

The Context of Inter-Governmental Relations in Zimbabwe Reflections from the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment Number 20 Of 2013

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Abstract: *Zimbabwe is politically and constitutionally a unitary, democratic and sovereign state with a three tier governmental structure: national government; provincial and metropolitan councils, and local government (rural district councils and various types of urban councils) according to the Constitution [Amendment No. 20] of 2013. This paper explores the composition, structure and the legal basis of the three tiers of government. Diagrammatic illustrations were used to depict these tiers more elaborately, highlighting focal points of power, authority, accountability and responsibility and how the system is synergised and synchronised from the national to the lower levels. Brief historical reviews are additionally used to locate the transformation of these structures through the vicissitudes of colonial discriminatory and racist structures to post independent African government supposedly modelled to dismantle the colonial system with fair, impartial and equitable structures established on the basis of human rights, improved access for all with important non racist, non ethnic codes and disregarding colour or creed.*

IGR and cooperative government: A conceptual framework.

In its most elementary context, the elasticity of the term IGR can be conveniently located in Anderson's (1960:3) definition as, 'an important body of activities or interactions occurring between governmental units of all types and levels'. Wright (1988) concurred with Anderson's (1960) definition but further reinforced the centrality of interactions among various institutions at different levels in order to promote coherence, coexistence and cooperation. Cameron (1994) gave a geographical jurisdictional perspective of IGR defining it as the geographical delineation of powers among the distinct spheres of government in a government system. The division of powers implies the uniqueness and independence of different levels of government in the intergovernmental domain. To Elazar (1987), the concept is not a replacement of historical concepts as federalism and unitarism, but a supplement allowing for the growing realities of politics and administration as governments have expanded. According to Opeskin (1998), the term IGR simply refers to relations between central, regional and local governments that facilitate the realisation of common objectives through cooperation. A summation of the conceptual elasticity of IGR however reflects that it is concerned with interactions and relations of various levels of government, influenced largely by the macro political system, socio-economic and geo-political diversities and how these can be harnessed to promote cooperation and integration without compromising their autonomy.

National government

The national government of Zimbabwe is the central authority of the country and the first tier. It is made up of three arms: the executive authority, the legislature and the judiciary. This section shall explore the horizontal diffusion of authority and separation of power among the three arms of government as noted above and vertical influence of the three arms on the development and operations of sub national tiers of government

The legislature

Section 116 of the Constitution vests the legislative authority of Zimbabwe in the legislature which shall comprise of parliament plus the president of the nation. The structure and exercise of legislative authority and the delegation of legislative authority is provided in part 5 of the Constitution. In terms of this Constitution, the legislature of Zimbabwe consists of:

- (a) a Head of State and
- (b) a bicameral Chamber 'Parliament' comprising
 - The 80 member Senate – an upper house which is made up of elected senators, members appointed on the basis of proportional representation, and traditional chiefs chosen by the council of chiefs.