

Zimbabwe's role on U.N. panel in question

by UPI

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y. - A Norwegian diplomat said some Western nations hope to block Zimbabwe's appointment to head the U.N. Commission on Sustainable Development.

"We do not find Zimbabwe the right country to head the CSD for the next period," Erik Solheim, Norway's international development minister, told the BBC.

Officials in the West say Zimbabwe, embroiled in a political and economic crisis, isn't a suitable choice to head a development commission.

"We don't think that Zimbabwe would be a particularly effective leader of this body," Tom Casey, a spokesman for the U.S. State Department, has said.

Development in Zimbabwe has "been going in only one direction -- and it's backwards," he said.

The BBC reported it is Africa's turn to head the U.N. development commission, and Zimbabwean Environment Minister Francis Nhema was scheduled to be appointed Friday.

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