



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zimbabwe
to the United Nations

Ref: ZNY/SOC/7

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zimbabwe to the United Nations presents its compliments to the UN-Women and has the honour to refer to the latter's note, referenced UNW/2021/011 dated 19 August 2021, inviting Member States to submit information related to the implementation of the Agreed Conclusions of the 61st Session of the Commission on the Status of Women on "Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work".

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zimbabwe further has the honour to attach hereto, the Government of Zimbabwe's submission on progress made in the implementation of the Agreed Conclusions.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zimbabwe to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the UN-Women the assurances of its highest consideration.

4 October 2021

The UN-Women
New York 10017



ZIMBABWE'S REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREED CONCLUSIONS ON WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN THE CHANGING WORLD OF WORK

INTRODUCTION

The Government of Zimbabwe remains committed to the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The adoption of regional and international instruments provided an opportunity for Zimbabwe to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Government is making efforts to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women in the world of work and thereby making deliberate efforts to lessen the burden of unpaid domestic and carework for women.

Considering the agreed conclusions on "Women's Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work," the Government of Zimbabwe has implemented the following:

1. MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN NORMATIVE AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

What specific actions have been taken to enact, strengthen and enforce laws and regulatory frameworks that ensure gender equality and prohibit discrimination against women in the world of work?

- The Constitution of Zimbabwe provides a strong Framework for advancing gender equality and women empowerment. The gender equality provisions in the Constitution have been aligned to the regional and international instruments on gender. Some of the provisions are:
Section 17, which provides for gender equality in all spheres of life in relationship to ownership of productive resources and in decision making positions.
Section 56, which provides for equality between men and women to opportunities including economic opportunities.
- The Government of Zimbabwe has updated the Labour Act in line with the provisions of the Constitution. The Act seeks to promote gender equality and advancement of women in the world of work. It provides for equality in employment opportunities and in remuneration for work of equal value.
- The Government of Zimbabwe has adopted a revised National Gender Policy in 2017. The policy provides a framework for mainstreaming gender across all economic sectors and seeks to address historical gender disparities across sectors. It provides concrete measures and strategies to mainstream gender in the following thematic areas:

- Constitutional and Legal Rights;
 - Economic Empowerment;
 - Politics and Decision making;
 - Health;
 - Education and Training;
 - Gender Based Violence;
 - Environment and Climate change;
 - Media, Information, Communication and Technology;
 - Disability; and
 - Culture and religion.
- The National Development Strategy prioritises mainstreaming of gender across all economic sectors as a way of eliminating the negative economic, social and cultural practices that fosters inequality between women and men. The blueprint prioritises financial inclusion of women and youths as a strategy for reduction of poverty.

What specific actions have been taken to enact, strengthen and enforce laws and regulations that uphold the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value in both the public and private sectors?

- Section 65 of the Constitution provides for equality in employment and equality of remuneration for similar work among men and women and also provides for the right to fully paid maternity leave for expecting women.

What measures have been taken to enact, strengthen and enforce laws and policies to eliminate all forms of violence and harassment against women in the world of work and provide means of effective redress in cases of noncompliance?

- The Government of Zimbabwe is in the process of crafting the workplace sexual harassment bill which seeks to address issues of sexual harassment in the workplace for the government institutions and parastatals and to give guidance on handling of such cases.
- The Government, through one of its Independent Commissions, the Zimbabwe Gender Commission, is developing a sexual harassment strategy which seeks to provide guidance on curtailment and handling of sexual harassment cases.

2. STRENGTHENING EDUCATION, TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

What measures have been taken to mainstream gender perspective into education, training programmes in order to facilitate the effective transition from education or unemployment to work?

- The Government recognizes the importance of promoting gender balance in education. Section 27 of the Constitution implores the state to take practical measures to ensure that girls are afforded the same opportunity with boys to obtain education at all levels.
- In line with the constitutional provision, the Government has made it imperative for institutions of higher learning to afford equal opportunities to boys and girls to enter these institutions.

3. IMPLEMENTING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICIES FOR WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT.

What steps have been taken to promote decent paid care and domestic work in the public and private sectors?

- The Government recognizes the challenge of unpaid care work for women. In pursuant to this challenge, the Government has through the Labour (Domestic Workers) Employment (Amendment) Regulations, 2020 (No. 19) has set the conditions of service for domestic workers that also include minimum wages for the different domestic tasks.
- A rapid assessment has been undertaken to establish the level of burden of unpaid care work, but this has not been followed up by concrete interventions to address the challenge. However, there has not been interventions in line with unpaid carework.

What actions and investments have been made to support gender responsive social protection and care infrastructure and services?

The Government of Zimbabwe prioritises the need to put in place social protection and care infrastructure that respond to the needs of women. Government has put in place the following:

- The Government has established 6 One Stop Centres across the country. These offer comprehensive services to Gender Based Violence survivors which include psychosocial support, legal aid, health services and access to justice.
- The Government in partnership with CSOs has also put in place 16 safe shelters and community safe shelters. These provide temporary shelters to survivors of Gender Based Violence, and they offer skills training while the women are at the shelters. These skills enable women to start some income generating projects when they leave the shelter.
- The Government is also in the process of establishing safe markets across the country. These are meant for most women entrepreneurs. The model safe markets provide for infrastructure that is responsive to the needs of women in terms of their biological and gender roles.
- During the Covid 19 pandemic, the Government unveiled safety nets for the Micro Small and Medium Enterprises and a ZWL\$600 million cash transfer programme was introduced in March 2020, and it was expanded to ZWL\$3.9 billion in May 2020. The Government prioritises allocations to social safety to meet the needs for the vulnerable members of the community most of whom are women and children.

What specific measures have been implemented to promote women's entry, reentry, and advancement in the labour market?

- The Government is working with CSOs to promote vocational and skills training among young women and girls who have left secondary education and those that may have dropped out of school. The skills training is meant to promote girls entry into the labour market and to start their own enterprises.

4. ADDRESSING THE GROWING INFORMALITY OF WORK AND MOBILITY OF WOMEN WORKERS

What measures have been implemented to promote transition from informal to formal paid employment for women?

- The Government of Zimbabwe, through its Vocational and women training centers, is providing businesses and technical skills training to Micro Small and Medium Enterprises, including the informal sector, aimed at enhancing their operations and adaptation to changing the business environment.

- To expedite the formalisation of the informal sector, Government, with support from ILO, is in the process of developing a formalization strategy that will make it easy for the informal business to transition into formal business.
- The Government is also in the process of implementing the decent work programme. The focus of the programme is on employment creation, formalisation of the informal sector and International Labour standards with cross cutting issues around the following areas:
 - Strengthening social protection;
 - Green economy (renewable energy);
 - Future of work;
 - Gender Equality and Non-discrimination;
 - Labour market information systems; and
 - Disability.

5. MANAGING TECHNOLOGICAL AND DIGITAL CHANGE FOR WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

What specific actions have been taken to support women's access to skills development and decent work in emerging fields, including science, technology, engineering and mathematics?

- The Government has introduced the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programme in schools and tertiary institutions. The objective of the programme is to encourage girls to pursue science, engineering, and technology fields. The programme assists girls pursuing these fields with payment of tuition fees and linkages to the labour market.

6. STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE VOICE, LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING

What specific efforts have been implemented to support women's participation and leadership in trade unions, workers' organisations and employers' organisations?

- The Government of Zimbabwe recognizes the importance of promoting the participation of women in labour unions and having them in decision making positions. In pursuant to that, Section 65 of the Constitution has stipulated

the right to form and join a trade union of choice and to participate in the lawful activities of the trade union.

- Section 4 of the Labour Act gives employees an entitlement to join a labour union of their choice and prohibits employers from making membership to a labour union a condition for one's employability.

7. STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF PRIVATE SECTOR IN WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

What efforts have been undertaken to encourage private firms and institutions to mainstream gender equality considerations in policies and practices?

- The Government of Zimbabwe, working with ILO, has been conducting trainings to capacitate private sector to come up with policies that promote gender equality in the workplace and to establish gender responsive infrastructure and programmes.

What action has been taken to increase investment and support for women entrepreneurs?

The Government of Zimbabwe recognizes the need to support entrepreneurship initiatives by women to promote gender equality and to increase employability of women in the formal and informal sectors. The government has put in place the following measures:

- **Women Development Fund:** The Government has continued to implement financial support to women businesses through the Women Development Fund, which is a credit facility for the grassroots women, particularly in the rural areas. The loan has a low interest rate and has flexible borrowing terms allowing women with limited collateral to have access to the fund.
- **Zimbabwe Women's Microfinance Bank:** The Government established the Zimbabwe Women's Microfinance Bank in 2018. The major objective of the bank is to provide financial assistance to women entrepreneurs by availing affordable and accessible finance through a decentralized banking system
- **Financial Inclusion:** The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe launched the Financial inclusion strategy in 2016. The objective of the strategy is to address barriers

to financial inclusion for women and other marginalized groups. The strategy ushered in a number of loan facilities among which were:

- \$15 million Women Empowerment Fund;
- \$10 million Horticulture Facility;
- \$40 million Gold Mobilisation Facility ;
- \$50 million Export Facility;
- \$10 million Business Linkage Facility; and
- \$15 million Cross Border Facility.

In line with the Financial Inclusion Strategy, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe has also put a requirement that every bank should have the following:

- A special loan window for women to increase women's access to finance;
 - A women's desk to deal with targeted loan applications for women; and
 - Submit sex disaggregated data of loan beneficiaries to enable monitoring of compliance with targets.
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- The Government has been promoting market linkages for women entrepreneurs through expos and exhibitions. It has facilitated the participation of women in the national and regional and international markets, where women have the opportunity to market their products and to create business synergies with external businesses. In addition, the Government has launched the 50 Million African Women Speak Platform (50MWASP), a COMESA marketing platform that seek to connect women in the region, through the platform, to build business linkages and market their products.