

CHAPTER 6: DEVOLUTION AND DECENTRALISATION

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ABSTRACT

Cognisant of the evolution in the global socio economic and technological structures, Zimbabwe decided to launch, the Vision 2030 Agenda in an effort to boost the country's growth. Thus, various programmes have been implemented, the Transitional Stabilisation Programme, 2018-2020 (TSP) piloting the Vision 2030 Agenda and currently the National Development Strategy 2021-2025 (NDS1) is underway. Clearly, the NDS1 is aimed at providing economic expansion, sustainable development, health and food security, to name a few. The programme stands on these distinctive pillars that are focused on addressing current affairs in the country. The NDS1 is particularly a short-term strategy enforced under the Vision 2030 Agenda, hence proffers growth in respective stages and areas. However, an up-close assessment of the NDS1 reveals that as stated before, the agenda is planned in a transformative, transparent and accountable manner which will ensure delivery of targeted services in a vigorous way and bring about development to the masses. The NDS1, additionally bears solutions to address global challenges which include natural resources conservation, climate change response, social stability in context of gender equality and promoting the handicapped and youth empowerment. Among these is notably autonomy to the lower governing structures through decentralisation and devolution. That is a major shift in terms of administrative or governance transformation in the country. Devolution and decentralisation will play a pivotal role in proffering development in all the sectors, hence its value in the NDS programme is fundamental. The chapter bears an assessment of the NDS1, in particular and the emphasis being on devolution and decentralisation, in context of its planning, monitoring and evaluation.

INTRODUCTION.

The GoZ, in the Second Republic, has harnessed the Vision 2030 programme in response to collapsing socio-economic and governance structures (ZCDD, 2021). Since 2018, the country has faced various

challenges across all sectors in terms of transformative economic development. Hence the TSP, under the wing of the Vision 2030 programme, pioneered the way and functioned from October 2018 to December 2020. The two-year economic programme was a success as it managed to induce macro-economic stability. Furthermore, the TSP tactic evidently produced fiscal consolidation, external sector balance and exchange rate stability (Pasipanodya, 2020). In January 2021, the NDS1 then succeeded the TSP in a bid to achieve the socio-economic and macroeconomic goals within Vision 2030.

NDS1 directs solutions in various sectors as mentioned before, such as the macroeconomic sector, social stability, environmental awareness and conservation and, lastly, of great interest is the realisation of governance modification towards an inclusive and participatory governance. Chapter 11 of the NDS1 states that the GoZ, since 1984, has embarked on decentralisation programmes that have misfired instead at most. Therefore, Vision 2030 has restructured the decentralisation approach through the NDS1's decentralisation and devolution tactic. In consonance with Yuliani (2004), decentralisation is the conveying of power from central governance to lower levels in a political administrative and territorial hierarchy, hence the NDS1 seeks to proffer such an adjustment with the aim of transforming governance through decentralisation that, in turn, will engender socio-economic transformation through inclusive and participatory local authorities.

Its involvement in the NDS programme provides a panel for the people to control development rather than in the traditional way of governance, where central government dictates the projects and how they should be carried out.

Devolution has been explained by Yuliani, (*ibid.*) as the “delegation of rights and resources to local governance”, this clearly unveiling government's effort to bring about equal utilisation of resources to all the communities. The present chapter hence practically dissects the NDS1 in an effort to explore the configuration of decentralisation and devolution and how it has been applied, and particularly the monitoring and the probable impacts in the agenda.

LITREATURE REVIEW

Devolution and decentralisation have been priority policies aimed at addressing governance and utilisation of resources since 1980 (Conyers, 2003). Masunungure and Ndoma (2013) maintain devolution as the highest degree of power transfer that diffuses governance powers, authority resources and responsibilities to local authorities. The local authorities then have the limited power to administer their own development. However, the power has thresholds. Decentralisation, on the other hand, is the general term used to describe the transfer of power from central governance to the lower governance (Moyo and Ncube, 2014). Therefore, after the attainment of independence, the country was in a bid to promote immediate socio-economic transformation, that is provide health care, education and the housing policy and decentralisation was done in a structure that transferred power from a central body to provincial, district and local authorities.

This then produced social and economic goals, these being decentralisation and devolution. These two were centred on equal participation of communities and authorities in decision-making and resource mobilisation. Furthermore, they were to safeguard local and human capital resources in communities. Although the power was theoretically transferred, according to Conyers (2003), less practical power had been conveyed to the lower tier authorities and this resulted in the misuse of the power and resources.

The decentralisation structure in the 1990s consisted mainly of fiscal decentralisation and sectorial decentralisation. According to Zinyama (2021), devolution in the early years of Zimbabwe's independence was not effective. The Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013), in Chapter 14, notably recognises the urgency of devolution in transformation of the country through development. The reintroduction of the decentralisation and devolution was a bold move, though it was not appreciated by the respective authorities, hence the policy was ineffective.

UNDERSTANDING THE NDS1

Zimbabwe's socio-economic standing has not been stable since independence/ this explains the numerous policies the country has

implemented since 1980, directed at various sectors but to no avail. Munro (2014) states the policies, however, produced sprinkles of breakthroughs and these include ZIMASSET STEM, ZIMPREST, NERP and ESAP, and TSP to name a few. These plans have been implemented in a bid to achieve a stable GDP and robust social and economic development. This section then investigates the, NDS1 structure and provides a comprehensive version of the programme structure.

The NDS1, unlike the previous blueprints, its main focus is on driving socio-economic factors that address challenges by utilising existing and modern methodologies. The programme has 14 main elements that are implemented in the mandate of transforming the socio-economic, environment.

The NDS1 programme, as stated before is the successor to the economic TSP and its value to the Vision 2030 agenda is to proffer the most needed solutions in the social and economic environment. The uniqueness of this me can be seen in the clear implementation plan or matrix as alluded to by ZCDD (2021), that the implementation is closely followed by monitoring and evaluation, which are major attributes of a successful action. Emphasis on devolution shows that the programme automatically facilitates cohesion with other sectors such as health, social infrastructure and food production through participatory governance and local resource manipulation.

The national development plan has full potential of developing the country as it is an inclusive blueprint established through consultative processes. The programme bears crystal clear plan frames that are backed by competent systems such as the Implementation Result Based Management (IRBM), that are the driving factors within the programme. On another note, the NDS1 proves to be much more effective as it has its priorities closely linked to each other and this then creates simultaneous development of all sectors. The 14 priorities are generally converging. The programme, however, is on the edge as this insinuates that if one programme fails to properly function, then the whole system will collapse.

Macroeconomic stability is the cornerstone of the NDS1 guidelines. As a result, the blueprint applies a dynamic stance to end misappropriation of

finances, wipe-out poverty and, lastly, creates strong ties with the international community. The main priority of the NDS1 is the stabilisation of the economy. The NDS programme basically evolves around the macroeconomic sector. Though the macroeconomic sector contends with the COVID-19 pandemic, the programme has been designed to easily adapt. The proposed strategies are implemented, and these include investment in energy, water and sanitation and the use of domestic and foreign fiscal policies. More so, the creation of employment and social umbrellas will also be highly dependent on the successfulness of the macroeconomic strategies.

Value addition and value chain creations are part of the NDS1 goals in improving industrial networking and, consequently, the industry, to have the required efficacy for a stable economy. Value chains will interlink the transport, energy, water and ICT infrastructure. Infrastructure development in the country is at a critical stage, in response to this. The NDS intends to revive infrastructure, through private investment, research in infrastructure and completing stagnant projects. In addition, according to the NDS1 (2021), economic re-engagement with the international community is one of the vital components of boosting the country's economy.

Poverty remains a threat in the country despite the previous policies, hence the Second Republic designed a section within the NDS1 that places particular emphasis on how poverty is alienated, within the five-year plan. According to NANGO (2021), poverty levels over the years have risen drastically due to increased occurrences of natural phenomena such as droughts and this has left the populace vulnerable to food insecurity. Economic recessions over the years have left both the urban and rural populace exposed to serious poverty. The current five-year plan proposes to increase food self-sufficiency by 55% and reduce food insecurity by 49%. Additionally, the NDS1 also targets to increase maize produce from the current 907 629 tonnes to 3 million tonnes by 2025, so poverty alleviation is targeted through vigorous agricultural transformation. Although the government has the capacity to deliver the above mentioned, natural disasters can be very costly and difficult for a country in its

beginning stages of developing. Droughts, floods and pests can destroy large volumes of produce and cripple the country.

Agriculture is basically the backbone of the country's food production but poor outputs in the sector have exacerbated poverty in Zimbabwe. Additionally, bottlenecks in engineering mechanisms, limited access to regional markets and low inputs have worsened poverty in the country. A close observation of the NDS1 reveals its efforts to tackle the above-mentioned challenges. First and foremost, the strategy is poised at introducing resilience and sustainable agriculture through community-based programmes, such as the *Pfumbudza/Intwasa* programme which has been appreciated greatly by large- and small-scale farmers.

The NDS1 is also designed to revitalise major agricultural giants such as the Cold Storage Commission in a bid to ameliorate the agricultural industry. Research and experimentation are the key features in upscaling the industry with this, new resilient breeds are discovered. Sustainable agriculture is highly considered in the programme, therefore, diversification and introduction of global standard modes of agriculture have been singularly proposed as the solutions to these challenges in the country.

Mechanisation has also been considered in the NDS1. The importation of global standard machinery is proposed in the strategy and the introduction of public-private sector initiatives have been targeted as the drivers for a stable agricultural sector. Land tenure and distribution have affected agriculture, the government, through the NDS, has introduced new land mandates that enable farmers to easily access land. The government has further re-instituted the Agribank as the official land bank and with this; the programme facilitates accessibility for farmers who need land. Spatial issues or disparities are resolved through regulatory frameworks that also proffer spatial planning services and mapping to produce robust agricultural functions. In this context, the government signed the Global Compensation Deed on July 2020 (NDS, 2021). The deed creates the pathway to international reengagement, one of the key elements.

Housing in Zimbabwe has also been one of the greatest threats as it is clear how all other government's efforts to resolve this challenge have

failed. The government has battled the housing challenge, coming up with strategies such as the *Garikayi/Hlalani Kuhle* programmes, but these have not done well. Through the NDS1, the housing challenges are planned to be reduced by the production of 220 000 housing units for the populace. Zimbabwe's housing issues have always been because of the economic instability, leading to mushrooming of informal settlements, especially in urban areas.

Illegal spatial processes facilitated by land barons have led to the creation of informal settlements in urban centres. In response to this, the NDS1 envisaged the re-introduction of 'mortgage financing schemes. These will enable all working citizens to purchase affordable houses. This method is beneficial mostly to civil servants. The restoration of the Housing Guarantee Fund (HGF) is a significant stance in the NDS1 programme as it will be a catalyst for housing delivery across the country. The introduction of new industrial technology will reduce costs in construction and, in turn, will create affordable housing to all. Government housing revitalisation is the crucial step in housing backlogs.

Land delivery has been considered in the NDS 1as one of the main factors affecting proper settlement structures. The programme intends to acquire 10 000 hectares for housing development in urban areas, and through this land, housing is delivered by efficient land developers under rigorous supervision by local authorities. The programme will produce 124 fully planned formal rural settlements. Land disputes are addressed through the restructuring of legal acts pertaining to land acquisition and occupation. Decentralisation of the approval from bodies such as the Department of Physical Planning will fast-track approval processes. The current poor service infrastructure such as water, communication, roads and sanitation facilities, is also addressed by the NDS1.

The consideration of informal settlements in the NDS1 programme indicates government's concern over the housing crisis, through the regularisation of the informal settlements housing demand. The health system has not been in a stable state over the past decade, with shortage of resources and staff, leading to poor health service delivery. The NDS1 provides access to health care and seeks to improve health infrastructure.

That would be a substantive step towards provision for primary health and hospital care, which are priorities of the programme.

Furthermore, the rebranding and remodelling of the health personnel and infrastructure will lead to the attainment of world health standards. To boot this notion, local appreciation of drug manufacturers will improve drug availability and, in turn, increase the refinement of health in the country. The NDS road map will also accommodate resilience against mortality through tackling the most threatening communicable diseases. Water and sanitation transmutation are also the primary targets of the NDS blueprint in the health sector.

Focus on environmental conservation is made in the NDS1 road map, evidencing its uniqueness compared to previous ones. The strategy seeks to take several global stances in managing local natural resources through sustainable natural resources utilisation and protection of the climate (NDS, 2021).

Environmental disasters have shaken the global community, and their constant frequency needs to be carefully addressed. The most recent natural hazard, Cyclone Idai, exposed the country's poor preparedness to natural disasters, hence the NDS1 will facilitate strategies to provide possible ways of preparedness. The NDS1 will also tackle the current global warming threat through resource capitalisation and awareness to the population. Sustainable development can then be achieved through these tactics.

One of the primal components of the NDS1 blueprint is to tender participation and control of local resources in the decision-making processes to local authorities through decentralisation. Decentralisation as mentioned earlier is the transfer of power from a central governing body to a lower one, local authorities being the lower tiers will receive authority to mobilise resources through NDS1 programmes that include the introduction of policies which promote devolution, revisit and alter the constitution to meet devolution standards and supplement new legislation to increase the effectiveness of decentralisation.

Governance, in line with the NDS1 will shift from a centred form to that of a participatory one. Local authorities will govern resources under a scheduled and properly monitored umbrella whilst the central government promotes the management of the funds to be dispersed. In line with constitutional provision, the central government will issue out 5% of the gross domestic product (GDP) to all local authorities as the devolution fund and, consequently, local authorities will utilise these funds in their planned programmes and submit periodical reports to their respective provincial superiors for monitoring and evaluation.

Devolution is an inclusive mode of governance; hence the NDS1 will implement development propellers such as human capital development which will improve the skill base, economic development and technology. Moreover, the remodelling of local governance structures, from provincial levels to village levels, will promote developmental cohesion and this is directly linked to national structures. Project plans will be created by local authorities and monitored by provincial boards, and, with this setup, alignment of national projects and local projects is possible. Devolution will also ease the need for infrastructure, health care and employment through its various development strategies, more so projects facilitated by the respective communities. This reduces the occurrences of white elephant projects.

Social protection in the country seems to be lacking and the NDS1 has targeted the following strategic points to manage the situation. The idea is to increase ease of access to all social commodities by the populace, the government to implement this through devolution and also through socio-economic strategies. The government has proved their bid for change to be valid; however, the social protection strategy may fail as it is highly dependent on the economy which, at the moment, is under negative forces.

To add on to social protection, it is augmented by human capital development, a method of increasing the skill base in the country and in turn boost the economy of the country to desired outcomes. This initiative was once enacted by the Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM), a projected developmental strategy to create an

increased number of technological students to enhance technology and natural sciences in the county. Therefore, the NDS1 proposes to induce a similar strategy that will enhance skills for the industry and, in turn, resuscitate the country's manufacturing sector.

More so, this approach will increase innovation and, in turn, technology, invention and industrial transformation will emerge. This approach to industrialisation will boost the country and indeed fast track the transformation process, but if the industrial market is not accommodative, then the initiative will meet many challenges.

APPRAISAL OF PLANNING

The devolution master plan is generally understandable and generic to follow through. The devolution initiative is implemented gradually in stages to fully achieve transparency and this creates a platform for easier evaluation for amendments and/or additions. Government, through the NDS1, plans to provide full transfer of political power to local authorities and this will result in the management of projects by local authorities and enhance efficiency through community participation and utilisation of local resources. Furthermore, fiscal transfer of power will be superimposed to enable local authorities to manipulate funds and disburse the finances to respective projects.

The whole national development plan is anchored by the IRBM, an efficiency stabiliser that maintains the motive to attain the desired results. The IRBM, as planned, will focus on five main angles: integrated development planning, results-based budgeting, personal performance system, monitoring and evaluation, and management of information systems. These points are the main veins of development as they determine each and every process in the programme. The IRBM plays a strategic role in the efficiency of the NDS1. However, its implementation may encounter difficulties due to poor follow-ups and the resources for such programmes may take long to reach remote areas.

This system has been implemented by many countries and the end result shows positive growth, therefore the IRBM implementation by the government, indicates the efforts and potential the programme has in

transforming the country's economic and social atmosphere. The government has set a very expectations on its self, considering the current unstable governance system being run on outdated structures and the economic state. The programme might be just another machine gun shooting blanks.

The introduction of devolution is aimed at facilitating good governance through transparency inclusiveness and participatory decision-making (Madzimore, 2021). These have been aligned with the Constitution and the government has set up frameworks mandated to achieve these goals. Devolution and decentralisation will bring about a new system of governance, that is, the national government, provincial and metropolitan councils and local authorities. With this hierarchy in place, the planning will flow in a bottom-up manner. However, the monitoring and evaluation is centralised.

Planning processes that usually involve problem-identification, evaluation of possible solutions and implementing the solutions are administered by the lower tiers at their own discretion, but under a budget funded by the central government. According to the NDS1 blueprint, all governing bodies will function under the guidelines of the Constitution. Therefore, government aims to strengthen all existing local or lower-tier authorities to ensure the proper implementation of decentralisation in the communities.

As planned, the introduction of ICT for smooth operation of the decentralisation programme has been proposed in the NDS1, with proper computerisation in the authorities, efficiency, speed, accuracy and accountability achieved. Furthermore, local authorities are independent of the central governance, as stated by the constitution of the country. The devolution process is also planned appreciating people's rights, hence political power is directly transferred to the provincial and local authorities to facilitate efficient governance and administration.

Among targeted goals are infrastructure development, roads, institutional buildings and standard water and sanitation and services. These are tackled by local authorities through devolution via projects funded by the central government. Participatory planning is initiated through community

engagement in projects and these processes will all be transparent and in line with the then current national projects. The decentralisation of authority by government may induce practical transformation and change, but communities have to fully cooperate and, with the current political and economic atmosphere, there is not much participation that can be achieved as the communities may sense differences in various forms and cooperation will not be achieved.

APPRAISAL OF MONITORING

Monitoring is the constant assessment and restricting of an on-going process to achieve set goals by the end of the process. This concept is implemented to provide a platform for one to check for flows and make possible predictions of the near future. Monitoring in the NDS1 programme has been greatly appreciated as evidenced in the IRBM which purports that monitoring and evaluation factors are important aspects in the programme. This approach will ensure clear and constant consultations on project proposals and will also increase efficiency. The structured monitoring will induce a transparent platform for development. Devolution will then be transparent with the utilisation of resources closely observed for any untoward practices.

The thematic group responsible for monitoring and evaluation for this priority is the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works, with emphasis on zero corruption, excellent service delivery and project banking. Decentralisation will ensure that the concept is implemented correctly and that the desired outcomes are achieved. From another perspective, the monitoring process may not be fully successful due to incompetent resource mobilisation and, most importantly, without an effective anti-corruption attitude, funds may be misappropriated.

The monitoring will also serve as a control system to check for any inefficiencies in all the planned sections of the devolution programme. It will ensure transparency in all local and provincial authorities. Though this system applies to all the other NDS sectors, in the devolution sector monitoring is one of the prerequisites for success as there is too much risk in the utilisation of resources at local level. Monitoring, as mentioned before, will follow the hierarchy as evidenced by the instance where

provincial personnel will constantly check progress reports on its respective districts, whilst district administrators will also check progress on their respective local authorities. This system of devolution in governance will ensure efficacy of the devolution concept.

APPRAISAL OF IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the devolution in the NDS1 basically follows the format mentioned in the planning section. The implementation of the devolution initiative is systematically programmed to follow the blueprint and simultaneously accommodate any adjustments along its course of implementation. The NDS1, as stated in the policy, has been implemented through various strategies, including thematic groups which initiated sectorial consultations for accuracy in focusing on projects. In the devolution sector, the consultations were conducted at provincial level to include the people's decisions in the implementation of the project.

Implementation stages will involve the gradual introduction of the devolution process such as the consultation, approval of the projects and financing by the government. The NDS1 states that this manner of implementation will prevent inconsistency, corruption and inefficiency. After being submitted to the relevant ministries, the implementation of the project proposals then proceeds to the commencement of the projects, with local authorities constantly providing progress reports and attending symposia for further familiarisation with the agenda and to proffer any negative factors. There is evidence that the implementation has met the targeted goal of efficiency. Even so, there are possible negative implications and these have to be closely monitored to avoid failure of the programme.

APPRAISAL OF EVALUATION

The evaluation process within the NDS1 fully facilitates the detection any negative elements in the programme and provides a prediction system for the agenda, as aforementioned. Evaluation, as defined by the Oxford Electronic Dictionary (2021), is the act of ascertaining or fixing value to a certain component, hence in the context of the NDS agenda, the evaluation will account for all its possible strengths and weaknesses and excellently proffer, best adjustments to the weak points.

Evaluation, as stated by the NDS1 (2021), is a mandate that is constantly met in all the NDS1 agendas and is facilitated by thematic groups or bodies responsible for each respective area. Most importantly, the evaluation will closely monitor project stages and evaluate the progress of the projects in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. The evaluation process will ensure that the devolution process is efficiently initiated and all possible anomalies are fished out.

DISCUSSION

The NDS1 is a masterpiece that will determine country's transformation from a lower-income class to a higher one. The 14 priorities set to drive the transformation system are, interconnected and proffer a comprehensive form of development structure, whilst at the same time, they bring about modern technology. From its crafting, the policy, explains the various problems the country is facing; hence, the crafted policies are set at clinically dissecting the issues and proffering the best possible solutions, but highly cautious of any anomalies and possible failures, through monitoring and evaluation.

Through these lenses the NDS becomes a 99.9 % success policy, with all the possible methods of avoiding failure, but this is a mere theoretical view. A literature review of the past policies indicates that most of the programmes never saw light of day, or that resources never made it to the intended destinations (ZIMCDD, 2021). Conscious of this fact, the certainty of the success of this programme becomes questionable. With the current economic conditions and the political, environment, the NDS1 can be one of the many theoretically perfect policies but with poor implementation and, consequently, no development at all.

More so the NDS1 comes at a time when the government also battles with major problems such as the COVID-19 and the natural Cyclone Idai-induced disaster in Chimanimani. With such a load of pressure, the implementation matrix is greatly affected as there is need to adapt to these conditions, hence the success of the programme is minimised, and this needs government to have powerful adaptation responses to these new conditions. Therefore, one can state that the success of the NDS is

highly dependent on the efficiency of the government in all the above-mentioned sectors.

The success of full devolution will ascertain the full, implementation of development, especially in the rural areas through full participation of the communities and local authorities (Conyers, 2003), However, in Zimbabwe the decentralisation, concept has been biased towards wrong targets, and that explains the failure of the devolution initiative.

With the current agenda, the devolution has been implemented in a peculiar form that will prosper or perform well if implemented without biasness, the constant monitoring and evaluation will provide a control system for the devolution, process to be implemented efficiently.

CONCLUSIONS AND OPTIONS

The socio-economic conditions are at a critical point, and there is need for intensive implementation of a model such as the, proposed NDS1. With such a programme, the much needed socio-economic, transformation can be achieved. The first note to make concerns transparency within the ministries and all the authorities that are facilitating, the NDS1. Transparency will induce proper facilitation of resources the government will disburse for the project.

The first method of creating transparency would be to establish an independent board within the NDS1, is responsible for controlling corruption and the use of funds in the system. Although a similar, system already exists within the NDS1, an independent one would involve less conspiracy and nepotism.

Awareness of the structure of the NDS1 should be intensified, especially in the remote countryside, as the current awareness strategy in the NDS1 was initiated before the COVID-19 pandemic, hence the lockdown needed a much-digitalised mode of conveying information to the populace through television and radio broad casts. Even the social media can be used to channel out summarised versions of the national development programme. The awareness will help in educating the populace who are the main stakeholders in the programme as purported by the NDS1.

There is need to have a flexible, revenue stream that will initiate an equal wave of development in all the areas that need development. Revenue streams can be, initiated through local decentralisation of the fiscal system and have local authorities raise certain amounts that are then scheduled into the devolution programme.

The devolution initiative will have to be fully implemented and avoid a situation whereby the programme is made to suit certain conditions. If the devolution agenda is wrongly implemented, the development control and focus is lost, leading to another wasted policy implementation and continuous struggling of the people. In a nutshell, the National Development Strategy is one of the most important policies as it bears ideas to fully bring about development in Zimbabwe, on the same note, the implementation of this programme and its success are highly sensitive and have to be implemented in a way that will guarantee improvements in the social-economic sector.