



# USAID | ZIMBABWE

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## GOVERNING JUSTLY AND DEMOCRATICALLY

### OVERVIEW

#### PROFILE

Date of Independence: 1980  
Population: 8-9 million (2009)  
Languages: English, Shona, Ndebele  
GDP per capita: unavailable  
*Source: U.S. State Department*

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### BACKGROUND

The challenges that face Zimbabwe are numerous, not least of which is a fragile transitional government hobbled by internal power struggles and a general lack of respect for human rights and the rule of law. Since the creation of the transitional government in February 2009, reformers have managed to tame hyperinflation and ease Zimbabwe's economic decline by dollarizing the economy and bringing some transparency to the budget process. Hospitals and schools which were largely shut down in 2008 have reopened, although much rehabilitation is required. The political climate is still uncertain, revenue collected is completely inadequate to fund budget requirements, and the investment climate remains weak.



U.S. assistance in Zimbabwe focuses on promoting the country's transformation from a brutally repressed and deeply impoverished nation to one in which the government respects democratic freedoms and seeks to meet the needs of its people. USAID continues to promote change and provide for those adversely affected by government mismanagement by working with civil society, helping Zimbabwe's democratic forces advance reforms, assisting the recovery of the agriculture sector, and providing much-needed humanitarian assistance.

### PROGRAMS

USAID promotes good governance and accountability, and supports consensus-building activities aimed at promoting peaceful agreement and democratic reform. This includes ensuring civil society participation in national dialogue, building the capacity of local governments, supporting a participatory process to develop a new constitution, strengthening democratic institutions, building the capacity of independent media, and supporting transitional justice programs. USAID programs also promote respect for human rights at all levels of government, and anti-corruption measures are a common thread through all activities.

### RULE OF LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

In the past decade, Zimbabwe has experienced major regression in the area of human rights, leading to a noticeable increase in the number breaches of fundamental rights and freedoms. USAID seeks opportunities for engagement and continues to work with donors to coordinate analysis, policy dialogue, and opportunistic interventions in human rights monitoring, coalition building, and the use of think tanks to engage the security sector. USAID supports human rights monitoring and provides assistance to groups working to document cases of human rights abuse, as well as groups that are undertaking work in reforming laws that restrict rights and liberties.



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## GOOD GOVERNANCE

USAID programs support avenues for meaningful public participation and legislative oversight; strengthen reform-minded components of the public-sector executive function; and provide capacity building and technical assistance to local government with the goal of improving accountability, service delivery, and responsiveness to citizen needs. The increased number of democratic parliamentarians in the House of Assembly has created opportunities to support law reforms and the lawmaking process in Parliament through assistance to portfolio committees, the Speaker's Office, and the Parliament Select Committee. USAID hopes to improve the ability of reformists within the government to undertake their responsibilities and deliver results to the people of Zimbabwe, strengthen citizen participation in public processes and ensure civil society is able to hold government accountable for legal reforms, service delivery, and fiscal decisions.

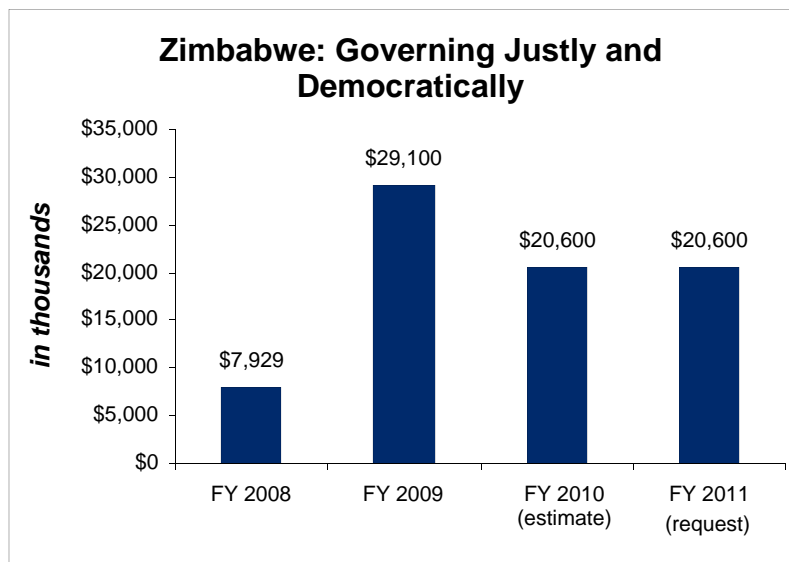
## POLITICAL COMPETITION AND CONSENSUS BUILDING

Zimbabwe continues to face institutional challenges and a deficit in political will to expand the arena for political competition and consensus building. The former ruling party's political policies and practices towards transparent and open competition have largely remained restrictive. One of USAID's main focuses is to help Zimbabweans develop stronger formal mechanisms to express their aspirations through improved democratic competition and the capacity for consensus building.

## CIVIL SOCIETY

With the installation of the transitional government, Zimbabwean civil society has an opportunity to play an important role in soliciting public input and creating debate on issues of national interest, particularly in relation to the formulation of the new constitution, national elections, and legislative reforms. Yet, without improvements in media freedom, civil society cannot effectively participate in public debate in an informed way. Therefore, USAID supports civil society organization training in membership recruitment, building coalitions, campaign development, strategy formulation, communications, and advocacy, and assists independent radio stations and community newspapers to increase the coverage of independent news throughout the country.

## FUNDING



On behalf of the American people, the U.S. government has provided humanitarian assistance and economic development to those in need around the world since the Marshall Plan.