

December 2016

His Excellency
The Ambassador of the Republic of Romania
Harare, Zimbabwe

RE: INQUIRY ON SUPPORTING NON-GOVERNMENT, ZIMBABWE-ROMANIA CO-OPERATION.

Your Excellency,

It was an honour to be afforded opportunity to meet with you at your office and residence in Harare. We are indebted to the time you afforded us out of your busy schedule.

Following our meeting we would like to express our interest in the possibility of engagement to pursue further strengthening of ties between our two countries, in support of the cordial diplomatic ties that already exist at Government level.

The objective for our meeting with you was to explore opportunities for establishing a stronger link between our two countries mainly in the areas of education, culture, leadership and general social development through non-state actors civil society, faith movements, inclusive of youth, children, and other special interest groups.

We strongly believe that Romania and Zimbabwe share a lot in common and that there is potential to explore various pathways for collaboration through a mechanism for coordination that we, as the Development Reality Institute would be honored to be part of. We strongly consider the mutual benefit that will accrue out of opening lines of cooperation, partnership and exchange. Both countries have a rich cultural, educational, leadership experience and heritage which create fertile ground for growing long lasting cooperative synergies.

Kindly note below a brief introduction of DRI and some general propositions on potential areas of cooperation.

1. Development Reality Institute – Background and Experience.

Development Reality Institute (DRI) is a youth oriented research based organisation formally registered as a Trust. The organisation was established to develop innovative strategies for enhancing society's adaptive capacity to development challenges. DRI achieves this through capacity building, policy analysis, knowledge management and programme interventions. The programme interventions are implemented through a network of young professionals, international volunteers and collaborations with other development partners.

Central to the work of DRI is exploring opportunities for increasing the impact of citizen participation in development programmes, sharing information and best practices, securing resources to support development programmes and advocating for the interests of marginalized communities in development activities in Zimbabwe and Africa at large. A priority for DRI is to promote sustainable socio-economic development and build the capacity of community based and civil society organisations to transform livelihoods of the marginalized groups through participatory and innovative solutions. DRI believes that an integrated development approach is the most appropriate strategy to address the current needs of vulnerable communities in Africa.

1.1 Experience in running networks and supporting memberships.

The Development Reality Institute has amassed vast institutional experience in supporting networks and memberships in various capacities, in lead and member role. The organization understands only too well the strength of collectives and the power of working together. Over the years DRI has grown a vast network of associates and partners within the social development space. The experience of the organizations has seen it collaborating with government in convening national stakeholders in various for a targeting strengthening of cooperation and collective approaches to challenges confronting Zimbabwe. One such project is the Sustainable Development Goals Achievement Project, run by the Government of Zimbabwe, in which the role of DRI is Knowledge Management, bringing together stakeholders and strengthening partnership towards SDG achievement at country level.

DRI plays a leading role in the following networks, chair of the Internet Society - Zimbabwe, fostering digital inclusion and freedoms, Cluster head of the Business Council on Sustainable Development Zimbabwe (BCSDZ), chairs of the Climate Change Working Group, Gender and Health Cluster, and Chair of the Zimbabwe Climate Change Youth Network. DRI has an observer status with UNFCCC, member of the UN Global Compact. Additionally DRI is a network member for BMW Foundation in Zimbabwe as well as an ASHOKA and Echoing Green International networks. DRI is the founder and lead organization in the Green Innovations HUB, which is a network of organizations supporting the development of innovations around the smart energy space.

1. **Registration as a:** Social Development Trust
2. **Staff component (current):** Current DRI staff complement is 10 full time, 3 part time.
3. **General Organisational Information:** Development Reality Institute: 21 Glenara Avenue South, Eastlea, Harare: Tel : +263 4 496987, Cell: +263 773460466 / info@driafrica.org, www.driafrica.org, www.gih.space, www.sdgs.org.zw

2.0 Potential areas of collaboration and coordination interest

2.1 Arts and Culture

There is great potential to successfully promote arts and culture initiatives between the two counties. These can take multiple forms. Naturally the cultural heritages of the two countries are different given that Romania is located in European North, while Zimbabwe is in African South. Cultural exchanges has been known to not only inspire creativity and innovation, but also extend to trade in artifacts, add to the entertainment industry as well as contribute to the enrichment of both cultures. In order to promote and facilitate cultural exchange DRI envisages the creation of collaboration track under an overall coordinating mechanism. Such a track may organize various activities such as (i) language lessons for Zimbabwean interested in learning Romanian and associated culture, (ii) coordinate the reunion of alumni of Zimbabweans that have studied or trained in Romania, to include past and present (iii) As and when resources permit organize trips to Romania by Zimbabwean Delegations and visa versa, have Romanian Delegations visit Zimbabwe to exhibit various areas of the rich cultures of the two such as food, dance, arts and other traditions of interest. Various resourcing mechanisms can be explored to support the management of these activities.

2.2 Thought Leadership and Think Tanks.

Leadership is a critical area to any development process from household to global level, and good leadership is an asset. DRI envisages developing a track that brings together progressive thinkers to reflect on global issues as they relate to national issues in Zimbabwe. Broad propositions that DRI lays in this letter of inquiry include drawing from the experiences of Romanian critical progressive thinking from scholars and thinker of historic and contemporary times. DRI proposes for consideration, organizing a series of critical thought dialogues, against the backdrop of Romanian thought leaders and other thinking that has inspired the growth of Romania. The dialogues may assume the format of books clubs and evening dialogue sessions. With time the activity may also host thought leaders and relevant think tanks addressing audiences in Zimbabwe. DRI further foresees fraternity based think-tank dialogue sessions from various professional backgrounds such as law, scientific research, medicine, human rights, governance/leadership, business, arts and other allied professions.

2.3 Education and Scholarship.

Education represents one of the key areas that tie Zimbabwe and Romania. A number of Zimbabweans have received tertiary level training in Romanian from leading institutions in the country. These beneficiaries have returned to Zimbabwe to become productive members of society, contributing to economic, social and political development of the country. Furthermore there is some evidence of collaborations between Zimbabwean and Romanian Academic and Training Institutions. Be this as it may DRI is convinced that there is still room for stepping up these kinds of cooperation particularly in the area of research and development, where it is common knowledge that Romania has amassed experience Zimbabwe can benefit from. DRI would propose here facilitating the brokering, twinning and linking of institutions in the two countries. Activities would also include linking prospective scholars with scholarship opportunities in the Romanian Republic.

Your Excellency;

It is our fervent hope that you share our conviction that there is immense potential for creating mutually beneficial partnership and collaboration outside the official Government ties. We believe that our proposal can only come to fruition with support from your office as a catalytic enabler. We would kindly request that such a programme if agreeable be centered and coordinated from the embassy to give credence and clout generate and attract support. Equally so, we are encouraged by the interest we are likely to generate within our vast network of partners within

We trust and place our hope in the enthusiasm you have demonstrated so far in seeking for the embassy to pursue a multi-pronged cooperation arrangement which drives both the intergovernmental agenda as well as the non-government partner cooperation. We are well appraised of your professional background in Romania and abroad and this gives us confidence in your likely inclination to understand and engage with further, the issues, which we have herein briefly raised.

We remain open to further discuss this proposal and we able to meet with you again, should you so require at a moment's notice.

Yours Faithfully,

Verengai Mabika :: Executive Director :: Development Reality Institute