

[Print this story](#) | [Close window](#)

Mail & Guardian online

www.mg.co.za

Steps to help Zim, but only after Mugabe

Todd Moss

03 May 2007 01:14

Any economic recovery strategy in Zimbabwe will have to be driven by Zimbabweans, but will require international support, spanning the full range of aid, debt relief, and private finance. Here are five constructive steps that the international community should take.

1. Help formulate a practical economic recovery strategy. The list of needs will be long, so devising a realistic set of priorities and a sensible division of labour among the many partners will be essential to success.
2. Provide coordinated assistance upfront. A key lesson from other countries is the necessity of a strong, assertive national body to corral multiple donors and ensure accountability (and be prepared to say no when necessary).

At the same time, as soon as the transition is clearly under way, the World Bank should immediately convene a consultative group to elicit multi-year pledges from the key contributors. Most funds could go into a donor pool -- called something like the Zimbabwe Reconstruction Trust Fund -- in order to facilitate matching official inflows to the agreed strategy. Quickly normalising relations with the International Monetary Fund will also allow debt restructuring talks to begin.

3. Quickly unleash the power of the private sector. A real recovery will have to go beyond public institutions and revive the country's once-vibrant industries. The new government will need to understand and fix the barriers faced by firms trying to rebound (and resist the temptation to overly intervene). Donors should also think about sponsoring a private investment conference early on to encourage foreign capital inflows.
4. Facilitate an orderly return of the diaspora. A massive pool of capital and talent is sitting in Johannesburg, waiting to come home. Many Zimbabweans in Australia, Europe or America will also want to return home, but may want to keep their options open. Countries hosting them now should ensure that immigration and asylum laws are not a barrier to tapping the benefits of this vital group.
5. Perhaps most importantly, promote a new approach to land use. Zimbabwe's still-unresolved land injustices have been a source of both real grievance and a convenient excuse for failure and theft. A transparent land audit and logical resettlement scheme could go far in rebuilding the once-proud farming sector.

*Todd Moss is a senior fellow at the Centre for Global Development, an independent research institute in Washington, DC. He is the co-author of *After Mugabe: Applying Post-Conflict Recovery Lessons to Zimbabwe*, *Africa Policy Journal*, Harvard University, 2006*