work or provide services that i.are inappropriate for a person of that child's age; or ii.place at risk the child's well-being, education, physical or mental health or spiritual, moral or social development;
- g. not to be detained except as a measure of last resort, in which case, in addition to the rights a child enjoys under sections 12 and 35, the child may be detained only for the shortest appropriate period of time, and has the right to be
 - i.kept separately from detained persons over the age of 18 years; and

ii.treated in a manner, and kept in conditions, that take account of the child's age;

- h. to have a legal practitioner assigned to the child by the state, and at state expense, in civil proceedings affecting the child, if substantial injustice would otherwise result; and
- i. not to be used directly in armed conflict, and to be protected in times of armed conflict.
- 2. A child's best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child.
- 3. In this section "child" means a person under the age of 18 years.

Article 29. Education

- 1. Everyone has the right
 - a. to a basic education, including adult basic education; and
 - b. to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible.
- Everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable. In order to ensure the effective access to, and implementation of, this right, the state must consider all reasonable educational alternatives, including single medium institutions, taking into account
 - a. equity;
 - b. practicability; and
 - c. the need to redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices.
- 3. Everyone has the right to establish and maintain, at their own expense, independent educational institutions that
 - a. do not discriminate on the basis of race;
 - b. are registered with the state; and
 - c. maintain standards that are not inferior to standards at comparable public educational institutions.
- 4. Subsection (3) does not preclude state subsidies for independent educational institutions.

Kenya (2010)7

Economic and social rights

43. (1) Every person has the right-

(a) to the highest attainable standard of health, which includes the right to health care services, including

reproductive health care;

(b) to accessible and adequate housing, and to reasonable standards of sanitation;

- (c) to be free from hunger, and to have adequate food of acceptable quality;
- (d) to clean and safe water in adequate quantities;

(e) to social security; and

(f) to education.

(2) A person shall not be denied emergency medical treatment.

(3) The State shall provide appropriate social security to persons who are unable to support themselves and their dependants.

Application of Bill of Rights

20. ...

(5) In applying any right under Article 43, if the State claims that it does not have the resources to implement the right, a court, tribunal or other authority shall be guided by the following principles—

(a) it is the responsibility of the State to show that the resources are not available;(b) in allocating resources, the State shall give priority to ensuring the widest possible enjoyment of the right or fundamental freedom having regard to prevailing circumstances, including the vulnerability of particular

groups or individuals; and

(c) the court, tribunal or other authority may not interfere with a decision by a State organ concerning the allocation of available resources, solely on the solely on the basis that it would have reached a different conclusion.

Mozambique (1990)8

Article 92

1. In the Republic of Mozambique education shall be a right and duty of all citizens.

2. The State shall promote greater and equal access to the enjoyment of this right by all citizens.

Article 94

All citizens shall have the right to medical and health care, within the terms of the law, and shall have the duty to promote and preserve health.

Article 95

1. All citizens shall have the right to assistance in the case of disability or old age.

2. The State shall promote and encourage the creation of conditions for achieving this right.

Senegal (Adopted by referendum in 2001)9

Article 8: The Republic of Senegal guarantees to all citizens their individual fundamental freedoms, economic and social rights as well as group rights. These freedoms and rights are: Civil and political liberties, freedom of opinion, freedom of expression, press freedom, freedom of association, freedom to hold meetings, freedom of movement, freedom to protest, cultural freedoms, religious freedoms, philosophical freedoms, union freedoms, freedom of enterprise, the right to education, the right to literacy, the right to property, the right to work, the right to health, the right to a healthy environment, and the right to a variety of information. These freedoms and rights shall be exercised under the conditions provided by law.

Constitution of Côte d'Ivoire, 2000 (Unofficial translation)¹⁰

Article 7

Every human being has the right to development and to the full material, intellectual and spiritual development of his person. The State shall ensure equal access to health, education, culture,

information, professional education and employment for all citizens. ...

Asia

Indonesia (1945 Constitution, as amended in 1999, 2000 and 2002)¹¹

Article 28C

1. Every person has the right to self-realization through the fulfilment of his basic needs, the right to education and to partake in the benefits of science and technology, art and culture, so as to improve the quality of his life and the well-being of mankind.

Article 28H

- 1. Each person has a right to a life of well-being in body and mind, to a place to dwell, to enjoy a good and healthy environment, and to receive medical care.
- 2. Each person has the right to facilities and special treatment to get the same opportunities and advantages in order to reach equality and justice.
- 3. Each person is entitled to social security enabling him to develop his entire self unimpaired as a dignified human being.

Article 31

- 1. Each citizen has the right to an education.
- 2. Each citizen is obliged to follow elementary education and the government has the duty to fund this.
- 3. The government organizes and implements a national education system, to be regulated by law, that aims at enhancing religious and pious feelings as well as moral excellence with a view to upgrading national life.
- 4. The state shall give priority to the education budget by allocating at least twenty percent of the state's as well as of the regional budgets to meet the requirements of implementing national education.

Article 34

- 1. Impoverished persons and abandoned children are to be taken care of by the state.
- 2. The state develops a social security system for everybody and empowers the weak and underprivileged in society in accordance with their dignity as human beings.
- 3. The state has the responsibility to provide proper medical and public service facilities.
- 4. Further provisions regarding the implementation of this article are to be regulated by law.

Thailand¹²

Section 48: A person shall enjoy an equal right to receive basic education for the duration of not less than 12 years which shall be provided by the state thoroughly, up to the quality, and without charge. Indigent, disabled, and handicapped persons are eligible for assistance and support from the state to enjoy equal education opportunities. Education and vocational training provided by private organizations, educational alternatives, self-education, and education for life shall be protected and promoted by the state.

Section 50: A person shall enjoy an equal right to receive standard public health service, and

the indigent shall have the right to receive free medical treatment from public health centers of the state. The public health service of the state shall be provided thoroughly and efficiently. The state shall prevent and eradicate harmful contagious diseases among the public without charge in a timely manner.

Section 51: Children, youth and family members shall have the right to be protected by the state against violence and unfair treatment. They shall have the rights to survive and receive physical, mental, and intellectual development in accordance with their potentials and environment. Interference or restrictions on the rights of children, youths, and family members are prohibited except in compliance with the provisions of the law specifically enacted to preserve family status and maximum benefit of a person or persons involved. Children and youth with no guardian shall have the right to receive care and education from the state.

Section 52: A person who is over 60 years of age and has insufficient income shall have the right to receive aid from the state.

Section 53: Disabled or handicapped shall have the right to receive public benefits and other assistance from the state.

Section 54: A homeless person with insufficient income shall have the right to receive assistance from the state.

Mongolia¹³

Article 16 [Citizen's Rights]

The citizens of Mongolia are enjoying the following rights and freedoms: ...

4) The right to free choice of employment, favourable conditions of work, remuneration, rest, and private enterprise. No one may be unlawfully forced to work.

5) The right to material and financial assistance in old age, disability, childbirth, and childcare and in other cases as provided by law.

6) The right to the protection of health and medical care. The procedure and conditions of free medical aid are determined by law.

7) The right to education. The state provides basic general education free of charge. Citizens may establish and operate private schools if these meet the requirements of the State....

Americas

Brazil (1988)14

Article 6. Education, health, work, habitation, leisure, security, social security, protection of motherhood and childhood, and assistance to the destitute, are social rights, as set forth by this Constitution.

[In addition, in February 3, 2010, the Brazilian Congress approved Constitutional

Amendment 047/2003 to incorporate the right to food into Article 6 of the national constitution].

Article 196. Health is a right of all and a duty of the State and shall be guaranteed by means of social and economic policies aimed at reducing the risk of illness and other hazards and at the universal and equal access to actions and services for its promotion, protection and recovery.

Article 203. Social assistance shall be rendered to whomever may need it, regardless of contribution to social welfare and shall have as objectives:

I - the protection of the family, maternity, childhood. adolescence and old age;

II - the assistance to needy children and adolescents;

III - the promotion of the integration into the labour market;

IV - the habilitation and rehabilitation of the handicapped and their integration into community life;

V - the guarantee of a monthly benefit of one minimum wage to the handicapped and to the elderly who prove their incapability of providing for their own support or having it provided for by their families. As set forth by law.

Article 205. Education, which is the right of all and duty of the State and of the family, shall be promoted and fostered with the cooperation of society, with a view to the full development of the person, his preparation for the exercise of citizenship and his qualification for work.

Colombia (1991)15

Article 51 All Colombian citizens are entitled to live in dignity. The state will determine the conditions necessary to give effect to this right and will promote plans for public housing, appropriate systems of long-term financing, and community plans for the execution of these housing programs.

Article 48: ... All the population is guaranteed the irrevocable right to social security. ...

Article 49: ... Public health and environmental protection are public services for which the state is responsible. All individuals are guaranteed access to services that promote, protect, and rehabilitate public health...

Article 67. Education is an individual right and a public service that has a social function....

Article 366. The general welfare and improvement of the population quality of life are social purposes of the state. A basic objective of the state's activity will be to address unsatisfied public health, educational, environmental, and potable water needs. For this purpose, public social expenditures will have priority over any other allocation in the plans and budgets of the nation and of the territorial entities.

Constitution of Bolivia, 2009 (Adopted by referendum)¹⁶

Article 16

I. Everyone has the right to water and food.

II. The State is under the obligation to guarantee food security, by means of healthy, adequate and sufficient nutrition for the entire population.

Article 20

I. Everyone has the right to universal and equitable access to the basic services of drinking water, sanitation, electricity, gas for household uses, postal services and telecommunication.

[In addition, the Bolivian Constitution also includes the rights to education, health, and adequate housing.].

Europe

Portugal (1982)17

Article 63 (Social security and solidarity)

1. Everyone shall have the right to social security.

2. The state shall be charged with organising, coordinating and subsidising a unified and decentralised social security system, with the participation of the trade unions, other organisations that represent workers and associations that represent any other beneficiaries.

3. The social security system shall protect citizens in illness and old age and when they are disabled, widowed or orphaned, as well as when they are unemployed or in any other situation that entails a lack of or reduction in means of subsistence or ability to work.

4. All periods of work shall, as laid down by law, contribute to the calculation of old age and disability pensions, regardless of the sector of activity in which they were performed.

5. With a view to the pursuit of the social solidarity objectives that are particularly enshrined in this Article and in Articles 67(2)b, 69, 70(1)e, 71 and 72, the state shall, as laid down by law, support and inspect the activities and operation of private charitable institutions and other non-profit institutions that are recognised to be in the public interest.

Article 64 (Health)

1. Everyone shall possess the right to health protection and the duty to defend and promote

health.

2. The right to health protection shall be fulfilled:

a) By means of a national health service that shall be universal and general and, with particular regard to the economic and social conditions of the citizens who use it, shall tend to be free of charge;

b) By creating economic, social, cultural and environmental conditions that particularly guarantee the protection of childhood, youth and old age; by systematically improving living and working conditions and also promoting physical fitness and sport at school and among the people; and by developing both the people's health and hygiene education and healthy living practises.

3. In order to ensure enjoyment of the right to the protection of health, the state shall be under a primary duty:

a) To guarantee access by every citizen, regardless of his economic situation, to preventive, curative and rehabilitative medical care;

b) To guarantee a rational and efficient nationwide coverage in terms of healthcare units and human resources;

c) To work towards the public funding of the costs of medical care and medicines;

d) To regulate and inspect corporate and private forms of medicine and articulate them with the national health service, in such a way as to ensure adequate standards of efficiency and quality in both public and private healthcare institutions;

e) To regulate and control the production, distribution, marketing, sale and use of chemical, biological and pharmaceutical products and other means of treatment and diagnosis;f) To establish policies for the prevention and treatment of drug abuse.

4. The national health service shall possess a decentralised and participatory management system.

Article 65 (Housing and urban planning)

1. Everyone shall possess the right for themselves and their family to have an adequately sized dwelling that provides them with hygienic and comfortable conditions and preserves personal and family privacy.

2. In order to ensure enjoyment of the right to housing, the state shall be charged with:

a) Planning and implementing a housing policy that is embodied in general town and country planning documents and supported by urban planning documents that guarantee the existence of an adequate network of transport and social facilities;

b) In cooperation with the autonomous regions and local authorities, promoting the construction of low-cost and social housing;

c) Stimulating private construction, subject to the general interest, and access to owned or rented housing;

d) Encouraging and supporting local community initiatives that work towards the resolution of their housing problems and foster the formation of housing and self-building cooperatives.

3. The state shall undertake a policy that works towards the establishment of a rental system which is compatible with family incomes and access to individual housing.

4. The state, the autonomous regions and local authorities shall lay down the rules governing the occupancy, use and transformation of urban land, particularly by means of planning instruments and within the overall framework of the laws concerning town and country planning and urban planning, and shall expropriate such land as may be necessary to the fulfilment of the purposes of public-use urban planning.

5. Interested parties shall be entitled to participate in the drawing up of urban planning instruments and any other physical town and country planning instruments.

Constitution of the Republic of Ukraine, 1996, last amended 8 December 2004¹⁸

Article 48

Everyone has the right to a standard of living sufficient for himself or herself and his or her family that includes adequate nutrition, clothing and housing.

⁵ In the case of SERAC and CESR v. Nigeria, ibid, paras. 63-5, the Commission noted that the right to food is implicit in the African Charter, on the basis of the argument by the communicants that it was contained in the right to life (Art. 4), the right to health (Art. 16) and the right to economic, social and cultural development (Art. 22).

⁶ <u>http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/index.htm</u>

⁷ <u>http://www.coekenya.go.ke/images/stories/Resources/the_proposed_constitution_of_kenya.pdf</u>

http://www.chr.up.ac.za/hr_docs/countries/docs/Constitution%20_in%20force%2021%2001%2005_En_glish_.pdf

⁹ <u>http://www.chr.up.ac.za/hr_docs/constitutions/docs/SenegalC%20(french).pdf</u>. The unofficial translation is available at:

http://66.102.9.132/search?q=cache:ITPIpP_soN8J:www.chr.up.ac.za/hr_docs/constitutions/docs/Senega IC%2520(english%2520summary)(rev).doc+constitution+senegal&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=uk. ¹⁰ http://www.accpuf.org/images/pdf/cm/cotedivoire/031-tf-txt_const.pdf

¹¹<u>http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia#Section XA .2A.2A : Funda</u> mental Human Rights

¹² <u>http://www.asianlii.org/th/legis/const/2007/1.html and http://www.ect.go.th/english/files/2007-constitution-english%5B1%5D.pdf</u>.

¹⁵ http://confinder.richmond.edu/admin/docs/colombia_const2.pdf.

¹⁶ Unofficial translation. "Nueva Constitucion Politica del Estado." Adopted by popular referendum on 25

¹ Preamble to the Global Political Agreement, September 2008

² Article 11 (1) of the ICESCR recognizes "...the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing ... ". However, the UN Human Rights Council adopts annually resolutions that refer to the terms 'right to food' and 'right to adequate housing'. The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has adopted General Comments on these rights; The right to adequate food (Art.11) General Comment 12, E/C.12/1999/5, 12 May 1999 and The right to adequate housing (Art.11 (1), General Comment 4, 13 December 1991. ³ Although the ICESCR does not explicitly refer to water and sanitation, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has stated that the right to water is implicitly included within Article 11 of the ICESCR, which recognizes the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living. This is because the right to water clearly falls within the category of guarantees essential for securing an adequate standard of living, particularly since it is one of the most fundamental conditions for survival. See The right to water, General Comment 15, E/C.12/2002/11, 20 January 2003. The UN Independent Expert on human rights obligations related to safe drinking water and sanitation has argued that sanitation, like water, could be implied under the right to an adequate standard of living and that there is considerable precedents - in international political declarations as well as in the work of United Nations human rights mechanisms - for this position. See Report of the independent expert on the issue of human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation, Catarina de Albuquerque, A/HRC/12/24, July 2009, par. 58. While some States do not accept that there are rights to water and sanitation. Zimbabwe was one of the 122 States at the UN General Assembly that voted in favour of a UNGA Resolution 64/292 of July 2010 which "Recognizes the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights." In 2006, Zimbabwe also signed on to the Abuja Declaration adopted at the First Africa-South America Summit (ASA) in Abuja, Nigeria, on 30 November 2006, in which 65 African and South American States committed to "promote the right of our citizens to have access to clean and safe water and sanitation... ⁴ The African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights stated that the combined effect of Articles 14 (right to property), 16 (right to health) and 18 (1) (right to protection of the family) reads into the Charter the right to shelter or housing. The Social and Economic Rights Action Center (SERAC) and the Center for Economic and Social Rights v. Nigeria, Communication 155/96, decision made at 30th Ordinary Session, Banjul, The Gambia, from 13th to 27th October 2001, ACHPR/COMM/A044/1, para. 60.

¹³ <u>http://www.servat.unibe.ch/law/icl/mg00000 .html</u>

¹⁴ http://www.v-brazil.com/government/laws/titlell.html

January 2009. Spanish original version available at: <u>http://www.geocities.com/cpbolivia/texto2.htm.</u> ¹⁷ <u>http://app.parlamento.pt/site_antigo/ingles/cons_leg/Constitution_VII_revisao_definitive.pdf</u> ¹⁸ <u>http://www.president.gov.ua/en/content/103_e.html</u>