



PRESENTATION OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ZIFA RESTRUCTURING COMMITTEE

MEDIA RELEASE

1. Introduction

In December, 2021, the SRC appointed a restructuring committee to look into the affairs bedeviling football administration in Zimbabwe.

The committee's terms of reference are a matter of public record.

Critically, however, the committee was to commission a forensic audit report, as well as consult widely in compiling its recommendations regarding the state and restructuring of football administration in Zimbabwe.

Mr. Rugare's committee was successful in discharging fully its terms of reference in the foregoing material respects, and for this, the SRC expresses its considerable appreciation to what was an undertaking of national significance.

The ZIFA Restructuring Committee's tenure terminated on 31st December, 2022 in accordance with the provisions of its terms of reference.

2. Forensic Audit Report

The report and its contents are also a matter a matter of public record. The full details thereof are downloadable from the Commission's website.

Board of Commissioners

Chairman Gerald Mlotshwa, Dr Allen Chiura, Colleen de Jong, Gail Van Jaarsveldt, Karen Mutasa, Nigel Munyati, Titus Zvomuya and Sebastain Garikai (Acting Director General)



The SRC awaits ZIFA's response to the same whereafter the necessary corrective actions can be instituted through public agencies such as the Zimbabwe Republic Police and the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission and the Financial Intelligence Unit of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe.

3. Overview

It is readily discernable from the committee's recommendations that the root cause of ZIFA's problems is a deeply flawed and outdated Constitution whose details are unknown to the greater number of its members.

The ZIFA Constitution, because of its flawed nature, allows for the eventual election of persons equally flawed in character and integrity, and lacking in basic management skills. These persons are incapable of separating the affairs of ZIFA from their personal needs and ambitions, financial and otherwise.

It is for this reason that any previous attempts at reform within ZIFA became highly charged and personalized affairs, with incumbent office holders thinking themselves attacked as individuals rather than the organization itself or the office held within ZIFA.

ZIFA was being run as a fiefdom.

This lack of constitutionalism within ZIFA is precisely why football in the country can be held to ransom by a handful of misguided, selfish and criminal individuals.

Without a new Constitution in place, the fortunes of ZIFA and football in Zimbabwe will forever be doomed. No serious reform can ever take place without a constitution that allows the election and appointment of officials who have the interests of football at heart.

These individuals do exist and they do want to participate, whether as officials or sponsors of the game. However, they do not want their reputations, integrity or corporate brands soiled by involving themselves in opaque electoral or procurement processes that are presently best suited for, and taken advantage of, by persons driven by primitive impulses.



4. Stakeholders Views

The Committee consulted widely.

It involved the public and other stakeholders as part of a wider consultative process, during which engagement was sought from a general football audience to obtain insights into the state of football at various levels.

Face to face consultations, the establishment and use of on-line portals for public participation, as well as engagement from football fans in the diaspora were all components of the public hearings that were carried out as part of the broader consultative process.

There was a recurrence of key issues and themes from these consultations as follows:-

4.1 ZIFA Constitution

It was the sentiment of many that despite the existence of a constitution, there was no constitutional observance of the same by ZIFA officials. Absolutely no effort had been made to adapt the constitution to respond to the needs of football in Zimbabwe.

During hearings, it became apparent that some ZIFA stakeholders, including the so-called 'councilors' of ZIFA, had never seen a copy of the association's constitution. These same councilors occupied office without limit of tenure. Some appeared to be semi-literate.

The general view was that ZIFA Congress simply rubber stamped the decisions of the Executive Committee on football matters: as long as they were transported to the bright lights of the city, fed and lodged in comfortable accommodation - with all its temptations - and paid *per diems*, they were happy to cast their vote in favour of their 'blessers'.

Strong sentiment was expressed in regard to banning holders of national office, such as Members of Parliament, from holding office within the structures of ZIFA.

It was noted that beach soccer and futsal were currently not being played with any level of seriousness in Zimbabwe. Their presence in the constitution was the means by which money was syphoned under false pretenses from FIFA, as well as to have 'delegates' at the ZIFA Congress to amass votes during election periods.

Former and current women footballers and administrators felt that the constitution should make provision for TWO Vice – Presidents, with one being female.

4.2 ZIFA Congress

It was the sense of stakeholders that despite congress being ZIFA's highest law-making body, the Executive Committee had, in practice, usurped this authority with the roles reversed: Congress had become subordinate and beholden to the Executive Committee, and ultimately to the association's President.

There were no systems in place, constitutional and otherwise, to assess how well legislators performed their duties in Congress.

Councilors terms were presently unlimited. Indeed, some had occupied office for over two decades without being called to account, let alone endure fresh elective processes.

Beach soccer and futsal, although in virtual recluse countrywide, still had representatives forming a part of the ZIFA assembly where they had voting rights.

There was no cooperation between NAPH, NASH, National Association of Tertiary Institutions Leagues, clubs, academies, schools and the association at national or provincial level. This lack of coordination had a negative impact in harnessing and nurturing football talent through the age group system.

ZIFA financial statements were not made available to the public. During meetings of congress, members were usually

put under pressure to accept the accounts on the promise that FIFA would provide funding with the information made available so long as it appeared to have been approved.

'Uncomfortable' issues were suppressed during these deliberations, with contentious issues being said to "fall under the exclusive domain of the Executive Committee as opposed to congress".

4.3 ZIFA Executive Committee

The Executive Committee was viewed as a law unto itself. It was not accountable to congress. There were no established system of checks and balances against the abuse of power: the story was told of how a former ZIFA President allegedly moved around with signed bank withdrawal slips in his suit jacket.

The ability of the Executive Committee to provide cash incentives and rewards to councilors was one of the ways in which its members could entrench themselves.

In this respect, the apparent call by some councilors to restate officials recalled by congress consequent to their suspension by the SRC was more a cry for cash and other incentives from the Executive Committee, rather than a genuine concern for the future of football in Zimbabwe.

The emergency committee, not representative of women, was an extension of the authority of certain members of the Executive Committee to the deliberate exclusion of others. It incorrectly, and unlawfully, assumed the secretarial functions and managed football on a day-to-day basis, implementing decisions that would normally require the approval of the entire Executive Committee or congress.

It was ZIFA's equivalent of a football cabal.

Owing to the unfettered powers of the ZIFA President, and, conversely, the undefined authority of the General Secretary, the secretariat was in fact beholden to the former, as was the

latter who took the position that only one person, the ZIFA president, could discipline him or remove him from office.

Women's football is not represented in every standing committee of ZIFA. The vast majority of committee members sit on two or more committee, and most are appointed as a reward for campaigning or voting for Executive Committee members.

The Judicial and Appeals Committee was made up of friends and co-workers. Some of these judges are personal lawyers for the Executive Committee their independence and integrity are compromised.

There was expressed a need for the establishment of an effective and independent committee dealing exclusively with gender issues as they relate to women in football, particularly in formulating policies and procedures to safeguard against sexual harassment and other predatory behavior prevalent against women in football.

4.3 Junior Football Development

There is no junior football development program within ZIFA. This is mainly because FIFA and CAF funding meant for grassroots development is diverted to financing operational expenses such as salaries, sitting allowances, per diems for ZIFA members and travel costs associated with the same.

Presently, there is no junior league which should start with Under 9's to Under 18's. ZIFA does not administer school football development programs. There is no player and activity monitoring system.

4.4 Women's Football

There is no supreme body overseeing all levels of the development of women's football at all levels. Leagues are none operational owing to a lack of funding.

Critically, women's football is not involved in FIFA funding applications. When funds are disbursed, they are not under

Women's Football control. As appears in the audit report, funds allocated for this purpose were diverted to fund other operational expenses. Funds such as this should be audited for final recipient to ensure that they have been applied for the purposes intended.

5. Key Recommendations

5.1 ZIFA Constitution

The Constitution must state that the laws of Zimbabwe take precedence over all other rules and regulations of ZIFA. The registration of ZIFA's constitution with the SRC infers this, but the document must be explicit in this respect.

The restructuring committee recommended changes to the ZIFA constitution and provided model provisions for the proposed amendments. This model template relies on the latest FIFA statutes as guidance for a new ZIFA constitution and is informed by the views of the Zimbabwean public.

This draft properly redistributes power within the structures of ZIFA, ensures for more participatory representation, clear definitions, term limits, additional checks and balances against the abuse of power and the elimination of duplicative structures.

It recommends that the constitution should bar public office holders from running for ZIFA office to avoid actual and perceived conflicts of interests, or politicizing the association for personal glory.

Further recommended is the rationalization of the powers of the ZIFA president, the conferring of explicit authority on the General Secretary to manage the day-to-day affairs of ZIFA.

In this latter respect, the much-abused emergency committee is recommended for abolishment as it has been used to circumvent both the secretariat, the Executive Committee and Congress itself.

In so far as office bearers are concerned, the recommendations are that there should be a minimum threshold of qualifications to become an Executive Committee member.

In so far as council members are concerned, there must be a minimum demonstrated understanding of the constitution and regulations to be a ZIFA council member, as well acceptable literacy skills.

5.2 The Warriors and Mighty Warriors

The committee recommended that these national teams should be housed in a structure that receives direct budgetary and administrative support from Government whilst ensuring that FIFA rules are respected in so far as the principle of non-interference is concerned.

5.3 Junior Football

The committee recommended that ZIFA develop a standardized system to rate academy programs and school programs.

There should be developed a national database for all junior players that is functional and easily accessible.

Additionally, ZIFA should develop and support quality leagues and competitions accessible for all ages and skill levels.

5.4 Women's Football

Women should be empowered to manage their own affairs in football. Key to this is allowing them to have direct access to FIFA funding so that it is applied to purposes intended. Women should be included at all levels of the game's administration on a quota system.

5.5 Facilities

ZIFA should be at the forefront, either with FIFA's assistance, or through effective lobbying of Government and local

authorities, of developing facilities that encourage use for football games at a professional and recreational level.

There should be a FIFA rated national training centre. ZIFA village is not fit for purpose.

5.6 Communication & Marketing

ZIFA relies almost exclusively on FIFA and CAF funding for its operations. It was recommended that ZIFA invest in senior business strategy and marketing positions. It should respect and maximize partnerships and retail opportunities and identify new revenue streams. ZIFA should be run as a business, not as a fiefdom or cabal.

5.7 Development of Administrators

Office bearers, administrators and coaches must have minimal CAF and FIFA qualifications and / or training. Coaching standards must be set and regulated.

5.8 Football in Schools

ZIFA should develop a specific strategy as part of a five year plan for fostering football in the school system, especially for girls.

6. Next Steps

The SRC has provided the findings and recommendations of the restructuring committee to the Executive Committee of ZIFA.

It is the strong expectation of the SRC that ZIFA will consider the same for adoption, and in such event, these recommendations will form the basis of a roadmap, with specific time-frames and milestones, for tangible implementation of reforms in football administration.

The roadmap agreed with ZIFA, and signed off in the manner of a term sheet, with SRC will form the basis of a joint approach by the parties to FIFA for endorsement of the same.

Key to this is that any elective congress of ZIFA from grassroots up should take place under the auspices of a new and duly registered constitution that guarantees that elected office bearers are committed to carrying out agreed reforms.

7. Special Acknowledgment

The SRC wishes to extend its sincere appreciation to the ZIFA Restructuring Committee chaired by Blessing Rugare, the other members were Tommy Sithole, Father Gibson Munyoro, Joyce Kapota, Charles Sibanda, Joel Gombera, Brian Moyo, Desmond Ali and Rudo Mugundani.

They have produced detailed findings and recommendations that if properly implemented, will undoubtedly form the basis for the ushering in of a prosperous chapter in our football.

By Order of the Board,



Gerald Nqobile Mlotshwa
CHAIRMAN

25th January, 2023