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### Development Ministers' Statement on Zimbabwe Crisis

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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

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**WASHINGTON, D.C.** - We, Development Ministers and Heads of bi-lateral agencies from Australia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and the United States, are very concerned about the evolving and increasingly desperate situation in Zimbabwe. In particular, after the withdrawal of Morgan Tsvangirai from the June 27 election, we are convinced that no free and fair elections are possible and therefore no outcome can be recognized internationally. We are extremely troubled by the negative spiral of violence and intimidation. Protection of those in the opposition and the population at large who are persecuted is crucial. Furthermore, food aid and access to humanitarian assistance must not be manipulated for political gain. Most importantly, non-governmental organizations must be allowed to continue to provide food aid and relief to the most vulnerable communities. In this regard, we urge the Government of Zimbabwe to address the current estimated one million ton grain shortfall.

While we recognize and encourage the growing momentum and concern from an increasing number of African leaders, we believe that critical actors in the region must exert more pressure on the Government of Zimbabwe to protect the rights of all concerned parties and safeguard all citizens against violence, consistent with international rights and norms. In particular, we believe that SADC, the African Union, and especially the Government of South Africa must make use of all available diplomatic means to resolve conflict and advance appropriate democratic processes.

Finally, we encourage the UN Security Council to take all necessary steps to help in the humanitarian field, use all necessary political measures, send a fact-finding mission, and provide mediators and observers to monitor the situation.

The American people, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, have provided economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide for nearly 50 years.

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