



HRT POLICY DOCUMENT ON SERVICE DELIVERY

- 1. Executive Summary:** The Harare Residents' Trust (HRT) has been leading in advocacy around quality service provision, guided by the principles of engagement and dialogue. Residents across the suburbs have been raising issues around the quality of water being provided, the consistency of refuse collection, the state of the road network, the effectiveness of councillors' representation, the services being rendered at District Offices, electricity supplies, city of Harare summons, the performance of the Zimbabwe Republic Police among other service delivery issues. It was in response to these demands of the citizenry that the Residents' Council of the HRT, representing all suburbs, the HRT Board and the Secretariat held a historic Policy Discussion Meeting held in Harare at one of the district offices on 16 August 2011.
- 2. Sewerage Reticulation System:** There are frequent sewerage bursts in the communities which take so long to be repaired and attended to by council. This has caused pollution of the environment in the communities. Sewerage bursts have compromised the health of the communities thus a danger of the resurgence of the cholera outbreak remains. Some communities use septic tanks yet are being charged for sewerage.

 - a. The HRT shall lobby against the charging for sewerage to residents who have septic tanks in their households.
 - b. It shall be the policy of the HRT to refer to the City by-laws on sewerage maintenance and demand that all reported sewerage bursts are addressed within 48 hours.
 - c. The organisation shall continue to conduct research into the provision of sewerage services to the residents by a local authority, obligations, duties and responsibilities of each stakeholder.
- 3. Refuse Collection:** Refuse collection in the communities is erratic. Residents are dumping waste in open areas. This has left most residential areas contaminated. There have been complaints about the speed at which the refuse collection trucks move within the communities. This endangers children who play along the streets. Local council offices have inadequate plastic bins to distribute to residents, yet when the refuse collection trucks get into the communities they refuse to empty sacks, resulting in illegal dumpsites.

 - a. It shall be the policy of the HRT to demand systematic refuse collection from the local authority, at least once a week in each community. Where this is impossible the HRT shall engage the local authority to find alternative spaces for refuse disposal.

- b. The HRT shall consistently demand the close supervision and monitoring of City of Harare workers, especially those in the Waste Management Department who are responsible for refuse collection in the communities.
- c. The HRT shall educate citizens on how to maintain a clean and safe living environment.

4. Road Network: Community roads are heavily potholed affecting both motorists and pedestrians. Council employees have attempted pothole filling using gravel and sand both which have been eroded by heavy downpours.

- a. The HRT shall engage the City of Harare to prioritise road maintenance and repairs in roads leading to the high density areas as they have become severely potholed.
- b. It shall be the policy of the HRT to advise motorists whose vehicles are damaged as a direct result of the poor state of roads to seek compensation from the local authority, once it has been proven through litigation that the City of Harare was culpable.

5. Water Supplies: Residents have raised concern over the water disconnections for outstanding debts. In communities where water supplies are erratic, the residents have taken the initiative to drill boreholes, sunken unprotected shallow wells, or fetch water from nearby polluted streams like Mukuvisi River, compromising community health. The quality of water has become an issue with most residents who question why drinking water has visible impurities.

- a. The HRT recognises that water is a right to be enjoyed by every citizen irrespective of economic and social status. The quality of water should meet the basic standards set by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and should be visibly clean to inspire confidence in the consumers.
- b. It shall be the policy of the HRT to lobby and demand from the City of Harare for the removal or scrapping from its water budget fixed water charges as this has disadvantaged thousands of water consumers in high and low density areas.
- c. The HRT shall as a matter of policy demand accurate meter readings as basis for the costing of water consumed by residents and will do everything in its power to denounce estimate water charges.
- d. It shall be the policy of the HRT to demand from Central Government and the local authority the availability of a minimum of 20 litres of water for domestic use by each citizen in terms of the **UN General Assembly Resolution**
- e. Where a resident/ratepayer has been disconnected, it shall be the responsibility of the local authority to provide the affected citizen with their 20 litres of water daily until the water is restored, in line with the UN standards. Zimbabwe is a signatory to that resolution and the local authority cannot work against the fulfilment of a national commitment.

- f. In the case of the above not being fulfilled, the HRT shall pursue litigation in the public interest to ensure compliance.
- g. The HRT shall hold the City of Harare responsible for the replacement and or repair of dysfunctional water meters. It is not the responsibility of a resident to buy a water meter as a replacement for a dysfunctional one. Where a resident has been asked to buy own water meter, the HRT expects that the City of Harare's bill will reflect the purchase of the meter which remains council property.
- h. The maintenance of the water and sewerage reticulation infrastructure, especially boreholes sunk by international NGOs and UNICEF, is the responsibility of the City of Harare.

6. Education: Residents want to see an improved education system in the communities where all school going children have easy and unhindered access to education. The cost of the education must be guided by national policy on education and the desire to achieve Goal Two of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (UN MDGs). Parents pay teachers' incentives, making education expensive, yet teachers are civil servants, fully employed by the Government of Zimbabwe. Some areas do not have secondary schools like Sunningdale and Kuwadzana Extension.

- a. The HRT policy is that there should be no incentives given to teachers, as long as they are in the employment of Government.
- b. It shall be the policy of the HRT to demand that schools complete their syllabuses within the stipulated time frames than for schools to allow teachers to conduct extra lessons as a way of completing syllabuses. Extra lessons are more a way to fund the salaries of teachers than improve the standards of education, and the HRT shall lobby, as an entity or within a coalition, the removal of extra lessons in all council and government owned schools.
- c. It shall be the policy of the HRT to denounce and oppose the distribution of condoms in schools whenever this issue is raised, because in the organisation's view, this promotes early child sex and premature marriages.
- d. The HRT shall demand that the City of Harare remove all schools that are using churches as classrooms. Churches have no facilities to provide a conducive learning environment for children.
- e. The organisation shall expect that the local authority provide space for both primary and secondary school in new land development project.

7. Health and Environment: Services at local health centres are mostly deplorable yet it is common knowledge that Zimbabwe and the City of Harare in particular have some of the most competent health personnel. Nurses and other medical teams in local health centres allegedly

conduct private business at council health centres, and occasionally discriminate patients seeking treatment in terms of access to drugs. Patients are usually referred to Harare Hospital which is also overwhelmed. Consultation fees are beyond their reach.

- a. The HRT shall put in place monitoring mechanisms at local level to ensure that the operations at local health centres are closely monitored in the interest of health for the residents.
 - b. Where cases of abuse of authority and health centre resources, it shall be the policy of the HRT to engage the City Health Department, the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, and other national bodies to improve service provision.
 - c. It shall be the policy of the HRT to demand that planning of all new residential areas should reserve land for the construction of health centres to avoid a situation where some suburbs have no local health centres, forcing residents to seek treatment elsewhere.
 - d. Consultation fees at health centres should be within the reach of the majority in that particular community to ensure that the City of Harare health policies promote access to health for all citizens.
 - e. The HRT shall engage ZESA on load shedding at health centres and shall also collaborate with such statutory bodies like the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) to safeguard the environment against illegal waste disposal and management.
- 8. Representation by Elected Councillors:** Councillors are more concerned with accumulating wealth rather than formulating policies which are pro-poor and address the concerns of the residents. In Harare few councillors convene feedback meetings disadvantaging the electorate who put them into office. As a result most residents view councillors as incompetent, and generally corrupt.
- a. A performing councillor, in the view of the HRT, is one who raises development issues of their community either in full council meetings or through council committee meetings. The competent councillor shall be expected to hold feedback meetings with the electorate, on a non-partisan basis, and should be easily accessible to the electorate.
 - b. It shall be the policy of the HRT to demand that every elected councillor hold at least six feedback meetings in their wards to ensure that the electorate have an appreciation of council's operations.
 - c. The HRT shall officially write to the Mayor and the Town to express disappointment at the performance of an elected councillor and subsequently demand the recalling of the particular councillor where under-performance is the major issue.

9. Electricity supplies: Power outages have become persistent disrupting domestic and industrial outputs. There is excessive load shedding with schedules not being adhered to. Billing is estimated and power disconnections are rampant in the communities.

- a. It shall be the policy of the HRT to demand accurate meter readings which should be reflected in the cost of electricity.
- b. The HRT shall use law to demand accurate costing of electricity, particularly for the period from February- November 2009, in line with the ruling of the Competitions and Tariffs Commission and a subsequent High Court ruling.
- c. The HRT shall denounce at all times estimated billing by the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) Holdings as this practice distorts the reality on electricity consumption.
- d. It shall be the position of the HRT to lobby ZESA to scrap or reduce by half outstanding electricity bills that have gone for more than 12 months without being settled. The option is for ZESA to put the defaulting consumers on manageable payment plans.
- e. Consistent with the Mission of the HRT, it shall be the policy of the HRT to conduct education seminars or undertake trainings for residents on how to monitor their bills in relation to their meter readings.

10. Housing: Council accommodation such as flats and single rooms is in a state of disrepair and has become unaffordable. There is serious overcrowding in flats and council houses. This has really compromised the African traditional values of privacy of the family unit as adults and kids share single rooms. Cooperatives that are spearheading housing allocation are more inclined towards political rhetoric where desperate home seekers have to pay huge amounts before they are eventually allocated a house, with some even dying before accessing the built houses. Repossessions of houses from defaulters and dependants of cooperative members are rampant, which leaves the poor still marginalised and open to exploitation.

- a. The HRT shall lobby the local authority to provide land for housing development projects by residents in overcrowded areas especially council owned properties.
- b. The responsibility of stands allocation and plan approval should be restored to Dos.
- c. It shall be the policy of the HRT to ensure that the City of Harare provides decent shelter or accommodation to residents on the housing waiting list in hostels, flats or rented properties.

11. City of Harare Summons: Most citizens have received summons and letters of final demand for outstanding debts from the City of Harare. Residents have debts that accumulated since February 2009 when the multi-currency was introduced. This action by the local authority has left most residents frightened and vulnerable to prosecution.

- a. It shall be the policy of the HRT to provide legal assistance to every resident who has received letters of final demand and summons from the City of Harare.
- b. The HRT urges all citizens to pay what they can afford for all services rendered to them, but will not support total boycott of rates payment as this has potential to harm actual service provision.

12. District Offices: District officers in the communities are disempowered and cannot deal with all residents' issues. The HRT has made visits to District offices where it has been discovered that the centers lack the resources to respond to the needs of the communities. The centers act more as referral points rather than them being sources of help and information on how their problems can be addressed.

- a. It shall be the policy of the HRT to demand, wherever and whenever necessary, the restoration of all administrative powers of District Officers of the City of Harare.
- b. If the above does not yield positive results, it shall be the policy of the HRT to pursue legal action against the City of Harare to restore all administrative powers of the District Officers.

13. Police: Police have ceased to uphold and order and no longer protect the public. Citizens feel vulnerable at community public meetings as the possibility of being victimised by political hooligans remains high, especially following the HRT Convention. Police clearances for public meetings have been deliberately delayed which has impacted negatively on citizens' participation. There are constant reports of police demanding bribes from vendors and constantly harassing them which makes vending impossible for economically disempowered residents especially women and children who survive on vending.

- a. In light of the above issues, it shall be the policy of the HRT to respond in the following manner where the police are involved.
 - i. Report and document all forms of corruption by police officers in the community.
 - ii. The HRT shall advocate for non-interference in the operations of vendors in areas or communities where there are no designated market places.
 - iii. The police have no mandate to determine who is invited to attend HRT community meetings.
 - iv. The HRT shall conduct awareness campaigns and educative meetings to ensure that the community understands the negative impact of corruption on society.
 - v. The HRT shall be at the forefront of educating residents on the decentralisation of vending activities, which are now the responsibility of the District Officer.

- vi. Where cases of bribery are reported, the HRT shall publish the reports and approach relevant officials for redress.

14. Political Affiliation:

- a. It shall be the policy of the HRT to remain as neutral as possible in the party political discourse of the nation. Below are the key principles and values to be upheld.
 - i. That no member of a political party holding a position from ward level upwards shall hold a position of leadership in the HRT at all levels.
 - ii. However that person referred to above, will be allowed to be a card carrying member and participate in all other activities of the organisation.
 - iii. That the HRT remains a neutral residents' body and individual political views shall not be expressed during meetings or activities of the HRT.

Contact Details: www.hrt.org.zw/ [info@hrt.org.zw/](mailto:info@hrt.org.zw) 0772 869 294/ 0772 365 805/ 0733 296 806