



# The

# Convenor



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29 JULY 2010

## COPAC Outreach Meeting

### Day 31

#### Mashonaland West

Copac held a public consultation meeting yesterday, the 29<sup>th</sup> of July 2010 at Machamire Business Centre (ward 9) in Makonde district. The meeting was attended by 22 people, 9 men, 9 women and 4 youth. The low attendance was attributed to the fact that the meeting took place in an urban area where people are not susceptible to influence and intimidation by political parties. A monitor who attended the meeting noted that although the number of participants was very low, their contributions were balanced and people articulated the thematic points well. The monitor reported that for the first time since the start of the public consultations, one participant said that judges and the speaker of parliament should not wear wigs if Zimbabweans confess to be a liberated people since the wigs are remnants of the colonial past.

#### Mashonaland Central

At a meeting held at Witchwood farm in Mazoe district, Mashonaland Central province, 381 people attended the meeting, 178 men, 43 youths and 160 women. A Crisis Coalition monitor in Mazoe noted that women were contributing more unlike in other meetings where they were just quiet. However, the monitor said that it is becoming a common feature that an individual requests to make an opening prayer and seeks to influence the flow of the discussions through the prayer. At this particular meeting, the man who gave the prayer "thanked God for giving people land" and said that "people did not want title deeds but 99 year leases". He went on to ask God to "punish those that called for sanctions to be punished with the death penalty". This leading prayer can shape the discussions thereby limiting other divergent views.

Another meeting took place at Belford Estates and 189 people attended. Participation was reported to be very low, only youths dominated the discussions. According to a monitor in the district, the farm where the meeting was held belongs to one of President Mugabe's body guards. Participants were reported to be merely agreeing with what the youths were saying and did not air their own views especially on questions to do with issues labour. The monitor stated that this might have been due to the fact that the owner of the farm was present thus intimidating the people. The monitor also noted that the presence of Retired Colonel Manjengwa also intimidated people.

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