



**MINISTRY OF WOMEN AFFAIRS COMMUNITY, SMALL AND MEDIUM
ENTERPRISES DEVELOPMENT**

**IMPROVEMENTS OF THE SITUATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN RURAL
AREAS**

Background

Zimbabwe has a population of about 14million with 52% being female. The bulk of the population, about 70%, lives in the rural areas with the majority being women. The national economy is mainly agrarian with women providing the bulk of the labour force in the sector where they are remunerated lowly. Most women do not own the land where they cultivate crops mainly for subsistence. Livelihoods of rural inhabitants are heavily dependent on natural resources available in their localities. Exploitation of such resources is frequently unsustainable and this has led to problems of energy deficiencies as forests have been over-exploited in the provision of fire wood. Water sources have been decimated through bad agricultural practices which cause siltationand the extinction of wetlands. The negative impact of degradation of rural environments is mostly felt among women and girls exacerbating their marginalization. It is against this background that the Government of Zimbabwe has instituted a raft of successful laws and policies to promote the empowerment of women and the girl child.

Integrating Gender Equality into National Laws, Policies and Programmes

- The Zimbabwean Constitution, in particular Sections 17 and 56 provide for gender equality and equity among all citizens. Provision is made for non-discrimination based on gender considerations.

- Zimbabwe has a Revised National Gender Policy (2017) that places strong emphasis on gender equality and equity and envisions a gender-just society in which men and women enjoy equity, and benefit as equal partners in the development of the country.
- A Broad-Based Women Economic Empowerment Framework was revised and adopted in 2011. It seeks to channel strategic interventions in four pillars namely Women Business ownership/Entrepreneurship; Women in key Economic Decision-Making Positions; Employment Equity and women from disadvantaged backgrounds operating Viable Informal and Formal Livelihood Activities. Government has catalyzed the process through creating a conducive Business and Policy Environment, vibrant and supportive Institutions, Partnerships and Coalitions and enhancing Women's Competencies.
- As a signatory to a number of international instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the 1995 Convention on Civil and Political Rights, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa, Zimbabwe's commitment to gender equality is clear.
- The Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development has implemented a number of projects including the empowerment of women through community gardens and income savings and lending schemes. These have yielded results as women participants have recorded improved economic status.

Adopting and Funding Gender and Climate Responsive Agricultural and Rural Development for Economic Empowerment of Rural Women

- Section 4.20 of the Zimbabwe Constitution guarantees the right for all to an environment that is not harmful to their health. It guarantees an environment that is protected through prevention of pollution and ecological degradation with secure ecological sustainable development and natural resource use for social and economic development.

- Climate change adaptation techniques focussing on rural areas are pivotal for Zimbabwe's sustainable economic growth.
- Awareness raising, availing and use of clean alternative energy sources such as solar and biogas are being prioritized by Government.
- Through the National Domestic Biogas Programme in Zimbabwe which was initiated in 2013 the Government created the Renewable Energy Fund. In partnership with SNV is being generated to provide access to clean energy for cooking, lighting and productive use. The programme is currently active in Insiza, Chegutu, Goromonzi and Mvuma with positive impacts realized through improved livelihoods, increased incomes of rural households and sustainable waste management and nutrient recycling.
- The 1998 National Energy Survey by the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority established that some 80,000 rural households used home solar systems. The number has grown to an estimated 113,000 systems, according to a 2016 report by the International Renewable Energy Agency.
- The Campfire Programme continues to be a source of livelihood for communities in Zimbabwe and it also serves to reduce human wildlife conflict.

Supporting the Resilience and Adaptive Capacities of Women and Girls to Respond to adverse effects of Climate Change

- Zimbabwe considers resilience as the ability of at-risk individuals, households, communities and systems to anticipate, cushion, adapt, bounce back better and move from the effects of shocks and hazards in a manner that protects livelihoods, recovery gains and support sustainable transformation.
- The Zimbabwe Resilience Building Fund is a long-term development initiative with an overall objective of contributing to increased capacity of communities to protect development gains in the face of recurrent shocks and stresses enabling them to contribute to the economic development of Zimbabwe.
- The Fund established in 2013 at the instigation of UNDP, targets to increase the application of evidence in policy making for resilience, building absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities of at-risk communities

and availing a timely and cost-effective response to emergencies through existing safety nets and other relevant programmes.

- Targeted interventions for building resilience include teaching women to adopt to Climate Smart Agriculture, Water Harvesting Technologies, Energy Saving Technologies, Gully Filling and afforestation of trees especially fruit trees which have nutritional and economic benefits.
- The Presidential Input Schemes for women in rural areas targets the production of small grains and value addition of produce to reduce post-harvest losses.
- Extension of credit schemes through the Zimbabwe Women Microfinance Bank enables women to sustain their small-scale commercial ventures.
- Women are supported to establish improved grain storage structures at household level and community level inputs through Seed Banks.
- The production of small livestock (sheep, goats, pigs, and poultry) is supported through the Women Development Fund and Community Development Fund administered by the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development.
- Promotion of Traditional Foods for consumption and sale encourages the preservation of local indigenous trees, vegetables and other fauna.

Women's Full Participation in Decision Making

- Zimbabwe recognises that sustainable development and good governance are achieved when there is gender equality and equity.
- The Zimbabwean Constitution provides for gender equality and equity hence the push for the General Laws Amendment Bill to accommodate the 50:50 Principle.
- The allocation of a specific quota to women in the Lower House is testimony to the commitment to achieve equal representation in decision making positions.
- Government has approved a policy mandating Boards of Parastatals to have 50-50 representation of males and females.

Promoting education, training and information programmes for rural and farming women through affordable and appropriate institutions: · ZIMSTAT

(Chair) the then Ministry of Rural Development, Promotion and Preservation of National Culture and Heritage. National Arts Council of Zimbabwe UNESCO **technology** Implementation of the CDIS (Culture for Development Indicators in Zimbabwe) project in Zimbabwe began in May 2017 and ended in April 2018. The Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT) was contracted to coordinate the CDIS implementation process in Zimbabwe. ZIMSTAT and UNESCO signed an agreement for cooperation in the implementation of the project. A Technical Working Group (TWG) which was set up to implement the CDIS composed of the following:

- The right to education is pronounced in the Constitution of Zimbabwe Section 75 Subsection 1 which states that every Zimbabwean is entitled to a basic State-funded education, including adult education. The Constitution further highlights that the State shall make steps to make education available and accessible to all its citizens. It is important to note that prior to the enactment of the Constitution in 2013, Zimbabwe had put in place various policies meant to promote and advance access to education in the country. It is within this context that a result of 0.91/1 reflects the efforts made by Zimbabwean authorities to ensure that education is made available in an inclusive manner.
- The average years of schooling for persons aged 17 to 22 years was 9.1 years. Taking into account that in Zimbabwe, persons aged 17 years are expected to have already completed a 7 year primary course as well as four years of lower FACTS & FIGURES 12 secondary, more still needs to be done to make sure that the target of 11 years is reached.
- In terms of education deprivation, 2% of the population aged between 17 and 22 years had less than 4 years of schooling. This calls for more intervention especially targeting marginalized groups in order to make education more accessible and that inequality among population groups is addressed.
- MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION: 94% (2015) The Constitution of Zimbabwe adopted in 2013 acknowledged the following 16 languages as officially recognised in the country; Chewa, Chibarwe, English, Kalanga, Koisan,

Nambya, Ndaou, Ndebele, Shangani, Shona, Sign Language, Sotho, Tonga, Tswana, Venda and Xhosa. The Constitution further state that the State and all institutions and agencies of Government must ensure that all the languages are treated equitably and take into account the language preferences of people affected by governmental measures or communications. In addition, the new education curriculum has been developed to cover all the indigenous languages stated in the Constitution.

- The Zimbabwean Indigenous Languages Curriculum (2015-2022) developed by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education allocated equal teaching hours to all the languages that are officially recognised in the country. As such, 100% of instructional hours dedicated to teaching languages are for teaching official or national languages. Although 0% of instructional hours are dedicated to teaching local or regional languages and international languages, it is important to note that the country has taken drastic measures to promote multilingualism by declaring the 16 languages to be official. It is also noteworthy that the school system in Zimbabwe allows students to learn languages of other countries such as Chinese, German, 13 French and Portuguese and these are mostly examined by international examination bodies such as the Cambridge. However, more still needs to be done to make sure that schools are indeed teaching all these languages that are pronounced in the country's Constitution.

The Constitution of the Republic of Zimbabwe, adopted in 2013, states that " every person has the right to freedom of expression which includes: (a) freedom to seek, receive and communicate ideas and other information (b) freedom of artistic expression and scientific research and creativity and (c) academic freedom" (Article 61.1). Zimbabwe's score of 68/100 indicates that the print, broadcast, and internet-based media is currently 'partly free', falling just below the benchmark (70%) of 'free' media.

In 2014, 68% of the population in Zimbabwe used the Internet. Despite the recognition of the key role that access to digital technologies, in particular the

Internet, plays in boosting the economy and encouraging new forms of access, creation, production, and the dissemination of ideas, information and cultural content, Zimbabwe has a fair result on internet use. This result may reflect the need to increase investment in the development of infrastructures, policies and measures that facilitate the use of new technologies. The country may also need to address issues such as pricing, bandwidth, skills, public facilities, content and applications targeting low-end users in order to bring more people online.

Strengthening the collection, analysis and dissemination of sex disaggregated data and gender statistics on links between rural women in Zimbabwe

- FAO. 2017. National Gender Profile of Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods – Zimbabwe: Country Gender Assessment Series. Harare.
- Zimbabwe CULTURE FOR DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS (CDIS) MAY 2017- APRIL 2018 UNESCO commissioned a ZMSTATS survey. Gender equality is not only internationally recognized as a critical building block of sustainable development, gender equality can go hand in hand with respecting cultural diversity and cultural rights when placed within a human rights framework that favours inclusion and equal access to rights and opportunities. Targeted policies and interventions in favour of gender equality strongly influence attitudes and perceptions of gender roles and improve the levels of gender equality in practice. Furthermore, cultural attitudes and perceptions play a key role in orienting such policies and measures. Nevertheless, policies require people: they need to be supported by members of the community to be successful and sustainable. The Gender Equality Dimension examines the correlations or gaps existing between the promotion and valorization of gender equality through targeted policies and actions, and culturally based perceptions of gender equality. GENDER EQUALITY OBJECTIVE OUTPUTS: 0.93/1(2014-17) The Government of Zimbabwe has showed that it is committed to the achievement of gender equality and women empowerment through the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) which has elaborate provisions

on gender equality and women empowerment. The country continues to engender its laws through the alignment process to the Constitution. Prior to the enactment of the constitution in 2013, the Government had put in place several pieces of legislation and policies to advance gender equality such as the National Gender Policy (NGP) of 2004. The 2017 revised National Gender Policy has ten thematic areas which include Gender, Culture and Religion. Although women in Zimbabwe have seized the opportunities and benefits of education and participation in labour force in the recent past, they still face challenges in getting full access to such opportunities. FACTS & FIGURES 26

Women are confronted with numerous gender related challenges in the political, economic and social sectors which inhibit them from attaining their full potential. On the social side, women are more likely to suffer abuse and violence than men which in the end affects their health and well-being. Women are less likely than men to be in paid employment, they tend to engage more in unpaid care work than men, and overall, they work more hours than men in non-economic activities. The result of 0.93/1 is reflective of the efforts that the country has put in place in making sure that gender equality is achieved in the different sectors of economy, society and politics. Analysis of the components of this indicator points to the gaps that still exist between women and men and this helps in understanding the reasons why these differentials still exist and at the same time identify areas of work that can improve equality between the two sexes. Women’s political participation was noted to be low, with 32% of women constituting the Lower House of Parliament (National Assembly). However, the Constitution of Zimbabwe of 2013 Section 124, introduced quotas in Zimbabwe’s National Assembly, with 60 seats reserved for women elected through proportional representation. This commitment by Government is set to improve women’s participation in politics. The average number of years of education for women and men aged 25 years and above shows that men tend to stay longer in the education system than their female counterparts, at least by one year.

0.0 0.1 0.2 0.3
0.4 0.5 0.6 0.7 0.8 0.9 1.0 Political Participation Education Labour Force
Participation Targeted Gender Equity Legislation Male Female Index of the

gaps between women and men in political, education and labour domains and in gender-equity legislation PoZ, LFS-2014, DVA, Labour Act. Methodology: UNESCO CDIS 27 This difference can be attributed to the competing gender roles that women have in the home as well as in society as a whole. The disadvantages for women are perpetuated in the labour market since men would have acquired more skills and knowledge. Labour force participation was generally high for both women and men, 92% and 96%, respectively. However, high figure for this indicator can mean a lack of other socio-economic aspects important for human development such as lack of social protection in younger and older ages. The implementation of Gender Equity Legislation such as Domestic Violence Act and Sexual Offences Act, Administration of Estate Act, among others, face resistance due to existence of cultural norms and values within the Zimbabwean society.

- PERCEPTION OF GENDER EQUALITY, 61% (2011) According to the World Values Survey of 2011, Zimbabwe scored 61% on perception on gender equality. This result shows that gender equality in Zimbabwe holds a fair position within societies and is somewhat supported by individuals. Analysis into the components of the indicator shows that 56% of women and men disagreed that when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women. The results show a different picture when analyzing between sexes separately. Sixty-seven percent of females against 42.7% males disagreed that men should have more right to a job than women. This shows that there is existence of gender stereotypes. There is, therefore, need to put in place mechanisms to ensure that equality between women and men exists and that both men and women do not perpetuate the problem. The same pattern is observed regarding women's political participation. About 19% of women strongly disagreed that men make better political leaders than women, compared to about 7% of men who felt the same. This result shows that a higher proportion of men believe that men are better political leaders than women. This point to the fact that policies that promote the participation of women in elections should be put in place. The Constitution of Zimbabwe of 2013 has introduced women's quotas in the National Assembly (refer to

Section 17 above). In the area of access to education, a lesser proportion of males (25.1%) compared to females (35.2%) strongly disagreed to the statement that university education is more important for a boy than it is to a girl. Such perceptions are usually turned into practice and this results in girls being denied university education at the expense of boys. This analysis of objective and subjective indicators highlights that gaps still exist between policy and practice. While the policies have been put in place to advance gender equality in the area of education, political participation and access to economic resources and means of production, among other things, a lot still needs to be done to instil the understanding of equality among society. This ensures that culture and beliefs will not impact negatively on efforts to improve gender equality in the country.

- While Zimbabwe is not currently collecting statistics on rural women and the impact of climate change, their time use and unpaid care work constitutes about 45% of their productive work per week. 34.6% of women own agricultural land (women and men report 2016) access to energy for rural women and girls is limited and efforts have been made to introduce alternate energy sources such as solar power to provide heating, lighting and radio and television connectivity. The National Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Sub-Committee has put in place structures up to Ward level to ensure provision of WASH services in rural areas in all the 8 rural Provinces. Government officials regularly collect data on water sanitation and hygiene indicators that show access to services through the Rural Water and Sanitation Information Management System (RWIMS). Government partnership with Non-Governmental Organisations provides technical and financial support for the Water Point Committees that set up operate and maintain water points in rural areas