

**UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE  
FACULTY OF LAW**

**Corporate Governance failures in State-Owned Enterprises in  
Zimbabwe: An assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the  
corporate governance structure.**

**Mini-thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
LLM Degree, University of the Western Cape**



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**Declaration**

I declare that *Corporate Governance Failures in State-Owned Enterprises in Zimbabwe: An assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the corporate governance structure* is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

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Date:.....



## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to my parents, Mr and Mrs Madekutsikwa who continue to support and show me unconditional love and to my sister, Dorothy Madekutsikwa, who has dedicated her life to making my dreams a reality.



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I am thankful to the Lord Almighty for continuously guiding, protecting and surrounding me with people who make my journey worthwhile. I acknowledge with gratitude the assistance of my supervisor Prof M Wandrag who not only assisted with the writing of this paper but availed herself to me as a mentor.

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“We can’t change the world unless we change ourselves” – Christopher (Notorious B.I.G) Wallace.

## **Acronyms and Abbreviations**

<b>CEO</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>COMU</b>	Crown Ownership Management Unit
<b>CSR</b>	Corporate Social Responsibility
<b>FSB</b>	Financial Stability Board
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GMB</b>	Grain Marketing Board
<b>IFIs</b>	International Financial Institutions
<b>IoDZ</b>	Institute of Directors Zimbabwe
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>PSMAS</b>	Premier Services Medical Aid Society
<b>SCI</b>	Statement of Corporate Intent
<b>SEC</b>	Securities Exchange Commission
<b>SOEs</b>	State-Owned Enterprises
<b>ZBC</b>	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation
<b>ZIFA</b>	Zimbabwe Football Association

## **Key words**

Corporate Governance

State-Owned Enterprises

Zimbabwe

OECD Guidelines

State ownership

Political control

Corporatisation



## Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction.....	10
1.1 Background.....	10
1.2 Research Objectives.....	17
1.3 Significance of Study.....	17
1.4 Methodology.....	17
1.5 Chapter Structure.....	18
1.6 Conclusion.....	19
Chapter 2.....	20
Corporate Governance in State-owned Enterprises.....	20
2.1 Introduction to Corporate Governance and State-owned Enterprises.....	20
2.1.1 Rise to prominence of Corporate Governance.....	20
2.1.2 Evolution of the concept of Corporate Governance.....	21
2.1.3 Definitions of Corporate Governance.....	22
2.1.4 Theories of Corporate Governance.....	23
2.1.4.1 The Agency Theory.....	24
2.1.4.2 The Stewardship Theory.....	25
2.1.4.3 The Stakeholder Theory.....	26
2.1.4.4 The Political Theory.....	27
2.2 Understanding State-Owned Enterprises and their Contributions to Development.....	28
2.2.1 Defining State-Owned Enterprises.....	28
2.2.2 History and the Rationale/Functions of SOEs.....	28
2.2.3 Contributions to Development.....	31
2.2.4 History/Overview of SOEs in Zimbabwe.....	32
2.3 Conclusion.....	36
Chapter 3.....	38
3.1 Introduction to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Zimbabwean Corporate Governance Framework.....	38
3.1.1 What is the OECD?.....	38
3.1.2 OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance for State-owned Enterprises.....	39
3.1.3 Rationales for state ownership.....	40
3.1.4 The State's role as an owner.....	41
3.1.5 State-owned enterprises in the marketplace.....	42
3.1.6 Equitable treatment of shareholders and other investors.....	43
3.1.7 Stakeholders relations and responsible business.....	44

3.1.8 Disclosure and Transparency .....	45
3.1.9 The Responsibilities of the Boards of State-owned Enterprises .....	47
3.2 An Overview of the Corporate Governance Framework of Zimbabwe .....	48
3.2.1 The Companies Act.....	49
3.2.2 The Public Finance Management Act.....	50
3.2.3 The Corporate Governance and Remuneration Policy Framework for Chief Executive Officers of Parastatals, State Enterprises and Local Authorities .....	53
3.2.4 The National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe (ZIMCODE) .....	56
3.2.4.1 Ownership and Control .....	56
3.2.4.2 Boards of Directors and Directors .....	57
3.2.4.3 The Governance of Risk .....	59
3.2.4.4 Information Management and Disclosure.....	59
3.2.4.5 Corporate Conflict Prevention and Resolution .....	60
3.2.4.6 Compliance and Enforcement.....	61
3.2.4.7 Governance of Stakeholder Relations.....	62
3.2.4.8 Role of Government in Corporate Governance .....	63
3.3 Conclusion .....	64
Chapter 4.....	67
State-owned Enterprise Governance in New Zealand .....	67
4.1 Introduction to New Zealand and its State-owned Enterprises .....	67
4.1.2 Why New Zealand?.....	67
4.1.3 History of State-owned Enterprises in New Zealand.....	68
4.2 Overview of New Zealand's Corporate Governance Structure .....	74
4.2.1 The State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986.....	74
4.2.2 The Companies Act 1993.....	76
4.2.3 The Public Audit Act 2001 .....	77
4.2.4 Financial Markets Authority Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines .....	79
4.2.4.1 Ethical Standards .....	79
4.2.4.2 Board Composition and Performance .....	79
4.2.4.3 Board Committees .....	80
4.2.4.4 Reporting and Disclosure.....	80
4.2.4.5 Remuneration.....	81
4.2.4.6 Risk Management .....	81
4.2.4.7 Auditors.....	82
4.2.4.8 Shareholder Relations .....	82



4.2.4.9 Stakeholder Interests .....	82
4.3 How New Zealand has infused the OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-Owned Enterprises into its corporate governance structure .....	83
4.4 Conclusion .....	84
Chapter 5.....	87
Conclusion and Recommendations.....	87
5.1 Introduction.....	87
5.2 Conclusion .....	87
5.3 Recommendations.....	89
5.3.1 Insulate State-Owned Enterprises from Excessive State Intervention .....	89
5.3.2 Enhance Transparency and Disclosure .....	90
5.3.3 Strengthen Powers of the Comptroller and Auditor-General.....	91
Bibliography .....	92



## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

It is a difficult and daunting task to try and trace back the actual origins of corporate governance, but what is clear is that it has been in existence for a very long time. It is made clear by some authors that corporate governance as a practice has been in existence since the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>1</sup> The case was not always the same for every country as different countries have different points in history that sparked the actual practice of corporate governance. China's corporate governance can be traced back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This is a period of interest for China because it was in this period that it began its industrialisation and in which it also attempted to transfer Western institutions into a non-Western economy.<sup>2</sup> In the United States (US) corporate governance was brought to the official reform agenda by the Securities Exchange Commission (SEC) in the mid-1970s and it was in this period that the term first appeared in the Federal Register, which is the official journal of the federal government.<sup>3</sup>

At the core of every successful corporation, there is a dire need for good corporate governance practices be it for the purpose of attracting investors or the maximisation of profits. Corporate governance became an area of concern mainly in instances of economic crises, these include the Asian crisis of 1997-2000 which devastated some of the world's most successful economies.<sup>4</sup> The other global financial crisis that brought serious attention to the realm of corporate governance was that of 2007-2008. This crisis has been termed the most serious financial crisis since the great depression and most scholars implicate corporate governance as one of the main reasons for the crisis.<sup>5</sup> This led to a huge increase in the importance of corporate governance and it also became an area of concern in African countries.

Corporate governance has no definitive definition but it has been defined as the way in which companies are directed and controlled.<sup>6</sup> The concept of governance is merely to summarise

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<sup>1</sup> Morck R & Steier L *The Global History of Corporate Governance: An Introduction* (2005) 11.

<sup>2</sup> Morck R & Steier L *The Global History of Corporate Governance: An Introduction* (2005) 9.

<sup>3</sup> Cheffins B *The History of Corporate Governance* (2012) 2.

<sup>4</sup> Singh A 'Corporate Governance, Corporate Finance and Stock Markets in Emerging Countries' (2003) 3 (1) *Journal of Corporate Law Studies* 41.

<sup>5</sup> Kumar J and Singh J 'Global Financial Crisis: Corporate Governance Failures and Lessons' (2013) 4 (1) *Journal of Finance, Accounting and Management* 22.

<sup>6</sup> Mongalo T 'The emergence of corporate governance as a fundamental research topic in South Africa' (2003) 120 *The South African Law Journal* 173.

the means by which organisations conduct themselves.<sup>7</sup> Other authors have further provided that corporate governance includes an environment of trust, ethics, moral values and confidence as a synergic effort of all constituent parts, that is, stakeholders including government, the general public, service providers, professionals, and the corporate sector.<sup>8</sup> The concept has also been defined as a set of processes, customs, values, codes, policies, law and structures governing the way a corporation is directed, controlled and held accountable.<sup>9</sup> The increased importance of corporate governance led to increased efforts worldwide to adopt measures that are in line with those implemented by developed economies. However, the same measures cannot be readily implemented in developing countries.

In order to understand the origins of state-owned enterprises, it is important that one understands the history of the modern day corporation. Corporations are a product of a process that began in England as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In the beginning, ownership was divided among a few individuals who often participated in management.<sup>10</sup> At this time most businesses existed through partnerships which were basically the only form available for most types of businesses.<sup>11</sup> Then one of the first corporations came into existence and this was the British East India Company at the end of 1600. It was a joint-stock company that was granted an English Royal Charter by Queen Elizabeth I with the intention of favouring trade privileges in India.<sup>12</sup> During this period, corporations were quasi-governmental institutions that were chartered by the crown for specific purposes.<sup>13</sup>

This marked the first time a corporation was formed as well as the gathering of investors in order to satisfy the extensive capital requirements of the operations. The state through the queen and kings in other countries closely monitored these corporations and would revoke the charters if they were not happy about the way they were being run.<sup>14</sup> If one pays close attention, this period is also indicative of the early signs of state intervention in the running of

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<sup>7</sup> Maune A 'Corporate Governance in Zimbabwe: An Overview of its Current State' (2015) 5 (1) *Asian Economic and Financial Review* 168.

<sup>8</sup> Crowther D and Seifi S *Corporate Governance and International Business* (2011) 11.

<sup>9</sup> Corporate Secretaries International Association 'State-owned enterprises corporate governance framework needs to be enforced' available at <http://www.csiaorg.com/State-owned-enterprises-corporate-governance-framework-needs-to-be-enforced> (accessed 20 February 2015) .

<sup>10</sup> Braendle V and Kostyuk A *Corporate Governance* (2007) 3.

<sup>11</sup> Ekelund R and Tollison R 'Mercantilist origins of the corporation' (1980) 11 (2) *The Bell Journal of Economics* 716.

<sup>12</sup> Ekelund R and Tollison R 'Mercantilist origins of the corporation' (1980) 11 (2) *The Bell Journal of Economics* 715.

<sup>13</sup> Braendle V and Kostyuk A *Corporate Governance* (2007) 3.

<sup>14</sup> Braendle V and Kostyuk A *Corporate Governance* (2007) 3.

corporations. The king or queen granted charters for operation and they had to be satisfied that company objectives were being maintained for the company to remain operational. This suggests that the state was to an extent in control of these corporations even though they were mostly run by the funds of private individuals. This might have paved way for the modern day state-owned enterprise (SOE) that was championed by the government of Margaret Thatcher centuries later.<sup>15</sup>

For the purposes of this paper, state-owned enterprises are entities that are established by the central and local governments and whose supervisory officials are from the government.<sup>16</sup> It has been noted that most African countries still have large numbers of state-owned enterprises operating in their economic sectors and these form an integral part of overall economic activity.<sup>17</sup> In Zimbabwe there are 78 state-owned enterprises which operate in an array of economic sectors from energy, water and agriculture to transport.<sup>18</sup> It is then very important that these enterprises always perform at their optimum levels as they are responsible for much of the well-being of the population since they are the biggest employers and service providers.

Since the well-being of many African nations is to an extent dependant on proper performance of state-owned enterprises, it is crucial that they are managed well.<sup>19</sup> It has been conceded that firms that have good corporate governance norms tend to perform better than those that do not.<sup>20</sup> This means that the success of the enterprises will depend on the corporate governance mechanisms in place as well their implementation. The Zimbabwean government has in the past made efforts to ensure that sufficient corporate governance mechanisms are in place but these seem to not have been sufficient as evidenced by the large scale failures of state-owned enterprises.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Megginson W and Netter J 'From State to Market: A Survey of Empirical Studies on Privatization' (2001) XXXIX *Journal of Economic Literature* 323.

<sup>16</sup> OECD Working Group on Privatisation and Corporate Governance of State Owned Assets- *State owned enterprises in China: reviewing the evidence* (2009) 5.

<sup>17</sup> Corrigan T *Corporate Governance in Africa's State-Owned Enterprises: perspectives on an Evolving System* (2014) 1.

<sup>18</sup> Balbuena S *State-owned enterprises in Southern Africa: A stock taking of reforms and challenges* (2014) 49.

<sup>19</sup> Nunnenkemp P 'State Enterprises in Developing Countries' (1986) 21(4) *Intereconomics* 186.

<sup>20</sup> Todorovic I 'Impact of Corporate Governance on Performance of Companies' (2013) 9 (2) *Montenegrin Journal of Economics* 47.

<sup>21</sup> Corporate Secretaries International Association 'State-owned enterprises corporate governance framework needs to be enforced' available at <http://www.csiaorg.com/State-owned-enterprises-corporate-governance-framework-needs-to-be-enforced> (accessed 20 February 2015).

In Zimbabwe corporate governance is generally regulated by the Companies Act,<sup>22</sup> the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange Act<sup>23</sup> and the listing requirements, but these are applicable only to listed companies, the Public Finance Management Act<sup>24</sup> (PFMA) as well as other rules of professional bodies such as the Institute of Directors which are not mandatory in nature. The Corporate Governance and Remuneration Policy Framework for Chief Executive Officers of Parastatals, State Enterprises and Local Authorities was introduced in 2010 pursuant to corruption and unethical behaviour.<sup>25</sup> The Institute of Directors Zimbabwe (IoDZ) has led efforts to introduce a corporate governance code for both the public and private sector in the form of the recently launched National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe (ZIMCODE). Before the code was launched the private sector opted to follow the provisions of the King II Code of South Africa and those of the Cadbury Report of England but both of these were not uniformly applied.<sup>26</sup> Some of the aspects highlighted in these codes may be of importance in state-owned enterprises as there is need to incorporate some of the principles.

The abovementioned Acts and codes show efforts to regulate corporate entities, but the Zimbabwean corporate sphere has been muddled with scandals so that confidence in corporations, be it parastatals or private companies, has been lost by the general public. The most recent scandals include those of parastatal bosses mainly the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC), which is the country's main broadcaster and that of Premier Service Medical Aid Society (PSMAS), which handles medical aid facilities for most civil servants.<sup>27</sup> It came to light that these persons had been ridiculously remunerating themselves while the majority of the employees were either not paid for months or were being paid negligible amounts of money.<sup>28</sup> The PSMAS chief executive officer was earning a monthly salary of US\$ 210 000 amounting to a total of US\$ 500 000 allowances included.<sup>29</sup> Meanwhile the whole board was taking about US\$ 1.3 million in monthly salaries while the medical aid

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<sup>22</sup> Companies Act (Chapter 24:03).

<sup>23</sup> Zimbabwe Stock Exchange Act (Chapter 24:18).

<sup>24</sup> Public Finance Management Act (Chapter 22:19) 11 of 2009.

<sup>25</sup> Zvavahera P and Ndoda G 'Corporate Governance and ethical behaviour: The case of the Zimbabwean Broadcasting Corporation' (2014) 9 *Journal of Academic and Business Ethics* 3.

<sup>26</sup> Obert S, Suppiah SDK, Tendai MJ, Desderio CM and Martin D 'Corporate board failure in Zimbabwe: Have non-executive directors gone to sleep?' (2014) 16 *IOSR Journal of Business and Management* 78.

<sup>27</sup> Obert S et al 'Corporate board failure in Zimbabwe: Have non-executive directors gone to sleep?' (2014) 16 *IOSR Journal of Business and Management* 78.

<sup>28</sup> Kajau S 'Clean up the mess, restore sanity at PSMAS' *The Standard* 15 December 2013 available at <http://www.thestandard.co.zw/2013/12/15/clean-mess-restore-sanity-psmas/> (accessed 20 February 2015).

<sup>29</sup> Ncube F and Maunganidze L 'Corporate Governance and executive Compensation in Zimbabwe State Owned Enterprises: A Case of Institutionalised Predation' (2014) 4 (6) *Management* 134.

society owed US\$ 3 million to service providers.<sup>30</sup> In addition to this there has been media exposure of major corruption in public and private bodies, flouting of tender procedures and other undesirable activities.<sup>31</sup> These and other scandals raised serious concern among other professionals which then led to the drafting of a corporate governance code by the IoDZ.

The above mentioned corporate governance failures have reduced investor confidence in Zimbabwe and even the locals have lost faith in the system.<sup>32</sup> It has been reported that between July 2011 and July 2013 a total of 711 companies had closed their doors and about 300 were under judicial management.<sup>33</sup> This situation becomes worse when these failures are in state-owned enterprises which are supposed to be the major players in the economy but they are always dependent on state funding because of inabilities in funding themselves.<sup>34</sup> According to a paper published in 2012 only one out of the six major state owned enterprises was performing well with the rest either in need of government funding or in a state of limbo.<sup>35</sup> The failure of these enterprises has been due to poor economic planning and restructuring, but there also has been a good measure of bad corporate governance practices.<sup>36</sup>

It is of great importance that when measures that have been implemented in one nation seem to be failing time be taken to look at other nations that have had a considerable amount of success in the same field. This study will examine how New Zealand has managed to create successful SOEs. Over the years, New Zealand has managed to implement measures that were aimed towards improving efficiency and governance, and increasing the competitiveness of its SOEs.<sup>37</sup> Zimbabwe is very much in need of measures that are aimed towards the same goals.

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<sup>30</sup> Rusvingo S 'The Salarygate Scandal in Zimbabwean Parastatals Sector: Another Darkside of the Nation' (2014) 14 *Global Journal of Management and Business Research -A: Administration and Management* 20.

<sup>31</sup> Mugabe T 'Zimbabwe: Code of corporate Governance Crafted' *The Herald* 29 May 2014 available at <http://www.herald.co.zw/code-of-corporate-governance-crafted/> (accessed 10 February 2015).

<sup>32</sup> Ncube F and Maunganidze L 'Corporate Governance and executive Compensation in Zimbabwe State Owned Enterprises: A Case of Institutionalised Predation' (2014) 4 (6) *Management* 131.

<sup>33</sup> Ncube F and Maunganidze L 'Corporate Governance and executive Compensation in Zimbabwe State Owned Enterprises: A Case of Institutionalised Predation' (2014) 4 (6) *Management* 131.

<sup>34</sup> Mambo E 'State enterprises bleed to death' *Zimbabwe Independent* 24 October 2014 available at <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/2014/10/24/state-enterprises-bleed-death/> (accessed 11 March 2015).

<sup>35</sup> Zhou G 'Three Decades of Public Enterprise Restructuring in Zimbabwe a Will-Of-The-Wisp Chase? (2012) 2 (20) *International Journal of Humanities and Science* 181.

<sup>36</sup> Zhou G 'Three Decades of Public Enterprise Restructuring in Zimbabwe a Will-Of-The-Wisp Chase? (2012) 2 (20) *International Journal of Humanities and Science* 182.

<sup>37</sup> Mulgan R *Politics in New Zealand* 3 ed (1997) 79.

New Zealand has been a member of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) since 1973.<sup>38</sup> Its membership is of relevance for this study because the OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-Owned Enterprises will be used in this analysis and it is important to compare to a country that applies the guidelines.<sup>39</sup> It is noteworthy that in 2010 New Zealand's SOEs had a combined asset value of \$ 53 billion and revenues of over \$ 13 billion.<sup>40</sup> This level of success makes an analysis of how this has been achieved imperative. According to Transparency International New Zealand's public sector had the second lowest levels of corruption in 2014.<sup>41</sup> The low levels of corruption can be attributed to government openness and effectiveness among other factors.<sup>42</sup>

Before the New Zealand government formed the modern day SOE it owned a range of essential commercial trading activities such as coal mining, petrochemicals, banks and insurance companies.<sup>43</sup> These were state run organisations that had boards of directors at their helm whose powers and functions could be reviewed by the responsible Minister.<sup>44</sup> In essence, this meant that Ministers retained the authority to make decisions. The government owned commercial trading activities were responsible for the delivery of social and regulatory functions.<sup>45</sup>

In the 1980s the New Zealand economy was underperforming and the treasury undertook an analysis into the root causes of the economic downturn.<sup>46</sup> This analysis revealed that the ailing government commercial trading activities were contributing extensively to the economic downturn.<sup>47</sup> The analysis proved that the entities were poorly governed, consumed

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<sup>38</sup> OECD 'List of OECD member countries- Ratification of the Convention on the OECD' available at <http://www.oecd.org/about/membersandpartners/list-oecd-member-countries.htm> (accessed 12 October 2015).

<sup>39</sup> Financial Markets Authority 'Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines' 2014.

<sup>40</sup> TEARA 'Story: State-owned enterprises' available at <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/state-owned-enterprises/page-1> (accessed 13 October 2015).

<sup>41</sup> Transparency International 'Corruption Perceptions Index 2014: Results' available at <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2014/results> (accessed 12 October 2015).

<sup>42</sup> Transparency International 'What makes New Zealand, Denmark, Finland, Sweden and others 'cleaner' than most countries' available at <http://blog.transparency.org/2011/12/07/what-makes-new-zealand-denmark-finland-sweden-and-others-%E2%80%9Ccleaner%E2%80%9D-than-most-countries/> (accessed 13 October 2015).

<sup>43</sup> The Board Room Practice Limited 'Corporate Governance in new Zealand Government-owned Companies: A Stock-Take' (2005) 1.

<sup>44</sup> The Board Room Practice Limited 'Corporate Governance in new Zealand Government-owned Companies: A Stock-Take' (2005) 1.

<sup>45</sup> Luke B *Strategic entrepreneurship in New Zealand's state-owned enterprises: Underlying elements and financial implications* (Unpublished PhD thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2009) 64.

<sup>46</sup> New Zealand Treasury 'State-owned Enterprises: History of Policy Development and Implementation' (1996) 6.

<sup>47</sup> New Zealand Treasury 'State-owned Enterprises: History of Policy Development and Implementation' (1996) 8.

large amounts of capital and other resources and produced low to negative returns.<sup>48</sup> At this time there was little or no mention of corporate governance as a field of enquiry despite the presence of government commercial trading activities.<sup>49</sup>

In light of the above circumstances, the New Zealand treasury decided that the limited liability company would be the most effective form for the management of government commercial trading activities.<sup>50</sup> This led to the corporatisation of various government departments that had a strong commercial function in an effort to steer them away from ministerial control and government interference.<sup>51</sup> This marked the formation of the modern day SOE which was brought into existence by the State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986 and was to be governed by the Companies Act 1953 in an effort to emulate the private sector.<sup>52</sup> The Companies Act would form a legal basis for managerial autonomy.<sup>53</sup>

Under this regime the primary function of SOEs is to act as successful business enterprises that generate profits.<sup>54</sup> Each SOE has two shares, one held by the Minister of SOEs and the other one is held by the Minister of Finance on behalf of the crown with the former being the executive shareholder for day-to-day overview.<sup>55</sup> The Minister of SOEs formed two advisory groups in addition to the usual advice from the treasury. One was the SOE Unit which reported directly to the Minister as part of his office.<sup>56</sup> The other was the SOE Steering Committee which was made up of highly skilled directors and it provided the Minister with informed advice on governance and board appointment issues.<sup>57</sup> Currently New Zealand utilises a centralised ownership model in the form of the Crown Ownership Management

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<sup>48</sup> Mulgan R *Politics in New Zealand* 3 ed (1997) 79.

<sup>49</sup> The Board Room Practice Limited 'Corporate Governance in new Zealand Government-owned Companies: A Stock-Take' (2005) 2.

<sup>50</sup> The Board Room Practice Limited 'Corporate Governance in new Zealand Government-owned Companies: A Stock-Take' (2005) 2.

<sup>51</sup> Luke B *Strategic entrepreneurship in New Zealand's state-owned enterprises: Underlying elements and financial implications* (Unpublished PhD thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2009) 68.

<sup>52</sup> Mulgan R *Politics in New Zealand* 3 ed (1997) 80.

<sup>53</sup> New Zealand Treasury 'State-owned Enterprises: History of Policy Development and Implementation' (1996) 18.

<sup>54</sup> Mulgan R *Politics in New Zealand* 3 ed (1997) 79.

<sup>55</sup> Luke B *Strategic entrepreneurship in New Zealand's state-owned enterprises: Underlying elements and financial implications* (Unpublished PhD thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2009) 74.

<sup>56</sup> The Board Room Practice Limited 'Corporate Governance in new Zealand Government-owned Companies: A Stock-Take' (2005) 3.

<sup>57</sup> New Zealand Treasury 'State-owned Enterprises: History of Policy Development and Implementation' (1996) 78.



Unit which is an integral part of the treasury that brings together ownership monitoring, appointments and governance functions of SOEs.<sup>58</sup>

New Zealand has moved towards very progressive SOE reforms that can provide valuable lessons for Zimbabwe. This paper will attempt to derive from these reforms and provide recommendations on the way forward for Zimbabwe.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

Corporate governance failures have been rampant in Zimbabwe's state owned enterprises and it is necessary to assess if the measures in place are adequate to address the situation at hand.

In-order to respond to the above, this paper will explore answers to the following questions:

- What is corporate governance and what is the importance of state owned enterprises?
- What international best practices are available and is Zimbabwean legislation in tandem with them?
- What has been done by other nations that faced the same predicament?
- What measures can be adopted to improve the current situation?

## **1.3 Significance of Study**

There has been a considerable amount of discussions on the state of corporate governance in Zimbabwe. The private sector has led efforts in conjunction with the government to address the problems that have been hanging over corporate governance mechanisms, therefore there is a need to assess if these efforts are fitting for the problem at hand. This paper will also shed light on the issue of political appointments and connections in SOE leadership which has largely contributed to the failures of these firms. The economic revival of the nation is dependent on proper corporate governance and this paper shall assess the strengths and weaknesses of the measures to be implemented and provide recommendations where possible.

## **1.4 Methodology**

In assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the Zimbabwean corporate governance structure, the researcher shall mainly use primary and secondary sources. Primary and secondary sources such as legislation, journal articles, reports and newspaper articles shall be

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<sup>58</sup> OECD *State-Owned Enterprises Governance Reform: An Inventory of Recent Change* (2005) 17.

used. Comparative research will be made to the nation of New Zealand, which had to adopt measures that would create a conducive environment for SOEs to operate successfully. International and regional instruments that provide principles of good corporate governance for state-owned enterprises shall be used to establish international best practice. The methodology shall also include the use of internet sources.

## **1.5 Chapter Structure**

### **Chapter 1**

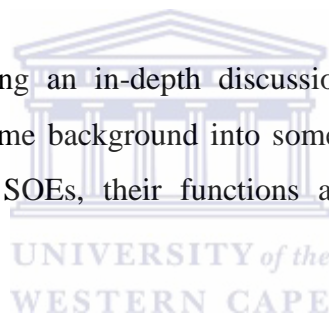
This chapter gave an introduction of the topic, an overview of corporate governance concepts and a brief overview of SOEs and their importance. In this chapter, the background of the Zimbabwean corporate governance failures and New Zealand's SOE reforms was also explained.

### **Chapter 2**

This chapter begins by providing an in-depth discussion of how corporate governance developed, its definitions and some background into some of its theories. The chapter also provides a broad overview of SOEs, their functions as well as their contributions to development.

### **Chapter 3**

This chapter focuses on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Guidelines on Corporate Governance for State-owned Enterprises. These have significant relevance to non-OECD countries as they provide a yardstick in terms of successful SOE corporate governance. This is done in order to assess if Zimbabwe has adopted any of the guidelines which reflect international best practices. This chapter seeks to determine if the current legislative regime fully addresses the gaps that were apparent in corporate governance, this is done by assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the current regime against the abovementioned principles of the OECD. It also highlights the fact that one of the major concerns in SOE governance is that of political connections. Appointments have been linked to politics and this remains a major concern as 'the powers that be' have immense control of every aspect of government.



## **Chapter 4**

In this chapter there is a comparative analysis of New Zealand's corporate governance reforms and structure to that of Zimbabwe. This country has experienced a considerable measure of failures in its government trading activities and these had a lot to do with the nations' corporate governance mechanisms. New Zealand is a valuable comparator because its SOE reforms embody the OECD guidelines and its SOEs are now successful.

## **Chapter 5**

This chapter gives a conclusion on the assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of Zimbabwe's corporate governance structure. In this chapter, recommendations are also given on strengthening the corporate governance regime and the way forward.

### **1.6 Conclusion**

It is important that when enterprises that are crucial to a country's economy fail an assessment be made in order to establish the causes. In this case, an assessment of the governance framework will be made in order to establish whether it is adequate or not. There will also be a need to analyse what other nations have done in order to overcome the same obstacles and in this case New Zealand will be examined.

The next chapter will discuss corporate governance and state-owned enterprises. This will provide insight on what corporate governance is and why there is a need to ensure that state-owned enterprises are properly governed.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE IN STATE-OWNED ENTERPRISES**

#### **2.1 Introduction to Corporate Governance and State-owned Enterprises**

The previous chapter highlighted that Zimbabwe has a large number of SOEs and for this reason it is very important that they are properly governed in order to ensure their profitability. This links to this chapter which will mainly emphasise on the importance of SOEs. The beginning of this chapter will broadly define corporate governance as well as provide insight on some of the theories of corporate governance. After that, the chapter will define SOEs and provide their history and the reasons for the formation. The chapter will also examine the contributions to the development of SOEs and provide an overview of the history and current state of SOEs in Zimbabwe. This will set the background for the chapters to follow as it will provide insight on the importance of SOEs in Zimbabwe.

##### **2.1.1 Rise to prominence of Corporate Governance**

Corporate governance has been in existence for a long time, but prior to the 1990s the term 'corporate governance' was rarely used, before this the nature of corporate governance was somewhat different from what is known today.<sup>59</sup> Therefore, there is no definitive historical treatment of corporate governance since the subject is immense.<sup>60</sup> Some authors opine that corporate governance has been in existence since the time where there was a possibility of conflict between investors and managers.<sup>61</sup>

Other authors have also stated that corporate governance has been in existence since the time of the formation of the East India Company, the Hudson's Bay Company, the Levant Company and other major chartered companies that were formed in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>62</sup> It can however be deduced that for most nations, more or less the same reasons exist for the rise to prominence of corporate governance. In France corporate governance was motivated by the implosion of the Mississippi Company in 1720 and in Germany it was

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<sup>59</sup> Mongalo T 'The emergence of corporate governance as a fundamental research topic in South Africa' (2003) 120 *SALJ* 174.

<sup>60</sup> Cheffins B *The History of Corporate Governance* (2012) 1.

<sup>61</sup> Wells H 'The Birth of Corporate Governance' (2010) 33 (4) *Seattle University Law Review* 1251.

<sup>62</sup> Cheffins B *The History of Corporate Governance* (2012) 1.

partially motivated by the need to protect small shareholders and the public from self-serving insiders.<sup>63</sup>

Numerous authors differ on this subject, but what is clear is that corporate governance has been in existence for a long time, even at times when the term was not in much use. There are also different interpretations of the term, but there is some consensus as to what corporate governance actually concerns and this will be covered in the definitions section of the chapter.

### **2.1.2 Evolution of the concept of Corporate Governance**

The concept of corporate governance was widely adopted in different parts of the world, but with major variations because of the different circumstances in each economy.<sup>64</sup> As a result, different corporate governance frameworks were developed. In the development of this concept, two main approaches of corporate governance that are differentiated by the legal system at work in each country can be identified.<sup>65</sup>

In civil law jurisdictions such as France, Germany and Italy corporate governance was developed in a manner that was focused on stakeholders.<sup>66</sup> For these countries corporate governance was to balance the interests of a number of key groups such as managers, employees, creditors, suppliers, customers and the community at large. The approach followed by these countries is known as the insider model of corporate control as it recognises that the greatest control in a firm is held by those that are close to the day to day activities of the firm.<sup>67</sup>

In common law jurisdictions such as the United Kingdom and the USA corporate governance development was shareholder orientated.<sup>68</sup> This meant that corporations were supposed to achieve the objectives that were set by their owners and management could be held

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<sup>63</sup> Morck R and Steier L *The Global History of Corporate Governance: An Introduction* (2005) 11, 13.

<sup>64</sup> Mulili B and Wong P 'Corporate Governance Practices in Developing Countries: The case of Kenya' (2011) 2 (1) *International Journal of Business Administration* 15 .

<sup>65</sup> Mulili B and Wong P 'Corporate Governance Practices in Developing Countries: The case of Kenya' (2011) 2 (1) *International Journal of Business Administration* 15.

<sup>66</sup> Bruner C *Corporate Governance in the Common-Law World: The Political Foundations of Shareholder Power* (2013) 7.

<sup>67</sup> Tully S *Research Handbook on Corporate Legal Responsibility* (2005) 36.

<sup>68</sup> Bruner C *Corporate Governance in the Common-Law World: The Political Foundations of Shareholder Power* (2013) 7.

responsible for attaining the firm's goals.<sup>69</sup> This approach, known as the outsider model of corporate control recognises the gap between management and the shareholders of a firm.<sup>70</sup>

As economies progressed it was later on realised that the outsider model of corporate control was not sustainable in the modern world. This led to the gradual acceptance of the fact that corporations are viewed as a nexus of contracts with their stakeholders.<sup>71</sup> Society and government create an environment in which corporations can fulfil their social responsibility and tax obligations.<sup>72</sup>

### **2.1.3 Definitions of Corporate Governance**

Corporate governance has been defined as “the process of supervision and control intended to ensure that the company's management acts in accordance with the interests of shareholders.”<sup>73</sup> This definition was given support by institutional investors and they are in agreement with the narrow interpretation of corporate governance which concerns itself mainly with the rights of shareholders, without much regard for those of other parties.

Another author opined that in corporate governance “the governance role is not concerned with the running of the business of the company per se, but with giving overall direction to the enterprise, overseeing and controlling the executive actions of management and with satisfying legitimate expectations of accountability and regulations by interests beyond the corporate boundaries.”<sup>74</sup> This definition is much broader than the one above as it includes the aspect of accountability to interests beyond the corporate boundaries and these are other stakeholders.

In addition to the above definitions is another that states that “...the governance of an enterprise is the sum of those activities that make up the internal regulation of the business in

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<sup>69</sup> Mulili B and Wong P ‘Corporate Governance Practices in Developing Countries: The case of Kenya’ (2011) 2 (1) *International Journal of Business Administration* 15.

<sup>70</sup> Tully S *Research Handbook on Corporate Legal Responsibility* (2005) 36.

<sup>71</sup> Razaee Z *Corporate Governance Post-Sarbanes-Oxley: Regulations, Requirements and Integrated Processes* (2007) 8.

<sup>72</sup> Razaee Z *Corporate Governance Post-Sarbanes-Oxley: Regulations, Requirements and Integrated Processes* (2007) 8.

<sup>73</sup> Solomon J *Corporate Governance and Accountability* 2 ed (2007) 13.

<sup>74</sup> Feizizadeh A ‘Corporate Governance: Frameworks’ (2012) 5 (9) *Indian Journal of Science and Technology* 3354.

compliance with the obligations placed on the firm by legislation, ownership and control. It incorporates trusteeship of assets, their management and their deployment.”<sup>75</sup>

There is contrast between the narrow and broad definitions of corporate governance as their focus areas tend to differ. The narrow definition, as mentioned above, concerns itself with the rights of shareholders whereas the broad definitions take into account all stakeholders<sup>76</sup> such as managers, employees, creditors, suppliers and the greater community.<sup>77</sup> The broadest of definitions consider that companies are accountable to the whole of society, future generations and the natural world.<sup>78</sup> These definitions are connected to the models of corporate governance mentioned above.<sup>79</sup> The narrow definition describes the insider model while the broad definition describes the outsider model. In cases where SOEs are concerned it will be important that the stakeholder approach be given preference as these companies should be of service to the general public.

Corporate Governance has also been defined as a set of processes, customs, values, codes, policies, law and structures governing the way a corporation is directed, controlled and held accountable.<sup>80</sup> A definition that would be favourable for SOEs provides that corporate governance is defined as “the system of checks and balances, both internal and external to companies, which ensures that companies discharge their accountability to all their stakeholders and act in a socially responsible way in all areas of their business activity.”<sup>81</sup> For the purposes of SOEs parties such as employees, managers, creditors, suppliers and the society at large should be considered stakeholders. The inclusion of these parties is in line with the definition of a stakeholder which provides that stakeholders are “those groups who affect and/or are affected by the organisation and its activities.”<sup>82</sup>

### **2.1.4 Theories of Corporate Governance**

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<sup>75</sup> Feizizadeh A ‘Corporate Governance: Frameworks’ (2012) 5 (9) *Indian Journal of Science and Technology* 3354.

<sup>76</sup> Solomon J *Corporate Governance and Accountability* 2 ed (2007) 14.

<sup>77</sup> Bruner C *Corporate Governance in the Common-Law World: The Political Foundations of Shareholder Power* (2013) 213.

<sup>78</sup> Solomon J *Corporate Governance and Accountability* 2 ed (2007) 14.

<sup>79</sup> See 2.1.2.

<sup>80</sup> Corporate Secretaries International Association ‘State-owned enterprises corporate governance framework needs to be enforced’ available at <http://www.csi.org.com/State-owned-enterprises-corporate-governance-framework-needs-to-be-enforced> (accessed 20 February 2015).

<sup>81</sup> Solomon J *Corporate Governance and Accountability* 2 ed (2007) 14.

<sup>82</sup> Mook L ‘Integrating and Reporting an Organisation’s Economic, Social and Environmental Performance. The Expanded Value Added Statement’ in Schaltegger S, Bennett M and Burritt R (eds) *Sustainability Accounting and Reporting* (2006) 284.

In order for one to fully understand the concept of corporate governance, it is also necessary that they understand the different theories. This section will provide insight on some but not all of the theories, that may have relevance to SOEs.

#### **2.1.4.1 The Agency Theory**

In this theory, managers of the company are defined as ‘agents’ and the shareholder as the ‘principal’, in a relationship where the shareholder delegates day to day decision making in the company to directors who are the agents.<sup>83</sup> The agency theory leads to the need to harmonise the interests of managers and shareholders for the objective of company value to be achieved.<sup>84</sup> The firm is not a natural person but a legal fiction, where individual interests are brought into symmetry within a framework of contractual obligations.<sup>85</sup> These contractual relationships are not only with employees but with other parties such as suppliers, creditors and customers.<sup>86</sup>

The major problem of this system is that, the agents do not always make decisions that are in the best interests of the principal as there is an assumption that their goals differ.<sup>87</sup> This results from the fact that there might be a large number of shareholders and complex operations and the management which has the expertise to run the company increasingly gains effective control and this puts them in a position where they are bound to pursue their own agendas.<sup>88</sup> One author stated that it cannot be expected that those who manage other people’s money will treat the money as their own and that waste and negligence are always present, more or less, in every business.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Feizizadeh A ‘Corporate Governance: Frameworks’ (2012) 5 (9) *Indian Journal of Science and Technology* 3355.

<sup>84</sup> Nicolae B and Violeta A ‘Theories of Corporate Governance’ 23 (1) (2013) *Studia Universitatis “Vasile Goldis” Arad Economics Series* 118.

<sup>85</sup> Yusoff W and Alhaji I ‘Insight of Corporate Governance Theories’ 1 (1) (2012) *Journal of Business and Management* 53.

<sup>86</sup> Yusoff W and Alhaji I ‘Insight of Corporate Governance Theories’ 1 (1) (2012) *Journal of Business and Management* 53.

<sup>87</sup> Feizizadeh A ‘Corporate Governance: Frameworks’ (2012) 5 (9) *Indian Journal of Science and Technology* 3355.

<sup>88</sup> Hamid A ‘Corporate governance theories’ available at <http://ari-glcrc.blogspot.com/2011/12/corporate-governance-theories.html> (accessed 10 May 2015).

<sup>89</sup> Tricker R *Corporate Governance: Principles, Policies and Practices* 3 ed (2015) 59.



It is for the above reasons that it has been suggested that it is necessary to implement measures to monitor managers, even though some of them might be costly. A direct way of monitoring that is not costly is shareholder participation in voting.<sup>90</sup>

This theory focuses on shareholders and managers only and this is not ideal in SOEs, where focus should be on all stakeholders. It recognises that managers are accountable mainly to shareholders, which will not be true for a SOE, which would have an array of stakeholders. Another questionable aspect of this theory is the persons to whom directors owe a duty to, directors should owe their duties to the company and not a select party.<sup>91</sup> This is in line with the shareholder primacy model and will mean that the employees, environment and the community at large will suffer, which makes this theory ineffective for SOE governance.<sup>92</sup>

#### **2.1.4.2 The Stewardship Theory**

This theory assumes that managers are faithful, responsive and effective people and therefore, they are good administrators of company resources.<sup>93</sup> Managers and executives are the stewards working for the shareholders that protect and make profits for the shareholders.<sup>94</sup> The behaviour of the steward is organisational and has higher utility than individualistic self-serving behaviour and it will not depart from the interests of the organisation because the steward is focused on its goals.<sup>95</sup> According to this theory, where shareholder wealth is maximised, the steward's utilities are maximised too because organisational success will serve most requirements and stewards will have a clear mission.<sup>96</sup> The premise of this theory is that managers are faithful and effective, and when they do their best to secure profits for shareholders the company will run efficiently.

This theory is almost the opposite of the agency theory in that the agency theory suggests that managers or employees can be self-interested whereas, the stewardship theory assumes that managers will be faithful and are good administrators. The stewardship theory suggests the

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<sup>90</sup> Solomon J *Corporate Governance and Accountability* 2 ed (2007) 18.

<sup>91</sup> Cahn A and Donald D *Comparative Company Law: Text and Cases on the Laws Governing Corporations in Germany, the UK and the USA* (2010) 337.

<sup>92</sup> Cahn A and Donald D *Comparative Company Law: Text and Cases on the Laws Governing Corporations in Germany, the UK and the USA* (2010) 337.

<sup>93</sup> Nicolae B and Violeta A 'Theories of Corporate Governance' 23 (1) (2013) *Studia Universitatis "Vasile Goldis" Arad Economics Series* 120.

<sup>94</sup> Abdullah H and Valentine B 'Fundamental and Ethics Theories of Corporate Governance' (2009) 4 *Middle Eastern Finance and Economics* 90.

<sup>95</sup> Yusoff W and Alhaji I 'Insight of Corporate Governance Theories' 1 (1) (2012) *Journal of Business and Management* 57.

<sup>96</sup> Yusoff W and Alhaji I 'Insight of Corporate Governance Theories' 1 (1) (2012) *Journal of Business and Management* 57,

unifying of the positions of Chairman and CEO so as to reduce agency costs and have greater role as stewards in the firm.<sup>97</sup> In modern day corporate governance this has been discouraged and more so in SOEs that have been performing badly due to the conduct of those in control. This is contrary to the governance objectives in SOEs, especially on the African continent where corruption is rife. It would also be naive to assume that managers are faithful and not self-serving in a country like Zimbabwe, where personal greed has become a common trend.

### **2.1.4.3 The Stakeholder Theory**

The stakeholder theory has developed gradually from the 1970s. Its first exposition was a general theory of the firm that incorporated corporate accountability to a wide range of stakeholders.<sup>98</sup> This theory has probably received the most attention in recent times as the role of the company came under scrutiny and revision. A stakeholder can be defined as any person or group which can affect or be affected by the actions of a business.<sup>99</sup> This includes employees, suppliers, creditors and the wider community and competitors. The stakeholder theory is concerned with values and beliefs about the appropriate relationship between the individual, the enterprise and the state.<sup>100</sup>

It has been argued that this theory focuses on managerial decision making and the interests of all stakeholders have inherent value and that there is no set of interests that is superior.<sup>101</sup> It is unlike the agency theory in which managers are working and serving the shareholders. In this they serve a network of relationships that is more important than the owner-manager-employee relationship.<sup>102</sup> This theory of corporate governance, which is based on satisfying the interests of all stakeholders has proved the most efficient in history, because it does not only work to achieve financial gain, but also to achieve a competitive advantage due to gain in people's trust and consequently goodwill on the market.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Abdullah H and Valentine B 'Fundamental and Ethics Theories of Corporate Governance' (2009) 4 *Middle Eastern Finance and Economics* 90.

<sup>98</sup> Feizizadeh A 'Corporate Governance: Frameworks' (2012) 5 (9) *Indian Journal of Science and Technology* 3357.

<sup>99</sup> CorpLaw 'Shareholder and Stakeholder theories of corporate governance' available at <http://www.corplaw.ie/blog/bid/317212/Shareholder-Stakeholder-Theories-Of-Corporate-Governance> (accessed 10 May 2015).

<sup>100</sup> Tricker R *Corporate Governance: Principles, Policies and Practices* 3 ed (2015) 70.

<sup>101</sup> Abdullah H and Valentine B 'Fundamental and Ethics Theories of Corporate Governance' (2009) 4 *Middle Eastern Finance and Economics* 91.

<sup>102</sup> Abdullah H and Valentine B 'Fundamental and Ethics Theories of Corporate Governance' (2009) 4 *Middle Eastern Finance and Economics* 91.

<sup>103</sup> Nicolae B and Violeta A 'Theories of Corporate Governance' 23 (1) (2013) *Studia Universitatis "Vasile Goldis" Arad Economics Series* 122.

The theory was proposed by Edward Freeman, who recognised it as an important element of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), a concept which recognises the various responsibilities of corporations today.<sup>104</sup> CSR can be defined as actions that appear to further the social good, beyond the interests of the firm and that which is required by law.<sup>105</sup> This means that a firm will be going beyond what is required by law and making efforts for the benefit of the stakeholders. This is very important in SOEs for there is a dire need that they are able to adhere to this theory of corporate governance, which will benefit all stakeholders especially the general public which has been subject to neglect.

#### **2.1.4.4 The Political Theory**

Political theory brings the approach of developing support from shareholders, rather than by simply purchasing voting power or control.<sup>106</sup> This theory recognises that the allocation of corporate power, privileges and profits between owners and other stakeholders is determined by how governments favour their constituencies.<sup>107</sup> The political model of corporate governance can have a vast influence on governance developments.<sup>108</sup> The political influence is evidenced by the participation of governments in the capital of companies or laws adopted by political structures which have a noteworthy influence on corporate governance.<sup>109</sup>

This theory recognises the influence that political powers have on corporate governance and this has some relevance to SOEs as the mechanisms that will potentially be employed will have a connection to the political model.

For the purposes of this paper, the stakeholder theory will be followed. This theory is relevant to SOEs because it encompasses aspects that fit within some of the reasons for the formation of these enterprises. In particular, it has relevance where an SOE is formed to fulfil a specific social objective which is the case in most African countries. The objectives may include correcting economic imbalances and providing employment. Since the stakeholder theory

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<sup>104</sup> CorpLaw 'Shareholder and Stakeholder theories of corporate governance' available at <http://www.corplaw.ie/blog/bid/317212/Shareholder-Stakeholder-Theories-Of-Corporate-Governance> (accessed 10 May 2015).

<sup>105</sup> McWilliams A and Siegel D 'Corporate Social Responsibility: A Theory of the Firm Perspective' 36 (1) (2001) *Academy of Management Review* 117.

<sup>106</sup> Abdullah H and Valentine B 'Fundamental and Ethics Theories of Corporate Governance' (2009) 4 *Middle Eastern Finance and Economics* 93.

<sup>107</sup> Turnbull S 'Corporate Governance: Its scope, concerns and theories' 5 (4) (1997) *Journal of Economic Literature* 190.

<sup>108</sup> Yusoff W and Alhaji I 'Insight of Corporate Governance Theories' 1 (1) (2012) *Journal of Business and Management* 58.

<sup>109</sup> Nicolae B and Violeta A 'Theories of Corporate Governance' 23 (1) (2013) *Studia Universitatis "Vasile Goldis" Arad Economics Series* 124.

considers the interests of all stakeholders, it is very important that SOEs have the same focus as they are run by the state on behalf of the society. This theory will provide a fitting benchmark on which to assess the adequacy of the governance framework.

## **2.2 Understanding State-Owned Enterprises and their Contributions to Development**

### **2.2.1 Defining State-Owned Enterprises**

The understanding of SOEs is important for this paper because there is a need to highlight the magnitude of their involvement and contribution to a typical developing country's economy. From the definition in the last chapter, SOEs can be defined as entities that are established by the central and local governments and whose supervisory officials are from the government.<sup>110</sup> The World Bank has defined state-owned enterprises as 'government-owned or government-controlled economic entities that generate the bulk of their revenue from selling goods and services.'<sup>111</sup> State-owned enterprises are also referred to as government corporations, public enterprises, or public sector enterprises which are a diverse mix ranging from internationally competitive listed companies, large-scale public service providers, wholly owned manufacturing and financial firms, to small and medium enterprises.<sup>112</sup>

### **2.2.2 History and the Rationale/Functions of SOEs**

Direct state intervention in the economy increased strongly in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as result of the Great Depression and other financial crises, the Second World War and its associated destruction of industry and infrastructure, and the break-up of colonial empires.<sup>113</sup> State intervention had however been present from ancient times that can be traced as far back as the times of the Roman Republic in which the state and private individuals and companies fulfilled almost all of the state's economic requirements.<sup>114</sup> In ancient Greece, the government owned the land, forests and mines but it contracted work to individuals and firms.<sup>115</sup> These are some of the origins of state ownership and the practice has been carried out throughout history by different governments and is still prevalent in the lesser developed nations with developed nations applying it at a smaller scale but with considerable success.

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<sup>110</sup> OECD Working Group on Privatisation and Corporate Governance of State Owned Assets- *State owned enterprises in China: reviewing the evidence* (2009) 5.

<sup>111</sup> The World Bank *Bureaucrats in Business: The Economics and Politics of Government Ownership* (1995) 4.

<sup>112</sup> The World Bank *Held by the Visible Hand The Challenge of SOE Corporate Governance for Emerging Markets* (2006) 1.

<sup>113</sup> OECD *Corporate Governance of State-Owned Enterprises: A Survey of OECD Countries* (2005 ) 9.

<sup>114</sup> Megginson W and Netter J 'From State to Market: A Survey of Empirical Studies on Privatization' (2001) XXXIX *Journal of Economic Literature* 323.

<sup>115</sup> Megginson W and Netter J 'From State to Market: A Survey of Empirical Studies on Privatization' (2001) XXXIX *Journal of Economic Literature* 323.

Later on, post war reconstruction in Europe and Japan was influential in direct government involvement in economic activities, and therefore to nationalise or establish companies placed in the strategic sectors such as energy, transport and banking.<sup>116</sup> After years of debate on how deeply the state should be involved in regulating economic activity, it was the government of Margaret Thatcher (1979) that provided an answer to this question.<sup>117</sup> This government conceded that the state should at least own telecommunications and postal services, electric and gas utilities, and most forms of non-road transportation especially airlines and railroads.<sup>118</sup> This led to the growth of state ownership in the developed world and this spread to their former colonies in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

In most Southern African countries, SOEs have been in existence from periods dating back to the attainment of independence. The business sectors in these countries consist mainly of resource based activities such as farming and fishing.<sup>119</sup> Several reasons have been advanced over the years that justify the use of SOEs despite this being a declining trend in the more advanced nations. The rationale for SOEs is mixed in a variety of social, economic and political objectives.<sup>120</sup> One of the reasons advanced is the need to counter monopolistic powers in many sectors and the need to ensure that prices are not above the price of producing the output.<sup>121</sup> This comes from the premise that private monopolists may produce and price at levels that are not socially optimal.<sup>122</sup> Some countries find monopolies desirable in industries that may have substantial economies of scale, in which optimal efficiency is achieved when the output is produced and supplied by a single monopolistic producer.<sup>123</sup> In such cases a certain type of monopoly, be it legal or natural may make state ownership the most efficient solution.<sup>124</sup>

State ownership can be a means to promote the development of economically desirable industries but that which may not be developed through private investment.<sup>125</sup> This occurs in instances where there might not be enough incentives for the private sector to engage in a

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<sup>116</sup> OECD *Corporate Governance of State-Owned Enterprises: A Survey of OECD Countries* (2005 ) 9.

<sup>117</sup> Megginson W and Netter J 'From State to Market: A Survey of Empirical Studies on Privatization' (2001) XXXIX *Journal of Economic Literature* 323.

<sup>118</sup> Megginson W and Netter J 'From State to Market: A Survey of Empirical Studies on Privatization' (2001) XXXIX *Journal of Economic Literature* 323.

<sup>119</sup> Balbuena S *State-owned enterprises in Southern Africa: A stock taking of reforms and challenges* (2014) 7.

<sup>120</sup> Obadan M *The Economic and Social Impact of Privatisation of State-Owned Enterprises in Africa* (2008) 9.

<sup>121</sup> Obadan M *The Economic and Social Impact of Privatisation of State-Owned Enterprises in Africa* (2008) 9.

<sup>122</sup> Kowalski P, Buge M, Sztajerowska M and Egeland M *State-Owned Enterprises: Trade Effects and Policy Implications* (2013) 12.

<sup>123</sup> Kowalski P et al *State-Owned Enterprises: Trade Effects and Policy Implications* (2013) 12.

<sup>124</sup> Kowalski P et al *State-Owned Enterprises: Trade Effects and Policy Implications* (2013) 12.

<sup>125</sup> Obadan M *The Economic and Social Impact of Privatisation of State-Owned Enterprises in Africa* (2008) 10.

certain industry but development of that industry may very well be of importance to a nation. This industry might have important spill overs within or across sectors and for this reason the state will invest in it.<sup>126</sup> For this reason, it is often argued that many successful private sector firms in the developed world owe their success, in part, to prior state ownership.<sup>127</sup> This argument links the presence of SOEs to development and suggests that there is a need for state ownership at different stages of the economy.<sup>128</sup>

In developing countries, SOEs are assigned or created to fulfil specific social objectives which have their roots in the periods of colonisation.<sup>129</sup> This will include correcting regional and economic imbalances, providing employment and reducing the concentration of monopoly power in the economy. This argument is put forth by the ‘commanding heights’ rationale and it further states that as a pre-requisite for balanced growth, there must be state control of the key sectors of the economy.<sup>130</sup>

SOEs are also being relied on as a remedy to market failures and to remove obstacles to development.<sup>131</sup> This is mainly done in countries with weaker regulatory frameworks or where the outsourcing of state activities to the private sector is difficult.<sup>132</sup> Additionally in instances where operations of SOEs have important ramifications for other parts of the economy, this may influence toward its privatisation.<sup>133</sup> Such societal obligations could be codified and imposed on a private buyer, but in a changing environment it is impossible to predict every future event and this has been used by some governments as an argument to maintain state control over facilities such as airports and airlines.<sup>134</sup>

SOEs can also be used as a means to achieve stability in countries that may have been subject to conflict. This has relevance in instances where the SOEs are microcosms of the societal and economic problems that led to the conflict and it must be noted that the struggle to

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<sup>126</sup> Bala M ‘Economic Policy and State Owned Enterprises: Evolution Towards Privatisation in India’ available at <http://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/17946/1/privatization.pdf> (accessed 7 May 2015) 3.

<sup>127</sup> Christiansen H ‘*Balancing Commercial and Non-Commercial Priorities of State-Owned Enterprises*’ (2013) 7.

<sup>128</sup> Christiansen H ‘*Balancing Commercial and Non-Commercial Priorities of State-Owned Enterprises*’ (2013) 7.

<sup>129</sup> Bala M ‘Economic Policy and State Owned Enterprises: Evolution Towards Privatisation in India’ available at <http://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/17946/1/privatization.pdf> (accessed 7 May 2015) 4.

<sup>130</sup> Bala M ‘Economic Policy and State Owned Enterprises: Evolution Towards Privatisation in India’ available at <http://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/17946/1/privatization.pdf> (accessed 7 May 2015) 4.

<sup>131</sup> Balbuena S *State-owned enterprises in Southern Africa: A stock taking of reforms and challenges* (2014) 8

<sup>132</sup> Kowalski P et al *State-Owned Enterprises: Trade Effects and Policy Implications* (2013) 13.

<sup>133</sup> Christiansen H ‘*Balancing Commercial and Non-Commercial Priorities of State-Owned Enterprises*’ (2013) 7.

<sup>134</sup> Christiansen H ‘*Balancing Commercial and Non-Commercial Priorities of State-Owned Enterprises*’ (2013) 7.

control them can serve to sustain the original conflict.<sup>135</sup> For this outcome to be avoided, campaign and development plans must address SOE issues decisively, comprehensively, and pragmatically.<sup>136</sup> A good example of this is the nation of Liberia in which the United Nations security forces took steps to enable the state-owned electric power company and state managed rubber plantations to serve as the basis for political stability.<sup>137</sup>

The other motivation for SOEs is the issue of externalities. These are the outcomes (positive or negative) of an economic activity that affects other members of a community.<sup>138</sup> Negative externalities are particularly concerning since, being produced by only one or a group of economic actors, they imply a cost for others which is higher than the private cost and a typical example of this is pollution, private cost might even be higher than the collective one (positive externality).<sup>139</sup> In these cases of market failure, the private sector is encouraged to overproduce goods that generate negative externalities and to under-produce those that generate positive externalities.<sup>140</sup>

Another reason for which SOEs can be established is for industrial and financial bailouts that result from irreversible crises. This was evident during the global financial crisis of 2008 in which Ireland had to nationalise most of its domestic banking sector. These measures were deemed necessary in order to rescue the ailing domestic banks.<sup>141</sup>

### **2.2.3 Contributions to Development**

It is important to understand the contributions of SOEs to the development of nations, especially those that are still developing as this will highlight the need for proper corporate governance in these institutions. It has been reported that SOEs account for 20 per cent of global investment and 5 per cent of employment.<sup>142</sup> Furthermore, SOEs in Africa produce 15 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), in Asia 8 per cent and Latin America 6 per cent, in Central and Eastern Europe the state sector also accounts for 20 to 40 per cent of overall

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<sup>135</sup> Efirid N 'The State-Owned Enterprise as a Vehicle for Stability' available at [www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub980.pdf](http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub980.pdf) (accessed 11 May 2015) vii.

<sup>136</sup> Efirid N 'The State-Owned Enterprise as a Vehicle for Stability' available at [www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub980.pdf](http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub980.pdf) (accessed 11 May 2015) vii.

<sup>137</sup> Efirid N 'The State-Owned Enterprise as a Vehicle for Stability' available at [www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub980.pdf](http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub980.pdf) (accessed 11 May 2015) viii.

<sup>138</sup> OECD *Corporate Governance of State-Owned Enterprises: A Survey of OECD Countries* (2005) 9.

<sup>139</sup> OECD *Corporate Governance of State-Owned Enterprises: A Survey of OECD Countries* (2005) 9.

<sup>140</sup> OECD *Corporate Governance of State-Owned Enterprises: A Survey of OECD Countries* (2005) 9.

<sup>141</sup> Palcic D and Reeves E 'State-Owned Enterprise Policy and the Loss of Economic Sovereignty: The case of Ireland' (2013) 13 (2) *Public Organisation Review* 119.

<sup>142</sup> The World Bank *Held by the Visible Hand The Challenge of SOE Corporate Governance for Emerging Markets* (2006) 2.

output.<sup>143</sup> These figures represent the significant contribution to development and the well-being of SOEs in different parts of the world, proving that there still is a need to focus on the corporate governance of these enterprises.

Presently, some state-owned enterprises are among the largest and fastest expanding multinational companies. A study conducted in 2011 shows that more than 20 per cent of the world's largest firms are state-owned (204 firms) and that they come from 37 different countries and their joint sales amounted to 3.6 trillion dollars in 2011.<sup>144</sup> This represented more than 10 per cent of the combined sales of the whole Forbes Global 2000 and is equivalent to 10 per cent of the world's GDP thus exceeding GDPs of countries such as Germany, France and the UK.<sup>145</sup>

It has been further recorded that SOEs in OECD countries have for some time represented a substantial part of the GDP, employment and market capitalisation, these entities have been prevalent in key sectors of the economy such as energy, transport and telecommunications.<sup>146</sup> There are a number of very successful SOEs such as the award winning Singapore Airlines, Brazil's EMBAER, the French Renault, Korean POSCO and the highly respected Indian Bombay Transport Authority.<sup>147</sup> In many parts of Africa infrastructural services are mainly handled by SOEs with some assistance from the private sector.

#### **2.2.4 History/Overview of SOEs in Zimbabwe**

When Zimbabwe attained independence, the country had about twenty SOEs that were spread across different key sectors of the economy. These SOEs included the Rhodesia Iron and Steel Company, the Grain Marketing Board, Rhodesia Railway Lines, the Agricultural Marketing Board, Rhodesia Airlines and the Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation.<sup>148</sup> Before independence this public enterprise infrastructure was a means of fortifying the colonial

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<sup>143</sup> The World Bank *Held by the Visible Hand The Challenge of SOE Corporate Governance for Emerging Markets* (2006) 2.

<sup>144</sup> Buge M, Egeland M, Kowalski P and Sztajerowska M 'State-owned enterprises in the global economy: Reason for concern?' available at <http://www.voxeu.org/article/state-owned-enterprises-global-economy-reason-concern> (accessed 12 May 2015).

<sup>145</sup> Buge M, Egeland M, Kowalski P and Sztajerowska M 'State-owned enterprises in the global economy: Reason for concern?' available at <http://www.voxeu.org/article/state-owned-enterprises-global-economy-reason-concern> (accessed 12 May 2015).

<sup>146</sup> Mbo M and Adjasi C 'Drivers of Organisational Performance: A State Owned Enterprise Perspective' available at [www.essa2013.org.za/essa2013\\_2530](http://www.essa2013.org.za/essa2013_2530) (accessed 12 May 2015) 3.

<sup>147</sup> Mbo M and Adjasi C 'Drivers of Organisational Performance: A State Owned Enterprise Perspective' available at [www.essa2013.org.za/essa2013\\_2530](http://www.essa2013.org.za/essa2013_2530) (accessed 12 May 2015) 3.

<sup>148</sup> Zhou G 'Three Decades of Public Enterprise Restructuring in Zimbabwe a Will-Of-The-Wisp Chase?' (2012) 2 (20) *International Journal of Humanities and Science* 175.



settler regime and a buffer against the threatening international environment during the period of international sanctions.<sup>149</sup> Upon attaining independence, the country instituted a range of political measures aimed at reconfiguring and refocusing the operational thrust of the public enterprise sector and this involved amending enabling Acts, creating new parastatals in neglected sectors and putting in place direct state control on enterprise pricing, investment, borrowing and marketing.<sup>150</sup>

Like many other African states, Zimbabwe faced difficulties in running these enterprises from the 80s through the 90s. The state as the owner implemented policies that were somewhat politically and socially favourable but not economically sustainable, for example it pushed for the Grain Marketing Board to pay producers more than its export price, while the price at which the GMB imported was higher than the price at which it sold to millers.<sup>151</sup> The widespread failure of state-owned enterprises the world over during this period also led to some domestic and external pressure on the Zimbabwean government to privatise or commercialise the enterprises.<sup>152</sup> External pressure mainly came from International Financial Institutions (IFIs) which argued that the management, performance and orientation of the enterprises ranged from mediocre to poor.<sup>153</sup> These forces also regarded it as ideologically imperative that state economic control through these enterprises should be reduced, if not eliminated, to make way for the unhindered operation of market forces.<sup>154</sup>

The hardships and pressure in the late 80s and early 90s led to the adoption of the enterprise reforms in 1991, in the form of the Framework for Economic Reform (1991). These reforms were aimed at reducing the level of subsidies which had become unsustainable and to correct the nations' budget deficits. The reforms were also aimed at the commercialisation and privatisation of the state's assets but there was public doubt in regards to transparency in the disposal process.<sup>155</sup> In regards to governance, the reforms also envisaged the relaxation of direct control of the operations by government, thus giving more autonomy to the boards and

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<sup>149</sup> Herbst J 'Political Impediments to Economic Rationality: Explaining Zimbabwe's Failure to Reform its Public Sector' (1989) 20 (1) *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 69.

<sup>150</sup> Zhou G 'Three Decades of Public Enterprise Restructuring in Zimbabwe a Will-Of-The-Wisp Chase? (2012) 2 (20) *International Journal of Humanities and Science* 175.

<sup>151</sup> Zhou G 'From Interventionism to Market-Based Management Approaches: The Zimbabwean Experience' (2001) XXVIII (ii) *Zambezia* 238.

<sup>152</sup> Gibbon P '*Structural Adjustment and the Working Poor in Zimbabwe*' (1995) 97.

<sup>153</sup> Gibbon P '*Structural Adjustment and the Working Poor in Zimbabwe*' (1995) 97.

<sup>154</sup> Gibbon P '*Structural Adjustment and the Working Poor in Zimbabwe*' (1995) 97.

<sup>155</sup> Zhou G 'Public Enterprise Sector Reforms in Zimbabwe: A Macro Analytical Approach' (2000) XXVII (ii) *Zambezia* 199.

management.<sup>156</sup> With the implementation of reforms that ranged from cutting direct and indirect subsidies, which were in the form of import duty exemptions, concessionary loans and government guarantees on commercial bank loans, the performance of the enterprises deteriorated significantly in the reform period.<sup>157</sup>

The 1990s did not see much success in the enterprise reform process and various arguments were advanced as to the actual causes of this and from these it can be deduced that improper corporate governance practices have always been a factor in the demise of these enterprises. It was pointed out that one of the reasons for failure in these enterprises was the lack of autonomy and accountability of the boards and managers. Instead, there was widespread involvement of the line ministries in the day-to-day decision-making, particularly in decisions affecting personnel and salaries, investment and purchasing.<sup>158</sup> From the onset one should note that in Zimbabwe and in Africa generally, the political imperatives of the leaders have often prevented the adoption, let alone the implementation of comprehensive public sector reforms.<sup>159</sup>

One of the first major scandals involving SOEs was that of the Willowvale Motor Industry in the year 1988. It was found that a number of government ministers had been given preference in the purchase of vehicles from the motor company which they would then resell at inflated prices.<sup>160</sup> In some of the instances, one individual acquired a vehicle for Z \$ 22 000 and then resold it for Z \$ 65 000 and another purchased one for Z \$ 24 000 and resold it for Z \$ 80 000.<sup>161</sup> This was an outright abuse of office shown by these individuals as they all used their political might to acquire these vehicles. What is alarming is that after an enquiry was conducted most of these individuals received presidential pardon.<sup>162</sup> Years later the same individuals implicated in this were now heading some of the country's parastatals such as

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<sup>156</sup> Zhou G 'Public Enterprise Sector Reforms in Zimbabwe: A Macro Analytical Approach' (2000) XXVII (ii) *Zambezia* 201.

<sup>157</sup> Zhou G 'Public Enterprise Sector Reforms in Zimbabwe: A Macro Analytical Approach' (2000) XXVII (ii) *Zambezia* 201.

<sup>158</sup> Gibbon P '*Structural Adjustment and the Working Poor in Zimbabwe*' (1995) 98.

<sup>159</sup> Herbst J 'Political Impediments to Economic Rationality: Explaining Zimbabwe's Failure to Reform its Public Sector' (1989) 20 (1) *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 67.

<sup>160</sup> Pindula 'Willowgate Scandal' available at [http://www.pindula.co.zw/Willowgate\\_Scandal](http://www.pindula.co.zw/Willowgate_Scandal) (accessed 16 June 2015).

<sup>161</sup> Pindula 'Willowgate Scandal' available at [http://www.pindula.co.zw/Willowgate\\_Scandal](http://www.pindula.co.zw/Willowgate_Scandal) (accessed 16 June 2015).

<sup>162</sup> Pindula 'Willowgate Scandal' available at [http://www.pindula.co.zw/Willowgate\\_Scandal](http://www.pindula.co.zw/Willowgate_Scandal) (accessed 16 June 2015).

Zimbabwe Newspapers and Air Zimbabwe.<sup>163</sup> This is a trend common in the country of recycling the same individuals over and over to head the ailing enterprises that are left and this evidences bad governance practices.

These trends did not change much throughout the years and the management of these enterprises fell under the same predicaments as it had in the past, such as the lack of autonomy and accountability of the boards and managers. The efforts to implement measures that would govern these enterprises were futile as they were hardly ever implemented. Fast-forward to the years 2013-2014 and the manifestations of non-implementation of governance measures took a new turn. State-owned enterprises became famous for their mismanagement and the ridiculous compensation methods for their top level managers and CEOs as well as an array of corrupt activities. This led to wide scale exposure of the corrupt activities as well as suspensions of enterprise boards and CEOs and this had not been done in a while.<sup>164</sup>

In 2014 numerous scandals were exposed in regards to compensation of the heads of parastatals in Zimbabwe. One the first major cases was that of the ZBC CEO, who was receiving an amount of US \$ 40 000 a month and on top of this he had been involved in other corrupt activities. In the same year the ZBC CEO was involved in a US \$ 1 million scandal, in this it was alleged that he had inflated figures of a contract for the purchase of a radio Outside Broadcasting van worth US \$ 100 000 to \$ 1 050 000 in alleged connivance with another company, this was done without the approval of the board.<sup>165</sup> The CEO of the company was only authorised to approve purchases not exceeding \$ 50 000 and the board could only approve purchases of up to \$ 300 000, with any purchase above that requiring the approval of the State Procurement Board.<sup>166</sup>

Followed by this was the exposure of the CEO of PSMAS who was earning an outstanding US \$ 210 000 in salary and another US \$ 260 000 in allowances, with the whole board taking US \$ 1.3 million a month in salaries at a time when the majority of employees were not paid

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<sup>163</sup> Makombe L 'Corrupt officials 'cleansed' by the passage of time' *The Standard* 9 September 2010 available at <http://www.thestandard.co.zw/2010/09/09/corrupt-officials-cleansed-by-the-passage-of-time/> (accessed 16 June 2015).

<sup>164</sup> Phiri G 'Salary scandals criminal: Moyo' *Daily News* 17 February 2014 available at <http://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2014/02/17/salary-scandals-criminal-moyo> (accessed 15 June 2015).

<sup>165</sup> Mugove T 'ZBC Boss in \$1m scandal' *Daily News* 28 January 2014 available at <http://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2014/01/28/zbc-boss-in-1m-scandal> (accessed 15 June 2015).

<sup>166</sup> Mugove T 'ZBC Boss in \$1m scandal' *Daily News* 28 January 2014 available at <http://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2014/01/28/zbc-boss-in-1m-scandal> (accessed 15 June 2015).

for months.<sup>167</sup> At this time, the civil servant medical aid society owed about US \$ 3 million to service providers and this resulted in denial of treatment for civil servants in some instances.<sup>168</sup> Despite this lack of ethical conduct, the PSMAS CEO continued to serve on numerous other boards some of which would point to his connectedness to those in higher offices, such as the presidency of the Zimbabwe Football Association (ZIFA).

These events partly show what has become of enterprise governance in Zimbabwe and they confirm that corruption has become a norm in the nation. There is need to restore proper corporate governance in an effort to turn around the economic collapse which has only benefited a handful.

### **2.3 Conclusion**

This chapter has given the background of the origins of corporate governance and it highlighted that the subject is immense. It has no definitive time of origin in history but what is clear is that it is an important practice and it has been in use for a very long time despite the late emergence of the terminology.

The chapter also focused on a select number of corporate governance theories. In particular the stakeholder theory which is the most suitable for SOEs. This is because the theory is inclusive of all parties that can affect or be affected by the activities of the company. In Zimbabwe SOEs are generally understood to be a means to address a number of social issues such as unemployment and economic inequality. This means that the theory will be the most suitable in testing the adequacy of the corporate governance framework.

The contributions to the development of SOEs were also mentioned in this chapter. Zimbabwe has 78 SOEs most of which are underperforming or not functional at all. These enterprises could be making substantial contributions to the ailing economy. It is clear that dysfunctionality in most of the SOEs can be attributed to bad governance practices, which is puzzling considering the economic situation. For this reason it is important that a framework that seeks to preserve the few functioning SOEs be implemented and encouraged.

The next chapter will examine the OCED Guidelines on Corporate Governance for State-owned Enterprises. The chapter will assess the corporate governance framework of

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<sup>167</sup> Kajau S 'Clean up the mess, restore sanity at PSMAS' *The Standard* 15 December 2013 available at <http://www.thestandard.co.zw/2013/12/15/clean-mess-restore-sanity-psmas/> (accessed 20 February 2015).

<sup>168</sup> Kajau S 'Clean up the mess, restore sanity at PSMAS' *The Standard* 15 December 2013 available at <http://www.thestandard.co.zw/2013/12/15/clean-mess-restore-sanity-psmas/> (accessed 20 February 2015).

Zimbabwe against the principles that are given in the guidelines. It will briefly highlight that some of the problems that have tainted SOEs in recent years might be beyond what can be solved by an effective regulatory framework.



## CHAPTER 3

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD) AND ZIMBABWEAN CORPORATE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

The previous chapter illustrated that SOEs are still an important part of some economies and it is imperative that proper corporate governance mechanisms be in place to ensure their profitability. This chapter will focus on the OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance for State-owned Enterprises. These will be used as a yardstick to test the adequacy of the corporate governance framework of Zimbabwe. The chapter will also infuse the stakeholder theory and the definition of corporate governance referred to in the previous chapter into the evaluation.

#### 3.1.1 What is the OECD?

The OECD is an organisation that seeks to promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world.<sup>169</sup> It does this by engaging different issues affecting the economies of member countries as well as conducting studies on member and non-member countries. More importantly, the OECD has been instrumental in addressing corporate governance issues. It started by publishing general Principles of Corporate Governance that have gained considerable attention because these managed to provide a benchmark that a lot of countries can relate to. The OECD Principles are actively used by governments, regulators, investors, corporations and stakeholders in both OECD and non-OECD countries. The principles have been adopted by the Financial Stability Board (FSB) as one of the Twelve Key Standards for Sound Financial Systems and they form the basis for the corporate governance component of the Report on the Observance of Standards and Codes of the World Bank Group.<sup>170</sup>

Upon realising the continued importance of SOEs, the OECD published the Guidelines on Corporate Governance for State-owned Enterprises.<sup>171</sup> Many economies had been struggling with the governance of state-owned enterprises. These guidelines were the first of their kind and for this reason they attracted global interest from a variety of stakeholders. The aspects

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<sup>169</sup> OECD 'The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)' available at <http://www.oecd.org/about/> (accessed 12 August 2015).

<sup>170</sup> OECD '2014-2015 Review of the OECD Principles of Corporate Governance' available at <http://www.oecd.org/daf/ca/2014-review-oecd-corporate-governance-principles.htm> (accessed 12 August 2015).

<sup>171</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2005) 9.

touched on in these guidelines are not limited to member countries but apply to any economy that operates these enterprises. The relevance of these principles lies in the fact that the experiences of economic transition and financial crises in developing and emerging market economies have confirmed that a weak corporate governance framework is incompatible with sustainable financial market development and growth.<sup>172</sup>

It is for the above reasons that the OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises are the most relevant for the purposes of this study. They provide a benchmark that can be used by any economy and they have been referred to by most governments in their quest to accomplish proper SOE governance. It should be noted that since Zimbabwe is not a member of the OECD these are only guidelines even to member countries, but these can also be followed by non-members. In the global economy, it is of great importance that international best practices are adhered to as participation is usually dependant on how well these are applied. It has been shown that SOEs generally perform better when they apply the best practices of the OECD, and this implies that the OECD guidelines would be useful for Zimbabwe's SOEs.<sup>173</sup> The guidelines are continually being revised to meet the needs of the changing times and economies.

### **3.1.2 OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance for State-owned Enterprises**

State-owned enterprises have remained very relevant in some parts of the world and despite their decline in developed economies, the OECD published the OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance for State-owned Enterprises. These guidelines are based on and are fully compatible with the G20/OECD Principles of Corporate Governance but focus on issues that are specific to the corporate governance of SOEs.<sup>174</sup> The guidelines were originally published in 1999, revised in 2004 and then the guidelines were adopted by the OECD in 2005.<sup>175</sup> After a decade the OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-Owned Enterprises were updated.<sup>176</sup> These provide a benchmark as to what measures may be

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<sup>172</sup> Jesover F and Kirkpatrick G 'The Revised OECD Principles of Corporate Governance and their relevance to Non-OECD Countries' (2005) 13 (2) *Corporate Governance: An International Review* 128.

<sup>173</sup> OECD *SOEs operating board: An application of the OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises to the cross-border operations of SOEs* (2010) 3.

<sup>174</sup> Bouchez L 'The OCED Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises – an introduction' available at <http://www.kvdl.nl/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Louis-Bouchez-The-OECD-Guidelines-on-Corporate-Governance-of-State-Owned-Enterprise.pdf> (accessed 19 June 2015) 578.

<sup>175</sup> Bouchez L 'The OCED Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises – an introduction' available at <http://www.kvdl.nl/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Louis-Bouchez-The-OECD-Guidelines-on-Corporate-Governance-of-State-Owned-Enterprise.pdf> (accessed 19 June 2015) 578.

<sup>176</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 7.

implemented in state-owned enterprises in order to achieve a system of governance that is robust enough to ensure a properly governed enterprise.<sup>177</sup> The guidelines are broken down into various headings which will be summarised in this section of the paper. These headings address the major aspects of governing state-owned enterprises with that of the state's role as an owner possibly the most crucial specifically for a nation like Zimbabwe where this is one of the most problematic issues.

### **3.1.3 Rationales for state ownership**

The guidelines provide that the state exercises the ownership of SOEs in the interest of the general public.<sup>178</sup> It is further provided that the ultimate purpose of state ownership of enterprises should be to maximise value for society through an efficient allocation of resources.<sup>179</sup> The government should also develop an ownership policy which will define the rationales for state ownership, the state's role in the governance of SOEs and how the state will implement its ownership policy.<sup>180</sup>

The ownership policy should be subject to appropriate procedures for political accountability and should be disclosed to the public.<sup>181</sup> Multiple and contradictory rationales for state ownership can lead to either a very passive conduct of ownership functions, or conversely result in the state's excessive intervention in matters or decisions which should be left to the enterprise and its governance organs.<sup>182</sup> In regards to a clear ownership policy it has been put forward that Zimbabwe does not have a clear ownership policy which results in complexity of the ownership structure.<sup>183</sup> The complex structure renders SOEs vulnerable to be used to achieve short term goals at the expense of efficiency.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 12.

<sup>178</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 19.

<sup>179</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 19.

<sup>180</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 19.

<sup>181</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 31.

<sup>182</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 31.

<sup>183</sup> Tambo B 'Conflicting roles and responsibilities of SOEs' *Sunday News Online* August 2 2015 available at <http://www.sundaynews.co.zw/conflicting-roles-and-responsibilities-of-soes/> (accessed 21 September 2015).

<sup>184</sup> Tambo B 'Conflicting roles and responsibilities of SOEs' *Sunday News Online* August 2 2015 available at <http://www.sundaynews.co.zw/conflicting-roles-and-responsibilities-of-soes/> (accessed 21 September 2015).



The guidelines also stress the need for public consultation when the state is developing and updating the ownership policy.<sup>185</sup> Various measures are provided which include consultation with the general public and its representatives and more importantly, consultation with private sector representatives, including investors and market service providers, and trade union representatives.<sup>186</sup>

### **3.1.4 The State's role as an owner**

Under this, the state should act as an informed and active owner and establish a clear and consistent policy, ensuring that the governance of SOEs is carried out in a transparent and accountable manner, with the necessary degree of professionalism and effectiveness.<sup>187</sup> Here the government will have to ensure that aspects such as remuneration, audits, board nominations and monitoring systems are adequately implemented and effective. It is important for the government to keep away from the day to day management of SOEs and allow them full operational autonomy.<sup>188</sup> The state should also let SOE boards exercise their responsibilities and should respect their independence.<sup>189</sup>

The guidelines also provide that governments should simplify and standardise legal forms under which SOEs operate.<sup>190</sup> This should be done because SOEs may have different legal forms from other companies. This may reflect specific objectives and or societal considerations as well as special protection granted to certain stakeholders.<sup>191</sup> It is important for governments to base themselves in corporate law that is applicable to private companies and avoid creating a legal form or granting SOEs a privileged status or special protection when this is not necessary for the achievement of public policy objectives.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 32.

<sup>186</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 32.

<sup>187</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 20.

<sup>188</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 20.

<sup>189</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 20.

<sup>190</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 20.

<sup>191</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 35.

<sup>192</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 36.

The exercise of the ownership right should be centralised in a single ownership entity or carried out by a co-ordinating body.<sup>193</sup> This helps in clarifying the ownership policy and its orientation and it also helps ensure its consistent implementation.<sup>194</sup> The ownership entity should be held accountable to the relevant representative bodies and have clearly defined relationships with relevant public bodies such as the state supreme audit institutions.<sup>195</sup>

In regards to the above, it is clear that the government of Zimbabwe has not entirely followed this principle since there has been government intervention in day to day operations of most SOEs. This is the case in SOEs such as Air Zimbabwe, which in 2012 had a debt of about US\$ 140 million, but had recently acquired two new airplanes that were almost the same value of the debt, without any explanation as to how this occurred and in Zimbabwe this usually points to political interference.<sup>196</sup>

### **3.1.5 State-owned enterprises in the marketplace**

The legal and regulatory framework of SOEs should ensure a level playing field and fair competition in the marketplace when SOEs undertake economic activities.<sup>197</sup> There should be a clear separation between the state's ownership function and other functions that may influence conditions for SOEs particularly the regulatory function.<sup>198</sup> It is also provided that stakeholders and other interested parties including creditors and competitors should have access to efficient redress through unbiased legal or arbitration processes when their rights have been violated.<sup>199</sup> SOEs undertaking economic activities should not be exempt from the application of general laws, tax codes and regulations.<sup>200</sup> Where SOEs combine economic

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<sup>193</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 38.

<sup>194</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 38.

<sup>195</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 39.

<sup>196</sup> Nyandoro T 'State-owned enterprises need good management' *NewsDay* 12 December 2012 available at <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2012/12/12/state-owned-enterprises-need-good-management/> (accessed 19 June 2015).

<sup>197</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 22.

<sup>198</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 22.

<sup>199</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 22.

<sup>200</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 22.

activities and public policy objectives high standards of transparency and disclosure regarding their cost and revenue structures must be maintained.<sup>201</sup>

### **3.1.6 Equitable treatment of shareholders and other investors**

Where SOEs are listed or include non-state investors among its owners, the state and the enterprises must recognise the rights of all shareholders and in accordance with the principles of the OECD must ensure equitable treatment and access to corporate information.<sup>202</sup> This principle enunciates a very important principle of governance in any corporation, it is important that minority shareholders perceive their treatment as equal to or as important as that of the major shareholder. This is so because the relationship between the state as controlling shareholder and the minority shareholders is particularly delicate, especially in commercial companies which are listed.<sup>203</sup> The state, as a dominant shareholder may be in a position to abuse minority shareholders as it is able to make decisions at the annual general meetings without the approval of the minority shareholders.<sup>204</sup> Apart from being in a position to control the board's composition, the state may also pursue political or policy objectives, which if implemented, may be at the cost of the minority shareholders.<sup>205</sup>

To guard against the abovementioned incidents, SOEs should observe a high degree of transparency and should also develop an active policy of communication and consultation with all shareholders.<sup>206</sup> Participation of minority shareholders in general meetings should be facilitated in order to allow them to take part in important decisions such as board election.<sup>207</sup> The guidelines also provide that national corporate governance codes should be adhered to by all listed and, where practical, unlisted SOEs.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 48.

<sup>202</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 24.

<sup>203</sup> Centre for Economic Studies ifo Group Munich *Corporate Governance: Relationship of state-owned enterprises with other shareholders* (2007) 28.

<sup>204</sup> Centre for Economic Studies ifo Group Munich *Corporate Governance: Relationship of state-owned enterprises with other shareholders* (2007) 28.

<sup>205</sup> Centre for Economic Studies ifo Group Munich *Corporate Governance: Relationship of state-owned enterprises with other shareholders* (2007) 28.

<sup>206</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 24.

<sup>207</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 24.

<sup>208</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 24.

### **3.1.7 Stakeholder relations and responsible business**

Stakeholders are central to the overall operations of any business and it is important that relations with the various stakeholders are maintained. The term stakeholder refers to individuals or groups that can affect or are affected by a corporation's activities and these include investors, employees, customers, suppliers and communities.<sup>209</sup> The stakeholder strategy is based on the notion that companies and society are interdependent, therefore, company success is connected to the well-being of local and global communities and all of a company's other stakeholders.<sup>210</sup> The principle provides that, the state ownership policy should fully recognise the enterprises' responsibility towards stakeholders and that it requires the enterprises to report on their relations with stakeholders.<sup>211</sup> The ownership policy should also make clear any expectations the state has in respect of responsible business conduct by SOEs.<sup>212</sup>

In any company stakeholders are diverse, for SOEs these may include the general public or a particular part of the public depending on the objectives of the enterprise. These relations may then be critical for those SOEs that are involved in the fulfilment of general service obligations or those whose activities may be vital for the economic development of the communities in which they operate.<sup>213</sup> In other cases, stakeholders may not have a direct relationship with the company, but it will still be important that the company takes heed of the rights of such groups.

Research has shown that stakeholders are not fully involved in corporate governance issues in Zimbabwe. In a working paper by McGee it was shown that there is no stakeholder involvement in corporate governance but it does not provide any recommendations as to how this should be remedied.<sup>214</sup> It also does not examine the corporate governance instruments in

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<sup>209</sup> Svendsen A *The Stakeholder Strategy: Profiting from Collaborative Business Relationships* (1998) 1.

<sup>210</sup> Svendsen A *The Stakeholder Strategy: Profiting from Collaborative Business Relationships* (1998) 4.

<sup>211</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 25.

<sup>212</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 25.

<sup>213</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 60.

<sup>214</sup> McGee R *Corporate Governance in Developing and Transition Economies: A Case Study of Zimbabwe* (2010) 12.

Zimbabwe but instead it uses descriptive information obtained from the World Bank on the state of corporate governance in Zimbabwe.<sup>215</sup>

The implementation of this guideline in Zimbabwe has been at an all-time low and employees who are arguably the most important stakeholders have been in bad relations with some of the SOEs. It has become very common that employees are either not paid in full, not paid at all or are sent on unpaid leave as was the case at the Grain Marketing Board (GMB).<sup>216</sup> It was reported in 2014 that a total of 3 600 GMB employees were ordered to go on compulsory two weeks leave each month as the company struggled with finances.<sup>217</sup> The GMB had not paid its employees in four months and it owed US\$ 37 million to farmers who had delivered grain in the 2013/14 season.<sup>218</sup> The farmers and employees are both important stakeholders and non-payment of the monies due to them is a sign of failed relations, with these parties disgruntled proper functioning of the enterprise may have been jeopardised.

More importantly the guidelines state that SOEs must not be used as vehicles for financing political activities and that they should not make political campaign contributions.<sup>219</sup> This is a prevalent practice in Zimbabwe as SOEs are known to fund political campaigns and trips abroad for those in government.<sup>220</sup> More recently the struggling SOEs were ordered to pay between US\$ 35 000 and US\$ 120 000 in contributions to the first lady's birthday fundraising dinner.<sup>221</sup> Such activities will not end anytime soon if the current government is in power and this leaves the future uncertain for SOEs.

### **3.1.8 Disclosure and Transparency**

It is important that state-owned enterprises observe high standards of transparency. This is usually in regards to information on company financials and other pertinent issues. SOEs should observe high standards of transparency and be subject to the same high quality

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<sup>215</sup> McGee R *Corporate Governance in Developing and Transition Economies: A Case Study of Zimbabwe* (2010) 11.

<sup>216</sup> Nleya F 'GMB workers to go on unpaid leave' *NewsDay* 22 December 2014 available at <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2014/12/22/gmb-workers-go-unpaid-leave/> (accessed 20 June 2015).

<sup>217</sup> Nleya F 'GMB workers to go on unpaid leave' *NewsDay* 22 December 2014 available at <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2014/12/22/gmb-workers-go-unpaid-leave/> (accessed 20 June 2015).

<sup>218</sup> Nleya F 'GMB workers to go on unpaid leave' *NewsDay* 22 December 2014 available at <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2014/12/22/gmb-workers-go-unpaid-leave/> (accessed 20 June 2015).

<sup>219</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 35.

<sup>220</sup> Rusvingo S 'The rot in the state-owned enterprises in Zimbabwe: A cause for concern' (2014) 14 (7) *Global Journal of Human Social Science* 39.

<sup>221</sup> Zhangazha M 'Companies forced to sponsor First Lady' *Zimbabwe Independent* 24 July 2015 available at <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/2015/07/24/companies-forced-to-sponsor-first-lady/> (accessed 22 October 2015).

accounting, disclosure, compliance and auditing standards as listed companies.<sup>222</sup> SOEs must observe these standards in disclosing material and non-material information in areas of significant concern to the state as an owner and the general public.<sup>223</sup> The information that should be disclosed includes (a) a clear statement to the public of enterprise objectives and their fulfilment, (b) enterprise financial and operating results, (c) the remuneration of board members and key executives and (d) board member qualifications, selection process, roles on other company boards and whether they are considered as independent by the SOE board.<sup>224</sup>

SOEs should also provide information on key issues relevant to employees and other stakeholders that may materially affect the financial and non-financial performance of the enterprise or have significant impacts on the stakeholders.<sup>225</sup> Financial statements of SOEs must also be subject to an independent external audit that is based on high standards.<sup>226</sup> The ownership entity should also make use of web-based communications to develop and publish annually an aggregate report on SOEs.<sup>227</sup>

Zimbabwe has managed to maintain a moderate level of disclosure in terms of auditing, the Comptroller and Auditor-General's offices have managed to produce annual reports that have revealed gross public finance maladministration.<sup>228</sup> However, it has been argued that the legislation that enables the functions of the Comptroller and Auditor-General did not give power to the office of the Comptroller and Auditor-General to compel Ministers and departments to observe and comply with the treasury instructions.<sup>229</sup> This has resulted in delayed submissions and in other instances total failure by ministries to produce certain

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<sup>222</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 26.

<sup>223</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 26.

<sup>224</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 26.

<sup>225</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 67.

<sup>226</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 67.

<sup>227</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 68.

<sup>228</sup> Mambo E 'State enterprises bleed to death' *The Independent* 24 October 2014 available at <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/2014/10/24/state-enterprises-bleed-death/> (accessed 20 June 2015).

<sup>229</sup> Zinyama T 'Efficiency and Effectiveness in Public Sector Auditing: An Evaluation of the Comptroller and Auditor-General's Performance in Zimbabwe from 1999 to 2012' (2013) 3 (7) *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 276.

returns and statements required for the audit.<sup>230</sup> Published reports reflected a uniformity of audit observations that rose from year to year, which meant that little or no actions followed on observations and recommendations made.<sup>231</sup>

### **3.1.9 The Responsibilities of the Boards of State-Owned Enterprises**

The board of directors of a company can be defined as a group of persons elected by the shareholders of a company to govern the affairs of the company.<sup>232</sup> In state-owned enterprises these individuals are usually appointed by the state and there is an expectation that they will act in good faith and in the best interests of the company. The guidelines provide that the boards of SOEs “should have the necessary authority, competencies and objectivity to carry out their function and monitoring of management.<sup>233</sup> They should act with integrity and be held accountable for their actions.”<sup>234</sup>

The boards should carry out their functions subject to the objectives set by the government and the ownership entity and they should have the power to appoint a Chief Executive Officer (CEO).<sup>235</sup> They should also be composed in a manner that allows them objective independent judgement and there should be separation of the roles of Chairman and CEO.<sup>236</sup> One important aspect of any SOE board is that it retains autonomy over any decisions that are within its scope, as this will prevent political interference and for this reason it is important that SOE boards are nominated through a transparent process. SOE boards should also be able to set up specialised committees that support the board in performing its functions in areas such as auditing, remuneration and risk management.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> Zinyama T ‘Efficiency and Effectiveness in Public Sector Auditing: An Evaluation of the Comptroller and Auditor-General’s Performance in Zimbabwe from 1999 to 2012’ (2013) 3 (7) *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 276.

<sup>231</sup> Zinyama T ‘Efficiency and Effectiveness in Public Sector Auditing: An Evaluation of the Comptroller and Auditor-General’s Performance in Zimbabwe from 1999 to 2012’ (2013) 3 (7) *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 276.

<sup>232</sup> Mynhardt R ‘Universal Corporate Governance Standards: Recommendations for the Composition of a Board of Directors’ (2014) 12 (1) *Corporate Ownership and Control* 243.

<sup>233</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 28.

<sup>234</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 28.

<sup>235</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 28.

<sup>236</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 28.

<sup>237</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 29.

Irresponsible boards have plagued Zimbabwean SOEs for a considerable amount of time and this has immensely contributed to the large scale failures that have been seen over the years. In 2014 it was revealed that in most SOEs there were obscene salaries, corruption, tender manipulation and general mismanagement that was aided and abetted by insufficient oversight.<sup>238</sup> This resulted in the firing of the boards of the ZBC, ZMDC, MMCZ and Marange Resource Boards, Air Zimbabwe and Zinara among others.<sup>239</sup> The parastatal board system in the country is known to be driven by cronyism and patronage and members of the public have lost faith in the system altogether.<sup>240</sup> This points to the fact that SOE boards have been highly dysfunctional and this is not in tandem with the abovementioned principle of corporate governance.

If the guidelines are followed, they would provide for a good model of corporate governance for Zimbabwe. The next part of this chapter will examine the main pieces of legislation that govern corporate governance in SOEs in Zimbabwe and attempt to evaluate their adherence to the OECD guidelines.

### **3.2 An Overview of the Corporate Governance Framework of Zimbabwe**

Companies are generally formed through two major avenues in Zimbabwe. The first is through the Companies Act (Chapter 24:18) which provides the ways in which a company may be registered. The commanding provision is section 7 which gives right to any persons to subscribe their names to a memorandum of association for the purpose of forming an incorporated company.<sup>241</sup> The second avenue in which companies are formed is through separate Acts. This mainly includes companies that are formed through Acts of parliament, which are the subject of this research, namely State-owned Enterprises. These entities are brought into being by Acts such as the Broadcasting Services Act (Chapter 12:06) which is the enabling Act for the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation. Other companies are also formed through conduct as outlined in the Companies Act. Section 4 provides that the Act applies to every company which shall be deemed to be duly incorporated and registered under the Act.<sup>242</sup> This means that any company to which the Act is applicable, but was not officially

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<sup>238</sup> Chabwinja S 'Ministers must not appoint cronies to boards' *The Independent* 18 February 2014 available at <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/2014/02/18/ministers-must-appoint-cronies-boards/> (accessed 21 June 2015).

<sup>239</sup> Chabwinja S 'Ministers must not appoint cronies to boards' *The Independent* 18 February 2014 available at <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/2014/02/18/ministers-must-appoint-cronies-boards/> (accessed 21 June 2015).

<sup>240</sup> Chabwinja S 'Ministers must not appoint cronies to boards' *The Independent* 18 February 2014 available at <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/2014/02/18/ministers-must-appoint-cronies-boards/> (accessed 21 June 2015).

<sup>241</sup> Companies Act (Chapter 24:03).

<sup>242</sup> Companies Act (Chapter 24:03).



registered as such will be regarded as registered and incorporated under the Act, and this is usually owing to the manner in which it operates.

In Zimbabwe corporate governance is regulated by the Companies Act,<sup>243</sup> the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange Act<sup>244</sup> and the listing requirements but these are applicable to listed companies. In the public sector corporate governance is regulated by the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA),<sup>245</sup> the Corporate Governance and Remuneration Policy Framework for Chief Executive Officers of Parastatals, State Enterprises and Local Authorities (Corporate Governance and Remuneration Policy Framework) and the recently launched National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe (ZIMCODE) which applies to both the public and private sectors. State enterprises are further regulated by their enabling Acts such as the Air Zimbabwe Corporation Act<sup>246</sup> and the Broadcasting Services Act.<sup>247</sup> This section of the work will evaluate the Acts and codes that are most relevant to corporate governance in SOEs.

### **3.2.1 The Companies Act**

The Zimbabwean Companies Act forms the basic foundation for the formation, registration and management of companies. The Act regulates most of the activities of companies that are incorporated under it from the conduct of directors to issues of shares. One can conclude that the Act includes aspects of corporate governance as it regulates the conduct of directors and matters of accounts and audit even though the term corporate governance is not specifically referred to. It is however important to note that the Act is mainly applicable to companies that are incorporated under the Act as stipulated in section 4 (1).<sup>248</sup>

The government managed to commercialise and privatise some of the old parastatals and these became subject to the Companies Act and are also governed by strict rules of the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange.<sup>249</sup> This study will not focus on these companies but on those in

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<sup>243</sup> Companies Act (Chapter 24:03).

<sup>244</sup> Zimbabwe Stock Exchange Act (Chapter 24:18).

<sup>245</sup> Public Finance Management Act (Chapter 22:19).

<sup>246</sup> Air Zimbabwe Corporation Act (Chapter 13:02).

<sup>247</sup> Broadcasting Services Act (Chapter 12:06).

<sup>248</sup> Companies Act (Chapter 24:03).

<sup>249</sup> The Herald 'Editorial Comment: Proposed ZIMCODE Bill Progressive' *The Herald* 20 June 2014 available at <http://www.herald.co.zw/editorial-comment-proposed-zimcode-bill-progressive/> (accessed 16 September 2015).

which the government retained 100 per cent ownership.<sup>250</sup> These are the state-owned enterprises brought into existence by enabling Acts of parliament and their regulation of operations is outlined in these Acts. These are the enterprises in which most of the problems discussed in this paper have transpired.

### **3.2.2 The Public Finance Management Act**

According to the Act its purpose is to secure transparency, accountability and sound management of the revenues, expenditure, assets and liabilities of entities that are specified in section 4 (1).<sup>251</sup> Section 4 then provides that the Act shall apply to ministries, designated corporate bodies and public entities, constitutional entities and statutory funds.<sup>252</sup> State-owned enterprises fall under corporate bodies and public entities. The Act defines a public entity as any corporate body that is established by or in terms of any Act for special purposes, a company in which the state has a controlling interest by virtue of shares or by right of appointment of members to the controlling body, a local authority and any partnership or joint venture between the state and any person which is prescribed by the Minister.<sup>253</sup>

In regards to corporate governance the Act merely states that all public entities must adhere to and implement sound principles of corporate governance procedures, policies and practices.<sup>254</sup> This was perhaps done in order to leave space for corporate governance specific codes such as the Corporate Governance and Remuneration Policy Framework for Chief Executive Officers of Parastatals, State Enterprises and Local Authorities. In this respect it is not possible to measure it against most of the core corporate governance guidelines of the OECD. It is however necessary that its accounting, reporting and disclosure procedures be examined in order to determine if they are effective enough for SOEs in Zimbabwe.

The Act provides for the formation of accounting authorities for public entities, which may be the board of the said entity and where there is no board the CEO or the person in charge of the entity, or a person so appointed by the Treasury.<sup>255</sup> Section 42 lays out the fiduciary duties of the accounting authority which include exercising utmost care to ensure reasonable protection of the assets and records for the public entity and the disclosure of material facts to

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<sup>250</sup> The Herald 'Editorial Comment: Proposed ZIMCODE Bill Progressive' *The Herald* 20 June 2014 available at <http://www.herald.co.zw/editorial-comment-proposed-zimcode-bill-progressive/> (accessed 16 September 2015).

<sup>251</sup> Section 3 Public Finance Management Act (Chapter 22:19).

<sup>252</sup> Section 4 (1) (a)-(d) Public Finance Management Act (Chapter 22:19).

<sup>253</sup> Section 2 Public Finance Management Act (Chapter 22:19).

<sup>254</sup> Section 50 Public Finance Management Act (Chapter 22:19).

<sup>255</sup> Section 41 (1)-(3) Public Finance Management Act (Chapter 22:19).

the Minister that may influence his decisions.<sup>256</sup> The most important being the duty to “act with fidelity, honesty, integrity and in the best interests of the public entity in managing the affairs of the public entity.”<sup>257</sup> This is in line with the OECD guidelines which require board members to act in the best interest of the company<sup>258</sup> and it particularly applies where the accounting authority is the board. This part of the Act functions well when there is an accounting authority that is honest and has integrity. This has, however proved not to be the case in some of the SOE boards in Zimbabwe.

The Act goes further by placing a duty on regular employees to ensure effective, efficient, economical and transparent use of financial and other resources.<sup>259</sup> It is then alarming that the authority and persons entrusted with the protection of the assets of the entity are the same ones that grab the very same assets for themselves. This was made clear by the cases of boards of SOEs such as the ZBC and PSMAS that approved hefty salaries for board members and management that were even above private sector rates.<sup>260</sup> In this case, the legislation has a commendable clear and straightforward intent, but this was defeated by the accounting authorities themselves. It is clear that what is needed in such situations is more rigorous screening procedures for persons who will sit on these boards as well involvement of public interest groups.

One of the key issues that the Act seeks to tackle is that of conflict of interest. Section 42 (3) (a) of the PFMA stipulates that all accounting authorities (the board or other controlling body or the chief executive) have a fiduciary duty to “disclose to the other members of the accounting authority any direct or indirect personal or private business interests that the member or any spouse, partner or close family relation may have in any matter before the accounting authority.”<sup>261</sup> The intent of this provision is clearly to avoid instances where members of the board or their close connections engage in business activities with a public entity for their own benefit.

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<sup>256</sup> Section 42 (1) (a) and (c) Public Finance Management Act (Chapter 22:19).

<sup>257</sup> Section 42 (1) (c) Public Finance Management Act (Chapter 22:19).

<sup>258</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 28.

<sup>259</sup> Section 45 (b) Public Finance Management Act (Chapter 22:19).

<sup>260</sup> Mambo E ‘State enterprises bleed to death’ *Zimbabwe Independent* 24 October 2014 available at <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/2014/10/24/state-enterprises-bleed-death/> (accessed 11 March 2015).

<sup>261</sup> Section 42 (3) (a) Public Finance Management Act (Chapter 22:19).

Normally the board of directors should not be in the business of micro-managing the corporation that they serve.<sup>262</sup> The board provides direction in the form of directives and it is the duty of the management to ensure proper management of the corporation.<sup>263</sup> This possibly means that it is not every transaction that an enterprise engages in that receives the full attention of the board. The PFMA in its provision that requires disclosure of any instances of conflict of interest specifically mentions that these should be matters that come before the accounting authority.<sup>264</sup> It can be argued that this provision is not sufficient for it only refers to matters that are before the accounting authority and not all dealings with the enterprise. Perhaps the wording could have been ‘any dealings with the state enterprise or parastatal.’ In as much as this may present a cumbersome exercise it is necessary for Zimbabwean SOEs because of the level that corruption and mismanagement have reached.

The above wording would provide a more rigorous disclosure requirement as there have been strong tendencies in management and boards alike to engage in activities that benefited them or their close associates.<sup>265</sup> The situation was escalated by the fact that there was also a culture of fear in the manner in which some state enterprises were being run. The state managed to appoint former army generals to the boards of SOEs such as the National Railways of Zimbabwe, Grain Marketing Board, Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe and Zimpapers.<sup>266</sup> This has been referred to by some authors as the ‘militarisation’ of SOEs which has greatly contributed to the rot in these enterprises.<sup>267</sup> This results in the boards being run by individuals of considerable power and it is never in the best interests of any board member to disagree with such members and that is if they are not in cahoots with the same individuals.

In terms of the transparency and disclosure guideline of the OECD, the Act does provide for somewhat adequate accounting measures for there is emphasis on using standards that are

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<sup>262</sup> David Berry ‘The Debate: Oversight vs Micromanagement’ available at [http://www.iclifgovernance.org/file/0025\\_oversight\\_vs\\_micromanagement.pdf](http://www.iclifgovernance.org/file/0025_oversight_vs_micromanagement.pdf) (accessed 16 September 2015) 1.

<sup>263</sup> David Berry ‘The Debate: Oversight vs Micromanagement’ available at [http://www.iclifgovernance.org/file/0025\\_oversight\\_vs\\_micromanagement.pdf](http://www.iclifgovernance.org/file/0025_oversight_vs_micromanagement.pdf) (accessed 16 September 2015) 1.

<sup>264</sup> Section 42 (3) (a) Public Finance Management Act (Chapter 22:19).

<sup>265</sup> Zvavahera P and Ndoda G ‘Corporate Governance and ethical behaviour: The case of the Zimbabwean Broadcasting Corporation’ (2014) 9 *Journal of Academic and Business Ethics* 3.

<sup>266</sup> Karombo T ‘Zimbabwe spending too much on defence and the military’ available at [http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=28074:zimbabwe-spending-too-much-on-defence-and-the-military-&catid=54:Governance&Itemid=118](http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=28074:zimbabwe-spending-too-much-on-defence-and-the-military-&catid=54:Governance&Itemid=118) (accessed 16 September 2015).

<sup>267</sup> Mutanda D ‘The impact of the Zimbabwean crisis on parastatals’ (2014) 5 (5.2) *International Journal of Politics and Good Governance* 5.

generally acceptable as well as transparency in all matters of accounting.<sup>268</sup> However, there have been numerous cases of late and in some cases, total failure of disclosure of returns and statements required for audits by the Comptroller and Auditor-General.<sup>269</sup> The Comptroller and Auditor General is responsible for auditing government ministries and state enterprises with powers enabled by the Audit Office Act (Chapter 22:18). The Audit Office Act works hand in hand with the PFMA. The Audit Office has been unable in certain instances to produce annual reports and meet statutory deadlines for parliament because the legislation that enables it does not provide for powers to compel Ministers and government departments to comply with treasury instructions.<sup>270</sup>

There is a need to ensure that all the legislation on accounting and reporting has adequate measures to enforce the contained provisions. The disclosure requirements can also be tweaked to bring them in line with the standards of the OECD as this will bring much needed transparency.

### **3.2.3 The Corporate Governance and Remuneration Policy Framework for Chief Executive Officers of Parastatals, State Enterprises and Local Authorities**

The Corporate Governance and Remuneration Policy Framework for Chief Executive Officers of Parastatals, State Enterprises and Local Authorities (Corporate Governance and Remuneration Policy Framework) was introduced in 2014 in order to tackle the rot in state enterprises. This framework, particularly addresses three main issues which are board appointments, management and performance; CEO appointment and performance and measures to deal with complex issues of salaries, allowances and procurement practices of public enterprises and local authorities.<sup>271</sup> Since the framework has a narrow scope, it will only be possible to evaluate it against a select number of the OECD guidelines. The framework was introduced amidst public disclosures of the salary gate scandal. It is, however alarming that until 2014 the government had seen no need to introduce such measures to curb excesses that it clearly was aware of as these parastatals report to line ministries.

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<sup>268</sup> Section 45 (b) and 49 (1) (b) Public Finance Management Act (Chapter 22:19).

<sup>269</sup> Zinyama T 'Efficiency and Effectiveness in Public Sector Auditing: An Evaluation of the Comptroller and Auditor-General's Performance in Zimbabwe from 1999 to 2012' (2013) 3 (7) *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 276.

<sup>270</sup> Zinyama T 'Efficiency and Effectiveness in Public Sector Auditing: An Evaluation of the Comptroller and Auditor-General's Performance in Zimbabwe from 1999 to 2012' (2013) 3 (7) *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 276.

<sup>271</sup> Corporate Governance and Remuneration Policy Framework for Chief Executive Officers of Parastatals, State Enterprises and Local Authorities 2014.

The OECD guidelines discussed above highlight the need for a competent board and it also provides the responsibilities of such boards.<sup>272</sup> The framework provides that board members must be selected on grounds of merit, based on a clearly defined capability matrix and skills mix, in areas such as legal, finance, marketing, audit, technical, human resources, strategic and economic planning.<sup>273</sup> The board members must also be inducted and trained by the Corporate Governance and Delivery Agency, which agency will be established within the office of the President and Cabinet to coordinate and monitor compliance with the ZIMCODE.<sup>274</sup> This is commendable because if followed in practice it will make way for people who are adequately qualified to sit on SOE boards, which is also in line with the OECD guidelines.

The Corporate Governance and Remuneration Policy Framework also provides for performance contracts for CEOs and other senior management.<sup>275</sup> These contracts are important because the OCED guidelines indicate that there is a link between performance and remuneration.<sup>276</sup> It is however not clear if these contracts apply to all members of the board. In addition to performance contracts, there is also provision for the evaluation of the performance of the CEO on a quarterly basis by the board and the communication of the results to the line Minister.<sup>277</sup> The framework also provides for the establishment of board committees such as those on audit, finance, human resources and remuneration and this is in line with the OCED guidelines.<sup>278</sup>

As stated in the OECD guidelines, the framework allows for the board of directors to be involved in the process of appointing a CEO.<sup>279</sup> According to the framework the board conducts interviews with the assistance of professional human resource consultants and select three possible candidates which will be selected from by the Minister and approved by the

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<sup>272</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 72.

<sup>273</sup> 1 (i) Corporate Governance and Remuneration Policy Framework for Chief Executive Officers of Parastatals, State Enterprises and Local Authorities 2014.

<sup>274</sup> 1 (iii) Corporate Governance and Remuneration Policy Framework for Chief Executive Officers of Parastatals, State Enterprises and Local Authorities 2014.

<sup>275</sup> 2 (iii) Corporate Governance and Remuneration Policy Framework for Chief Executive Officers of Parastatals, State Enterprises and Local Authorities 2014.

<sup>276</sup> Jesover F and Kirkpatrick G 'The Revised OCED Principles of Corporate Governance and their Relevance to non-OECD Countries' (2005) 13 (2) *Corporate Governance: An International Review* 133.

<sup>277</sup> 2 (v) Corporate Governance and Remuneration Policy Framework for Chief Executive Officers of Parastatals, State Enterprises and Local Authorities 2014.

<sup>278</sup> 1 (xx) Corporate Governance and Remuneration Policy Framework for Chief Executive Officers of Parastatals, State Enterprises and Local Authorities 2014.

<sup>279</sup> 2 (i) Corporate Governance and Remuneration Policy Framework for Chief Executive Officers of Parastatals, State Enterprises and Local Authorities 2014.

President.<sup>280</sup> The framework is however not clear in terms of the boards' role in the dismissal of the CEO. It only states that if CEOs do not meet the minimum requirements of their performance contracts this will constitute grounds for termination of office.<sup>281</sup>

The framework goes further by stating that a 50:50 gender representation and regional spread should be factored into the selection criteria of board members.<sup>282</sup> In essence, this seeks to address a social issue of gender representation in high profile positions in the nation and this is in line with some of the reasons for the formation of SOEs mentioned in the previous chapter. This is in line with the OECD guidelines since they provide that it is considered good practice to strive towards diversity in board composition, including with regards to gender, age, geographical, professional and educational background.<sup>283</sup>

In as much as the framework has commendable provisions one main issue is seemingly not addressed. This is the issue of board independence, the OECD guidelines provide that it is important that SOEs have strong boards that can act in the interest of the company and effectively monitor management without undue political interference.<sup>284</sup> One cannot emphasise enough the importance of board independence in SOEs especially in a country such as Zimbabwe where political interference is the order of the day.<sup>285</sup> In a paper by the United Nations it was highlighted that political governance standards may spill over into the area of commerce.<sup>286</sup> It is a matter of concern that the framework only prohibits Permanent Secretaries from being members of the board as this should also extend to Ministers and other government officials.<sup>287</sup> The framework provides for multiple reporting mechanisms to the line Ministers but does not provide for any provision restraining the Minister from interfering with the activities of the board.

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<sup>280</sup> 2 (i) Corporate Governance and Remuneration Policy Framework for Chief Executive Officers of Parastatals, State Enterprises and Local Authorities 2014.

<sup>281</sup> 2 (vii) Corporate Governance and Remuneration Policy Framework for Chief Executive Officers of Parastatals, State Enterprises and Local Authorities 2014.

<sup>282</sup> Corporate Governance and Remuneration Policy Framework for Chief Executive Officers of Parastatals, State Enterprises and Local Authorities 2014.

<sup>283</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 72.

<sup>284</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 72.

<sup>285</sup> News, analysis and comment on Africa 'Zimbabwe- greed, political interference and mismanagement feed pension crisis' available at <http://africajournalismtheworld.com/2015/08/07/zimbabwe-greed-political-interference-and-mismanagement-feed-pensions-crisis/> (accessed 21 September 2015).

<sup>286</sup> United Nations Economic Commission for Africa: *Overview of Corporate Governance and Accountability in Southern Africa* (2007) 22.

<sup>287</sup> 1 (viii) Corporate Governance and Remuneration Policy Framework for Chief Executive Officers of Parastatals, State Enterprises and Local Authorities 2014.

According to the framework, most decisions of the board and the CEO must be communicated either to the Minister or the Permanent Secretary. It further provides that line Ministers can appoint members from their ministries to sit through board deliberations and report to the ministry.<sup>288</sup> This can be taken as the state exercising its ownership function and ensuring that the operations of the board are in line with its mandate. However, if the same framework does not guarantee independence of the board and CEO to at least carry out their duties without undue political interference, this could be a cause for concern. It is necessary for board independence to be promoted in all SOEs through measures that allow boards sufficient autonomy.

### **3.2.4 The National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe (ZIMCODE)**

The ZIMCODE was introduced this year (2015) as the first code of corporate governance of its kind in Zimbabwe. The National Code of Corporate Governance applies to both the public and private sectors. The ZIMCODE has taken the ‘apply or explain’ approach which means that it is voluntary, but it recommends that the Corporate Governance and Remuneration Policy Framework should be enacted into law so as to make it compulsory.<sup>289</sup> The code has not seen much implementation yet, especially in the case of SOEs, but it is expected to be fully implemented in due course.<sup>290</sup>

The code has been divided into different chapters, each containing several principles and this section of the work will go through each chapter. Since this is a holistic corporate governance code its principles will be evaluated against most of the OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-Owned Enterprises. The ZIMCODE will also be evaluated against the definition of corporate governance considered the most relevant for SOEs in this study and the stakeholder theory of corporate governance.

#### **3.2.4.1 Ownership and Control**

Under this chapter, the ZIMCODE provides for the rights of different classes of shareholders and it states that there must be a balance of power between the shareholders who provide capital, the managers and the board of directors.<sup>291</sup> It is provided further that corporate power should not be concentrated in one person or a small group of persons because this will have a

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<sup>288</sup> 1 (viii) Corporate Governance and Remuneration Policy Framework for Chief Executive Officers of Parastatals, State Enterprises and Local Authorities 2014.

<sup>289</sup> Chapter 1.6 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe.

<sup>290</sup> Tambo B ‘Conflicting roles and responsibilities of SOEs’ *Sunday News Online* August 2 2015 available at <http://www.sundaynews.co.zw/conflicting-roles-and-responsibilities-of-soes/> (accessed 21 September 2015).

<sup>291</sup> Chapter 2.8 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.



negative impact on effective and ethical corporate leadership.<sup>292</sup> Additionally, it states that corporate power which is represented by the right to vote on a one share one vote basis must always be aligned with economic rights.<sup>293</sup> The ZIMCODE recommends that the right to vote should be extended to all shareholders, rights of minority shareholders must be respected and that there must be timely and transparent disclosure of annual reports.<sup>294</sup>

Most of this chapter addresses an array of shareholder issues from ownership, voting rights, information given to shareholders and shareholder meetings, and this is adequately done. This aligns the chapter with the OECD guideline on equitable treatment of shareholders as it manages to cover most of the shareholder issues especially the rights of minority shareholders. A notable aspect of this chapter is the statement that “the community in which a company operates should benefit from its operations.”<sup>295</sup> This alludes to the stakeholder theory of corporate governance, which is very important for Zimbabwe but this will be fully addressed in the following sections of this chapter.

#### **3.2.4.2 Boards of Directors and Directors**

The preamble of this chapter provides that a company acts through natural persons, mainly the board of directors, which is the governing and controlling body of the company. Therefore the board of directors must possess certain qualities, play certain roles and perform certain functions and duties.<sup>296</sup> The principles state that the board of directors should provide effective corporate and entrepreneurial leadership.<sup>297</sup> The principles further provide that the leadership of the board must be based on:

- (a) ethics, profession and good morality;
- (b) the notion that strategy, risk, performance and sustainability are inseparable;
- (c) prudent and effective controls which make it possible for risk to be assessed and managed properly;
- (d) complete compliance with, and respect for, applicable laws, especially the Bill of Rights as set out in the Constitution and adherence to non-binding rules, codes and best practice standards; and

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<sup>292</sup> Chapter 2.9 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>293</sup> Chapter 2.10 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>294</sup> Chapter 2.11, 12, 13 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>295</sup> Chapter 2.20 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>296</sup> Chapter 3.52 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>297</sup> Chapter 3.53 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

(e) the recognition that the best interests of the company and the stakeholders must always be promoted.<sup>298</sup>

The above principles encapsulate the duties and responsibilities of the board of directors and they provide a suitable yardstick for how directors should conduct themselves. They also seek to address the issue of inadequately qualified executives who lacked good ethics who had been sitting on numerous boards.<sup>299</sup> There is also need to change the general public perception that all SOE boards are riddled with corruption, mismanagement and fraud.<sup>300</sup> The ZIMCODE also places on directors the legal duties of good faith, loyalty, care, skill and diligence in the discharge of their duties.<sup>301</sup> Apart from these duties directors are also implored to act with honesty and integrity, and there is a duty to act morally that is supplemented by an array of recommendations.<sup>302</sup> The moral duty is very important for Zimbabwean SOEs because it was clearly lacking among some of the boards such as those of the ZBC and PSMAS.<sup>303</sup>

The chapter further provides for the qualities, membership criteria and qualifications of board members. The principle states that the board should be composed of members with good leadership qualities and core competencies required by the company such as accounting, legal and managerial experience.<sup>304</sup> In terms of the composition of the board, it is provided that company boards should have a majority of non-executive directors, the majority of whom should be independent.<sup>305</sup> It is also stated that the independent non-executive director must be independent in character and judgment and should not have relationships or circumstances which are likely to affect, or appear to affect their independence.<sup>306</sup>

This chapter is very much in tandem with the OECD guideline on the responsibilities of the boards. In addressing the issue of board independence, it however does not specifically refer to the issue of political interference in the boards of SOEs. It manages to ensure the appointment of individuals who are independent in character and judgment but there still is

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<sup>298</sup> Chapter 3.54 (a)-(e) National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>299</sup> Ncube F and Maunganidze L 'Corporate Governance and executive Compensation in Zimbabwe State Owned Enterprises: A Case of Institutionalised Predation' (2014) 4 (6) *Management* 137.

<sup>300</sup> Zvavahera P and Ndoda G 'Corporate Governance and ethical behaviour: The case of the Zimbabwean Broadcasting Corporation' (2014) 9 *Journal of Academic and Business Ethics* 2.

<sup>301</sup> Chapter 3.61 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>302</sup> Chapter 3.57 and 65 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>303</sup> Obert S, Suppiah SDK, Tendai MJ, Desderio CM and Martin D 'Corporate board failure in Zimbabwe: Have non-executive directors gone to sleep?' (2014) 16 *IOSR Journal of Business and Management* 78.

<sup>304</sup> Chapter 3.79 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

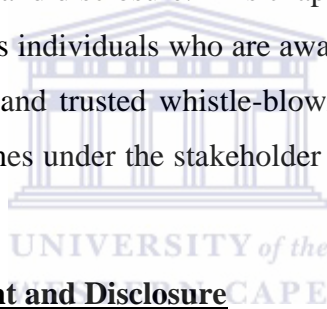
<sup>305</sup> Chapter 3.87 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>306</sup> Chapter 3.109 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

need to insulate SOEs from undue influence of the state. The chapter is also not clear on whether or not state officials are allowed to sit on SOE boards apart from the Permanent Secretaries that are precluded from sitting on boards by the Corporate Governance and Remuneration Policy Framework. Such a measure would be important to prevent instances of the so called ‘militarisation’ referred to above.<sup>307</sup>

### **3.2.4.3 The Governance of Risk**

The code provides that business leaders should understand risk and how it can be measured, eliminated or mitigated and that risk management systems must be independently assured.<sup>308</sup> The code implores directors to establish an efficient and effective system for the day to day supervisions of the company’s financial and business operations.<sup>309</sup> In addition to this there are numerous other measures that are alluded to in the code that include risk assessment, internal and external audits, audit committees and whistle blower policies. These allude to the OECD guideline on transparency and disclosure. This chapter is commendable because of the whistle blower policy for it allows individuals who are aware of the misuse of funds to report anonymously to an independent and trusted whistle-blowing system.<sup>310</sup> This policy is also encouraged in the OECD guidelines under the stakeholder relations and responsible business guideline.<sup>311</sup>



### **3.2.4.4 Information Management and Disclosure**

The preamble of this chapter explicitly states that disclosure of all company information and its accessibility to all stakeholders is crucial to the culture of building confidence, accountability and trust within the company.<sup>312</sup> It goes further to state that the disclosure of information is important for stakeholders for it assists them in making informed decisions.<sup>313</sup> The inclusion of stakeholders is a step towards fulfilling the stakeholder theory of corporate governance that was alluded to in the previous chapter and this is a laudable effort.

The principles in this chapter make room for information management and disclosure and they provide that the board should ensure that information is properly managed and is made

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<sup>307</sup> See 3.2.2.

<sup>308</sup> Chapter 4.188 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>309</sup> Chapter 4.189 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>310</sup> Chapter 4.225 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>311</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 59.

<sup>312</sup> Chapter 5.261 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>313</sup> Chapter 5.261 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

available timeously.<sup>314</sup> The chapter contains multiple disclosure principles and recommendations that seek to address disclosure deficiencies highlighted above in the section on the Public Finance Management Act.<sup>315</sup> Since this is a corporate governance code it is not in its scope to provide measures that compel Ministers and government departments to produce information needed for audits by the Comptroller and Auditor General. This means that the disclosure principles and recommendations available do not carry enough legislative might to ensure or compel the disclosure of such information.

Chapter 5 recommends that the company's remuneration policy and directors' remuneration, including salary, benefits, bonuses, stock options and pensions should be included in the information disclosed by the company. This is a bold move, especially in regards to SOEs where boards have been ridiculously remunerating themselves at the expense of all other stakeholders.<sup>316</sup> This would in turn promote the principle of transparency and disclosure as per the OECD guidelines. The chapter also makes provisions for integrated and sustainability reporting. It provides that integrated reporting includes the company's strategy, governance, financial performance, and future outlook in one report.<sup>317</sup> It states that the integrated report should be guided by the Global Reporting Initiative's Integrated Reporting Council and any other reputable international reporting framework.<sup>318</sup>

As far as corporate governance can go this chapter provides adequate disclosure measures that are in line with the OECD guideline on transparency and disclosure. It is important that these measures are followed since the legislation does not provide the power to compel the disclosure of audit information.<sup>319</sup>

#### **3.2.4.5 Corporate Conflict Prevention and Resolution**

This chapter seeks to address the issue of conflict prevention and resolution since conflicts are inherent in business.<sup>320</sup> As stated in the code, the prevention and resolution of corporate conflict makes it possible to protect the rights of shareholders and to protect the property and

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<sup>314</sup> Chapter 5.262 (a) and (b) National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>315</sup> Public Finance Management Act (Chapter 22:19).

<sup>316</sup> Mutanda D 'The impact of the Zimbabwean crisis on parastatals' (2014) 5 (5.2) *International Journal of Politics and Good Governance* 3.

<sup>317</sup> Chapter 5.316 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>318</sup> Chapter 5.316 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>319</sup> Zinyama T 'Efficiency and Effectiveness in Public Sector Auditing: An Evaluation of the Comptroller and Auditor-General's Performance in Zimbabwe from 1999 to 2012' (2013) 3 (7) *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 276.

<sup>320</sup> Chapter 6.324 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

business reputation of the company.<sup>321</sup> The chapter makes provisions for the establishment of a corporate conflict resolution (CCR) committee by the board in order to deal with and prevent conflict.<sup>322</sup> This measure complements the OECD guidelines for they provide that mechanisms should be implemented to avoid conflicts of interest.<sup>323</sup>

This chapter also implores directors and employees not to use their positions for an improper purpose or take advantage of company opportunities to further their own interests.<sup>324</sup> There is recommendation against one person taking the position of chairperson of the board and CEO as supervising oneself is a typical conflict of interest.<sup>325</sup> Notably the chapter recommends that the remuneration committee should be fully composed of non-executive directors and that they should not determine their own remuneration but this must be done by an independent company.<sup>326</sup>

#### **3.2.4.6 Compliance and Enforcement**

This chapter explains the reason behind adopting the ‘apply or explain’ approach which is that the approach “...reflects an appreciation of the fact that it is often not a case of whether to comply or not, but rather a case of considering how the principles of a code and recommendations contained in it can be applied in the particular circumstances of a given enterprise.”<sup>327</sup> This approach allows boards upon concluding that a recommendation is not in the best interests of a company the opportunity to apply the provision differently or apply another practice and still achieve the same objectives.<sup>328</sup>

There is acknowledgement that the ‘apply or explain’ approach has a bias towards indirect coercion.<sup>329</sup> The code then relies on disclosure principles to encourage compliance through linkage with membership to sector associations, professional bodies and to support the legal license to remain in business.<sup>330</sup> Voluntary codes rely on the market as a mechanism for encouraging compliance and the codes provide a major source of corporate governance in addition to the law. It is the norm that corporate governance codes are voluntary in the private

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<sup>321</sup> Chapter 6.325 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>322</sup> Chapter 6.328 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>323</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 73.

<sup>324</sup> Chapter 6.339 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>325</sup> Chapter 6.341 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>326</sup> Chapter 6.357 and 358 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>327</sup> Chapter 7.370 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>328</sup> Chapter 7.371 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>329</sup> Chapter 7.372 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>330</sup> Chapter 7.372 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

sector. However there is need for a mandatory comprehensive code of corporate governance for SOEs as stated in this code that the Corporate Governance and Remuneration Policy Framework should be enacted into law. Incorporation of some on the major principles in the ZIMCODE should precede the enactment of the Corporate Governance and Remuneration Policy Framework.

### **3.2.4.7 Governance of Stakeholder Relations**

This is one major aspect that had not been entirely addressed in the past by existing legislation as indicated above.<sup>331</sup> In the governance of a company it is important to create a balance between the maximisation of shareholder value and the protection and promotion of the interests of other stakeholders.<sup>332</sup> For the purposes of this paper stakeholders have been defined as “those groups who affect and/or are affected by the organisation and its activities.”<sup>333</sup> In the ZIMCODE stakeholders are defined as parties that can or are affected by the operations of a company which is in line with the aforementioned definition.<sup>334</sup> The code provides that stakeholders include shareholders, institutional investors, creditors, lenders, suppliers, customers, regulators, employees, trade unions, the media, analysts, consumers, society in general, communities, auditors and potential investors.<sup>335</sup>

The principles of the code are set on the identification, recognition, respect and promotion of the legitimate rights of stakeholders by the company in its endeavours.<sup>336</sup> It provides for mechanisms for engagement and transparency between the company and its stakeholders. The principles and recommendations in this chapter are consistent with the OECD guidelines which state that there should be recognition of the enterprises’ responsibility towards stakeholders and that it requires the enterprises to report on their relations with stakeholders.<sup>337</sup> The code does indeed provide that companies must report on their relations with stakeholders through its integrated report.<sup>338</sup> This will enable any interested parties to track the stakeholder relations of each company and this brings a new dimension of transparency for Zimbabwe.

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<sup>331</sup> See 3.1.6.

<sup>332</sup> Chapter 8.392 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>333</sup> Solomon J *Corporate Governance and Accountability* 2 ed (2007) 14.

<sup>334</sup> Chapter 8.393 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>335</sup> Chapter 8.393 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>336</sup> Chapter 8.395 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>337</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 25.

<sup>338</sup> Chapter 8.429 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

The code is also in line with the stakeholder theory of corporate governance that was referred to in the previous chapter as it focuses on parties outside the shareholders and the realisation of their rights.

#### **3.2.4.8 Role of Government in Corporate Governance**

According to this chapter government plays both an administrative and coordinating role through its agencies at every level.<sup>339</sup> It is the role of the government to provide an environment that is conducive for the private and public sector. Since the government is the biggest employer in the country, it is fundamental that it observes good corporate governance practices in government Ministries, Parastatals and State-controlled companies.<sup>340</sup> This chapter mainly implores the government to respect laws and regulations and to play a meaningful role in instilling good values and ethics.<sup>341</sup> This is of outmost importance in Zimbabwe because many have lost faith in the government itself and do not believe that SOEs will be run effectively.<sup>342</sup>

This is an important chapter for the government to implement. It has been alleged that the state's ownership policy which is exercised through multiple actors such as line ministries and a number of other government bodies over and above the board of directors is complex.<sup>343</sup> Such complexity is known to be a challenge in matters of ensuring efficient decisions and good corporate governance.<sup>344</sup> It is then argued that the state's ownership functions and its policy making and regulatory functions arise and leave the SOEs vulnerable to be used to achieve short term goals at the expense of efficiency.<sup>345</sup>

The above is not consistent with the OECD guideline on rationales for state ownership. The guidelines provide that the exercise of ownership rights must be clearly identified within the state administration.<sup>346</sup> Such exercise of ownership would be facilitated by setting up a

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<sup>339</sup> Chapter 9.437 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>340</sup> Chapter 9.439 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>341</sup> Chapter 9.449 and 449 National Code on Corporate Governance Zimbabwe 2014.

<sup>342</sup> Tambo B 'Conflicting roles and responsibilities of SOEs' *Sunday News Online* August 2 2015 available at <http://www.sundaynews.co.zw/conflicting-roles-and-responsibilities-of-soes/> (accessed 21 September 2015).

<sup>343</sup> Tambo B 'Conflicting roles and responsibilities of SOEs' *Sunday News Online* August 2 2015 available at <http://www.sundaynews.co.zw/conflicting-roles-and-responsibilities-of-soes/> (accessed 21 September 2015).

<sup>344</sup> Tambo B 'Conflicting roles and responsibilities of SOEs' *Sunday News Online* August 2 2015 available at <http://www.sundaynews.co.zw/conflicting-roles-and-responsibilities-of-soes/> (accessed 21 September 2015).

<sup>345</sup> Tambo B 'Conflicting roles and responsibilities of SOEs' *Sunday News Online* August 2 2015 available at <http://www.sundaynews.co.zw/conflicting-roles-and-responsibilities-of-soes/> (accessed 21 September 2015).

<sup>346</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 31.

coordinating entity or by the centralisation of the ownership function.<sup>347</sup> According to the above the Zimbabwean state has not been able to establish a clear ownership policy and this might be one of the major causes of the problems that befall the management of SOEs.

### **3.3 Conclusion**

This chapter indicates the importance of the OECD guidelines in the management of SOEs. It is important that when regulators or legislators are drafting legislation or codes infuse the different principles to enhance the productivity of SOEs. It is imperative that guidelines such as those on rationales for state ownership and the state's role as owner be considered in Zimbabwe's corporate governance regime. The state needs a clear ownership policy in order to avoid the use of SOEs for the achievement of short term goals at the expense of efficiency. The lack of clarity in the ownership policy can also lead to excessive state intervention in the operation of SOEs. This is true for Zimbabwe for SOEs are at used as an organ of the political parties and there is need to do away with this.

The country needs a central ownership agency that will exercise the state's right of ownership. Such a body would clarify the ownership policy and it will ensure that the policy is consistently implemented. It will be of great importance that the agency be held accountable to relevant representative bodies and have relationships with public bodies such as the office of the Comptroller and Auditor-General. APE

The office of the Comptroller and Auditor-General needs sufficient powers to compel the disclosure of information when it wishes. There must be sufficient power for it to carry out random audits in order to stamp out corruption which has riddled the state enterprises. There is need for greater accountability and disclosure of the finances of SOEs. Responsible Ministers and boards should be held accountable for any corrupt behaviour, for it is alarming that with the level of state intervention in Zimbabwe line Ministers state that they were unaware of excessive remuneration practices when they occur. Application of the OECD guidelines in these instances would promote efficiency.

The current regime clearly does not comply with the OECD guidelines, but the ZIMCODE is the only instrument that embodies most of the principles. There are issues that might need to be adequately addressed such as that of financial reporting as highlighted in the section on the Public Finance Management Act. The ZIMCODE however, provides for sufficient measures

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<sup>347</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 31.



in regards to reporting but it is not mandatory and this might be used as a means to circumvent its principles and recommendations. This issue is stressed on because one has to understand the operating atmosphere in Zimbabwe.

Shortly after the salary gate scandal the government responded by capping salaries of executives to only US \$6 000 a month with other circumstances considered in a move to restore sanity.<sup>348</sup> It is, however alarming that months later a newly appointed senior management member of PSMAS who had replaced the previous CEO was earning US \$40 000 which is four times the US \$11 000 he should have been earning.<sup>349</sup> This was being done while the company was still struggling to pay service providers and workers.<sup>350</sup>

This points to a culture of good laws but no implementation of such laws. This is the operating atmosphere in most activities in which the government is involved. The country only scored 20 out of 100 for the 2013 and 2014 periods on the corruption perceptions index compiled by Transparency International.<sup>351</sup> The scores reflect the level of corruption in public sectors and the organisation adds that “bribes and backroom deals don’t just steal resources from the most vulnerable- they undermine economic justice and economic development, and destroy public trust in government and leaders.”<sup>352</sup> There is also a strong need to end the culture of ‘militarising’ SOE boards, implementation of the ZIMCODE will prevent such tendencies.

It is important that the ZIMCODE is implemented because it will provide the public with much needed confidence in the system that has been lost over the years. It is in line with most of the OECD principles and it provides a good yardstick for corporate governance as it embodies the corporate governance definition referred to in the previous chapter. The code propagates a culture of transparency and accountability which is of utmost importance. There is however need to advocate for the insulation of the boards of SOEs to ensure that even

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<sup>348</sup> Ndlovu P ‘CEO Pay Capped: Revealed: What top parastatal bosses earned’ *Chronicle* March 19 2014 available at <http://www.chronicle.co.zw/ceo-pay-capped-revealed-what-top-parastatal-bosses-earned/> (accessed 9 October 2015).

<sup>349</sup> Ndlovu P ‘CEO Pay Capped: Revealed: What top parastatal bosses earned’ *Chronicle* March 19 2014 available at <http://www.chronicle.co.zw/ceo-pay-capped-revealed-what-top-parastatal-bosses-earned/> (accessed 9 October 2015).

<sup>350</sup> Ndlovu P ‘CEO Pay Capped: Revealed: What top parastatal bosses earned’ *Chronicle* March 19 2014 available at <http://www.chronicle.co.zw/ceo-pay-capped-revealed-what-top-parastatal-bosses-earned/> (accessed 9 October 2015).

<sup>351</sup> Transparency International ‘Corruption Perceptions Index 2014’ available at <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2014/results> (accessed 9 October 2015).

<sup>352</sup> Transparency International ‘Corruption is threatening economic growth for all’ available at <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2014/results> (accessed 9 October 2015).

though they take instructions from the state they are free from undue political influence. As stated in the code some of the principles and recommendations must be made mandatory for SOEs with the hope that new boards will adopt a culture of implementation.

The next chapter will undertake a comparative analysis of the corporate governance of SOEs in New Zealand. This will be done in order to provide an example from which valuable lessons can be derived for the Zimbabwean public sector.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **STATE-OWNED ENTERPRISE GOVERNANCE IN NEW ZEALAND**

#### **4.1 Introduction to New Zealand and its State-owned Enterprises**

The previous chapter illustrated that Zimbabwe has had numerous problems in the management of its SOEs. In view of this, the corporate governance structure of Zimbabwe was analysed and it is necessary that lessons be derived from another jurisdiction. This chapter will begin by providing insight into the reasons why New Zealand has been chosen for this study. It will also examine the history and modern day structure of SOEs in New Zealand as well as its corporate governance structure. The chapter will also point at other aspects of New Zealand's SOE structure from which guidance can be derived for purposes of this study.

#### **4.1.2 Why New Zealand?**

New Zealand has been chosen for this study due to its membership of the OECD and its relatively successful SOEs.<sup>353</sup> New Zealand joined the OECD in 1973 and has been an active member since then.<sup>354</sup> Since this study has utilised the OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises it is only fitting that a country that is part of the OECD be used for comparative purposes. It is also noteworthy that New Zealand has managed to infuse tenets of the OECD guidelines in its corporate governance structure.<sup>355</sup> Apart from the OECD guidelines, this country has also been chosen for its culture towards corruption especially in the public sector.

As of June 2010, 17 of New Zealand's SOEs had a combined asset value of \$ 53 billion and revenues of over \$ 13 billion.<sup>356</sup> This level of success provides sufficient reason for the need to understand how this nation has managed to reach this point in the governance of its SOEs. One outstanding factor of New Zealand's public sector is the low level of corruption which is ranked second lowest in the world according to Transparency International.<sup>357</sup> The low levels

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<sup>353</sup> Asia Pacific Interdisciplinary Research in Accounting 'Re-examining the Financial Returns from New Zealand's SE Sector; Re-evaluating Privatisation' available at <http://www.apira2013.org/proceedings/pdfs/K203.pdf> (accessed 12 October 2015) 3

<sup>354</sup> OECD 'List of OECD member countries- Ratification of the Convention on the OECD' available at <http://www.oecd.org/about/membersandpartners/list-oecd-member-countries.htm> (accessed 12 October 2015)

<sup>355</sup> Financial Markets Authority 'Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines' 2014

<sup>356</sup> TEARA 'Story: State-owned enterprises' available at <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/state-owned-enterprises/page-1> (accessed 13 October 2015)

<sup>357</sup> Transparency International 'Corruption Perceptions Index 2014: Results' available at <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2014/results> (accessed 12 October 2015)

of corruption can be attributed to government openness and effectiveness.<sup>358</sup> Low level corruption countries have also been known to have strong and active civic activism and social trust, strong transparency and accountability mechanisms in place allowing citizens to monitor their politicians and hold them accountable for their decisions.<sup>359</sup> If Zimbabwe can emulate such standards in regards to public sector management the benefits could be innumerable since the country has lost a lot to corruption and cronyism.<sup>360</sup>

For the abovementioned reasons New Zealand will provide noteworthy lessons for Zimbabwe. It will also be important to note that no two jurisdictions are the same and the same measures cannot always be readily applied from one jurisdiction to another. Caution will be exercised in the recommendations to be provided. The most important concern is that of the political climate in Zimbabwe and this paper will be cautious on this issue.

#### **4.1.3 History of State-owned Enterprises in New Zealand**

It is important to note that New Zealand's public sector includes parliament, the courts, police and armed forces.<sup>361</sup> These organisations together with government departments that are publicly funded and directly responsible to a minister are referred to as the country's 'core public service.'<sup>362</sup> Beyond this there are other government organisations and departments that are funded by the government but are not directly responsible to or controlled by the government.<sup>363</sup> Under this category there are crown entities, SOEs and other government businesses.<sup>364</sup> Crown entities are quasi-autonomous organisations such as commissions, review committees and tribunals, which are established to exercise public power or advise Ministers outside the ambit of the central government.<sup>365</sup> SOEs are basically large trading

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<sup>358</sup> Transparency International 'What makes New Zealand, Denmark, Finland, Sweden and others 'cleaner' than most countries' available at <http://blog.transparency.org/2011/12/07/what-makes-new-zealand-denmark-finland-sweden-and-others-%E2%80%9Ccleaner%E2%80%9D-than-most-countries/> (accessed 13 October 2015).

<sup>359</sup> Transparency International 'What makes New Zealand, Denmark, Finland, Sweden and others 'cleaner' than most countries' available at <http://blog.transparency.org/2011/12/07/what-makes-new-zealand-denmark-finland-sweden-and-others-%E2%80%9Ccleaner%E2%80%9D-than-most-countries/> (accessed 13 October 2015).

<sup>360</sup> Chabwinja S 'Ministers must not appoint cronies to boards' *The Independent* 18 February 2014 available at <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/2014/02/18/ministers-must-appoint-cronies-boards/> (accessed 21 June 2015).

<sup>361</sup> Luke B *Strategic entrepreneurship in New Zealand's state-owned enterprises: Underlying elements and financial implications* (Unpublished PhD thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2009) 67.

<sup>362</sup> Mulgan R *Politics in New Zealand* 3 ed (1997) 79.

<sup>363</sup> Luke B *Strategic entrepreneurship in New Zealand's state-owned enterprises: Underlying elements and financial implications* (Unpublished PhD thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2009) 67.

<sup>364</sup> Luke B *Strategic entrepreneurship in New Zealand's state-owned enterprises: Underlying elements and financial implications* (Unpublished PhD thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2009) 67.

<sup>365</sup> The Treasury 'Other Crown Owned Companies' available at <http://www.treasury.govt.nz/commercial/ownership-framework/croc/> (accessed 12 October 2015).

departments within government, which are subsequently corporatised and established as state legal entities with a strong commercial focus.<sup>366</sup> Other government-owned businesses are those outside the scope of crown entities and SOEs, but which have a significant crown shareholding.<sup>367</sup> This study will, however focus only on New Zealand's SOEs.

Before 1984 the New Zealand government owned a large range of essential commercial trading activities such as coal mining, petrochemicals, banks, insurance companies and an airline.<sup>368</sup> During this period there were state-run organisations with boards and an example is the New Zealand Railways Corporation, which had a board whose powers and functions could be reviewed by the responsible Minister.<sup>369</sup> This meant that the Minister of Railways retained the authority to make decisions. This practice also applied to other government-owned commercial entities, but in varying degrees.<sup>370</sup> Government departments and ministries were also responsible for the delivery of social and regulatory functions.<sup>371</sup>

In 1984 the New Zealand economy was underperforming and the treasury produced a comprehensive analysis of the economic situation.<sup>372</sup> This analysis found that the performance of the entities owned by the government was a substantial contribution to the economic situation.<sup>373</sup> Their main findings showed that the entities were poorly governed, consuming large amounts of capital and other resources, and producing low to negative returns.<sup>374</sup> In a paper published in 1984 (Economic Management) by the treasury the main reasons for the failure of SOEs included:

- a) their lack of clear, non-conflicting objectives;
- b) their operating environment i.e. the special assistance they received and restraints on competition;

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<sup>366</sup> The Treasury 'State-Owned Enterprises' available at <http://www.treasury.govt.nz/commercial/ownership-framework/soe/> (accessed 12 October 2015).

<sup>367</sup> Luke B *Strategic entrepreneurship in New Zealand's state-owned enterprises: Underlying elements and financial implications* (Unpublished PhD thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2009) 68.

<sup>368</sup> The Board Room Practice Limited 'Corporate Governance in new Zealand Government-owned Companies: A Stock-Take' (2005) 1.

<sup>369</sup> The Board Room Practice Limited 'Corporate Governance in new Zealand Government-owned Companies: A Stock-Take' (2005) 1.

<sup>370</sup> Luke B *Strategic entrepreneurship in New Zealand's state-owned enterprises: Underlying elements and financial implications* (Unpublished PhD thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2009) 64.

<sup>371</sup> Luke B *Strategic entrepreneurship in New Zealand's state-owned enterprises: Underlying elements and financial implications* (Unpublished PhD thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2009) 64.

<sup>372</sup> New Zealand Treasury 'State-owned Enterprises: History of Policy Development and Implementation' (1996) 6.

<sup>373</sup> New Zealand Treasury 'State-owned Enterprises: History of Policy Development and Implementation' (1996) 8.

<sup>374</sup> Mulgan R *Politics in New Zealand* 3 ed (1997) 79.

c) the incentives arising from existing arrangements from monitoring performance.<sup>375</sup>

Despite the presence of government commercial structures before 1987 there was little or no mention of corporate governance as a field of enquiry.<sup>376</sup> At this time there were commercial companies that were governed by the Companies Act of 1955 but there was little or no public debate about the quality of governance.<sup>377</sup> This debate only gained momentum when there was a significant number of state-owned enterprises and an environment that encouraged performance focus.<sup>378</sup>

Eventually the limited liability company was chosen as the most effective vehicle for the management of the government commercial and trading operations.<sup>379</sup> Various government departments with a strong trading function were corporatised and held as SOEs or privatised in a move to steer them away from ministerial control and government interference.<sup>380</sup> It was at this time that the government decided to treat commercial management and risk the same way that the private sector did.<sup>381</sup> This also led to the deregulation of the SOE's market as well as special assistance which had been provided when trading agencies were within government agencies.<sup>382</sup> Progressive deregulation was in the rail and electricity sectors and this meant that SOEs now faced competition from private sector companies.<sup>383</sup> More importantly boards were appointed from the private sector and civil servants were excluded and this is still the case.<sup>384</sup> Similar to the private sector directors were also not appointed to represent any community interests.<sup>385</sup> These reforms were in line with the ongoing international trend of aligning public sector management with that of the private sector.<sup>386</sup>

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<sup>375</sup> New Zealand Treasury 'State-owned Enterprises: History of Policy Development and Implementation' (1996) 7-8.

<sup>376</sup> The Board Room Practice Limited 'Corporate Governance in new Zealand Government-owned Companies: A Stock-Take' (2005) 2.

<sup>377</sup> New Zealand Treasury 'State-owned Enterprises: History of Policy Development and Implementation' (1996) 7.

<sup>378</sup> New Zealand Treasury 'State-owned Enterprises: History of Policy Development and Implementation' (1996) 8.

<sup>379</sup> The Board Room Practice Limited 'Corporate Governance in new Zealand Government-owned Companies: A Stock-Take' (2005) 2.

<sup>380</sup> Luke B *Strategic entrepreneurship in New Zealand's state-owned enterprises: Underlying elements and financial implications* (Unpublished PhD thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2009) 68.

<sup>381</sup> The Board Room Practice Limited 'Corporate Governance in new Zealand Government-owned Companies: A Stock-Take' (2005) 2.

<sup>382</sup> McKinnon M *Treasury: The New Zealand Treasury, 1840-2000* (2003) 369.

<sup>383</sup> McKinnon M *Treasury: The New Zealand Treasury, 1840-2000* (2003) 369.

<sup>384</sup> Mulgan R *Politics in New Zealand* 3 ed (1997) 81.

<sup>385</sup> Mulgan R *Politics in New Zealand* 3 ed (1997) 81.

<sup>386</sup> Luke B *Strategic entrepreneurship in New Zealand's state-owned enterprises: Underlying elements and financial implications* (Unpublished PhD thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2009) 68.

The treasury was very much responsible for the development of the policy that led to the formation of the modern day SOE. It argued that setting up enterprises as separate legal entities under the Companies Act 1953 would reduce the likelihood of lenders assuming an implicit government guarantee.<sup>387</sup> More importantly, it argued that giving SOE boards the same powers as those of private sector boards would limit the scope for detailed ministerial intervention in the management of the enterprise.<sup>388</sup> The Companies Act would then provide the legal basis for managerial autonomy.<sup>389</sup> This is important because corporatisation results in insulation because company laws usually limit the rights of shareholders to directly manage the enterprise.<sup>390</sup> This would be very valuable for Zimbabwe as there is need to insulate SOE boards from political interference.

Initially nine SOEs were formed in 1987 under the State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986 (SOE Act) and were to be governed by the Companies Act 1953 in an attempt to emulate the private sector.<sup>391</sup> One exception to this is KiwiRail which is a statutory corporation established by its own legislation and is a SOE under the SOE Act but is not a company under the Companies Act.<sup>392</sup> The primary function of SOEs is to act as successful business enterprises that actually make profits.<sup>393</sup> Some sections of the SOE Act did allow the government to pursue non-commercial objectives as long as they were clearly identified and separately paid for rather than being hidden in the total budget.<sup>394</sup> Despite the presence of this clause most of New Zealand's SOEs have acted as fully commercial enterprises, thus neglecting the social objectives.<sup>395</sup>

In each SOE there are two shares, one held by the Minister of SOEs and one held by the Minister of Finance on behalf of the crown with the former being the executive shareholder

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<sup>387</sup> New Zealand Treasury 'State-owned Enterprises: History of Policy Development and Implementation' (1996) 18.

<sup>388</sup> The Treasury 'State-Owned Enterprises' available at <http://www.treasury.govt.nz/commercial/ownership-framework/soe/> (accessed 12 October 2015).

<sup>389</sup> New Zealand Treasury 'State-owned Enterprises: History of Policy Development and Implementation' (1996) 18.

<sup>390</sup> Vigliasindi M *The effectiveness of Boards of Directors of State-owned Enterprises in Developing Countries* (2008) 3.

<sup>391</sup> Mulgan R *Politics in New Zealand* 3 ed (1997) 80.

<sup>392</sup> The Treasury 'State-Owned Enterprises' available at <http://www.treasury.govt.nz/commercial/ownership-framework/soe/> (accessed 12 October 2015).

<sup>393</sup> Mulgan R *Politics in New Zealand* 3 ed (1997) 79.

<sup>394</sup> Section 7 State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986.

<sup>395</sup> Mulgan R *Politics in New Zealand* 3 ed (1997) 81.

for day-to-day overview.<sup>396</sup> During the transition period the Minister of SOEs formed two advisory groups in addition to the usual advice from the treasury. One was the SOE Unit, which reported directly to the Minister as a part of his office.<sup>397</sup> The purpose of this Unit was to provide complementary and board appointment advice to the Minister in addition to that of the treasury which he did not want to solely depend on.<sup>398</sup> The other was the SOE Steering Committee which was made up of highly skilled directors and it actively provided the Minister and the SOE unit with informed advice on governance and board appointment issues.<sup>399</sup>

During this period there were establishment boards which had no legal standing and were formed to prepare the first business plans, contracts, the draft Statement of Corporate Intent (SCI) and the appointment of the CEO-select.<sup>400</sup> The SCI is the document that the government exercises its control through.<sup>401</sup> The statement is prepared by the board in consultation with the shareholding Minister and it covers issues such as the type of business to be engaged in, the composition of the balance sheet and how the board will set its annual dividend.<sup>402</sup>

These boards assisted with the incorporation process of the SOEs. The boards were involved in shaping the future of the businesses and were tasked with selecting which departmental staff would be taken into the new business.<sup>403</sup> The state sector also benefited from the fact that skilled private sector directors accepted appointments to the establishment and company boards.<sup>404</sup> This is attributed as one of the major factors for the success of the commerciality process. It is also important to note that since appointments were made by the Minister under-

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<sup>396</sup> Luke B *Strategic entrepreneurship in New Zealand's state-owned enterprises: Underlying elements and financial implications* (Unpublished PhD thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2009) 74.

<sup>397</sup> The Board Room Practice Limited 'Corporate Governance in new Zealand Government-owned Companies: A Stock-Take' (2005) 3.

<sup>398</sup> The Board Room Practice Limited 'Corporate Governance in new Zealand Government-owned Companies: A Stock-Take' (2005) 3.

<sup>399</sup> New Zealand Treasury 'State-owned Enterprises: History of Policy Development and Implementation' (1996) 78.

<sup>400</sup> The Board Room Practice Limited 'Corporate Governance in new Zealand Government-owned Companies: A Stock-Take' (2005) 3.

<sup>401</sup> TEARA 'Story: State-owned enterprises' available at <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/state-owned-enterprises/page-1> (accessed 13 October 2015).

<sup>402</sup> TEARA 'Story: State-owned enterprises' available at <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/state-owned-enterprises/page-1> (accessed 13 October 2015).

<sup>403</sup> The Board Room Practice Limited 'Corporate Governance in new Zealand Government-owned Companies: A Stock-Take' (2005) 4.

<sup>404</sup> New Zealand Treasury 'State-owned Enterprises: History of Policy Development and Implementation' (1996) 22.



performing directors could be reappointed to boards for political reasons.<sup>405</sup> This is a down side of giving political figures the power to appoint board members.

In the dual model of ownership the two shareholding Ministers were advised by the New Zealand Treasury for the Minister of Finance and the Crown Company Monitoring Advisory Unit (CCMAU) for the Minister of SOEs and were accountable to parliament for the performance of their duties.<sup>406</sup> The Treasury primarily advised SOEs on matters of financial performance, economic issues and balance sheet matters and the CCMAU provided advice on commercial performance matters.<sup>407</sup> Since 2009 New Zealand has moved from the dual ownership model to a centralised one. The old structure was replaced by the Crown Ownership Management Unit (COMU) which is an integral part of the treasury that brings together the ownership monitoring, appointments and governance functions of SOEs.<sup>408</sup>

Present boards are composed of seven to nine directors who are appointed based on their business skills and experience who are accountable to the shareholding Minister.<sup>409</sup> Most SOEs are subject to Ministerial direction in relation to the content of certain aspects of the company's statement of corporate intent and the level of dividend payable to the Crown.<sup>410</sup> It has also been stated that the SOE framework intends for Ministers to have an advisory role only and not interfere with the operations of SOEs.<sup>411</sup> This will provide the necessary insulation from government interference that is essential for SOEs. In the case of KiwiRail, the two shareholding Ministers may jointly remove board members at any time entirely at their discretion.<sup>412</sup> This as a result may be vesting too much power in the Ministers as it cannot be up to an individual member's discretion to remove board members. It would be preferable if set procedures are in place that would assist and govern such dismissals and open them to scrutiny for appropriateness.

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<sup>405</sup> The Board Room Practice Limited 'Corporate Governance in new Zealand Government-owned Companies: A Stock-Take' (2005) 4.

<sup>406</sup> TEARA 'Story: State-owned enterprises' available at <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/state-owned-enterprises/page-1> (accessed 13 October 2015).

<sup>407</sup> The Treasury 'Crown Company Monitoring Advisory Unit' available at <http://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/abouttreasury/soi/2008-13/09.htm> (accessed 20 October 2015).

<sup>408</sup> OECD *State-Owned Enterprises Governance Reform: An Inventory of Recent Change* (2005) 17.

<sup>409</sup> Luke B *Strategic entrepreneurship in New Zealand's state-owned enterprises: Underlying elements and financial implications* (Unpublished PhD thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2009) 74.

<sup>410</sup> The Treasury 'State-Owned Enterprises' available at <http://www.treasury.govt.nz/commercial/ownership-framework/soe/> (accessed 12 October 2015).

<sup>411</sup> Luke B *Strategic entrepreneurship in New Zealand's state-owned enterprises: Underlying elements and financial implications* (Unpublished PhD thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2009) 74.

<sup>412</sup> The Treasury 'State-Owned Enterprises' available at <http://www.treasury.govt.nz/commercial/ownership-framework/soe/> (accessed 12 October 2015).

These are among the other reforms that have been implemented by New Zealand over the years from the inception of the State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986. The SOE reforms have received extensive support from researchers and commentators from other countries.<sup>413</sup> The reforms have been referred to as an exemplar of new public management breaking from the bureaucratic paradigm of public administration.<sup>414</sup> Various foreign governments have even visited New Zealand to learn from its SOE sector success.<sup>415</sup> New Zealand SOE boards basically run companies without political intrusion but are only expected to abide by the ‘no surprises’ convention in regards to major issues.<sup>416</sup> This has enabled a well-functioning SOE sector that has had numerous benefits for the government and stakeholders at large.

## **4.2 Overview of New Zealand’s Corporate Governance Structure**

In New Zealand SOEs are established by the State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986, are incorporated as companies and as a result are bound by the provisions of the Companies Act 1993.<sup>417</sup> The State-Owned Enterprises Act is also referred to as the ‘umbrella statute’ because it encompasses all the necessary powers to establish and transfer assets to SOEs.<sup>418</sup> The Companies Act basically regulates most of the activities of private sector companies from how they are incorporated and managed and other issues that come along with operating in the private sector. In their operation as private sector companies the SOEs will also be subject to the corporate governance code. Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines compiled by the Financial Markets Authority is the corporate governance code for New Zealand. This section will highlight the most important aspects of the corporate governance framework.

### **4.2.1 The State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986**

The State-owned Enterprises Act which is the founding Act for all of New Zealand’s SOEs provides that the principal objective of every SOE shall be to operate as a successful business and to that to that end it must be:

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<sup>413</sup> Luke B *Strategic entrepreneurship in New Zealand’s state-owned enterprises: Underlying elements and financial implications* (Unpublished PhD thesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2009) 75.

<sup>414</sup> O’Flynn J ‘From new public management to public value: Paradigmatic change and managerial implications’ (2007) 66 (3) *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 353.

<sup>415</sup> Cullen M ‘Cullen at induction seminar for SOE directors’ available at <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/cullen-induction-seminar-soe-directors> (accessed 20 October 2015).

<sup>416</sup> The Board Room Practice Limited ‘Corporate Governance in new Zealand Government-owned Companies: A Stock-Take’ (2005) 15.

<sup>417</sup> The Treasury ‘State-Owned Enterprises’ available at <http://www.treasury.govt.nz/commercial/ownership-framework/soe/> (accessed 12 October 2015).

<sup>418</sup> New Zealand Treasury ‘State-owned Enterprises: History of Policy Development and Implementation’ (1996) 17.

- (a) as profitable and efficient as comparable businesses that are not owned by the crown;  
and
- (b) a good employer; and
- (c) an organisation that exhibits a sense of social responsibility by having regard to the interests of the community in which it operates and by endeavouring to accommodate or encourage these when able to do so.<sup>419</sup>

This section provides the most important provisions in the SOE sector reforms of New Zealand. The government departments were transformed into SOEs for the purpose of creating profit making enterprises that would also be good employers.<sup>420</sup> The Act states that directors shall be persons who will assist the SOEs to achieve their principal objectives.<sup>421</sup> Directors are given the role of making all decisions in relation to the operation of the SOE in accordance with the statement of corporate intent and their accountability to shareholding Ministers is also set out.<sup>422</sup>

The Act makes provision for the performance on non-commercial activities. When the Crown wishes that a SOE provide goods or services to a person, there shall be an agreement in regards to this and payment must be made in part or in full by the Crown.<sup>423</sup> The shareholding rights of the Minister of Finance and the responsible Minister is established by this Act. It is provided that these Ministers may from time to time on behalf of the Crown subscribe for or acquire shares or equity bonds or both in companies specified in Schedule 2 of the Act.<sup>424</sup> Schedule 2 provides a list of 14 SOEs that include KiwiRail, Airways Corporation of New Zealand Limited and Animal Control Products Limited. The number of shares or equity bonds to be held by the shareholding Ministers must be equal.<sup>425</sup> The Ministers are empowered to exercise all rights and powers attached to the shares they hold in a SOE.<sup>426</sup>

The Act encompasses accountability measures firstly through the statement of corporate intent (SCI). The SCI shall be delivered by every SOE board to the shareholding Ministers not later than one year before the commencement of each financial year of the SOE.<sup>427</sup>

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<sup>419</sup> Section 4 (1) (a)-(c) State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986.

<sup>420</sup> Section 4 (2) State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986.

<sup>421</sup> Section 5 State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986.

<sup>422</sup> Section (2) and (3) State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986.

<sup>423</sup> Section 7 State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986.

<sup>424</sup> Section 10 (1) State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986.

<sup>425</sup> Section 10 (2) State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986.

<sup>426</sup> Section 22 (3) State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986.

<sup>427</sup> Section 14 (1) State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986.

Section 14 delves into the array of information to be included in the SCI such as the objectives of the group, the nature and activities to be undertaken and the accounting policies.<sup>428</sup> It further provides for the delivery of annual and half yearly reports, and financial statements as well as information that should be tabled before the House of Representatives for purposes of accountability.<sup>429</sup> The Auditor General is appointed as the auditor of state enterprises and subsidiaries and state enterprises are also designated as public entities under the Public Audit Act 2001.<sup>430</sup>

Section 30 of the Act provides that “notwithstanding anything in the Companies Act 1993, the Reserve Bank of New Zealand Act 1989 or any other enactment or rule of law, a company in which all the shares are applied for by Ministers may be registered under the Companies Act 1993...”<sup>431</sup>

#### **4.2.2 The Companies Act 1993**

The Companies Act 1993 is a very broad Act that addresses numerous issues in regards to New Zealand’s company law. Major issues addressed in the Act include director powers and duties, shareholder rights and liabilities and the disclosure of different types of information. The Act does not specifically refer to the term corporate governance but the measures it contains contribute to proper corporate governance. Directors are mandated to act in good faith and in the best interests of the company in discharging their duties.<sup>432</sup> Directors may not act or agree to the company acting in a manner that contravenes the Companies Act or the constitution of the company.<sup>433</sup> Such a provision would directly apply to the issue highlighted in the previous chapter of SOEs being forced to contribute money to the first lady’s birthday celebrations.<sup>434</sup> Furthermore directors must exercise the duty of care, skill and diligence that a reasonable director would exercise in the same circumstances when exercising their powers.<sup>435</sup>

According to the Act, if a director commits an offense or exercises their powers and duties in bad faith knowing that the conduct will cause serious loss to the company they will be liable

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<sup>428</sup> Section 14 (2) (a),(b),(d) State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986.

<sup>429</sup> Section 15, 16, 17 State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986.

<sup>430</sup> Section 19 (1) State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986.

<sup>431</sup> Section 30 (1) State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986.

<sup>432</sup> Section 131 (1) Companies Act 1993.

<sup>433</sup> Section 134 Companies Act 1993.

<sup>434</sup> See 3.1.7 Companies Act 1993.

<sup>435</sup> Section 137 Companies Act 1993.

to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years or to a fine not exceeding \$ 200 000.<sup>436</sup> In Zimbabwe such provisions are generally not included in the enabling Acts of SOEs such as the Broadcasting Services Act<sup>437</sup> and the Air Zimbabwe Corporation Act.<sup>438</sup> Harsh prison sentences and fines are a necessary deterrent for the behaviour that has plagued SOE boards in Zimbabwe. It has become common that board members and public officials commit serious offences and only walk away with a mere dismissal because of their political connections.<sup>439</sup> Where a board member has consciously prejudiced a company it is essential that they face fitting punishment.

The Act makes provision for the disclosure of instances of conflict of interest. It is provided that a director upon becoming aware of the fact that he or she is interested in a transaction or proposed transaction, must cause to be entered in the interests register the monetary value of the transaction or the nature and extent of that interest.<sup>440</sup> In this Act failure to comply with the disclosure provisions will result in an offence and liability to a penalty.<sup>441</sup> The remuneration and payment of any benefits to a director must be authorised by the board.<sup>442</sup>

Shareholders are given the right to inspect company information at any time they deem necessary.<sup>443</sup> The board is mandated to ensure that accounting records are present at all times and the records must show that the company's accounting methods comply with generally accepted accounting practice.<sup>444</sup> Some of the provisions in regards to auditing do not apply to public entities because of the Public Audit Act.

### **4.2.3 The Public Audit Act 2001**

The purpose of the Act is to establish the office of the Controller and Auditor-General and reform and restate the law relating to the audit of public sector organisations.<sup>445</sup> The Act implores the Auditor-General to act independently in the exercise and performance of his or her functions, duties and powers.<sup>446</sup> The Auditor-General is the auditor of all public entities and must from time to time audit the financial statements, accounts and other information that

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<sup>436</sup> Section 138A (1) and 373 (4) Companies Act 1993.

<sup>437</sup> Broadcasting Services Act (Chapter 12:06).

<sup>438</sup> Air Zimbabwe Corporation Act (Chapter 13:02).

<sup>439</sup> Pindula 'Willowgate Scandal' available at [http://www.pindula.co.zw/Willowgate\\_Scandal](http://www.pindula.co.zw/Willowgate_Scandal) (accessed 16 June 2015).

<sup>440</sup> Section 140 (1) (a) and (b) Companies Act 1993.

<sup>441</sup> Section 140 (4) Companies Act 1993.

<sup>442</sup> Section 161 (1) Companies Act 1993.

<sup>443</sup> Section 178 (1) Companies Act 1993.

<sup>444</sup> Section 194 (1) (b) Companies Act 1993.

<sup>445</sup> Section 3 (a) and (b) Public Audit Act 2001.

<sup>446</sup> Section 9 Public Audit Act 2001.

a public entity is required to have audited.<sup>447</sup> The Auditor-General also has the power to examine at any time:

- (a) the extent to which a public entity is carrying out its activities effectively and efficiently:
- (b) the public entity's compliance with its regulatory obligations:
- (c) any act or omission of a public entity, in order to determine whether waste has resulted or may have resulted or may result:
- (d) any act or omission showing or appearing to show a lack of probity or financial prudence by a public entity or 1 or more of its members, office holders, and employees.<sup>448</sup>

The Auditor-General may enquire, either on his or her own initiative or on request into any matter concerning a public entity's use of its resources.<sup>449</sup> Any matters that arise out of the performance and exercise of the Auditor-General's functions, duties and powers must be reported to the House of Representatives on an annual basis.<sup>450</sup> The Auditor-General has the duty to publish by way of a report to the House of Representatives, the auditing standards that are or intended to be applied to the conduct of audits and enquiries.<sup>451</sup>

The Act provides the Auditor-General with the power to require a public entity or any person to produce a document in the entity's or person's custody, care or control or to provide the Auditor-General with information or an explanation about any information.<sup>452</sup> This measure in essence compels those in possession of information to produce such information to the Auditor-General. The previous chapter highlighted that the Zimbabwean Audit Office has been unable to produce audit reports because its enabling legislation does not provide for powers to compel ministers and government departments to comply with treasury instructions.<sup>453</sup> Such a measure could cure the defect in the Zimbabwe legislation that was alluded to in this instance.

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<sup>447</sup> Section 14 (1) and 15 (1) Public Audit Act 2001.

<sup>448</sup> Section 16 (1) (a)-(d) Public Audit Act 2001.

<sup>449</sup> Section 18 (1) Public Audit Act 2001.

<sup>450</sup> Section 20 Public Audit Act 2001.

<sup>451</sup> Section 23 (1) Public Audit Act 2001.

<sup>452</sup> Section 25 (1) (a) and (b) Public Audit Act 2001.

<sup>453</sup> See 3.2.2.

#### **4.2.4 Financial Markets Authority Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines**

Corporate governance guidelines were first published in New Zealand in the form of a handbook by the Securities Commission in 2004. The handbook was a shortened version of a fuller report, Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines published in 2004 as well.<sup>454</sup> The report and handbook set out the nine principles that form the basis of the corporate governance code. The code utilises a system of principles rather than taking a prescriptive approach. This allows boards to explain how they comply with each principle rather than ‘comply or explain why not.’<sup>455</sup> This was done to allow for flexibility in reporting since there are entities that may also need to comply with other corporate governance principles. This approach is different from that of the ZIMCODE which prescribes how its principles can be fulfilled. The principles of this code complement those of the OECD. The code is applicable to listed issuers, other issuers of securities, state-owned enterprises and may also include other companies.<sup>456</sup>

##### **4.2.4.1 Ethical Standards**

Directors are mandated to set high standards of ethical behaviour, model this behaviour and hold management accountable for delivering these standards throughout the organisation.<sup>457</sup> A code of ethics should be adopted that is a meaningful statement of its core values. It should set expectations for ethical decision making in regards to acting with honesty and integrity, proper use of an entity’s property, not participating in illegal or unethical activity, among other issues.<sup>458</sup> The code of ethics should be communicated to the employees and training and whistleblowing procedures should be provided.<sup>459</sup> The code provides that a code of ethics is not effective unless there are consequences for directors and employees who breach it.<sup>460</sup> This is an important aspect that also needs to be implemented in Zimbabwe’s ethics codes for SOEs.

##### **4.2.4.2 Board Composition and Performance**

Similar to the OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-Owned Enterprises the code advocates for a board that has a balance of independence, skills, knowledge, expertise

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<sup>454</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 3.

<sup>455</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 3.

<sup>456</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 5.

<sup>457</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 8.

<sup>458</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 9.

<sup>459</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 9.

<sup>460</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 9.

and experience.<sup>461</sup> There should be an appropriate balance of executive and non-executive directors and should include directors who meet the formal criteria for independent directors.<sup>462</sup> Directors are mandated to act in the best interest of the company and its roles must be clearly set out in a formal charter that sets out responsibilities and roles of the board, including any formal delegations to management.<sup>463</sup> More importantly the chairperson of a publicly owned entity should be independent and no director may hold the roles of board chairperson and chief executive unless there are extenuating circumstances.<sup>464</sup> The process of appointment should be rigorous so as to give the board a range of relevant skills and expertise. It is also important that boards carry out self and individual assessments in order to enhance effectiveness.<sup>465</sup>

#### **4.2.4.3 Board Committees**

Board committees should be utilised where they will enhance effectiveness in key areas while still retaining board responsibility.<sup>466</sup> Board committees should have clear, formal charters that set out their roles and delegated responsibilities.<sup>467</sup> Audit committees should be composed of all non-executive directors all of whom are independent, at least one director who is a qualified accountant and a chairperson who is independent and not the chairperson of the board.<sup>468</sup> The code encourages the appointment of different committees such as the remuneration committee but these should be set up according to company needs.<sup>469</sup>

#### **4.2.4.4 Reporting and Disclosure**

The board should demand integrity in the financial reporting and in the timeliness and balance of corporate disclosures.<sup>470</sup> The financial and annual reports of all entities should in addition to all information required by law, include sufficient, meaningful information to enable investors and stakeholders to be well informed.<sup>471</sup> Boards must maintain an effective system of internal controls for reliable financial reporting and accounting records.<sup>472</sup> Entities should adhere to high standards of reporting and disclosure to ensure proper accountability

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<sup>461</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 11.

<sup>462</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 12.

<sup>463</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 12.

<sup>464</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 12.

<sup>465</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 15.

<sup>466</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 16.

<sup>467</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 17.

<sup>468</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 17.

<sup>469</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 19.

<sup>470</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 20.

<sup>471</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 21.

<sup>472</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 21.



between the entity and its investors and stakeholders.<sup>473</sup> Reporting and disclosure requirements are more significant for public sector entities. The continuous disclosure regime should be observed in order to maintain a high standard of information disclosure.<sup>474</sup>

#### **4.2.4.5 Remuneration**

The remuneration of directors and executives should be transparent, fair and reasonable.<sup>475</sup> The board should have a clear policy for setting remuneration of executives and non-executive directors that are fair and reasonable in a competitive market for the skills, knowledge and expertise required.<sup>476</sup> Publicly owned entities should publish their remuneration policies on their websites.<sup>477</sup> This should be adopted in Zimbabwe since SOEs have been involved in numerous remuneration scandals. The issues to be considered in establishing remuneration are complex and can only be viewed in the context of each entity.<sup>478</sup> A distinction must be drawn between the packages of executives and non-executive directors and for efficiency reasons it is important to tie executive director compensation to entity performance.<sup>479</sup>

#### **4.2.4.6 Risk Management**

Directors should have a sound understanding of the key risks faced by the business and they should regularly verify that the entity has appropriate processes that identify and manage potential and relevant risks.<sup>480</sup> The board should receive and review regular reports on the operation of the risk management framework and internal control processes, including any developments in relation to key risks.<sup>481</sup> The code encourages processes such as enterprise wide risk management frameworks which are useful in identifying, monitoring and managing risk.<sup>482</sup>

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<sup>473</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 22.

<sup>474</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 23.

<sup>475</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 24.

<sup>476</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 25.

<sup>477</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 25.

<sup>478</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 26.

<sup>479</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 26.

<sup>480</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 27.

<sup>481</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 28.

<sup>482</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 28.

#### **4.2.4.7 Auditors**

The principle provides that boards should ensure the quality and independence of the external audit process.<sup>483</sup> Boards must inform themselves fully on the responsibilities of external auditors and be rigorous in its selection of auditors on professional merit.<sup>484</sup> There is also need that the board ensures that there is no relationship between the independent auditors and the subject entity of the audit or any related persons and the auditor must confirm this.<sup>485</sup> It is the responsibility of the audit committee to select and recommend board and shareholder appointment of auditors, and to oversee all aspects of their work.<sup>486</sup>

#### **4.2.4.8 Shareholder Relations**

The board should promote constructive relationships with shareholders that encourage them to engage with the entity.<sup>487</sup> The guidelines encourage widely-held entities to have clear published policies for shareholder relations and to regularly review practices aiming to communicate the goals, strategies and performance of the entity.<sup>488</sup> Shareholders have certain rights as owners and boards should take necessary steps to ensure shareholder involvement in issues that need their approval.<sup>489</sup> In giving effect to this the board must ensure that information is more accessible to shareholders, shareholders are given sufficient time and detail to enable them to participate in decisions and that shareholder meetings are held in places that are convenient for the shareholders.<sup>490</sup>

#### **4.2.4.9 Stakeholder Interests**

The board should respect the interests of stakeholders taking into account the entity's ownership type and its fundamental purpose.<sup>491</sup> Boards should have clear policies for the entity's relationships with significant stakeholders, bearing in mind the distinction between public, private and Crown ownership.<sup>492</sup> Public sector entities report at least annually to inform the public of their activities and performance since stakeholder interests have a

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<sup>483</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 30.

<sup>484</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 31.

<sup>485</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 31.

<sup>486</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 32.

<sup>487</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 34.

<sup>488</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 34.

<sup>489</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 36.

<sup>490</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 36.

<sup>491</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 37.

<sup>492</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 38.

particular significance in these entities.<sup>493</sup> Advancing the interests of stakeholders such as employees and customers will often further the interests of an entity and its shareholders.<sup>494</sup>

### **4.3 How New Zealand has infused the OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-Owned Enterprises into its corporate governance structure**

A number of OECD countries have realised the need to utilise a centralised system of the ownership function.<sup>495</sup> In line with the OECD guideline on the state's role as an owner, New Zealand has centralised its ownership function. This has been done through centralising the ownership model under which ownership is now the responsibility of a specialised unit. The specialised unit is known as the Crown Ownership Management Unit (COMU) which is an integral part of the treasury.<sup>496</sup> It is responsible for ownership monitoring, appointments and governance functions of SOEs.<sup>497</sup> Under this guideline New Zealand has also managed, through provisions of the State-Owned Enterprises Act, to create an arms-length relationship between the government and SOEs by distancing management tasks from political control.<sup>498</sup>

The above ties in with the rationales for state ownership guideline. According to this guideline the ownership policy should be subject to appropriate procedures for political accountability and should be disclosed to the public.<sup>499</sup> There should not be multiple or contradictory rationales for state ownership as these can lead to either passive conduct of ownership functions or excessive intervention in matters or decisions which should be left to the enterprise and its organs.<sup>500</sup> New Zealand's ownership policy is clear in terms of the mandate of the Crown Ownership Management Unit (COMU) and is published to the public on the treasury's website.

In terms of the transparency and disclosure guideline New Zealand has made more efforts to enhance transparency in the management of its SOEs. In January 2010 shareholding Ministers initiated a continuous disclosure regime for the largest 7 SOEs.<sup>501</sup> This was done in

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<sup>493</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 38.

<sup>494</sup> Corporate Governance in New Zealand: Principles and Guidelines 2014 39.

<sup>495</sup> OECD *State-Owned Enterprises Governance Reform: An Inventory of Recent Change* (2005) 7.

<sup>496</sup> OECD *State-Owned Enterprises Governance Reform: An Inventory of Recent Change* (2005) 17.

<sup>497</sup> OECD *State-Owned Enterprises Governance Reform: An Inventory of Recent Change* (2005) 17.

<sup>498</sup> Sokol D *Competition Policy and Comparative Corporate Governance of State-Owned Enterprises* (2009) 1757.

<sup>499</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 31.

<sup>500</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 31.

<sup>501</sup> OECD *State-Owned Enterprises Governance Reform: An Inventory of Recent Change* (2005) 17.

an effort to keep the public constantly informed on matters that may have a material effect on each of the 7 companies' commercial value.<sup>502</sup> This measure is in line with the OECD guideline on transparency and disclosure which requires SOEs to publish all material and non-material information to the state as an owner and the general public.<sup>503</sup>

Incorporating these guidelines into the corporate governance structure of New Zealand has enhanced the structure and ensured well governed enterprises that are profit making.<sup>504</sup> New Zealand's corporate governance structure embodies the OECD guidelines in many aspects, the above have been highlighted for their importance for Zimbabwe.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

New Zealand realised early that its government owned entities were underperforming as a result of the manner in which they were owned and controlled. These entities were poorly governed, consumed large amounts of capital and produced low to negative returns which is nearly the same situation in Zimbabwe's SOEs. In its reforms New Zealand created a corporate governance structure that would leave Ministers with an advisory role and SOE boards with the necessary independence and freedom to manage their operations. Zimbabwe needs to free its SOEs from heavy government intervention as this has not proved to be of any benefit.

SOEs in New Zealand are insulated from most of the state's bureaucratic tendencies by their incorporation under the Companies Act 1993. This allows them to operate as and compete with private sector companies. This transition was made more fluent by the highly skilled directors that were recruited from the private sector who were willing to join the boards of the new SOEs. Company law provided a suiting alternative to the manner in which these entities were previously controlled. It is worthwhile to explore the potential benefits of corporatising Zimbabwe's SOEs since the country has slightly more efficient company laws. Apart from providing insulation from government interference this model could also change the public's perception of what a SOE is and restore the faith that has been lost. This model could also be a solution to the bureaucratic paradigm of public administration which stifles growth that the country is stuck in.

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<sup>502</sup> OECD *State-Owned Enterprises Governance Reform: An Inventory of Recent Change* (2005) 7.

<sup>503</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-owned Enterprises* (2015) 26.

<sup>504</sup> See 4.1.2.

According to Transparency International New Zealand has the second lowest level of public sector corruption in the world. As mentioned in the chapter this can be attributed to government openness and effectiveness. Other factors include civic activism, social trust transparency and accountability mechanisms allowing citizens to monitor politicians and hold them accountable for their decisions. Most of the factors mentioned here do not necessarily exist in Zimbabwe and where they exist they do not have a considerable effect. The government has made efforts to stamp out corruption but these have been in vein because it allowed these activities to take root for a long time that they are now engrained in most economic sectors. Change required in this matter goes further than the corporate governance structure and would lead this paper to encroach into a political debate.

It is important to note that since New Zealand is a member of the OECD, its corporate governance structure mirrors most of the OECD guidelines. In its ownership role New Zealand created a centralised system. The Crown Ownership Management Unit assumes responsibility for ownership monitoring, appointments and governance functions of SOEs. This helps clarify the ownership policy and it ensures its consistent implementation. A centralised ownership policy is crucial for Zimbabwe because there is need for a clear ownership policy that is not complex. In following this guideline the Zimbabwean state should also create an arms-length relationship with SOEs by distancing management tasks from political control.

The ownership policy of Zimbabwe should also be clear in terms of the mandate of the ownership body if it is to be established. There will be need to ensure that the public is well aware of the ownership policy and that it is subject to appropriate procedures for political accountability. This will be very important because there is a strong need to restore public faith in the accountability mechanisms of SOEs.

In following the OECD guidelines New Zealand Ministers enhanced transparency in the management of SOEs. This was done by establishing the continuous disclosure regime for its 7 largest SOEs. The importance of such a measure for Zimbabwe cannot be stressed enough. Zimbabwean SOEs do not always publish information to the public that may be material or non-material to the general public. This measure can be implemented in most SOEs to ensure that information is not being kept from the state or members of the public.

The corporate governance structure of New Zealand is more or less the same as that of Zimbabwe except for one major difference which is that of New Zealand's umbrella statute

that birthed its SOEs. A number of lessons can be derived from its Acts such as the Public Audit Act 2001 on the issue of adding provisions that compel ministers and government departments to provide information needed by the Comptroller and Auditor-General to perform audits.

New Zealand's corporate governance code utilises a system of principles which allows for flexibility and this is good in instances where companies already have a culture of compliance. The ZIMCODE has broader principles and recommendations which have the effect of prescribing how certain aspects should be followed. This is fitting for Zimbabwe because there is a need to provide direction.

The next chapter will conclude this paper and provide recommendations on the problems highlighted in the previous chapters.



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a conclusion and summary of the recommendations emanating from chapters 2 to 4. The recommendations are aligned in order to provide a unified proposal in regards to the weaknesses in the SOE corporate governance structure of Zimbabwe. The recommendations additionally take into account the lessons derived from the corporate governance reforms of New Zealand. The premise of this discussion is outlined in the previous chapters.

#### **5.2 Conclusion**

In order to ensure the profitability and sustainable growth of an enterprise it is important that robust corporate governance measures be in place. State-owned enterprises still form an integral part of the economies of developing nations. In the year 2014 Zimbabwe had about 78 SOEs most of which were either operating at a loss or had become dysfunctional. The media and recent studies have made it clear that this has been due to poor corporate governance standards. In the past two years the media has gone on to unveil the level of corruption and maladministration in these enterprises. The exposures reached their peak when the ridiculous remuneration packages of board members and management of a number of SOEs were exposed.

The abovementioned events form the premise of this study. This led to the need to understand the corporate governance atmosphere in Zimbabwe through assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the corporate governance regime. This assessment indicates that the corporate governance regime of Zimbabwe which went for a long time without a corporate governance code was a breeding ground for the abuses of office. The regime that has been assessed includes the Public Finance Management Act (Chapter 22:19) and the Corporate Governance and Remuneration Policy Framework for Chief Executive Officers of Parastatals, State Enterprises and Local Authorities 2014.

The assessment utilised the OCED Guidelines on Corporate Governance for State-Owned Enterprises. These guidelines have become popular among OECD and non-OECD countries and have been endorsed by international organisations such as the Financial Stability Board and the World Bank. They provide a basis for establishing a good corporate governance

framework for SOEs. An assessment of Zimbabwe's current regime indicated that it does not embody some of the guidelines and this renders it inadequate. There is a deficiency in guidelines such as those on rationales for state ownership and the state's role as an owner. Non-compliance with these guidelines leads to a lack of clarity in the state's ownership policy which can also lead to excessive state intervention which is the case in Zimbabwe.

The assessment also revealed that the office of the Comptroller and Auditor-General does not have sufficient power to compel Ministers and government departments to comply with treasury instructions. The result of this is delayed submissions and at times total failure to submit statements needed for the audit. However the audit requirements of the Public Finance Management Act are not entirely inadequate. The Act has adequate measures for the transparent disclosure and management of the funds of the enterprises. The problem lies in individuals who are bent on non-compliance with the said legislation. This has been apparent in the actions of boards of directors that have circumvented the directions of the statute to benefit themselves.

One of the major issues that have been raised in this paper is that of board insulation from undue influence of the state. According to the OECD guidelines boards require sufficient autonomy to enable them to carry out their mandate. This issue has not been particularly addressed in any of the legislation or codes of corporate governance in Zimbabwe. This is a matter of concern because a number of issues have been pointed out in the previous chapters. These include the use of SOE resources to fund political events and the militarisation of SOE boards.

More recently, Zimbabwe published the ZIMCODE which is its first corporate governance code and it is applicable to the public and private sectors. The code embodies most of the OECD guidelines and it is quite progressive. It is still to be implemented and in this code lies the hope for the restoration of sanity in SOEs. The major concern is the issue of having good laws and no implementation of these laws in actual fact. The previous chapters indicated that there is a recent case of directors still not abiding by the salary cap introduced by government in response to the salary gate scandal. It is a troubling matter that those who still assume these leadership positions do not have much regard for proper corporate governance.

The comparative analysis with New Zealand brings into light some of the preconditions for successful SOEs. The reforms that New Zealand implemented transformed its SOEs from inefficient government departments to profit making corporations. This was made possible by



the corporatisation of SOEs under the Companies Act 1993 and levelling them with private sector companies. The recruitment of highly skilled private directors and less ministerial interference enabled these enterprises to function properly. The country's success can also be attributed to the low levels of corruption in the public sector. As indicated in the previous chapter, in 2014 New Zealand had the second lowest levels of corruption worldwide in the public sector according to Transparency International. This creates a governance environment that allows for efficiency and proper use of enterprise resources.

New Zealand has incorporated most of the OECD guidelines into its corporate governance structure and this has enhanced its system of governance. In its incorporation of the guidelines it now makes use of a centralised system of ownership through the Crown Ownership Management Unit. The shareholding Ministers initiated a continuous disclosure regime for the largest 7 SOEs whereby material and non-material information is regularly disclosed to the government and the general public.

A number of lessons can be derived from its Acts such as the Public Audit Act 2001 on the issue of adding provisions that compel ministers and government departments to provide information needed by the Comptroller and Auditor-General to perform audits. The corporate governance code of New Zealand utilises a system of principles which allows for flexibility. This is a good approach when dealing with enterprises that already comply with good corporate governance practices. The manner of the ZIMCODE of principles and extensive guidelines suits the needs of the public sector in Zimbabwe since there is need for proper guidance.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The weaknesses of Zimbabwe's corporate governance structure have been highlighted above and it is important that recommendations are provided for the way forward. There is need to infuse the OECD guidelines and the lessons derived from New Zealand's SOE corporate governance regime into the core corporate governance structure of Zimbabwe.

#### **5.3.1 Insulate State-Owned Enterprises from Excessive State Intervention**

State-owned enterprises need to be insulated from excessive state intervention and this paper suggests that SOEs should be incorporated and governed under the Companies Act (Chapter 24:03). This is similar to the system used in New Zealand. The major advantage of this is that SOEs will now be treated as private sector entities which are clearly more efficient. This

measure needs to be supported by the recruitment of private sector directors who have vast skills and experience in the running of companies. Recruitment of highly skilled individuals will address the issue of militarisation of the boards of SOEs. As corporate entities, SOEs will have to face competition from other private sector companies and both will have a level playing field. Such insulation will also protect the entities from excessive state intervention since this is one of the major issues in the governance of Zimbabwean SOEs. Incorporation is also a means to protect SOEs from the state's bureaucratic tendencies and align public sector management with private sector management.

This measure ties in with the OECD guideline on rationales for state ownership. Under this the state should have clear and non-contradictory rationales for state ownership in order to avoid excessive intervention in matters that should be left to the enterprise and its organs. In light of this Zimbabwe needs to establish a clear ownership policy that does not result in complexity of the ownership structure. This will be solved by creating a centralised ownership model that has a clear mandate. In implementing this model the state will have to establish a central agency. This agency should be accountable to relevant representative bodies and should have relationships with public bodies such as the office of the Comptroller and Auditor-General. Similar to the Crown Ownership Management Unit of New Zealand this body can be responsible for ownership monitoring, appointments and governance functions.

In addition, the OECD guideline on the state's role as owner calls for governments to steer away from the day to day management of SOEs and allow them full operational autonomy and the centralised ownership entity should emphasise this issue.

### **5.3.2 Enhance Transparency and Disclosure**

Zimbabwe's transparency and disclosure mechanisms can be enhanced in order to restore public trust in the manner in which SOEs are managed. The continuous disclosure regime of New Zealand which enhances the OECD principle of transparency and disclosure can be adopted for all SOEs. This regime was implemented in New Zealand in order to constantly inform the public on issues that may have a material effect on each of the 7 largest SOEs. In Zimbabwe this measure can be adopted for all SOEs depending on the costs of continuous disclosure to each SOE. Information to be disclosed will include material and non-material information and it will be disclosed to the state and the general public.

### **5.3.3 Strengthen Powers of the Comptroller and Auditor-General**

The previous chapters indicated the need for the power to compel Ministers and government departments to disclose information that is needed for audits. The Comptroller and Auditor-General should be given power to compel Ministers and SOEs to disclose audit information to avoid cases of late or non-disclosure. This aspect is linked to the OECD principle on transparency and disclosure which provides that information on enterprise financial and operating results should be published. The Public Audit Act 2001 of New Zealand provides the Auditor-General with the power to require a public entity or person to produce a document in the entity's or person's custody, care or control or to provide the Auditor-General with information or an explanation about any information. Such a measure can be infused into the Public Finance Management Act (Chapter 22:19) of Zimbabwe to provide the compelling power for the Comptroller and Auditor-General.

The success of SOEs in Zimbabwe is very important because they form an integral part of the economy. Good corporate governance fosters an environment that is needed to operate an efficient enterprise. New Zealand's SOEs are subject to a robust corporate governance regime and this is arguably one of the major reasons for their success. SOEs in Zimbabwe have fallen prey to mismanagement and poor corporate governance practices. This has created serious inefficiencies and financial problems. This study makes it clear that the current corporate governance regime in Zimbabwe is not adequate. The measures proposed in this study can improve the situation in Zimbabwe's SOEs. These measures can be implemented in addition to the ZIMCODE.

**[Word count: 25 123 Text excluding footnotes]**

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