

THE YEAR 2014: AN ERA OF UNFORGETTABLE AND UNRELENTING POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC TURMOIL IN ZIMBABWE (2014-15)

Silas Luthingo Rusvingo

Accounting and Information Department, Faculty of Commerce

Great Zimbabwe University, Masvingo, Zimbabwe

srusvingo@yahoo.com

Abstract

The aim of this Paper authored so early in 2015 is to carry out a comprehensive review in hindsight of the year 2014 under the following subheadings. Under the first discussion headlined “Year 2014: An annus horribilis” the era of unforgettable and unrelenting political and economic hardship is given a comprehensive review by Dumisani (2014-15) of the Zimbabwe Independent. After him comes Muckracker (2014-15) who also looks at the same era but under a different theme headlined “Another wasted year as economy screams.” And finally Muronzi (2014-15) takes over the discussion of the same era but under a different theme headlined “The good, the bad and ugly of 2014.” In keeping with his tradition the Author will wrap up the discourse with a Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation.

Keywords: Political, Economic, Turmoil, Zimbabwe, Review

INTRODUCTION

The name of January on the calendar of every year to mark the end of one year and the beginning of another year is named after Janus an ancient Roman god. Janus is, according to Roman religion and mythology the god of beginnings and transitions. He presides over gates, doors, doorways, passages and endings. He is depicted as having two faces since he looks to the future and the past. It is timely to remind ourselves of this Roman myth as we enter the New Year called 2015. One of Janus’s faces is looking back at 2014 while the other is looking ahead to 2015.

The backward looking face is obviously very depressed since there is very little to celebrate in the year gone by. It began badly as Zimbabweans began to see that the promises of upliftment they had been given by ZANU PF (Zimbabwe African National Union formed in 1977), the eventual winner of the harmonized 31 July 2013 elections would remain pies in the sky and would never come to pass. The promise of 2 million jobs was as certain as death after life that it was not going to be fulfilled. Instead several thousand people were going to lose their jobs and therefore their sources of livelihood as the year 2014 wore on. This time last year i.e. January of 2014 dozens of factories shut down during Christmas and New Year end of year break never to open again. The few and rare successes achieved against all odds during the short life Inclusive Government (2009 – 13) were quickly reversed as the clueless and paranoid ruling ZANU PF threw caution to the wind and dismally failed to define clearly its policies, particularly the investor spooking Indigenization law seen by many in and around the country as the single most intractable law hindering foreign direct investment (fdi) in a financially hamstrung Zimbabwe. His Excellence President Mugabe and his cohort of self-serving cabinet ministers sang from different hymn books throughout the year 2014. He then regressed to the highly racist thinking of the turn of the millennium when he caused the large scale expropriation of farms owned by whites and parceled them to his cronies who know next to nothing about commercial farming to ensure food security for the country where agriculture was once upon a time its mainstay. Last year in 2014, His Excellence President Mugabe urged his renegade and lawless supporters to unceremoniously chase the remaining white farmers away from their land without compensation in a show of disrespect for properly rights in this modern world of increasing complexity. *Mwari ne Vadzimu venyika ino dai marambidza!* (Meaning the Almighty God and the Country's Ancestral spirits please forbid!) (Madanhire 2014).

Some hope though was raised when His Excellence President Mugabe apparently signed “mega deals with his eastern allies namely China and Russia, in which the two countries promised to pour billions of US dollars in new foreign direct investment (fdi) in a cash starved Zimbabwe. But the internecine squabbles that haunted the ruling party for the better half of the year 2014 must surely have affected the two countries' enthusiasm to invest. Russia also began to experience its peculiar problems which have seen its economy plummet. It might not make political and economic sense for it to release the promised US\$3 billion to Zimbabwe any time soon. The infighting in ZANU PF did not end as anticipated with the party congress early in December 2014. Instead it has developed new dimensions that make it even more complex. In the face of this fdi from the East is certainly unlikely to happen at the scale it was hoped it would. But the greatest casualties of all these are the common people who erroneously placed all their hopes on the ruling ZANU PF in giving it a resounding victory in the 31 July 2013

harmonized elections. Not only are more of Zimbabweans without jobs looking forward but also their children face an even bleaker future. And Janus's second face which is looking to the New Year 2015, is anguished and is creased with despair, disillusionment and pessimism for there seems to be no new beginning or transition in the making. The year 2014 for Zimbabwe was indeed a tragicomedy – where in vernacular Shona we say *Mwana atsva kudumbu mai vatsva kumusana* (meaning a double tragedy of a mother with a baby strapped on her back both perishing in a fire accident (Madanhire 2014).

So much about the long ignition to the discourse in this Paper. Coming your way next is the statement on the relevant and related Literature Review and Research Methodology to expose the Research findings in this Paper.

STATEMENT ON THE RELATED LITERATURE & RESEARCH APPROACH

In order to expose the unbiased Research findings the Author made a bee line to the private print media for strategic reasons. The private print media in Zimbabwe and in particular in the Harare region comprise the dailies which are The Newsday, The Daily News and the Zimbabwe Mail. On weeklies the Standard sister to the Newsday, the Zimbabwe Independent and The Financial Gazette rule the roost. The editorial policy of the private print media is to state facts and figures as they are on the ground without fear, favor or prejudice. Whereas the government owned print media such as the daily Herald and the weekly Sunday Mail are found of stating propaganda which is what the government wants to hear and not the truth which the people want to be told. For this reason the public flock to the private media at the expense of the public and government owned media for want of a more user friendly editorial policy. And, without much ado the Author called upon Dumisani (2014-15) whose story was relevant and related to the topic under discussion in this Paper. Details on his story coming your way in just a moment in case you wanted to go away.

Year 2014: An annus horribilis (Dumisani 2014-15)

The discussion in retrospect of the year 2014 would be far from complete without a mention of the much hyped Tokwe-Mukosi floods disaster. The year 2014 best remembered for its great adversity and misfortune unfolded as below:

- The Tokwe-Mukosi floods disaster involving the haphazard relocation of 20 000 families from the flooded river basin to Chingwizi Transit camp in Mwenezi district.
- Poor service delivery long dismissed as having gone to the dogs – erratic water and electricity supplies, potholed and rugged roads as well as horrific road accidents. Burst

water and sewer pipes, contaminated water and messing up of towns and cities pavements.

- Sex scandals involving church leadership – read RGM End Time Message church leader Robert Martin Gumbura. Charged and convicted of raping four of his female congregants, Robert Martin Gumbura was sentenced to an effective 40 years in jail without the option of a fine.
- Alarming levels of corruption countrywide e.g. former Vice President Joyce Mujuru allegedly conniving with her political allies to poison and assassinate His Excellence President Mugabe so that they would remove him from power by whatever foul means.
- Economic tailspin – deflation which is the opposite of hyperinflation which financially ruined Zimbabwe in the unforgettable 2000-8 era. Hyperinflation was reported at 500 billion % before the timely intervention of the Unity Government of 2009 – 13 who introduced a basket of foreign currencies to replace the discredited Zimbabwe dollar currency, dropping capacity utilization 39.6% in 2013 down to 36.3% in 2014 the year of tragicomedy, falling production and low aggregate demand, company closures, job losses, soaring unemployment, humiliating poverty and the attendant social ills, vicious spiral of negative developments including but not limited to struggling banks, falling profits reported by a collapsing commerce and industry, bankruptcies, shutting down of factories, shrinking revenues and incomes, budget overruns, fiscal crisis and increasing default on loans by companies and individuals.
- Another sad chapter under the economic tailspin was the shocking salaries reported in the country's poorly governed parastatals sector. The IMF visits to Zimbabwe on a failed mission to douse the economic flames enveloping the nation in unrelenting political and economic turmoil, Chinese and Russian mega deals signed in September 2014 or thereabout but abandoned on the sad news of internecine squabbles in the ruling ZANU PF party which intensified towards the beginning of the Party congress in early December 2014.
- On the flip side of the year of tragicomedy was the reported British business delegation trip to Harare, the first in nearly 20 years. And the removal of the punitive economic sanctions brought a sigh of relief to the ZANU PF political leadership incessant crying and mourning to have them lifted without terms and conditions applying.
- On political turmoil - Elton Mangoma shock letter to Morgan Tsvangirai, founding President of the original MDC (Movement for Democratic Change in Zimbabwe - formed in 1999 from civic society groups such as Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union,

Zimbabwe National Student Union, National Constitutional Assembly, to mention just a few) and now the MDC-T, the MDC-T's second split in less than 10 years and Tendai Biti MDC Renewal Team, the MDC-T congress in October 2014 which came to pass as a non-event, the popular Nelson Chamisa surprise defeat at MDC-T's power games at the said Party congress, and the ZANU PF fierce factional and succession power struggles and the concomitant political drama – read the venomous name – calling character assassinations ruthless in nature and posturing, toppling and murder plots, ruthless purges and former Vice President Joice Mujuru cruel fate; the opposite being the surprise elevation of Acting President Emmerson Munangagwa and his co-deputy Phelekezela Mphoko (Dumisani 2014 – 15).

- A paranoid ZANU PF government at sea over how to tackle the economic challenges facing the nation after suspiciously manipulating and brazenly stealing the 31 July 2013 harmonized elections held under conditions synonymous with sexual harassment like others before, and yet unable to honour its ridiculous and hyperbolic electoral promises which include falsely creating value of US\$7.3 billion from the indigenization of 1138 companies judgementally sampled across 14 key sectors of the economy and unlocking over U\$1.8 trillion from moribund state enterprises, US\$2 billion to recapitalize Angribank, US\$3 billion for IDCZ., US\$2 billion for the rehabilitation of the extensively destroyed and damaged infrastructure, US\$300 million for Sedco, two million jobs, average growth rate of 9% by 2018, 250 000 low income housing units, 1250 public houses and buildings, 2500 shell factories, vendor market stalls, 310 clinics, 300 schools and building a new parliament complex (Dumisani 2014-15).
- And of course, His Excellence President Mugabe and his wife, now renamed game changer in ZANU PF, Dr Grace Mugabe – their egocentric and self-serving rhetoric, hypocrisy and dishonesty, endless gallivanting and holidaying in the Far East while the economy and country burns, Mazowe land seizures to expand the first family's business interests in the Mazowe District and obsession with power for self preservation and to protect family and personal interests (Dumisani 2014-15).
- Alongside many other significant and dramatic events not mentioned elsewhere in this Paper so far, these are some of the sordid happenings, activities and trials and tribulations which dominated the year of tragicomedy in Zimbabwe in 2014.
- As we go through the bleak festive season shorn of any festive spirit and close the year, renamed *annus horribilis* in the Latin language, it is notable beyond any doubt that 2014 was a year of great adversity or misfortune: a disastrous year in many respects,. In the Latin language, as reported above there is a phrase to aptly describe such a year: *annus*

horribilis as opposed to *annus mirabilis* - a remarkable or auspicious year. (Dumisani 2014-15).

- The year 2014 started as the previous 2013 had ended – with depressing, devastating and bad news. Thousands of villagers in Masvingo Province were forced to evacuate the flood basin of the Tokwe-Mukosi dam as they were haphazardly relocated to Chingwizi camp in Mwenezi District where they faced serious hardships, including a lack of adequate food, shelter, health and education facilities.
- As is the long time tradition with the ZANU PF government, it reacted lackadaisically. His Excellence President Mugabe had, in a rare show of good statesmanship in Africa, a continent renowned for bad governance, declared the Tokwe-Mukosi flood disaster a national disaster but he did not even bother to go there to see for himself how the Tokwe-Mukosi flood victims were coping with the afore-mentioned hardships. This was a clear sign to anybody out there who seriously thinks or believes that His Excellence President Mugabe really cares about ordinary Zimbabweans, they need to have their heads examined by a competent psychiatrist. Therein lies the folly of his cronies and bootlickers who continue to dishonestly claim - on threadbare evidence of course – he is a great leader despite disastrous consequences of his rule (Duminsani 2014-15).
- Even though the Zimbabwean comatose economy is buffeted by devastating challenges, His Excellence President Mugabe and his self-seeking cabinet ministers hardly have time to focus on it. Whenever they find time to do it they are always clueless. Instead they have been engrossed in the vacuous ZImAsset rhetoric – a woolgathering economic wish list – and self-serving power politics. The best name for the ZANU PF authored ZimAsset blue print is that it is nothing but a toxic brew.
- There won't be any meaningful change of political and economic direction until His Excellence President Mugabe goes whichever way. In the politically and economically cursed Zimbabwe on autopilot aeroplane since the turn of the millennium, is edging towards a life threatening precipice again in the brand new year of 2015 and beyond for as long as His Excellence President Mugabe soon to be 91 on 21 February 2015 and increasingly looking frail and in poor health from old age remains in the driving seat. (Dumisani 2014-15).

Muckracker (2014-15) a regular contributor to the Zimbabwean Independent in his Muckracker column could not have said it any better. Details on his story coming your way in just a second from now.

Another wasted year, as economy screams (Muckracker 2014-15)

The year 2014 is another wasted era that had just come to an end on 31 December 2014. Marked by empty promises, delusional and stupid policies and the continual rise of His Excellence President Mugabe – ZANU PF “political monotheism” the year 2014 can be remembered for its tragicomedies. Tragicomedies in the sense that the year was dominated by both the good and ugly events. Of much significance it is the year Zimbabweans of all colours black, white, yellow etcetera witnessed “gamatox” insecticide failing to annihilate the weevils, perhaps on probability that the mixture was of an improper concentration – someone should have alerted a chemist to give a helping hand before the spraying process had begun – who knows, the weevils, a subject of compliant by the ruling ZANU PF, could have been exterminated! (Muckracker 2014-15).

It is interesting to note that the purges in the ruling ZANU PF party will not stop until Vice President Munangagwa ensured that all those he perceives to be anti his ascendancy are kicked out of the revolutionary ZANU PF party such as former Vice President Dr Joyce Mujuru, former national party spokesperson Rugare Gumbo. In the first week of January 2015, His Excellence President Mugabe fired seven more top party officials and notably among them were Minister of State for Presidential Affairs, Flora Buka and Sylvester Nguni (Minister of State in former Vice President Joyce Mujuru’s office). All the ZANU PF members who were sympathizers to former Vice President Mujuru were chased away from celebrations to honour Munangagwa’s rise to the Vice President’s post in Zvishavane, while Buka and former Indigenization Minister Honourable Francis Nhema were not allowed to shake hands with the new Vice President at a state function in Chirumhanzi. And all these shenanigans resonated with the narrative the year 2014 was a tragicomedy (Muckracker 2014-15). According to the Jim Crow system what was then happening in ZANU PF was typically segregation based on factional affiliation not race which was set to open more fissures in the country than expected. Practising politics of hatred is contradictory to the much hyped claims that ZANU PF is determined to ensure there is peace and reconciliation of all parties and its people in the country. Otherwise the pertinent question to ask is why are these perceived renegades being persecuted for expressing dissent which is their constitutional right? If this is the case under Vice President Munangagwa who is not His Excellence President Mugabe then Zimbabwe must brace up for more tyranny more torture and the establishment of a more autocratic state in which only those who hero-worship the oppressive comprador bourgeoisie leadership survive. And while this purging is taking place in modern Zimbabwe in the 21st Century the Zimbabwean comatose economy yells on a daily basis. “Help me urgently. I am suffocating.” It is not surprising to wake up one morning to the unsavory news that the paranoid ZANU PF ruling

party has proclaimed the banning of multiparty democracy in Zimbabwe to safeguard its loot and frustrate the weakened opposition parties in Zimbabwe. Who would dare challenge them after all – they stole many elections before and nothing happened to them. (Muckracker 2014-15).

Frantz Fanon once put it: “Nationalist parties. mobilize people with slogans such as “*Pamberi ne ZANU PF* (meaning Forward with ZANU PF). When such parties are questioned on the economic programme of the State they are clamouring for, they are regrettably incapable of replying because precisely they are completely clueless and ignorant of the economy of their own country. *Mwari neVadzimu venyika ino dai maramba!* (meaning Almighty God and the country’s Ancestral spirits please forbid!). ZANU PF congresses are marked by sloganeering, praise singing and intolerance of opposition politics in Zimbabwe. The fired Webster Shamu once exuded the highest level of bootlicking during his hey days in the ruling ZANU PF, calling His Excellence President Mugabe “cremora”, the “digital warrior”, among other dubious titles. But that bootlicking rhetoric, delusional as it was stupid, did not contribute to the sudden improvement of the welfare of the ordinary Zimbabweans most of whom at 72% of the Zimbabwe population of 13 million people are hopelessly poor – poverty in Zimbabwe means surviving on less than one dollar a day. In his political ramshackle he must be accusing and blaming himself of playing the wrong card because the once user friendly “cremora” has now turned toxic – who will he sing those praises for again. Imagine how Zimbabwe had been fast tracked to the Stone Age Era: After dancing and singing for His Excellence President Mugabe, what he did as an early Christmas present for the poor and suffering masses of Zimbabwe faced with a bleak Christmas and new year holidays was to bid Zimbabwean farewell in mid-December 2014 to go and enjoy himself in the Far East with his young wife, Grace Mugabe who is twice as young only to come back in mid-January 2015. *Mwari dai marimba!* (meaning God forbid!)

Unlike his predecessors, Dumisani (2014-15) and Muckracker (2014-15) Muronzi (2014-15) presented his side of the story on the year 2014 analysed under the good, the bad and the ugly. Details on his side of his story coming your way in just a moment.

The good, the bad and the ugly of 2014 (Muronzi 2014-15)

The shocking salaries earned by chief executive officers in the parastatals sector, company closures, business deals, International Monetary Fund engagements with the Zimbabwe government, His Excellence President Mugabe stinging attacks on Information Minister Honourable Jonathan Moyo, Dr Grace Mugabe’s political tsunami, the Chinese and Russian deals, former Vice President Joyce Mujuru’s political problems related to the toppling and

assassination plots to His Excellence President Mugabe, the ZANU PF congress of extraordinary drama, the year 2014 was an era of tragicomedy characterized by some sprinkles of good news, bad experiences and the ugly events (Muronzi 2014).

The Author will roll out the good news about Zimbabwe first which is up next.

The good news about Zimbabwe in the tragicomedy era of 2014 (Muronzi 2014-15)

The good news in Zimbabwe during the tragicomedy year of 2014 kicks off in January 2015 with the Zimbabwe government's request to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to approve a six month extension to the country's Staff Monitored Programme (SMP). The SMP was a programme embarked upon between the Zimbabwe government and the IMF to assist the former to strengthen its economic policies and deliver outstanding commitments. Under the sought extension the IMF team, visited Harare in March 2014 to assess performance towards the attainment of the SMP programme during the period under review. The Finance Minister Honourable Patrick Chinamasa visits the all weather friend to the ruling ZANU PF party China looking for money to finance budgetary support but returns home empty handed and no reasons were given to explain that phenomenon. In February 2014 His Excellence President Mugabe returns to work after his vacation abroad to focus on the comatose economy with no tangible results seen after his said economic intervention manoeuvres. The IMF team visits Harare in March 2014 in its continuing engagement with the Zimbabwe government on the adoption of the requisite economic policies to jump start the Zimbabwe comatose economy then in its 14th year of economic meltdown. John Mangudya, formerly Chief Executive Officer of Commercial Bank of Zimbabwe (CBZ) is appointed Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) governor to take over from the incumbent Gideon Gono in May 2014. In July 2014 the Government of Zimbabwe sends a Letter of Intent and a Memorandum of Economic and Technical Memorandum of Understanding of Zimbabwe to the IMF. The document describes the economic policies that the Government of Zimbabwe is pursuing for implementation in the SMP framework. It was in the same month that Honourable Chinamasa the Minister of Finance and his Mines counterpart Honourable Walter Chidhakwa visit Moscow to court investors. In August 2014 His Excellence President Mugabe visits China and signs "mega deals" which are however a subject of feasibility and bankability studies. In September 2014 Russia and Zimbabwe sign a US\$3 billion deal to jointly mine platinum in the world's third platinum producing nation. In October 2014 a five member business delegation from the United Kingdom arrives in the country for the first time in nearly 20 years for a 3 day working visit to engage government and the business community. In the same month the European Union (EU) unconditionally lifted its 12 year suspension of direct financial aid to Zimbabwe imposed after accusations of human rights abuses by the Zimbabwe

government. In November 2014 the Welshman Ncube – led MDC and the Tendai Biti – led MDC renewal Team both of which splintered from the mainstream MDC party led by Morgan Tsvangirai, form a coalition raising hopes among pro democracy activist of a grand coalition against ZANU PF rule. And finally in December 2014 His Excellence Emmerson Munangagwa and Phelekezela Mphoko are appointed co-Vice Presidents (Muronzi 2014-15).

So much about the good news about the year 2014 to spark a rare ray of hope on the suffering Zimbabwe masses. Up next is a narration of the bad experiences which for their part took centre stage in the tragicomedy year of 2014.

The bad experiences about Zimbabwe in the tragicomedy era of 2014 (Muronzi 2014-15)

The month of January 2014 exposes a report that three unnamed banks were said to be struggling and were under the RBZ surveillance. Finance Minister Honourable Patrick Chinamasa returned empty handed from China where he wanted investment money from China, the second largest economy in the world after the USA and an all weather friend to the ruling ZANU PF party. His Excellence President Mugabe returned to work in February 2014 but started globe-trotting to far flung Singapore, Malawi and other countries ignoring the economy then burning and other issues that needed his urgent attention. The Tokwe-Mukosi flood disaster unexpectedly resurfaced in Masvingo province adversely affecting 60000 villagers. But His Excellence President Mugabe failed to visit the flood victims. In March 2014 the IMF warned the macro-economic environment in the country was expected to remain challenging in 2014 and the outlook was for continued moderate economic growth. In June 2014 the RBZ cancelled the Capital Bank operating license and in the process endangering US\$30 million in public funds and about US\$50 million in National Social Security Authority (NSSA) money going down the drain. Non-performing loans from the troubled banking sector continued to balloon which was a sign of bad times ahead i.e. in the rest of 2014 and beyond. His Excellence President Mugabe flew to far away Bolivia for the G77 Summit in Santa Cruz, ignoring serious problems at home which demanded his urgent attention. In the same period the IMF warned that Zimbabwe's fragile economy was characterized by growth slowdown, a large external deficit and low international foreign reserves. The IMF also emphasized that achieving sustainable and inclusive growth required determined and comprehensive reforms. While the comatose economy and country continued to burn His Excellence flew to Malawi to attend the country's golden jubilee and in the process skipping the burial of Sakupwanya a ZANU PF politburo member to become the only head of state and government in attendance. In the same month of July 2014, the IMF reported the depressing news that the Zimbabwe's economic rebound experienced since 2009 had ceased and was expected to decelerate in 2013 and

beyond. Key risks to the outlook period included lower than projected tax collections, economic policy slippages, financial sector stress and global commodity prices. Zimbabwe faced these risks with thin buffers. In August 2014 Egypt Air suspended its flight to Harare citing viability challenges meaning there was very little business taking place between Harare and the outside world because of the country's economic tailspin. To resonate with the aforementioned economic tailspin Finance Minister revised the GDP growth rate from 6.1% to 3.1% citing serious economic challenges bedeviling the country. In October 2014 in a continuous bad story for Zimbabwe in the year 2014 Trust Bank was placed under provisional liquidation after the shareholders withdrew their court papers to oppose the action. During the same month came the unpalatable news that the figure for non-performing loans (NPLs) had ballooned to US\$700 million to further weigh down the economy to compound the country's mounting economic problems. The capacity utilization tumbled by 3.3% to 36.3% in 2014 down from 39.6% in 2013. In November 2014 Nelson Chamisa then MDC-T organizing secretary unexpectedly lost his bid to land the powerful Secretary-General post to become a card carrying member in a zero sum game i.e. from hero yesterday to zero today simply because he had, through popularity in the MDC-T party become a threat to Tsvangirai the party president himself. In the same month of November 2014 Finance Minister Honourable Chinamasa presented his 2015 national budget which was described as a dog's breakfast on social media. The budget exposed a deep fiscal crisis gripping Treasury amid shock revelations that the government will spend a whopping 92% of its meagre revenues on recurrent expenditures leaving a negligible 8% for capital projects and service delivery. The minister's figures showed that 4600 companies had closed shop since the year 2000, while over 55 400 jobs had been lost. The month of December 2014 saw the RBZ reporting that the figure for NPLs was dragging the economy down, hence the need to attach stringent measures to would be borrowers as a measure of restoring waning confidence in the battling financial services sector. The same month saw ABC holdings founding Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and other executives stepping down pocketing a staggering US\$17 million in cash but nonetheless a loss of skill and experience to the local banking sector. Finance Minister Honourable Chinamasa announced the long awaited retrenchment of the civil servants in 2015 as part of measures to reduce the unsustainable wage bill. And characteristic of His Excellence President Mugabe, he again went on his costly month long leave in the Far East to leave the country and economy burning behind his back. (Muronzi 2014-15).

So much about the awesome and bad experiences for the year of tragicomedy i.e. the year 2014. To conclude the discourse in this part of the Paper is to find out what is in store for the ugly scenes which also characterized the year of tragicomedy. Details coming your way in just a moment in case you wanted to go away.

The ugly scenes about Zimbabwe in the tragicomedy era of 2014 (Muronzi 2014-15)

There is no doubt that the year 2014 started on a tragic note with the unsavoury and shock news about the (Public) Premier Medical Services Medical Aid Society (PSMAS) Chief Executive Cuthbert Dube, renamed Cashbag Dube drawing a whopping US\$230 000 as basic salary which rose to a whopping US\$500 000 with allowances, in a Zimbabwe which is a sea of poverty with 72% of the population surviving on less than a dollar a day. In the same month of January 2014, former MDC-T deputy Treasurer General, Elton Mangoma authored a shocking letter to the attention of Morgan Tsvangirai the party leader demanding immediate leadership renewal in the MDC-T because under his leadership the opposition party had resoundingly lost the 31 July 2013 harmonized elections to His Excellence President Mugabe, which he was expected to resoundingly win. Wrote Mangoma:

“Since the outcome of the election, calls for leadership renewal have been made in different quotas and at different platforms. It is my unbending resolve that leadership renewal at this juncture could be the only avenue to restoring credibility of the party lest it risks being confined to history. At the time when confidence is plummeting there is a need for the MDC to freshen up, create fresh impetus and rally its troops to remain united and focused. However this impetus cannot and will not be created if the leadership status quo is preserved.”

In short, Tsvangirai through his dubious life style with women of different kinds had done the party irreparable damage to the party's image. The month of February 2014 saw Mangoma's letter triggering fierce infighting which rocked the MDC-T to the bone. Another MDC-T split in April 2014 was imminent amidst accusations and counter-accusations and dismissals and counter-dismissals. In a sensational rape case RMG End Time Message Church leader Robert Martin Gumbura was convicted of four counts of rape and one count of possession of pornographic material and sentenced to 50 years. In April 2014 Didmus Mutasa the former ZANU PF Secretary of administration announced that Her Excellence Joyce Mujuru had been chosen to lead the party into infinity and that those who angled to snatch the position at the December 2014 congress were not only wasting their time but day dreaming to spark the hard long and dirty factional and succession campaign until the party congress in December 2014. In June His Excellence President Mugabe made a stinging attack on his Information Minister, Honourable Jonathan Moyo for being a weevil bent on destroying ZANU PF from inside. The ZANU PF youth and women's congresses are held amidst controversy a sign which did not bode well for the ZANU PF congress. In the same month Dr Grace Mugabe, wife to His Excellence President Mugabe manoeuvred her way into ZANU PF to lead the Women's League as Chairwoman to replace Oppah Muchinguri. All provincial chairpersons aligned to Mujuru are dismissed a sign dirty campaigns ahead of the ZANU PF congress had started to intensify. In

the same month of September 2014 Grace Mugabe, wife of His Excellence President Mugabe graduated with a dubious PhD degree in sociology at the University of Zimbabwe. His Excellence President Mugabe was reported to have been the marker of her doctoral thesis. The month of October 2014 saw Grace Mugabe begin nationwide campaign rallies and meetings, launching a campaign of innuendo, brutal attacks and vicious character assassination against Her Excellence Vice President Joyce Mujuru. The same month saw medical doctors embark on a crippling strike over poor remuneration. The month of November 2014 saw Mujuru, Mutasa and Goche, all sensationally accused of plotting to topple and assassinate His Excellence President Mugabe as the factional and succession wars reached a climax. Nasty and dirty demonstrations against Her Excellence Vice President Mujuru started while votes of no confidence in ZANU PF provincial chairmen escalated among chaos in the ruling ZANU PF party. Serious internal purges followed as everyday became The Night of Long Knives. Eleven people including a pregnant woman and children died and many more injured in a stampede after 15 000 people packed a 7000-seater Mbizo Stadium in Kwekwe to the rafters for a service by celebrity preacher and self-styled miracle worker, Walter Magaya of the Prophetic Healing and Deliverance Ministries. And finally December 2014 saw the ruling ZANU PF party hold its congress and Mujuru and her allies unceremoniously ousted from the party amid high profile political casualties and turmoil paving the way for Munangagwa and Mphoko and some new ministers. After the chaotic congress His Excellence President Mugabe went on his usual one month long vacation in the Far East leaving the economy and country burning behind his back. (Muronzi 2014-15).

There for you is the year of a tragicomedy in Zimbabwe, which resoundingly resonates with the narrative “The year 2014: An era of unforgettable and unrelenting political and economic turmoil in Zimbabwe (2014 – 15). Up next is the need to summarize the discourse before the Conclusion of the study

SUMMARY

The discourse kicks off with the description of a Roman God called Janus. Janus has two faces one looking in the past i.e. 2014 while the second face looks at the year 2015 and beyond. The two faces looking into the past and future are both in anguish, a sign that the political and economic fundamentals in both 2014 and 2015 are certainly not looking good for your information the beloved Reader. After the Introduction to the discourse which points to a picture of doom and gloom for Zimbabwe comes the statement of the relevant and related Literature Review and the Research Methodology whose primary objective is to expose the Research Findings, from which are derived the Conclusion and Recommendations. Dumisani (2014-15)

analyzed the year 2014 as a horrible year characterized by the Tokwe-Mukosi Flood disaster in Masvingo province, poor service delivery, sex scandals involving church leaders, alarming levels of corruption and an economic tailspin marked by deflation, falling capacity utilization, liquidity crunch and the sad story of a political and economic tailspin which goes on and on the sky is the limit.

Muckracker (2014 -15) weighed in with his telling theme : Another wasted year as the economy screams. The highlights of his contribution entail the ZANU PF election promises which were not honoured, massive company closures with more people thrown out of employment, the liquidity crunch sparked by investor spooking policies, internecine squabbles in both the ruling ZANU PF and the opposition MDC-T party. His Excellence President Robert Mugabe is caught globe-trotting to earn himself the name: The modern Vasco da Gama while the country and economy is burning behind his back.

And finally Muronzi (2014-15) highlights the good, the bad experiences and the ugly scenes which characterized Zimbabwe in the tragicomedy year of 2014. On the good news the IMF is captured courting Zimbabwe to craft and implement investment policies that are user friendly. Another highlight of the good news was the signing of “mega deals” yet to bear fruit to benefit Zimbabwe.

The ruthless firing of former Vice President Mujuru and her allies marked the major highlight under the theme followed by RBZ cancelling operating licence for Capital Bank. Economic slowdown, the ballooning of NPLs, a huge external debt, low foreign exchange reserves etc marked the major challenges discussed under this theme.

The major highlights under the ugly scenes in Zimbabwe then were “mega salaries” earned in the parastatals sector, Tsvangirai is sharply criticized for bad leadership of the MDC-T party, a sensational rape case saw Gumbura, a church leader being sentenced to 50 years, Grace Mugabe joins ZANU PF as Women’s League boss in what is regarded as worst thing to happen to ZANU PF in a life time. The ZANU PF congress of hatred and name calling not to mention endless purges in the party hogged the limelight during this period. With the Summary out of the way, up next is the conclusive remarks of the Paper.

CONCLUSION

According to Rusvingo (2008) Kenkel (1984) defines a Research Hypothesis from which a Conclusion is derived as: “A statement about the value of a parameter or a group of parameters can take”. According to the same Kenkel (1984:343): “The purpose of a Research Hypothesis testing is to choose between two conflicting Research Hypotheses about the value of a population parameter. The two conflicting Research Hypotheses are denoted as the Null

Research Hypothesis, denoted H_0 and the Alternative Research Hypothesis, denoted H_1 . These two Research Hypotheses are mutually exclusive so that when one is true the other one is false.”

Therefore for the study in this Paper whose title is “The year 2014: An era of unforgettable and unrelenting political and economic turmoil in Zimbabwe (2014-15)” the Null Research Hypothesis (H_0) and the Alternative Research Hypothesis in respect of the Research topic or title in this Paper as articulated above shall respectively be:

H_0 The year 2014 was not an era of unforgettable and unrelenting political and economic turmoil in Zimbabwe.

H_1 The year 2014 was an era of unforgettable and unrelenting political and economic turmoil in Zimbabwe.

Given the overwhelming evidence as given elsewhere in this Paper including the Summary which is loud and clear for all to hear and see the Alternative Research Hypothesis namely: The year 2014 was an era of unforgettable and unrelenting political and economic turmoil in Zimbabwe is to be resoundingly accepted while the Null Research Hypothesis as articulated above is to be resoundingly rejected in light of the overwhelming evidence which was 100% pro the Alternative Research Hypothesis (H_1) and 100% anti the Null Research Hypothesis (H_0)

With the exciting Conclusion of the study now done and sealed up next are the Recommendations of the study which were primarily designed to address what was not done right politically and economically to turn the year 2014 an annus horribilis (Dumisani 2014-15). So convincing graphics coming your way in just a moment. Please don't go away before the “feel good” Recommendations of the study in this Paper – The year 2014: An era of unforgettable and unrelenting political and economic turmoil in Zimbabwe (2014-15) are unveiled as hereunder.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Hanzi nevakare vedu kana wakwegura chigara kumba utambe nevazukuru (meaning like it or not everything never mind how thrilling has a necessary end. Period.) Delusional and stupid as it may sound to His Excellence President Mugabe and his rented crowds the brutal truth now facing His Excellence President Mugave soon to be 91 years of age on 21 February 2015 and visibly looking frail and senile from failing health the wise thing to do sooner than later is to call it quits. As it is His Excellence is now a dead weight – an oppressive burden to the nation. If His Excellence President Mugabe wants to leave a rich legacy behind his back like the legendary

world icon, the late Nelson Mandela, the time to leave office is now or never. As certain as death comes after life, His Excellence President Mugabe is now riding a hungry tiger. The once lovely pet is now showing its teeth in readiness to pounce, kill and devour its rider because the domestic pet has been kept away from its pet food for far too long.

The story about to come your way as below is certainly a “don’t miss “story. To resonate with what the Author has just said this is what Phiri (2015) of the Daily News had to say to confirm that for His Excellence President Mugabe it is time to hang his boots because his playing career is over.

ZANU PF big wigs want Mugabe out (Phiri 2015)

All the political analysts purposively and judgmentally sampled to confirm the story by Phiri (2015) confirmed all the ZANU PF bigwigs spoken to wanted His Excellence President Mugabe out by yesterday at the earliest. The continuing infighting with no end in sight and the growing speculation inside the party around the possibility of His Excellence President Mugabe relinquishing the reigns of power before the end of his current term in 2018 betrayed the fact that many ruling party bigwigs were now reported desperate for the nonagenarian to leave office yesterday at the earliest. (Phiri 2015).

Analysts spoken to by the Daily News had expressed skepticism His Excellency President Mugabe was willing to hand over power to any of his juniors in the ruling ZANU PF party any time soon. These sentiments had come amid the political storm ignited by fraud – accused businessman cum politician Energy Mutodi who sensationally claimed on social media that Vice President His Excellence Munangangwa would succeed His Excellence President Mugabe by March 2015 (Phiri 2015).

What has been creating anxiety on the part of the nation is that it has been kept guessing for far too long now. The late Nelson Mandela, the first South African President in the post Apartheid South Africa had on coming to power in 1994 made it known to the world he would do one term before he called it quits. But with His Excellence President Mugabe its guess work about when he is going to relinquish power.

On the economic front, Zimbabwe must learn to improve the ease of doing business. Period. Kachembere (2015) wasted precious little time to announce to an expectant nation with 72% of its people surviving on less than a dollar a day that Zimbabwe must improve the ease of doing business in order to uplift the poor. Finer details on this coming your way in just a second from now.

Zimbabwe must improve ease of doing business (Kachembere 2015)

Zimbabwe must, in this modern world of increasing complexity adopt business friendly regulations to enhance the doing business environment and grow its economy which is always screaming: “I am suffocating. Please help me”. The World Bank had warned, in its monthly economic review on Zimbabwe that the creation and adoption of investor friendly policies will “stimulate the development of the private sector, creation of new firms, help attract investment, facilitate a reduction in unemployment, and innovative firms and support greater lending to the private sector”. The much hyped Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Act of 2007 compelling foreign companies to cede 51% of its investment stake to the locals is utter rubbish if not a dog’s breakfast. Imagine that across the Limpopo River in neighboring South Africa they do not have such an investor spooking policy who then is the loser, Zimbabwe or South Africa? South Africa today is the second largest economy in Africa after Nigeria and a member of the Brics (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa).

This comes as Zimbabwe was ranked 171 out of 189 by the World Bank’s Doing Business 2015 Report, down from last year’s ranking of 170. The report which is quite handy for Zimbabwe measures regulations affecting 10 critical areas of the life of a business which are:

- Starting a business
- Dealing with construction permits
- Getting electricity
- Registering property
- Getting credit
- Protecting minority investors
- Paying taxes
- Trading across borders and
- Enforcing contracts and resolving insolvency.

In a recent report where the Author witnessed a race for foreign direct investment (FDI) in the SADC (Southern African Development Community) region the heart breaking story about Zimbabwe is a cause for great concern. Finer details on this coming year is as in Table 1 below:

Table 1: FDI inflows into Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe

Country	Fdi Inflow in billion US Dollars	Ranking	%
Mozambique	6.0	1	48
South Africa	5.0	2	41
Zambia	1.0	3	8
Zimbabwe	0.4	4	3
	12.4		100

Source: Dengu (2014)

To simplify, countries like lowly Mozambique and Big Brother South Africa were walking away with US\$48 and US\$41 of the US\$100 brought into the SADC region for investment to win gold and silver respectively, Zimbabwe was content to win a wooden spoon for her running to confirm the narrative that Zimbabwe is not investor friendly.

Vakare vedu vakati mbudzi kuzvarira pavanhu kuti itandirwembwa. Vane nzeve vazvinzwira. (meaning Ignore wise counsel at your peril and those with ears have heard it from the horse's mouth).

With the Recommendations now done and out of the way up next is the vital need to reassure the beloved Reader on the authenticity of the contents in this Paper which can only be given by way of a Key Assumption. Details on this coming your way in just a moment.

KEY ASSUMPTIONS

In presenting this Paper the articulate Author would, right from the outset, wish to reassure the beloved Reader that all the facts and figures herein contained were articulately stated as they are on the ground without fear, favour or prejudice. And the Author will hurriedly want to add that the mission of this statement coming late in the Paper presentation is to allay the fears or doubts by the Reader and to give him/her peace of mind on the factual contents of this Manuscript in the wake of the sombre and solemn atmosphere painted by the footprints of this Manuscript vis-à-vis the political and economic challenges bedeviling the country in 2014, a year of tragicomedy in Zimbabwe.

Given the above sentiments delivered in all honesty, probity and transparency it is as obvious as death coming after life that Zimbabwe as a country is in great need of a short prayer especially after taking the beloved reader through the rough ride terrain offered by the unrelenting and unforgettable political and economic challenges of 2014. Zimbabwe touted as the “Switzerland” of Africa a decade or so ago is now reduced to a hopeless basket case feeding its people on hand-outs from the philanthropic donor community. The Author being a Christian by religion will shoulder that responsibility and pray for Zimbabwe as below.

The short prayer for Zimbabwe (Pew Paper 2015)

Ngatinamatei'

Baba makuratidza nzira yamaropafadzo neyokuteerera mukuti kukumbira kuti tive vakavimbika munzira iyoyo. Tiitei tizive kuzara kwemakomborero, nembiri yenyu isingaperi, yepfuma irikudenga isingapfukutwe, kuora, kana kubiwa, asi iyo tichafara nayo nokusingaperi muuvepo hwenyu. Nekuna Jesu Kristu tenzi wedu. Amen (Pew Paper 2015).

Let us pray.

Father you have shown us the path to blessing, to abundance, to obedience and you ask us to trust You and obey You and walk it. May we know the fullness of Your blessing and eternal glory for that treasure in Heaven which can never be corrupted and never rusted and never stolen but which we shall enjoy forever and ever in Your presence. In Jesus Christ name. Amen (Pew Paper 2015).

REFERENCES

- Dengu,C (2013 July 13) Foreign direct investment inflows into the SADC region. *Newsday*, p14.
- Dumisani, M (2014 December 24 – 2015 January 8) Year 2014: An annus horribilis. *Zimbabwe Independent*, p.8.
- Kachembere, J (2015 – January 6). Zim must improve ease of doing business. *Daily News*, p.11.
- Kenkel, J.L (1984) *Introductory Statistics for Management and Economics*. 2nd Edition. Boston Duxbury Press.
- Madanhire, N (2014 December 31). More despair, pessimism beckon. *Newsday*, p.6.
- Muckracker (2014 December 24 – 2015 January 8). Another wasted year as economy screams. *Zimbabwe Independent* p.11.
- Muronzi (2014 December 24 – 2015 January 8). The good, the bad and ugly of 2014. *Zimbabwe Independent*, p.13.
- Pew Paper (2015 January 4) Blessed is the hand that gives. Church of the Province of Central Africa (CPCA). Diocese of Harare, St Magdalene Anglican Church. Avondale Parish.
- Phiri, G (2015 January 6) ZANU PF bigwigs want Mugabe out. Analysts say continuing party factions confirm this. *Daily News*, p.1.
- Rusvingo, S (2008). An investigation into the variables which militate against Harare City Council providing a world class service delivery in the then turbulent political, economic, legal, diplomatic, ethical, technological and socio-cultural environments as measured in Zimbabwe between 2000 – 08. An unpublished doctoral thesis with the Irish Business School, London, UK Retrieved from a book – binded text book.
- Staff Reporter (2014 October 25) Southern African Development Community mission statement. Retrieved on <http://www.sadc.int/../> Sadc mission.
- Staff Reporter (2015 January 13) Brics. Wikipedia. Retrieved on <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brics>.