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Our programming and outreach activities during the course of 2018 was informed by our 2017-2019 Strategic Plan.

The strategic plan seeks to consolidate gains of the past; maintain the momentum; explore opportunities for intervention and thereby strengthen the organisation’s brand as a pioneer and leader in defence of freedom of expression, access to information, media freedom and privacy of communication.

During the year under review, we thus heightened our lobby and advocacy work on Internet Governance and Regulation and Media Law and Policy Reforms, stressing the need for free expression online, data protection and privacy. On the media law reforms front, we continued with our push for the repealing and alignment of laws such as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and Broadcasting Services Act (BSA) among others, with the 2013 Constitution.

The scaling of our work on Internet Governance and Regulation came on the backdrop of the proposed Cybercrimes and Cybersecurity laws – Alignment of Laws to the Constitution, Legal Support and Capacity Building of Media and Promoting Pluralism in Broadcasting and Digital Migration.

In doing this we were mindful of the need to vastly improve MISA Zimbabwe’s brand visibility. In this regard deliberate efforts were made to leverage on online tools and platforms at the disposal of the organisation thus propelling MISA Zimbabwe’s as the lead defender of Zimbabweans’ basic liberties.

We are happy to report that we managed to achieve the set targets during the course of 2018 as informed and underpinned by our Strategic Plan. These milestones are additional feathers to MISA Zimbabwe’s achievements which come on the back of its public-record success stories over the years which culminated in:

- Inclusion of Section 61 and 62 in the constitution as explicit guarantees for media freedom, freedom of expression and access to information.
- Establishment of Media Centre, an organisation that offers secure and well equipped working space for journalists, citizen journalists and civil society.
- Establishment of the Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ) as a self-regulatory body
- Adoption of MISA positions and recommendations on media law reforms and transformation of ZBC in the government sanctioned Information and Media Panel of Inquiry (IMPI) process.
- Constitutional ruling against criminal defamation
- Establishment of community radio initiatives to push for the still to be licensed community radio stations.
- Establishment of Media Lawyers Network as a rapid legal response mechanism to journalists and media workers arrested or detained during the course of the lawful professional duties.
- Parliamentary motions on repeal of AIPPA and BSA.
- Successful licensing of the first ever commercial radio stations.
Operational Context

Zimbabwe held its 2018 elections on 30 July this year against the backdrop of previously contested outcomes amid allegations of rigging and manipulation of the results which were continuously won by former president Robert Mugabe since independence in 1980.

The 30 July elections were thus significant in that Mugabe was not a factor in these elections following his removal in a military coup in November 2017. Equally significant was that his long standing nemesis, former Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai, for the first time since 2000, did not contest in the 2018 elections. Tsvangirai, who was the leader of the MDC-T since its formation in 1999, succumbed to cancer of the colon in April 2018.

The absence of the two protagonists undoubtedly changed the complexion of the country’s politics as his successor Emmerson Mnangagwa, who stood as the Zanu PF presidential candidate, promised to break with Mugabe’s intransigence politics.

In his inauguration speech on 24 November 2017 following Mugabe’s ouster President Mnangagwa, said he would ensure the pillars of democracy are strengthened and respected in Zimbabwe.

This raised hope that he would move with speed and implement outstanding socio-economic and political reforms ahead of the 2018 elections. It is common cause that the elections came without implementation of the envisaged reforms.

Worse still, the outcome of the presidential elections, was yet again disputed with the MDC-Alliance led by Nelson Chamisa mounting a constitutional court challenge. The Constitutional Court, however, upheld President Mnangagwa’s slim victory over Chamisa.

The elections were poignant as they were supposed to cleanse Zimbabwe of its previously disputed election results and open the country’s socio-economic and political democratic space and retention of international goodwill conducive to foreign direct investments.

Regrettably as 2018 came to a close, a year after President Mnangagwa’s post-coup leadership and five months after
the July elections, the outstanding reforms were still to be implemented.

Laws such as the discredited Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), used to license and regulate the media; the Official Secrets Act (OSA), to broadly embargo information held by public bodies and the Broadcasting Services Act (BSA), to hinder free establishment of private radio stations, remained entrenched in the country’s statutes.

Other restrictive laws include the Public Order and Security Act, Censorship and Entertainment Controls Act (CECA), and the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act. This should also be viewed against the government’s accelerated efforts to introduce the cybercrime laws, generally perceived as intended to curb free speech online.

These laws essentially curtail citizens’ right to freedom of assembly and association, demonstrate and petition, including the right to freedom of conscience, as provided for by Sections 58, 59 and 60 of the Constitution as well as Sections 61 and 62 which protect the right to free expression, media freedom and access to information. Encouraging though is President Emmerson Mnangagwa in his State of the Nation Address to the 9th Parliament of Zimbabwe, singled out AIPPA and BSA as among the laws that will be tabled for amendment.

In addition, the Ministry of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services, on 7-8 December 2018, convened a multi-stakeholder consultative conference to determine the shape and form that the longstanding media law and policy reforms process would take.

Our interventions were thus informed by these key events and developments as they obtained and manifested during the year under review in line with our 2017-2019 Strategic Plan.

In line with the above-mentioned Strategic Plan and its core thrusts, our programming was thus organised into five programme areas which are:

- **Campaign for Freedom of Expression and the Right to Information** - promotes legal reform and the introduction of new legislation to improve the protection and implementation of media freedom and the right to information.

- **Media Freedom Monitoring** - monitors media freedom violations and developments and issues action alerts. Provides MISA with an important advocacy platform.

- **Campaign for Broadcasting Diversity** - promotes an open system of broadcasting licensing, editorial independence and the introduction of a three-tier system of broadcasting comprising public, commercial and community broadcasting.

- **Media Support** - aims to promote and enhance media accountability and professionalism. Seeks to create awareness of the need for a code of ethics and self-regulatory bodies. Also promotes professionalism in the media through media training initiatives.

- **Legal Support** - Provide funds for legal assistance to media practitioners and institutions with the aim of protecting freedom of expression.
MISA Zimbabwe forged ahead with its mission to consolidate work on Internet Governance and regulation. In line with this mission, the organisation held the Internet Governance Roundtable Conference on 30 April 2018 that ran under the theme: *Formulating Internet Policy in Changing Times*.

The roundtable discussion focused on possible Internet regulation policies that Zimbabwe was most likely to embark on during 2018. It afforded civil society actors the opportunity to strategise on possible policy developments.

The second major event that MISA Zimbabwe held was the Multi-Stakeholder Internet Governance Forum held on 27 November 2018. It ran under the theme: *Ensuring a Safe Internet for All*. The multi-stakeholder Forum brought together civil society actors, government representatives, members of Parliament and the police to discuss Internet Governance in Zimbabwe.

MISA Zimbabwe’s outstanding lobby work in that regard and as modelled in the context of multi-stakeholder Internet Governance on human rights principles, saw the organisation being appointed to the Southern African Development Community Internet Governance Forum (SADC-IGF) Multi-stakeholder Steering Committee.

This appointment is validation of MISA Zimbabwe’s sterling work in the local Internet Governance space and provides an immense opportunity for the organisation to expand its Internet Governance foray into the region.
During the year under review MISA Zimbabwe escalated its access to information campaign through the production of community newsletters and resuscitation of its Votewatch263 Portal.

This entailed leveraging on alternative community media and online platforms as part of efforts to mobilise and enhance citizen participation in governance issues and more so in the context of the country’s 2018 elections held on 30 July.

**Newsletters**

The newsletters were produced by networks of community newsletters activists and distributed in 20 marginalised communities where there is limited access to mainstream media. Access to information in Zimbabwe’s remote area is generally limited due to lack of electricity. This followed capacity trainings of the network of community newsletters to produce their own local news content.

Targeted provincial marginalised community based information groups were in Lalapanzi, Zhombe, Gokwe and Zvishavane (Midlands Province), Zaka and Bikita in Masvingo Province and Harare’s dormitory town of Chitungwiza.

Murehwa, Goromonzi, Mutoko and Hwedza in Mashonaland East. Kariba, Chinhoyi, Hurungwe and Mhondoro in Mashonaland West and Lupane and Bubi in Matabeleland North. In Manicaialand, areas covered were Chipinge, Mutare and Buhera.

Following these interventions, this assisted in enhancing transparency and credibility through citizen participation in monitoring election processes thereby debunking misleading information. The voices of women and youth were amplified as they were quoted in the newsletters as sources of news.

Contact details of key institutions such as the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission and Heal Zimbabwe Trust, provided through the newsletters, assisted members of the communities to report human rights violations in their respective areas. The exposure of traditional leaders (chiefs), who were demanding to see voter registration slips from members of their communities, resulted in some of them desisting from the practice.

**Votewatch263**

Relaunched ahead of Zimbabwe’s 2018 elections, the project was aimed at ensuring citizens participated in monitoring the electoral process and sharing their experiences, which is critical in enhancing transparency in the electoral process.

The portal which served as the information hub where stories and information was uploaded, was consolidated by leveraging on new media platforms: Facebook and Twitter to ensure information reached audiences in possession of a mobile phone.

Target audience were therefore, able to access either Facebook (which has reasonably cheap data bundles in comparison to normal data rates in Zimbabwe) and Twitter.

With content coming in from the country’s 10 provinces, the Votewatch263 platform generated 575 stories from January 2018 to August 2018 with a growth rate of 124% in comparison to 2013 when 256 articles were written during the same period highlighting issues that were not discussed in the mainstream media.

Through partnerships with the Election Resource Centre and Gender & Media Connect, contributors to the portal and the generality of citizens, were able to receive real-time updates on electoral related issues during the pre-election and post-election period.
Media Law Reforms

As highlighted earlier in this report, MISA Zimbabwe maintained its pressure on government to implement outstanding media law reforms since the coming into being of the 2013 Constitution with its explicit provisions on freedom of expression, media freedom and access to information, among other progressive provisions in the Bill of Rights.

The organisation raised the decibels in its lobby against the continued existence and application of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), calling for its repeal and replacement with at least three distinct Acts that would focus on Data Privacy, Access to Information and the Zimbabwe Media Commission.

This culminated in the Multi-Stakeholder consultative workshop on the realignment of media laws which was facilitated by the Ministry of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting. During that meeting, the Permanent Secretary for Information, Publicity and Broadcasting, Nick Mangwana, indicated that government was working on three Bills to replace AIPPA namely:

- Freedom of Information Bill
- Information/ Data Protection Bill
- Zimbabwe Media Commission Bill

MISA Zimbabwe’s position papers and opinion pieces generated and shared during the year under review, had a bearing in the government initiating the consultative process and its now public record stance on the need to do away with AIPPA.

Elections and Safety Guidelines Workshops

Training workshops on Elections, Safety and Security were conducted in Gweru, Bulawayo, Masvingo, Mutare, Gwanda, Chinhoyi and Harare to equip Zimbabwean journalists with safety and security skills as well as guidelines on covering the 2018 elections in a professional manner as dictated by the ethics of the profession.

The training workshops came on the backdrop of challenges that journalists face during elections, which include violence, confiscation of their equipment, beatings by political activists and law enforcement agents in the course of their duties. The trainings also covered securing of journalists’ electronic correspondence and data storage. This was also informed by the fact that cases involving media freedom violations tend to spike during election time.

Media/Police Relations

National Police Spokesperson, Senior Assistant Commissioner Charity Charamba attended the Gweru, Bulawayo and Harare workshops where she made a presentation on the role of the police in ensuring a safe environment for journalists.
The Masvingo and Mutare meetings were addressed by her deputy, Chief Superintendent Paul Nyathi.

Presentations by the police came on the backdrop of the meeting between The Zimbabwe Republic Police and representatives of media organisations led by MISA Zimbabwe Trustee Cris Chinaka on 20 December 2017 in Harare. The police delegation was led by Senior Assistant Commissioner Charity Charamba.

The meeting agreed on proposed resolutions and action plans aimed at improving the professional working relationship between the media and the police through agreed work plans and timeframes for ease of monitoring of progress. The meeting agreed on a raft of actions to secure a safe and conducive working environment for journalists.

The December meeting was a follow-up to a similar ground-breaking engagement held in September 2016 on the backdrop of assaults of journalists during the course of their duties, confiscation of cameras and deletion of video clips by the police thereby souring relations between the two parties.

It is in that context that MISA Zimbabwe invited the police to make presentations and interact with the media as part of efforts at improving relations between the two parties and secure a safe working environment for journalists.

In addition, MISA Zimbabwe also produced a handbook: Reporting Elections & Safety Guidelines, as further reference material as well as media jackets for ease of identification of journalists on duty.

**Impact**

No local journalist was arrested or assaulted (by the police) during the 2018 election period and more-so, during the election-related demonstrations that rocked Harare on 1 August 2018. Fundamentally, none of the journalists trained by MISA Zimbabwe, were among the 13 cases involving media freedom violations that were recorded during the election period. This is directly attributable to improved relations between the media and the police following MISA Zimbabwe’s engagements with the Zimbabwe Republic Police.

However, one foreign journalist Joseph Cotterill, was shoved with a rifle butt by a member of the riot police when the police tried to block an MDC-Alliance election-related press conference at a local hotel in Harare on 3 August 2018.

The other three cases involved the assault of local and foreign journalists (none of them trained by MISA Zimbabwe), by the military during the violent demonstrations in Harare on 1 August 2018.
Anecdotes

Pretty Chavango, freelance journalist
The media jacket has helped mainly in terms of visibility (and identification as a journalist).

During political rallies the jacket helped a lot in gaining respect from the different political supporters and uniformed forces.

Watmore Makokoba, freelance journalist
The MISA Media Jacket is our security shield in hostile environments. Apart from the accreditation card, the media jacket is also a form of identity. During violent protests as journalists we executed our duties safely as we were easily identifiable by our media jackets.

JournoSOS Panic Button

In the past, journalists that were arrested, detained or attacked during their duties did not have the means to speedily communicate their arrest or detention. MISA Zimbabwe therefore, developed two mobile phone Apps to promote the speedy notification of violations against journalists.

The first Application is the JournoSOS App. This App is used to directly get in touch with MISA Zimbabwe staff responsible for administering the Media Defence Fund. Journalists and media practitioners who are harassed, attacked or arrested in the field can notify MISA Zimbabwe of any violations by pressing a set button on the App. The App records the location and nature of the media rights violation.

The second Application is the MISA Zimbabwe Panic Button. This App is a panic App that connects the media practitioner with a number of pre-selected contacts. When the media practitioner is in a dangerous situation, pressing the volume and power buttons on their phone in a predetermined sequence will automatically send out an SOS SMS message to pre-selected contacts in that media practitioner’s phone. This App connects the media practitioner to contacts who are able to come to the media practitioner’s aid in cases of emergency.

At least 100 people downloaded the Applications following their launch ahead of the July 2018 Elections.
In the course of 2018, MISA Zimbabwe issued 39 Alerts. Alerts are communications that outline the various forms of media freedom violations recorded by the organisation.

Media Defence

MISA Zimbabwe assisted 13 journalists with legal and emergency services. This included journalists from both private and State owned media houses. The most prominent case involved NewsDay journalist Blessed Mhlanga who was assaulted during a live studio programme by then Deputy Minister of Finance, Terrence Mukupe. MISA Zimbabwe assisted Mhlanga to recover his smartphone from Mukupe. The Legal Defence Fund was also used to petition the Constitutional Court for the live coverage of the presidential elections results challenge initiated by the MDC-Alliance.

Regional Footprints

MISA Zimbabwe’s work on the digital rights front extended beyond Zimbabwe’s borders and into the region. The organisation’s regional impact was validated when MISA Zimbabwe was appointed to the coordinating committee of the Southern African Development Community’s Internet Governance Forum (SADC-IGF). In addition, MISA Zimbabwe took a lead in formulating a digital rights campaign that will see MISA chapters in Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe working together on raising awareness on digital rights issues that are of regional interest.

Global Footprints

MISA Zimbabwe’s contribution to the digital rights discourse was evidenced by its participation in global meetings such as the Forum on Internet Freedom in Africa, the Internet Freedom Festival, the Internet Governance Forum, and RightsCon. These are internationally recognised platforms aimed at promoting and protecting digital rights. MISA Zimbabwe’s participation at these platforms meant that the Zimbabwean perspective was presented and also acknowledged on the world stage.

Outlook/projections 2019

• Maintain momentum and pressure on repeal of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and Broadcasting Services Act (BSA): #AIPPAMustFall! #BSAMustFall!
• Maintain an alliance-based approach in advocacy for media freedom and protection of citizens rights to free expression and access to information.
• Increase and maintain pressure on the urgent need for transformation of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) into a truly independent public broadcaster.
• Government and its security arms, as well as political parties should prioritise the safety of journalists.
• Demand and push for an end to impunity on crimes and violence against journalists.
• Engage the military in view of the media violations that occurred in Harare on the 1st of August 2018.
• Maintain relations and engagements with the Zimbabwe Republic Police in implementing the December 2017 media/police resolutions.
• Urge media training institutions to fine-tune journalism training curriculums to suit industry and market needs.
• Promote the participation of women in decision making positions in the media industry and ensure that they are remunerated on the same scales as their male counterparts.
MISA Zimbabwe National Director Tabani Moyo, presenting a paper on Media and Content issues at the Southern Africa Internet Governance Forum (SAIGF) conference in Durban from the 28th to 29th November 2018

Participants at the 2018 SAIGF, Durban, South Africa.
Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe representative, Tichaफ Mujuru, (with microphone) addressing delegates at the Multi-Stakeholders Internet Governance Forum at the Cresta Lodge in Harare.

MISA Zimbabwe National Director Tabani Moyo (left) at the end of an engagement meeting with SADC Parliamentary Forum election observer mission.
Zimbabwe Republic Police Assistant Commissioner, Paul Nyathi, speaking on police interventions towards curbing cybercrimes during the Multi-Stakeholders Internet Governance Forum at the Cresta Lodge in Harare.

Chairperson of Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Information Communication Technology and Cyber Security, Hon Chalton Hwende delivering keynote address during the Internet Governance Forum.

Keynote address by Special Advisor to the President Christopher Mutsangwa, at the MISA Zimbabwe 2018 World Press Freedom Day Breakfast meeting.
Zimbabwe Internet Governance Forum (ZIGF), Chairperson, Cade Zvavanjanja, delivering his presentation on complexity of cybersecurity.