

ZIMBABWE

**PROGRESS REPORT ON
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION
1995-2003**

FORWARD

The Government recognises the need for full participation of men and women in development processes at all levels in order to ensure sustainable development and attainment of equality between the sexes. It is also cognisant of the existence of social, economic and cultural factors that create gender imbalances and prevent women from fully participating and benefiting from the development process.

Soon after the 1995 Beijing Conference, the Government of Zimbabwe drew its own National Plan of Action for the implementation of the Platform For Action (PLA). This signified the Government's total commitment for ensuring the full and equal participation of women in all spheres of life. The National Plan of Action follows the gender and development approach that seeks to mainstream gender into all spheres of life and development as opposed to the previous women in development approach.

This report will build upon the "Zimbabwe Government Progress Report on the Implementation of the Platform for Action" prepared in November 1999. It will focus on the efforts made by government, the people of Zimbabwe and other agencies in realizing the equality of both women and men and will confine these indicators to the five critical areas of concern prioritised by Zimbabwe.

Special thanks go to the staff and consultants of the Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation, which houses the National Gender Machinery that coordinates women's issues in Zimbabwe. We would also like to appreciate all the gender focal points from various ministries, leaders and representatives of civil society organisations and UN agencies that collaborated in the compilation and validation of this report. Final thanks go to Margaret Zunguze who produced the report.

Minister of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation

Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
ARV	Anti Retroviral drugs
BEAM	Basic Education Assistance Module
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immuno Virus
ICTs	Information Communication Technologies
IEC -	Information, Education and Communication
MDG -	Millennium Development Goals
MYDGEC-	Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation
MOHCW-	Ministry of Health and Child Welfare
NEPAD-	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NERP	National Economic Revival Programme
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NYP	National Youth Policy
PAAP	Poverty Alleviation Action Plan
PEP-	Post Exposure Prophylaxis
PLA	Platform for Action
PPTCT	Parent to Child Transmission
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TB	Tuberculosis
UN	United Nations
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
ZDHS	Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey
ZIMPREST	Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation
ZNFPC-	Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council

Methodology

The methodology for preparing this report included administration of the questionnaire as well as a desk review of documents. The questionnaire was administered to multi-ministerial representatives as designated by the Permanent Secretaries of the Ministries. Interviews were also held with civil society representatives. The time available for this research was six weeks. A multi-stakeholder consultative and review workshop was done to validate the research findings.

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

The Government of Zimbabwe does not only remain committed to the full implementation of the Platform for Action (PLA) and the Beijing Declaration but also to the Millennium Development Goals agreed to by over 189 Heads of State and Governments at the Millennium Summit of September 2000.

Soon after the 1995 Beijing Conference, the Government of Zimbabwe drew its own National Plan of Action for the implementation of the Platform For Action (PLA). This signified the Government's total commitment for ensuring the full and equal participation of women in all spheres of life. The National Plan of Action follows the gender and development approach that seeks to mainstream gender into all spheres of life and development as opposed to the previous women in development approach.

This shift of focus recognises the origins of gender discrimination and appreciates that this cannot be corrected by addressing women's issues separately. The National Plan of Action was developed by and for all stakeholders involved in the advancement of women, i.e. civil society, government ministries, the private sector and the community at large. This included benchmarks, activities, indicators etc. for the period 2000-2005. The following areas of critical concern were identified and will be reported on closely in this report:

- Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
- Women in power and decision-making
- Education and training of women
- Women and the economy
- Women Health, and HIV and AIDS

Since Beijing + 5, the thrust of all stakeholders in the advancement of women have been to call for the integration of gender perspectives in all policies and programmes. Thus the Women's Movement in close collaboration with the Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation have been very active in analysing policies and programmes for gender sensitivity and advocating with parliamentarians for reform changes were necessary.

The Government recognises the need for full participation of men and women in development processes at all levels in order to ensure sustainable development and attainment of equality between the sexes. It is also cognisant of the existence of social, economic and cultural factors that create gender imbalances and prevent women from fully participating and benefiting from the development process.

This report will build upon the "Zimbabwe Government Progress Report on the Implementation of the Platform for Action" prepared in November 1999. It will focus on the efforts made by government, the people of Zimbabwe and other agencies in realizing the equality of both women and men and will confine these indicators to the five critical areas of concern prioritised by Zimbabwe.

DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT OF ZIMBABWE OVER THE REPORTING PERIOD

Zimbabwe's official population figures have grown by 1.1% from 10,4 million for 1992 to 11.6 million for 2002. This growth rate is 3% less than that achieved for the period 1982-1992. Women make about 52% of the population.

Several key social indicators have deteriorated for example; life expectancy decreased from 58 to 53 for males and from 62 to 57 years for females between the period 1992 and 1997. According to the Ten Year Review of the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action (ICPD+10), HIV and AIDS has largely contributed to the rapid decrease in life expectancy over the last few years. The 2003 estimated prevalence rate among adults (15-49 years) was 24.6%.

Table 1 shows the estimated number of people living with HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe by the end of 2003. According to the Zimbabwe Human Development Report of 2003, 'the estimate of 43 years for Zimbabwe in 2000-2005 is 26 years lower than it would have been without AIDS'.

Table 1 Estimated number of people living with HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe at the end of 2003

	Estimated Number	Range
Total adults & children	1,820,000	1,473,000 – 2,020,000
Adults (15-49)	1,540,000	1,250,000 – 1,710,000
Women (15-49)	870,000	700,000 – 960,000
Children (0 –14)	165,000	131,000 – 186,000
Adult Prevalence (15 131,000 – 186,000)	24,6%	20%-28%

Source: Zimbabwe National HIV/AIDS Estimates 2003 Published by Health Information and Surveillance Unit, Department of Disease Prevention and Control AIDS and TB Programme

An estimated 17% (1,820,000) Zimbabweans are living with HIV and AIDS and of this number over 56,5% are women reflecting the high vulnerability of women to the epidemic. The causes of this will be discussed in a later section of this report.

During the period 1980-1990, the newly independent government concentrated on reducing poverty and government spending was directed towards social sector expenditures, expansion of rural infrastructure, including land reform. There was considerable enthusiasm soon after independence regarding the status of women in Zimbabwe. This led to the promulgation of several laws aimed at advancing the status of women.

The Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) adopted in 1991 was an effort to boost the country's economic performance. This was done at a time the country still enjoyed wide international support. However droughts, floods, increased external debt and interest on debt repayment, and the non-realisation of ESAP's objectives were associated with the economic decline of the 1990s. The real GDP growth averaged 1,5% during 1991-1995. Government was

forced to focus on the more pressing matters and immediate problems often to the neglect of longer-term issues that have a direct bearing on the advancement of women.

The welfare gains of the 1980s were eroded as budgetary allocations to social sectors decreased. Women and children more than men tend to bear the burden of increased poverty and are further marginalized from the processes and gains of development. Extreme poverty increased significantly during 1990s with an estimated 35% of the population living below the poverty datum line 1995 compared to about 26% in 1990. There was growing unemployment and poverty among the populace and the magnitudes of decline tended to worsen with time even into the new millennium.

ESAP was replaced with a 'home-grown' reform package, namely the Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST) in April 1998. However lack of financial resources undermined its effective implementation. The Millennium Economic Recovery Programme (MERP) replaced this first homegrown initiative but was also rendered ineffective due to the withdrawal of the international donor support. In February 2003, the Government launched another stabilization programme; the National Economic Revival Programme (NERP). As quoted from the draft 2003 Progress Report on Millennium Development Goals, these home-grown initiatives are very commendable but have failed to kick-start the export sector to generate the much-needed foreign currency to revive the economy.

In the midst of all these challenges, the government has not remained passive but has done the following in order to lessen the burden and cushion its citizens:

- Developed and launched the National Gender Policy
- Developed a National HIV/AIDS Policy which includes the following;
 - National HIV Strategic Framework 2000-2004 as a national responses to the HIV/AIDS epidemic
 - The National AIDS council was established in 2000
 - The AIDS levy was instituted and every employed person contributed 3% of his or her monthly income to the Fund.
- Fast track land reform designed to redistribute land to the majority of Zimbabweans in order to reduce structural economic vulnerability. The challenge was to transform the land reform programme into a sustainable agrarian reform programme. This would help the country cope with recurring humanitarian challenges.
- Twenty percent (20%) quota of all resettled land is reserved for women. This is a major achievement for women who have had no property rights except through a male relative (father, husband or son).
- Early 2004, the Governor of the Reserve Bank with Government backing put in place a monetary policy framework and embarked on several measures meant to stimulate production, and to clean up the financial sector of graft and wanton speculative practices using public funds.

The foregoing discussion puts into perspective the environment in which the goals of the Platform For Action and the Millennium Development Goals are supposed to be achieved. Zimbabwe is no doubt confronting a complex set of development challenges.

PART 2: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION IN ZIMBABWE DURING THE PERIOD 1995-2004

Zimbabwe is a signatory to a number of regional and international conventions that promote gender equality and equity:

1. Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
2. Convention on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR)
3. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
4. SADC Declaration on Gender and Development and its Addendum on the Prevention and eradication of Violence Against Women and Children
5. African Union Protocol on the rights of women in Africa (2004)

This section will discuss the status and trends, challenges and identified legislative reforms for each of all areas of critical concern paying greater attention of the five critical areas of concern identified by Zimbabwe as needing special attention.

INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

National mechanisms

Mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality exist in the form of the Ministry of Youth Development Gender and Employment Creation (MYDGEC) through the Gender department (national machinery) and the Parliamentary Committee on gender. The ministry has five operative departments namely: -

- Gender
- Youth Development
- Employment Creation
- Skills Development
- Human Resources

The mandate of the gender machinery is to promote gender equity and equality. Its area of focus is gender mainstreaming in all levels and all sectors. The National Gender machinery runs programs in the areas of Gender and HIV/AIDS, Gender and Law, Economic Empowerment of women, Women, Politics and decision-making, Policy and National Occasions and the Girl Child.

The gender department has a full staff compliment. The national mechanism is conveniently located such that the gender department is within the ministry which channels decisions through the permanent secretary, minister, cabinet and parliament. The ministry works with developmental partners such as other government ministries, donors, NGOs, and the rest of civil society. Strong networks have been established with the partners e.g. UNIFEM and UNDP for fundraise and lobby for the ministry. Line ministries play a role in the national mechanisms through the implementation of programs through the gender management systems and gender focal persons in gender mainstreaming.

Achievements

- The National Gender Machinery responsible for promotion of gender issues was established in August 2000 as the Gender Department within the Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation. The existing gender management system consists of the national gender machinery; gender focal points, district gender councils and provincial gender councils.
- The task of gender focal points is to facilitate the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the National Gender Policy (NGP) and ensure gender mainstreaming in respective ministries and departments.
- Launch of NGP in March 2004 has made gender mainstreaming more feasible. Sectorial gender policies can now be streamlined using the NGP as a guideline.
- A National Plan of Action for the NGP will soon be developed to facilitate the NGP's implementation.
- District and provincial gender councils were established in 2001 to facilitate the mainstreaming of gender issues at community level. The councils are made up of traditional leaders, healer, NGO representatives, faith-based organisational representatives, government officers and other civic leaders.
- There is a Parliamentary Committee on MYDEC, which plays a monitoring role over the activities of the Ministry and the various Gender Focal points in line ministries. The Women MPs have formed a Gender Caucus whose objective is to sensitise the legislators to make them aware of the need for gender quality and equity. The mandate of the portfolio committee is to consider and deal with all bills and statutory instruments and to monitor, investigate, enquire into and make recommendations to any legislative program, budget or policy formulation it may consider relevant.
- Capacity for promoting gender mainstreaming has been achieved through training focal persons. The training equipped them with basic gender skills. Actions plans together with monitoring and evaluating tools are also tools used in the mechanism. Challenges in capacity building exist in the area of skills implementation, marketing gender mainstreaming, and ability to influence policy and program design. There is therefore need to train gender focal persons so that they can be more bold and assertive so that they can be able to spearhead gender issues in their departments.
- Core indicators have been established through a draft monitoring and evaluation tool, which lies with the national machinery.

Constraints

- Not all gender focal persons are senior officials in the planning and monitoring functions as originally planned. This impedes the effectiveness of the gender machinery as the junior officers have limited capacity to influence policies and programmes as is expected of them.
- Although all the provincial officers are University degree holders, the capacity for gender related analysis and planning in the National Gender Machinery is low mainly due to the recruitment of personnel who have no gender training. The situation is worsened by the lack of a systematic gender program in the induction for members of staff.
- The national gender machinery needs to be strengthened in its operations particularly through human resources, training and budgetary allocations. The gender machinery successfully lobbied for an independent budget in 2002. Funds were received to conduct

gender awareness programmes. Budgetary allocations are important if gender sensitive programmes are to be developed and implemented to the benefit of women.

- The terms of reference for gender focal points do not constitute their key result areas. As a result, gender issues are regarded as secondary functions to the focal person's main duties. There is need to recognize the importance of the gender focal person's role and reflect this even in monetary terms.
- The gender department does not have a budget to finance gender-mainstreaming activities of the gender focal persons and this increases the sidelining of their work. There is also lack of adequate equipment like computers. The NGM does not seem to be using ICTs effectively.
- Provincial and district gender councils are not really functional due to lack of funds.
- A weak point lies in that there is no system for disaggregating data at the National Machinery but they rely on CSO. New types of data need to be collected in the area of unpaid care work, HIV/AIDS and child headed families. The CSO is very committed to providing sex aggregated data while line ministries provide minimal support. Sex aggregated data is being used effectively in education, health and social welfare.

Challenges

- The positioning, renaming and reshaping of the gender machinery allows for its trivialisation within MYDGEC. Gender machinery now falls under the department of youth and this has overshadowed the political commitment for gender issues in relation to the public profile and resource allocation.
- There is no Plan of Action to implement either the Beijing Declaration on Gender, the SADC Declaration or the National Gender Policy.
- The lower position of gender focal points in ministries contributes to the ineffectiveness of the institutional mechanism to mainstream gender. Taking them through gender empowerment and self-assertiveness types of programmes could strengthen the gender focal points.
- Larger budgetary allocations to the MYDEC could have a greater impact on their activities. This is needed to fight structural gender discrimination and inequalities. The close linkage between MYDEC and civil society is commendable.
- There is a low level of understanding of gender and development issues by policy makers. This is exacerbated by the lack of ratification of critical international instruments on gender and women¹

Recommendations

1. Develop a national plan of action to implement the Beijing Declaration on Gender and the National Gender Policy.
2. There is need to market the gender department to the public so that the public becomes aware of its existence and view gender as a serious national issue.
3. Presently the Department of Gender cannot hold another ministry responsible for the implementation of gender action plans. There is therefore need for either an independent Gender Ministry with the responsibility to do so or alternatively a body like a Gender

¹ Needs Assessment for Capacity Building of National Gender Machineryes for Gender Equality in SADC Member States, Zimbabwe Report by L Shaba.

Commission that has the authority to make ministers answerable also have a system of liaising with the gender focal points in the various ministries.

4. Set up or consolidate capacities of training centres.

2. WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION-MAKING

There are no legal barriers to women's participation in public and political life. The constitution and the Electoral Act of 1990 gave women the right to vote in general and by-elections and to stand for election in the same elections and in Presidential Elections. The Women's Parliamentary Caucus has been established to provide a forum for female members across the political divide to discuss various gender related issues. This forum is important for enactment of gender-sensitive legislation and lobbying for the empowerment of women².

The Government, with the assistance of partners such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and civil society, embarked on the Women In Politics and Decision Making project beginning in 1997. The objectives were to increase women's participation in positions of authority, achieve a 52% female representation in Parliament and other institutions by year 2000. The programme also aimed at building the capacity of women leaders. This was done through civic education, skills training, and information dissemination through publications, television and radio programmes, among other strategies.

The raising of women's social, economic, and political status is essential for the achievement of transparent, accountable government and effective administration and sustainable development in all spheres of life.

The participation of women in politics and in decision-making positions has continued to be a challenge for government. Zimbabwe has a gender empowerment measure of 0.359 and it is ranked 5 out of 9 selected SADC countries according to the SADC Human Development Report. Although there are no legal barriers prohibiting women from participating in public and political life the number of women in politics and decision making positions has continued to decline over the years. The Sexual Discrimination Removal Act of 1980 ensures that women hold public office on equal terms with men.

Government is committed to advance women's participation in the management of the public service. It did this by instituting an affirmative action (UNICEF 1995) whose target was to have at least 30% of all public service senior posts occupied by women by the year 2000. Table 2 shows the persons in executive office by sex, 1990, 1995, and 2003.

² The Ten-Year Review Of The Implementation Of The ICPD Programme Of Action (ICPD+10)

Table 2: Persons in Executive office by sex and year

	1990		1995		2003	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Ministers	3	29	2	21	4	24
Deputy Ministers	6	67	4	11	1	11
Governor/Resident ministers	1	7	7	1	1	7

In the first two parliaments after independence, women constituted fewer than 10% of members of parliament. In the third parliament 1990-1995, there was an improvement at 14%. This proportion fell to 11% in the fourth parliament (2000-2005). The target set by SADC is to reach 30% by 2005 and the MDG target is to reach 50% by 2015. However the NGP target is 52%.

In 1997, women held 22% of senior civil service positions. This figure rose to 30% by 2002. The target is to reach 50% by 2015.

Table 3: Distribution of men and women in senior Public/Civil Service posts

GRADE	Percentage of Women			
	1997	2002	2003	2004
Permanent Secretary	12	22	17.5	25.2
Director and equivalent	-	-	18.5	25.1
Deputy Secretary and equivalent	23	37	33.5	31.2
Under secretary and equivalent	22	29	22.1	22.9

Source: Public Service Commission 2004

1. Administrative Officer / Senior Administrative Officer/ Principal Officer is a through grade
2. Senior Management post are from under secretary level to Permanent Secretary

In 2002, 12% of Urban Councillors were female, see Table 4. There was no female out of 15 Executive Mayors (the current one is in an acting position) and there were no female Town Clerks out of a total of 16. There are three female chiefs. Although there are no statistics available, it is clearly evident that there are even fewer women in decision-making positions in the private sector.

Table 4: Distribution of men and women in Provincial/Regional/Local Government

	No. of Women		No. of Men		Total positions		% Women	
	1997	2002	1997	2002	1997	2002	1997	2002
Provincial Governors and Resident Ministers	1	1	7	7	8	8	12.5	12.5
Urban Councillors	-	39	-	287	-	325	-	11.96
Executive Mayors	-	(1)	-	14	-	15	-	6.7
Rural District Council Councillors	37	42	1517	1512	1554	1554	2.4	2.7

Source: Urban Councils Association of Zimbabwe and Association of Rural District Councils

Table 5: The Judiciary

Serial	No. of Women		No. of Men		Total		% Women	
	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003
Judges (High and Supreme Courts)	8	11	18	26	26	37	14.4	29.7
Magistrates	45	41	116	114	161	155	27.9	26.5

In order to increase the participation of women in politics and decision-making, \$3 million was utilised to train women in leadership and mobilisation skills in January 2002. This amount is hardly enough in relation to the task at hand. Women are grossly underrepresented to effectively and timorously influence policy and legislation. Prevailing socio-cultural attitudes about female leadership are still not supportive of female participation in decision-making.

The Government, together with its technical partners in civil society, such as Women In Politics Support Unit (WIPSU) and Women, Leadership and Governance Institute (WLG I) is actively promoting women's involvement in leadership through capacity building and education of female councillors and Members of Parliament

Constraints

- Despite constituting more than half the national population, women have continued to be under represented at all levels of decision making in government, parliament, political parties, the private sector, special public service commissions and boards, religious groupings and other institutions in the community. This low participation of women is due to cultural, social, political and economic influences that impact negatively on women participation in decision-making positions.
- Women that run for any type of political office are viewed by the community as unfeminine, immoral and aggressive by the largely traditionalist and patriarchal society of Zimbabwe. It is important that adequate measures are taken that addresses those imbalances driven by customary practices at different levels (political, social and economic) of society.
- Discriminatory attitudes and practices, family responsibility, low income, little education, lack of self-confidence, the inability to control their sexuality and reproductive roles combine to prevent women from attaining high positions.

- Women are still underrepresented in political decision making particularly parliament. During the first two parliaments, women constituted fewer than 10%. There was improvement during 1990-1995 when women members of parliament constituted 14%. However this figure fell to 11% during 2000-2003. This shows that Zimbabwe is still a long way from meeting the 30% by 2005 target set in the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development. It also behind the target set in the National Gender Policy of 52%.
- The major challenge in ensuring meaningful participation of women in public life and politics is how to institute an effective quota system, promoting violence free election campaigns and changing perceptions about women leadership.
- There is also lack of financial resources for aspiring female candidates in any election.
- The mindsets of women have to change as they were socialized to accept men as leaders and tend to look down on women leaders.

Challenges

1. One way to ensure meaningful participation of women in public and politics is to institute an effective quota system even for political parties. Study how South Africa has succeeded in this endeavour. People vote for parties and not individuals.
2. Government should ensure violence-free elections to encourage women to participate. Women candidates should get special funds to enable them to run their pre-election campaigns effectively
3. The great resistance from patriarchal subjugating ideologies and from detrimental cultural practices that tend to tie the woman to the home and family environment need to be tackled from any angles including school curricula, churches etc.
4. Frequent changes in ministers and permanent secretary level provides no continuity and stunts development as the ministers are for ever learning and not moving forward.

Recommendations

1. Legislation that ensures political parties institute a pre-election quota system of women representatives must be enacted.
2. Appoint female ministers and permanent secretary positions of powerful ministries like Finance, Lands and rural resettlement etc.
3. Have less changes of ministers and permanent secretaries.
4. The Government needs to take a look at the recommendations made in the evaluation of the Women In Politics and Decision Making Project with a view to re-launch the project. Adequate resources also need to be made available for any future project.
5. Implement the 52% stipulated by the NGP for women in decision-making positions across all sectors.
6. The media needs to be more gender sensitive and start acknowledging the role of women in society and politics.
7. The National Gender Policy adopted in 2002 and launched in 2004 is expected to guide the implementation of gender sensitive programmes and policies. This must be followed with adequate resource allocations as an important step towards realising rights and achieving gender equality.
8. Ministry of Women's Affairs must be reformed
5. Each election year, the president has the prerogative to nominate additional members of Parliament at his own discretion. This is an excellent opportunity to increase female

numbers in Parliament. This would also be a clearest evidence of Governments attitude towards gender equality and towards affirmative action for women.

3. EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF WOMEN

The post-independence era witnessed a massive expansion in the educational system especially basic education when the Government promulgated the policy of universal free primary education. Initiatives were adopted to ensure that the participation of the girl child was increased, while for women, adult literacy programmes were introduced.

According to the Zimbabwean Millennium Development Goals Draft Progress Report for 2003, in 1994, net primary school enrolment ratio was 81,8% male and 82% female. By 2000, Zimbabwe had attained gender parity but the trend has been decreasing over the past three years³.

While the gender gap in primary and Forms 1-2 is small, it tends to increase and widen and peaks for Form 6. The proportion of children 5-19 years leaving school decreased from 17,1% in 1992 to 16,1% in 1997 and then increased to 18,2% in 1999. The increase in number of dropouts could be due to the steep rise in school and examination fees and retrenchments of some breadwinners. According to UNICEF (1994), more females than males are more likely to give shortage of money as a major reason for not going to school.

Equity at tertiary education and training institutions

Despite the existence of affirmative action policies with respect to gender, the disabled and other disadvantaged groups; these policies do not seem to yield the intended outcomes. The gender gap is exceptionally wide in universities, higher and technical institutes as Table 6 and 7 shows.

Table 6: Technical And Vocational Colleges

Year	Male	Female	Total
2000	12 492	5 021	17 513
2001	14 297	6 705	21 002
2002	11 131	6 123	16 254
2003	11 090	5 048	16 138

Source: Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education 2003

³ Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network Budget Watch (March 2004).

Table 7: University enrollments

Year	Male	Female	Total
2000	19 960	4 298	14 258
2001	9 615	4 539	14 154
2002	14 178	6 717	20 895
2003	14 662	7 108	21 770

Source: Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education 2003

NB: Figures exclude Zimbabwe Open University enrolments

Teaching personnel

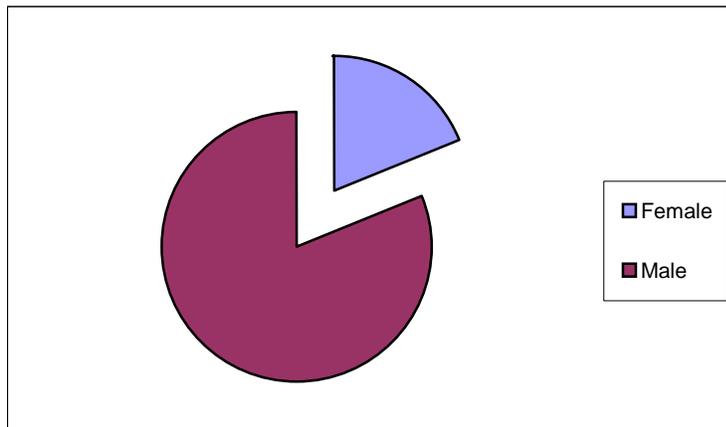
Primary level teacher training colleges has more female enrolments. For example in 2000, 66% females enrolled but in 2003 the enrolment of females was at 53%. The numbers of males enrolling did not change much during the same period. The big drop in female enrolment during 2003 corresponds with the reduction of female graduates at 'O' and 'A' levels during 2000-2002.

Table 8: Teacher Colleges Enrolments: 2000-2003

YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
2000	8 204	16 113	24 317
2001	8 121	9 328	17 449
2002	9 166	11 944	21 110
2003	8 244	9 371	17 615

More male enrolments are found at tertiary level. The pie chart in Figure 3 gives the proportions of male and female lecturers in Universities during the period 1999-2000.

Figure 3 Percentage of male (81%) and female (19%) lecturers at Universities during 1999-2000



Achievements

1. There has been an increase in the number of “A” level schools in rural areas. In addition, there has been an increase in the number of female headmistresses who act as role models to girl children⁴.
2. More schools have been set-up in resettlement and mining areas with provision of more textbooks and subsequent reduction in the student to textbook ratio.
3. The Zimbabwe’s National Gender Policy states that education is the foundation for economic and social development. The policy recognises the importance of incorporating gender issues in all curricula at all levels of education. It also sets out to amend all relevant education and legal instruments that promote gender inequality.
4. Schools are encouraged to develop curricula and training materials that improve the self-image, lives and work opportunity of girls. Career guidance is used to expose children to non-stereotyped careers.
5. After Beijing in 1995, the Zimbabwean government adopted the Affirmative Action as strategy to eliminate discrimination against girls and other under represented groups such as the disabled, minority and elderly in education and skills training. This was adopted across the entire national education and tertiary training system.
6. Government has facilitated the establishment of the Women’s University in Africa. This University is expected to have women constituting about 60% of its enrolment. This should have good consequences for women and the economy.
7. Circular Number page 35 of 2001 allows pregnant girls to go back to school after delivery. This policy allows the girl to finish school and places her in a better position to get a profession and a better job and be in a position to look after the baby. The policy has met mixed reactions from parents and teachers. There is need for sensitisation on the policy and the benefits it has for the girl and society as a whole. This policy addresses the gender gaps in education in line with the Beijing PLA that stresses the need to address inequalities and inadequacies in unequal access to education and training in violation of the rights of the girl child.

⁴ Verbal correspondence from Senior Education Official at Ministry of Education and Sport and Culture Ms. Gweme during verification workshop.

8. The Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) is a social safety net administered through the Ministry of Education, Sports, and Culture to pay for school and examination fees for disadvantaged children due to poverty, orphan hood and poor health status of breadwinner. The policy stipulates that at least 50% of the children receiving assistance from BEAM must be female.

Children assisted by the Basic Education Assistance module by sex, Zimbabwe, 2002

School type	% Boys	% Girls
Primary	50.1	49.9
Secondary	51.9	48.1
Special	57.6	42.4
Total	50.3	49.7

Source: Department of Social Welfare

Constraints

- The impact of HIV and AIDS on the educational system must be well understood. The programme that requires teachers to teach on HIV and AIDS may not be effective as infected teachers may avoid taking such lessons.
- The ministry must ensure that married teachers are deployed to the same schools. Ensure that water and sanitary systems are functional, as some partners may prefer to stay apart instead of facing the inconvenience of poor sanitary and water systems.
- Infrastructure development is still poor at schools in newly resettled areas.
- There is no gender budget in most ministries. Therefore there are not enough resources to effectively carry out gender activities in line ministries.
- While the gender gap in primary teachers' colleges is small, it is exceptionally wide in universities, higher and technical institutes. The gender gap is evident in science subjects taken by girls at tertiary level. This implies that females are not enrolling for technical subjects, which are highly demanded by the private sector. This explains the wide gender gaps in employment in fields that are science based. The number of disabled students in tertiary levels is negligible.
- Most tertiary institutions are situated in urban areas and this is disadvantageous to rural based pupils who may experience accommodation problems. This creates a host of other problems for female students. Since they do not stay on campus, they have to commute to and from college. Transport costs become prohibitive. Some girls may be forced to sell sexual favours to drivers of Emergency Taxis (ETs) in return for free rides.
- The poor economic situation is forcing parents or guardians to increase the burden on girls to contribute to the family income at tender ages. Although Zimbabwe has signed the International Labour Organisation Convention 138 (C138) on minimum age of employment, young girls are a common sight on the streets and by the roadsides selling foodstuffs and other wares and are employed largely as domestic workers.
- There are inadequate sanitation facilities for girls in some schools. Prices of cotton wool and other sanitary products have been rising steady and are now beyond the reach of many. Most girls resort to not going to school during their monthly period or else are forced to use little pieces of cloth that are unhygienic and have a tendency to leak and bring shame on the girl concerned.

Recommendations

- Ministry of Education should ensure that its teachers in rural areas are fully informed of what anti retro viral medications are available. Teachers are in a better position to spread the news in their schools and environs.
- Enforce free primary universal education.
- Lobbying efforts should continue to keep the girl child in school by mobilizing alternative resources.
- Scholarships could be offered to entice girls to study science subjects at tertiary level of education.
- The establishment of Vocational Training Institutions at Provincial level helps alleviate the problem of transport and accommodation.
- Access to both primary and secondary education, even after dropping out of formal school can be improved through distance education, night schools and part-time courses. These services need to be reactivated in order to mitigate the negative effects of poverty and HIV/AIDS. Special funds/scholarships should be set to increase the number of girls that return to school. These funds/scholarships should also cater for adult education.
- Gender should be mainstreamed into the school curricula at all levels
- Ensure that adequate infrastructure has been put in resettlement areas to ensure girls and boys continue going to school even if their family has relocated during the land reform process.
- Women and girls need to be exposed to non-traditional role models of their gender, so as to create a new positive attitude so that they refuse to be boxed into cultural stereotypical roles.
- A subsidy on sanitary will be greatly appreciated by all the girls and mothers of Zimbabwe.
- There is also need to increase the self-confidence and self-esteem of girls, e.g. through life-skills and other school-based programmes in which they are full participants

4. WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY

There is no law that prohibits women from acquiring loans from banks or other financial institutions. Women's associations and clubs have played a great role in assisting women to finance their income generating projects. Women's group like Indigenous Women's Organisation, Women in Business and Skills Building, Multi-million Dollar Round Table have all played pivotal roles in bringing more women into the economy as players to be reckoned with.

The government through the MYDGEC is making inroads into the economic empowerment of women. The Gender Department received its own budget of \$Zim800 million as opposed to previous years where it used to rely on viraments to carry out gender awareness programs. The Ministry further allocated \$14 million for women economic empowerment projects. The funds will be used to institutionalise the National Gender Policy, which was approved by Cabinet in February 2001. Nevertheless MYDGEC got the smallest vote in the 2003 budget of \$Zim4 351 718 000 which is 0.7% of the total national budget of which it is too small considering the fact that women who are the majority i.e. 52% of the total population are supposed to be the major beneficiaries.

The Ministry budgeted \$Zim2 700 000 000 for women grants but managed to get \$Zim400 million. This has made it difficult for the department to carry out its economic empowerment projects which were meant to target marginalized women remote areas such as Binga and Malipati. As a result the department has only managed to fund very few empowerment projects for women.

Achievements

- A one billion-loan facility was set up for small to medium scale entrepreneurs as start-up capital.
- The President has set up a special fund for disadvantaged women who include widows in rural areas to engage in income generating projects.
- The Gender Department was also represented in the Loans Committee the Employment Creation Fund at National Provincial and District level which saw 55% of the beneficiaries of the fund being women.
- In the land reform programme, the Zimbabwean government has shown its commitment to the inclusion of women in the mainstream economy giving 20% quota for land resettlement to women.
- Zimbabwe established a National Social Security Authority (NSSA) in 1989 for the purpose of establishing social security systems to both males and females on retirement, old age or through work related injuries. The right to paid maternity leave is guaranteed for all women and dismissals on the basis of pregnancy, maternity leave or marital status are outlawed.
- Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises Development provides small loans to both men and women engaged in small and medium scale businesses, with a specific quota being set aside for women in business. These loans are meant largely for rural businesses and are equitably distributed among provinces. This has opened up a window of opportunity for both men and women operating in the small to medium business sector.
- Other schemes for the empowerment of women require that they be organised in clubs to which donations of equipment like sewing machines, soap making machines, oil pressing machines as well as peanut butter making machines are made. Such clubs can also access loans at concessionary interest rates, for example the loans accessed by women from the Department of Gender in the Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation and the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises Development. The government has also opened the market to micro finance organisations some of which avail loans exclusively to women.

Constraints

- The status of women in the economy has continued to decline over the years as the country has been facing economic challenges such as the high inflation rates currently 448.8%, high unemployment, high poverty levels, lack of foreign investment and drying up foreign aid. This has further affected women as basic commodities such as food, clothing, accommodation, water, sanitary wear have gone beyond the reach of the average Zimbabwean woman.
- Women have also continued to be marginalized in economic decision making as reflected by the limited women's participation in the budget making process and economic

formulation. There is need to increase the capacity for the public (especially women) to understand issues of economic policy and to petition for their own economic and social rights.

- The high prevalence of HIV/AIDS has further worsened the economic status of women as they are further burdened with the care of the sick as hospitals are referring patients for home-based care. This places much of the burden on women, as they have to look for food and drugs under the current economic challenges where food and drugs are expensive and inaccessible.
- The time has come to acknowledge women's contribution to the economy in the productive sector. Women contribute more to the GDP in terms of agriculture and their work in the informal sector as the following figures show. 85% of women as compared to 65% men are employed in agriculture and 35,1% women are self-employed compared to 17,5% men in the informal sector. It is important to note that in these two areas the incomes are very low and there is very little job security.
- Women tend to predominate in the informal sector of the economy where financial institutions and other organizations are usually not willing to finance. This primarily hinges on the lack of collateral security, as most women do not own property and productive resources. Generally, women's contribution to economic processes continues to be categorized as unpaid work. Of late, due to the declining economic environment, men have begun to take over from women those activities traditionally considered a preserve of women, such as food production and distribution, and other informal activities. This has had the effect of dis-empowering women, particularly in rural communities, thus driving the women and the family in general into poverty.

Challenges

- With the land issue, culture should not be used to dis-empower women of their right to, access to, control of, as well as ownership of land. Micro credit systems maintains the low status of women – forcing women to remain at the low levels of the economic ladder
- Efforts must be made to ensure that emerging businesswomen have access to funds of the same magnitude as men. There has been a tendency to give micro-credits mostly to women and big loans to men. All major economic reforms should not sideline women's accessibility to loans
- Empower women and girls economically, e.g. by providing them with access to credit, and business, entrepreneurship and marketing skills
- Women may still have limited control over resources they make due to power dynamics in the home.
- There is need to strengthen the legal and policy frameworks that support women's rights to economic independence (including the right to own and inherit land and property) e.g. by restructuring justice systems, enacting laws and training NGOs to popularise these laws.
- We must address the fears and resistance that surround gender. Some women's groups have argued that there has been little progress towards gender equality in some spheres because an honest analysis of power relations provokes discomfort or even active resistance on the part of some men. As a result, those who occupy decision-making positions in donor agencies, community-based organisations, households, governments and NGOs do not prioritise initiatives that seek to challenge the status quo.

- Women in the economy can greatly increase their outputs in business if they turned to the information society for information using information communication technologies like televisions, computers etc. Civil society organisation that train and promote women in using e-mail and the Internet for research and as information sources should be funded. These initiatives could succeed in creating an Internet that has local content instead of the current dominance from the western world. E-commerce activities could greatly improve the marketing activities of our local crafts and handy work.

Recommendations

1. Twenty percent quota of all land holding to be in the hands of women. This statement must be incorporated into the land policy since it is only mentioned in the gender policy.
2. Policy intervention must be supported with gender disaggregated data
3. There is need to engender national budgets and macro-economic policies
4. Assign monetary values to unpaid work.
5. There must be increased information dissemination of trade policies and agreements e.g. Cotonou, SADC Trade Protocol
6. Encourage the use of information and communication technologies among women.

5. WOMEN, HEALTH AND HIV/AIDS

Reproductive rights, as enunciated in the ICPD, rest on the premise that everyone has the “right to attain the highest standard of reproduction and sexual health”.

According to the Zimbabwe Country Report of the United Nations Secretary-general’s Task force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa, the Government of Zimbabwe estimates that 24.6% of the population between 15 and 49 were HIV positive in 2003. The urban prevalence rate is 28% and the rural is 21%. The report states that women and girls bear the brunt of the infections. The 2001 Zimbabwe Young Adult Survey, a national representative population-based survey of the HIV risk behaviours and prevalence among young adults aged 15-29 found a prevalence of 22% among women and 10% among young men surveyed (CDC/UNAIDS 2003). The following graph shows that young women account for nearly 80% of all infections in the 15 to 24 age group.

Antenatal coverage in Zimbabwe is high standing at 93%, while institutional delivery coverage is relatively low at 69%. Antenatal Care (ANC), delivery and postnatal care (PNC) are offered free in all government Rural Health Centres. The Essential Obstetric Care (EOC) Assessment conducted in year 2000 revealed that 58% of the population had adequate access to a facility with some EOC of which 41% was within an 8 km radius⁵. The assessment report also showed that traditional birth attendants at delivery attend 17% of mothers.

Results from the Young Adult Survey (YAS 2002) show that HIV prevalence among young people aged 15-29 years is estimated at 21,8% for women and 10,3% for men. There is an estimated 1 820 000 Zimbabweans living with HIV/AIDS in the year 2003, out of which over half, 56.5%, are women. An estimated 166 000 are new infections of which 53% are women. Approximately 138 000 new AIDS cases are expected to occur among adults aged 15-49 years in

⁵ MOHCW 2000 Assessment of coverage and utilisation of Obstetric Care in Zimbabwe.

2003. An estimated 40 000 new HIV infections and 36 000 new AIDS cases among children aged 0-14 years are also predicted in 2003. The number of AIDS related deaths predicted in 2003 was estimated to be 135 000 among adults with an estimated 57% occurring among women and 36 000 among children. An average of 2 600 adults and 690 children are estimated to die each week in Zimbabwe. By end of 2003, it is estimated that there will be 761 000 HIV/AIDS orphans aged 0-14 years, in Zimbabwe⁶.

Achievements

1. In recognition of the threat and worsening HIV and AIDS situation the Government of Zimbabwe in 1999 adopted a National HIV AIDS Policy in order to promote and guide present and future responses to the epidemic. The policy was framed in conformity with international protocols and conventions and used a multi-sectoral approach. The National Gender Policy launched in 2004 emphasizes the need to mainstream gender, empower women and girls and enable men to assume their responsibilities in the fight against AIDS. The Orphan Care Policy preceded both the National HIV/AIDS Policy and the National Gender Policy.

To coordinate and implement all efforts against the epidemic, the government established the National AIDS Council (NAC) through an act of parliament. NAC has since decentralized its work with HIV and AIDS to Provincial, District, Wards and Village Aids Action Committees (PAAC, DAAC, WAAC, VAAC).

To ensure national resources for HIV and AIDS interventions, government created a National AIDS Trust Fund, funded by a 3% AIDS levy on all cooperate and individual income tax. The AIDS levy is administered through NAC. A national strategic framework has clearly identified prevention of HIV transmission among young people, people in the work place and prevention from mother to child as top priorities. A large share of the funds are focused on providing support and social services for people living with HIV and AIDS, and orphans and other vulnerable children.

2. The enactment of the Sexual Offences Act (2001), which protects young people from sexual predation and punishes those who commit non-consensual sexual acts including rape and sodomy. The Act also provides for compulsory testing of sexual offenders to ascertain their HIV status and criminalizes the wilful transmission of HIV.
3. Civil society is an active and key player in the fight against HIV and AIDS. Responses of civil society have taken the form of awareness raising, skills transfer and development, service delivery and support for those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS.
4. Communities, particularly women, provide a significant proportion of voluntary service to the infected and affected of their neighbourhoods.
5. UN Agencies support to Zimbabwe is based on the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and the United Nations Development Framework (UNDAF). The CCA is a UN Country Team based situation analysis of current development issues in the country and is the key input in the formulation of the UNDAF. The UNDAF is a planning tool, which seeks to bring together and synchronize the policy planning and actions of the UN Funds and

⁶ *Zimbabwe National HIV/AIDS Estimates, 2003.*

Programmes in close collaboration with the government. Most UN agencies are actively supporting programmes that positively impact on the status of women and girls.

In the area of prevention, for an example, the UN supports increased utilisation of prevention services, including voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) and PPTCT, the development of HIV and AIDS policies and programmes in the workplace, HIV and AIDS education in schools, colleges and communities, and capacity building programmes for women and girls. The UN agencies have several interventions in the areas of care and support; mitigation as well as psychosocial support and economic empowerment for female caregivers and others affected by HIV and AIDS.

Constraints

- Gender has not been integrated throughout the National Policy on HIV and AIDS but is in a stand-alone chapter. The policy recognizes that gender roles and relationships increase women's vulnerability to HIV and AIDS because of unequal power relations, which are entrenched in cultural practices and customary laws. This increases the vulnerability of women and girls. It is recognized that cultural barriers and unequal power relations between men and women affect reproductive rights. These gender imbalances, which promote gender based violence and the spread of STI and HIV/AIDS, are embedded within the patriarchal culture, which upholds the dominance of men and relegates women to a subordinate status.
- Rising poverty levels, poor environments and the HIV virus have contributed to the resurgence of TB, malaria, diarrhoea, and other formerly curable communicable diseases. These diseases are resurfacing because of the compromised immunity due to HIV.
- With respect to focusing on girls and women in the prevention, care and mitigation of HIV and AIDS; lack of gender expertise at a national, provincial and district level is a big constraint.
- In most structures, men outnumber women in decision making/senior management positions, while women make up most of the implementers, resulting in the development and dissemination of gender insensitive guidance.
- Competition for funding and the lack of unity in the implementation of programmes are the main constraints encountered by civil society responses to HIV and AIDS. The general negative perception of women's lobby groups within society, particularly among men is another constraint for civil society in its response to the gendered nature of HIV and AIDS.
- Section 23 (3) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe allows for discrimination based on customary laws on issues such as adoption, marriage, divorce, burial, and distribution of property on death or matters of personal law. The continued existence of customary law alongside common law has perpetuated women's disadvantaged position in Zimbabwe, particularly on issues of reproductive health.

Challenges

1. Ensure access to health services and education, in particular life skills and sexuality education for both boys and girls, e.g. by training health workers and teachers on gender, and re-orienting health and education systems so that they are flexible, participatory and community-centred rather than bureaucratic and hierarchical

2. Although girls and women represent the bulk of new infections, budgets, programmes, policies and human resource commitments do not reflect this.
3. The biological vulnerability of girls is amplified by deep-rooted gender inequalities and social norms that require women, and particularly girls to be passive and ignorant about sex, and submissive to the will of men in determining the terms of sexual relations.

*Recommendations*⁷

1. Encourage and empower communities to research and identify positive aspects of their culture that would enhance behaviour change and improve power relations.
2. Female-focused prevention strategies are urgently needed in order to reduce HIV infections among girls and young women.
3. Increase access of girls to youth friendly centres, corners and anti-AIDS clubs
4. Increase availability of knowledge about and access of girls and women to gender-sensitive and youth friendly health services, including those for the treatment of STIs and HIV.
5. Promote provision of information on available HIV and AIDS services for young women and girls such as VCT, PPTCT.
6. Strengthen advocacy for HIV prevention methods and strategies that empower women and girls.

7. HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN

Zimbabwe has made a lot of progress towards ensuring the full development of women and guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on the basis of equality with men. Zimbabwe is a state party to a number of International Instruments providing for the protection and promotion of human rights, and in particular the rights of women and children. These include:

- The United Nations International Declaration of Human Rights (UNIDHR), which is enshrined in our Constitution,
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR),
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR),
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). This convention has been translated into the vernacular languages thus making it more accessible to the majority of Zimbabweans.
- African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa, Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Zimbabwe is also a state party to the African Charter on the Rights of the Child (ACRC), and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR), New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and regionally Zimbabwe is a state party to the SADC Declaration on Gender (1997) and Domestic Violence Against Women and Children.

In addition, several pieces of legislation exist in Zimbabwe⁸, which provide for the rights and interests of women and children. These include:

⁷ Taken largely from the Zimbabwe Country Report on the UN Secretary-General's Task Force on Women, Girls, and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa

⁸ The Ten-Year Review Of The Implementation Of The ICPD Programme Of Action (ICPD+10)

- i) The Matrimonial Causes Act (1985), which provides guidelines for the distribution of property on dissolution of marriage. A major weakness of this legislation is that it does not apply to unregistered customary law unions, as they are not regarded as marriages under the Zimbabwean law. With majority of the married women in such institutions, it is evident that on separation, the majority of the women are prejudiced on divorce.
- ii) The Guardianship of Minors Act grants custody of children born in wedlock to the father, but requires such father to act in consultation with the mother. For children born outside wedlock, the custodianship can go either way.
- iii) The Maintenance Act provides for the spouse and children's rights to maintenance. This legislation is applicable in all cases of neglect during the subsistence of the marriage, as well as after divorce or separation.
- iv) The General Laws Amendment Act grants majority status to all persons, irrespective of sex, on attainment of the age of 18. This legislation brought a massive departure from the old position in which women were regarded as perpetual minors and had no legal capacity to enter into any contracts without the consent of their husbands, in the case of married women. In the case of unmarried or divorced women, consent of fathers or other male relatives was required.
- v) The Deeds Registries Act, as amended in 1996, allows women to own immovable property in their own names, and the subsequent decisions of the courts, which amended the customary law which previously provided that the eldest male child was the heir. With the new amendment, women could inherit from their late fathers' estates.
- vi) The Deceased Estates Succession Act and the Administration of Estates Amendment Act provides for the spouses rights to inherit from the deceased spouse's estate.
- vii) The Labour Act provides for the equal opportunity to employment and to equal pay for the same type of work amongst men and women. The same Act also provides for three months paid maternity leave to women. This particular legislation was amended in 2000 to allow women to be paid 100% of their salary while on maternity leave. Prior to the amendment, women were only entitled to receive 75% of their salary while on maternity leave.
- viii) Domestic Violence Bill proposes to provide protection and relief to survivors of domestic violence. It will also provide victims of domestic violence with the opportunity to apply for and get a peace order.

Constraints

- In addition to the legislation mentioned above, the country's legislation though not expressly providing for the rights and welfare of women and children, is regarded as being gender neutral hence it can be widely interpreted to include women. In accordance with Section 89 of The Zimbabwe Constitution, the country has a dual legal system that allows customary law to co-exist with general law, subject to legislative amendment or modification.
- The Government is aware that there are still discriminating laws and regulations in the status books and is committed to amending them.
- Section 23 (3) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe allows for discrimination based on customary laws on issues such as adoption, marriage, divorce, burial, and distribution of property on death or matters of personal law. The continued existence of customary law alongside common law has perpetuated women's disadvantaged position in Zimbabwe.

Challenges

- Many people know what the gender-based challenges facing women and girls are. However, the complexity of gender relations means that many find it difficult to focus on what exactly to do.
- Even organisations that are explicitly trying to address the problems of women and girls find it difficult to deal with the root causes of gender inequality. Because changes in gender relations occur slowly, not enough funding or attention is given to programmes that try to address the deeper connections between gender and HIV/AIDS.
- There is need for practical indicators to show levels of achievement e.g. court cases reported on violations of human rights.

Recommendations

1. Push for the domestication of CEDAW
2. Ensure that CEDAW is widely disseminated
3. Maintain a gender-disaggregated database of the court cases on human rights violations.

8. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Levels of violence against women and girls, including emotional abuse, physical violence, sexual violence (e.g. rape, marital rape, child sexual abuse) is high in Zimbabwe. Half of female homicide cases in Zimbabwean courts are related to domestic violence.⁹

Gender-based violence is a serious violation of fundamental human rights, which refers to unequal relations between men and women resulting in domination of and discrimination of women by men. It includes physical and sexual violence as well as economic, psychological and emotional abuse. Domestic violence touches on issues such as threats, battery, sexual abuse of children, economic deprivation, marital rape, femicide, female genital mutilation, traditional practices harmful to women, forced prostitution and trafficking in women and children.

Many cases of domestic violence especially where the offender is the bread winner are unreported so it is not possible to come up with the exact number of women who are affected by domestic violence. However it is clearly evident that domestic violence is a prevalent practice in society that has even led to loss of life. Musasa Project reported 619 cases of domestic violence between January and April 2004.

Achievements

1. Musasa Project has managed to open provincial offices in three of the provinces. These offices offer awareness raising sessions, counselling, shelter and other essential services.
2. Men are both perpetrators of violence and essential to the solution. Men are beginning to respond to the need for constructive involvement in promoting gender equity and fighting HIV and AIDS. PADARE, which means a “man’s forum” is one such successful initiative. PADARE is an NGO with a vibrant programme on men and HIV and AIDS, which tacks men’s responses to the epidemic.

⁹ Zimbabwe Country Report on the UN Secretary-Generals Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV AIDS in Southern Africa

3. The Ministry of Justice, legal and Parliament has lead the way in the sub-region in establishing Victim friendly Courts, specialised courts for the protection of children in cases of sexual and physical violence. The courts aim at creating an environment that is caring, supportive, less bureaucratic and conducive to private and friendly discussions. Unfortunately their impact has been hampered by lack of resources and capacity.
4. In 2001, the Government of Zimbabwe enacted the Sexual Offences Act to protect women and girls from rape (including marital rape) and other forms of rape. The act also criminalizes wilful transmission of HIV through sexual intercourse by an infected person.
5. Several civil society organisations like Musasa, WAG, Childline, ZWLA and LRF offer various services that include support for survivors or victims. Legal aid, representation and information dissemination.
6. Government arms like the Police, The media, Government Ministries e.g. Ministry of Education, Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation, civil society, churches and networks of women and children's organisations have conducted education training and awareness raising campaigns on various issues of gender-based violence. The awareness campaign took the forms of workshops, pamphlets, stickers, poster, badges, drama, song, dance, marches, media and testimonial. These EIC activities assisted the community to have more knowledge and have a change of attitude and behaviour in an effort to end gender based violence.
7. Sexual harassment at work and the performance of sexual favours in order to get employment or promotion at work have been outlawed in the Labour Act of 2002.
8. Public hearings on the Domestic Violence Bill are underway through out the country.

Constraints

- There is need to harmonise the marriage laws of Zimbabwe (civil marriage, customary law marriage and unregistered customary law marriage/union), granting equal rights to spouses in the different types of marriages so as to create equity in marriage and ensure that no marriage gives an inferior status to the other partner.
- Communities do not often consider a person an abuser if the sexual abuse resulted in a pregnancy and the abuser accepts responsibility

Challenges

1. The existence of the dual legal system, that is, the customary law and the common law, and lack of harmony between the two systems, more particularly in family law matters, presents a major challenge in promoting gender equity and equality. Customary law is an exception to the anti-discriminatory clause in the Constitution.
2. The existence of three different types of marriage (civil marriage, customary law marriage and unregistered customary law marriage/union) contributes to the persistence of gender inequality especially in areas of family law.
3. There is no legal requirement that all marriages must be registered yet the unregistered customary law union is not regarded as a marriage for purposes of property sharing on divorce.
4. There is need to make clear guidelines on the proprietary rights of wives.
5. There is no minimum age of marriage for the customary law marriages.

6. There is need to lobby for budgetary allocations to promote gender equity, equality and empowerment of women as legislative provisions alone will not be effective. Funds are necessary for functioning safety nets, campaigns that raise public awareness on women's rights with respect to the legislation.
7. Currently, domestic violence is dealt with under the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act Chapter 907, which deals with issues related to assault. The Act has been criticised for not adequately protecting victims of domestic violence. Some of the officials that deal with cases of domestic violence have received special training such that women get the sensitivity they deserve. But this training has not covered all the officers in all the provinces. Offenders are usually fined and the officers at times take a mediating role and take domestic violence as a private issue.
8. The major challenge is to make into law the Domestic Violence Bill that is in line with CEDAW so as to effectively deal with the issue of Domestic Violence. There is also need to provide the capacity for the administration of the Bill through training

Recommendations

1. Parliament should urgently enact the Domestic Violence Bill.
2. Harmonize the marriage laws into one consolidated law.
3. Awareness must be raised among policy makers and law enforcement agents on the impact of gender and HIV and AIDS have on the long-term development of society.
4. Leaders at all levels must be empowered with information to advocate successfully on gender-based violence and its links with HIV and AIDS.
5. All girls and women that have been sexually abused must have access to Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP).
6. Efforts must be accelerated to raise awareness and build strong partnerships within communities to expose gender-based violence and explore ways to respond through united power relations.
7. Increase support training and sensitisation of law enforcement personnel on gender-based violence.

9. THE GIRL CHILD

Education is key to an effective response to HIV and AIDS. Studies have shown that out-of-school youths are five times more likely to have sex than those in school¹⁰. Research has also shown an association between higher education levels and increased awareness and knowledge of HIV and AIDS, greater knowledge of HIV testing facilities, higher rates of condom use among partners.

Life skills education is particularly important to help girls and boys learn how to make informed decisions, communicate effectively, assert themselves, manage anger, resolve conflicts without resorting to violence, and build their self-esteem.

¹⁰ Save the Children Fund 2002. Desk Study on Sexual Behaviour and Reproductive health of Children and Young People in Zimbabwe

Achievements

1. The government with support from the donor community, civil society and the United Nations agencies, has been implementing the HIV/AIDS life skills programme since 1992, which has increased awareness of HIV and AIDS issues among pupils, education staff and communities.
2. Zimbabwe ratified the Children's Protection and Adoption Act 2001, which makes it a criminal offence to allow a child to reside in a brothel or cause a child to be engaged in prostitution. The act also makes it an offence to adopt a child for purposes of sexual exploitation.
3. The Sexual Offences Act 8/2001 makes it an offence for anyone to have extramarital intercourse or conduct himself or herself in an indecent or immoral act with a young person. Knowingly escorting a young person for the purposes of extra marital intercourse with another person/persons is a crime under this Act.
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6. The National Youth Policy (2003), which has enabled the engagement of the youths in income generating activities.
7. The Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) of 1999, which provides support to children identified by communities as being in greatest need of help with school fees and levies.
8. Adoption of the National Strategy on Children in Difficult Circumstances (CDC).
9. Adoption of the National Orphan Care Policy of 2001.
10. Zimbabwe National Traditional Healers Association (ZINATHA) has spoken strongly against some discriminatory practices like incest, girl-child sacrificing or payment to appease spirits for a wrong done by her father or family.
11. Gender Councils instituted in the districts are pivotal in explaining laws and sensitising traditional, cultural and other opinion leaders about the harmful effects of certain traditional practices in a bid to put a stop to them.
12. Girl Child Network has been set up to address issues of the girl child. This organisation has been very successful training girls, detecting and investigating rape and incest, reporting cases to schools and police. As a result of these endeavours, a shelter has been set up for abused girls where they can receive counselling and emotional support.

Constraints

- Sexual abuse of girl children is on the increase. Most of the culprits that have been tested have been found to be HIV infected. The abuse is mostly driven by the belief that sex with a virgin will cure HIV and AIDS or slow the disease progression.
- Poverty and economic hardships intensifies the vulnerability of children. When a parent dies, most of the orphans are disinherited and left without any economic or social security. Most orphaned children are forced to drop out of school and the girls are forced to assume

the role of heading the household if no relative is prepared to take the children in. Most girls are forced into early prostitution in an attempt to keep food on the table for the other siblings. Many more are forced to seek employment as domestic workers or on farms where the exploitation may continue in the form of low wages. Some may not even be paid any salary as they are told that this balances with the roof they have over their heads and the meals they have per day.

- Both male and female students at tertiary and secondary schools are reportedly involved with sex for luxury goods. Some girls are reported to have sex with the 'big guys in town'. Some patrons pay huge amounts for uncondomised penetrative sex. This is often too tempting for some girls to refuse. Many girls are known to date older men that are most likely to be HIV positive than men of their age.
- For those girls and women that engage in cross-border trading, it is not uncommon to be asked for sexual favours in exchange for not paying duty on their goods.
- Cases of incest are on the increase. Due to the economic hardships, some fathers consult traditional healers who may prescribe that the father de-flowers his own daughter as means of securing business prosperity.

Recommendations

1. Collapse the bridge of infection between older men and younger women and girls. Many girls have sexual partners who are five to ten years older than them, and these men are more likely to be infected than boys and younger men. Relationships with older men are also more likely to be premised on unequal power relations, leaving girls vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.
2. Protect female enrolment figures - AIDS may be taking girls out of school. Although gender parity has largely been achieved in educational enrolment in southern Africa, we need more information on the impact of the epidemic on the education of girls, particularly orphans.
3. Protect girls and women from the direct and long-term risks of HIV infection as a result of violence. Girls and women who have been sexually assaulted are at increased risk of HIV infection, through direct transmission and because of the long-term effects of sexual violence on risk-taking behaviour.
4. Support advocacy programmes for subsidising, reduction or removal of school fees for orphan and vulnerable children, and progressively for all children, at primary and secondary levels.
5. Support programmes that will keep the girls, particularly those orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS in school.
6. Support gender-sensitive HIV and AIDS education and life skills programmes in schools.
7. Provide gender sensitive socialisation processes for boys and girls.

10. WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The Government of Zimbabwe is a signatory of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) of 2002 in Johannesburg, which is based on the principle that development should meet the needs of the present generation without compromising that of the future generations.

Achievements

1. In order to preserve the environment, the Government has launched the Rural Electrification programme to generate employment and improve rural lighting. Another initiative was the Solar Photovoltaic project, which encouraged the use of solar energy as a sustainable renewable source of energy. These initiatives will greatly to reduce pressure on fuel wood and save the forests and also reduce the work of women in rural areas. Most women had to travel long distances to fetch firewood whose reserves have been steadily depleting.
2. The land resettlement programme was meant to reduce overpopulation and land overuse in rural areas.
3. Action has been taken to integrate rural women's traditional knowledge and practices of sustainable natural resources use in the development of environmental management and extension policies and programme.

Challenges

- Implementing the land resettlement programme in a sustainable manner will remain a challenge. New settlers continue to clear land for agricultural purposes. This process needs to be supervised and monitored.
- Due to growing urban and peri-urban populations, provision of safe water and adequate sanitation remains is a challenge.
- Waste management needs great attention to combat air and water pollution.
- There is need to diversify and engage in more sustainable energy provision strategies that should include renewable sources especially for rural communities. This is important to stop deforestation.

Recommendations

- Implement the land resettlement programme in a sustainable manner.
- Establish waste management practices to combat pollution.
- Provide safe water and sanitation to urban, per-urban and rural populations.

11. WOMEN AND THE MEDIA

Achievements

Journalists have a role to play in transforming society into a more democratic institution that reflects the voices and perspectives of all; women and men, girls and boys. The next table present the designation of personnel at the Zimbabwe broadcasting Corporation in November 2001

Some of the ZBC Personnel by Designation and sex as at 21 November 2001

Designation	Male	Female	Total
Director	2	0	2
Executive secretary	0	5	5
Personnel officer	1	0	1
Public Relations Officer	1	0	1
Technical Director	2	0	2
Bureau Chief	3	0	3
Editor in Chief	1	0	1
Chief Producer	1	0	1
Chief Reporter	1	0	1
Business Reporter	0	1	1
Reporter	14	6	20
Sports Editor	1	0	1
Film Editors	1	0	1

Source: Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation

The table shows that women occupy the secretarial posts and about the same number are employed as reporters. The absence of women in positions of authority or decision making means that women are not able to present, defend and mobilise support for issues that affect women's lives. This is shown clearly in the results of the review of media coverage of gender issues to determine the extent to which the Zimbabwean media is promoting gender equity and awareness, or reinforcing gender stereotypes, in news items that was carried out during September 2002 by MISA and Gender Links.

Constraints;

- Women's views and voices are grossly under-represented in the media. Women constituted only 15% of news sources in the media monitored in the study.
- There were no significant differences between the private and public media in reporting gender issues. This shows there is still a long way to go regard to awareness raising and training of the media on gender in Zimbabwe.
- Women in certain occupational categories were virtually silent: The only occupational categories in which women views dominated were as beauty contestants and homemakers. Male voices predominated even in agriculture, where women perform most of the work.
- Women politicians were not heard relative to their strength in parliament
- Gender equality is hardly considered newsworthy. Sport 23% and economic and politics 28% dominated the news.
- Women media practitioners do not predominate in many hard news beats
- It was apparent from the research that both male and female in the electronic media had to be young. In the range 20-34 years old.
- There are still cases of blatant sexist reporting in the media

Challenges

1. The media need to challenge the social norms and values that contribute to the lower social status of women and girls and condone violence against them, e.g. through dramas and community-based educational initiatives. This can only be possible if the media itself were gender sensitive.
2. There is need to develop community media so that it plays its role of social responsibility to the public and provides positive and quality information to local communities and spend less time on music.
3. Need to break false distinction in the media of hard news (politics and economics covered by men) and soft news, health, education, etc covered by women). Women and men should be given equal opportunity to cover all areas on the media's agenda
4. Women lack the right to freedom of expression in and through the media
5. Editorial content – work is needed to change the media as a conduit of backlash rather than exposing gender injustices. There is need to find strategies to mitigate the media backlash that is likely to emerge in its coverage and portrayal of the Beijing + 10 women process
6. Gender and media activism needs to be strengthened and increased in the country – (consumers of media need to put more pressure on editors, owners of the media to give women a voice and portray them in a positive manner in their diverse roles).
7. Incorporate gender into the training curricular of media training institutes
8. ICT needs to be used more by activists to network and mobilize around issues of gender justice as a region. Coupled with this is that ways must be found to eradicate 'technology phobia' among women.
9. MYGEC and gender activists need to be involved in the ICT Policy Formulation process to ensure that social and gender concerns are addressed and conditions are set to facilitate women's access to and use of ICTs.

Recommendations

- Media and all regulatory aspects of the industry must be more gender sensitive
- Develop more community media
- Women should be given opportunity to cover all aspects of media
- Strengthen gender and media activism
- Increase the numbers of women media practitioners in decision-making positions.

12 WOMEN AND POVERTY

Achievements

- Zimbabwean's economy is largely agrarian in nature with agriculture contributing more than 24,7% to GDP followed by manufacturing at 11.5% as at 2001. The agrarian reforms are expected to improve the average annual growth rates in agriculture and household food supplies.
- The gender gap in the ownership and control of land is the single greatest contributor to the gender differences in economic well being, social status and empowerment because the one who owns the land and means of production has decision making power. Women who make the majority in rural and agricultural settlements are there as wives and children and not as landowners.

- The government has intervened with a policy that says 20% of all resettled land should go to women. Table 9. Shows the distribution of heads of household in communal lands by sex.

Table 9: Number of Heads of Households in the Communal Lands by Sex and Year 1996-1999

Year	Male heads	Female heads	% of female heads	Total
1996	607 978	481 678	44	1 089 656
1997	578 036	510 692	47	1 088 728
1998	613 129	523 628	46	1 136 757
1999	598 398	537 603	47	1 136 000

Source: CSO (1999), Agriculture and Livestock Survey in Communal Lands

The drop in number of male heads and increase in female heads could be due to AIDs casualties. The raise in male heads for subsequent years could be due to urban-rural migration as many people lost their jobs due to the effects of ESAP.

Table 10 shows the number of women and men that were allocated land under the A1 model of Resettlement Programme from June – October 2001

Table 10: Analysis of Statistics on Resettled Farmers A1 Scheme June-5 October 2001

	Male	Female	Total	% Female
Farm workers	1 799	258	2 057	13
Others	90 645	18 093	110 795	17
Total	92 444	18 351	110 795	17

Source: Women and Land Lobby Group, 2002

Table 11 shows allocated land under the A2 Scheme in January 2002.

Table 11: Analysis of Statistics on Resettled Farmers A2Model January 2002

	Total Number	Percentage
Male	28 560	86
Female	3 793	11
Joint	744	3
TOTAL	33 841	100

Source: Women and Land Lobby Group, 2002

Prior to the government policy of allocating 20% of resettled land to women, very few women could get access to loans to support their agrarian initiatives as the following table shows.

Table 12: Number of Loans Approved by SEDCO by Sex 1990-2000

Year	Total	Number of female	% of loans to females
1990/91	543	13	2.4
1992/93	395	46	11,6
2000	1805	1026	57,0

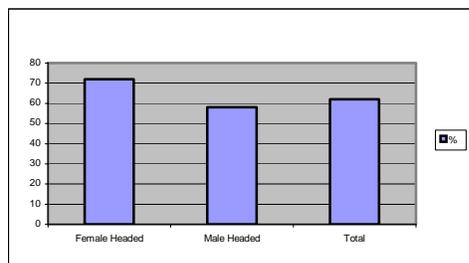
Source: SEDCO

Maize is the staple food and hunger is associated with its shortage. Due to recurring droughts and floods maize productivity has been erratic since 1990. According to the 2002 Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment, the number of people in need of food aid rose from 6.7 million in 2001 to 7.2 million in 2002.

Constraints

- The incidence of poverty in Zimbabwe has been on the increase. A study by the CSO in 1998 suggested that poverty in households increased from 40.4% in 1990/91 to 63.3 by 1995/6. The incidence of extreme poverty in the same period increased from 16.7% to 35.7%. The results are similar to those found in the Poverty Assessment Study Survey (PASS) of the Ministry of Public Service Labour and Social Welfare (1995). 61% of households were found to be living in poverty while 45% are in extreme poverty. These trends are consistent with trends in macroeconomic poverty indicators such as real per capita GDP growth rate which declined from 3.7% in 1990 to -1.3% in 1995, to -7.7 in 2000 and -14.7%.
- Current trends show that poverty is on the increase in both rural and urban areas and is more acute in female-headed homes (72%) than in male-headed homes (58%) as the figure below shows.

Figure 4: Poverty by gender Head of Household



Source: Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, Poverty Assessment Study 1995, Harare

- Child malnutrition which is a problem linked with poverty was estimated at 11% of children in urban areas and 26.5% of children in rural areas. Factors which include rapid economic decline, decline in agricultural production, high inflation levels (over 400%), low disposable incomes and high structural unemployment (about 50%) and high prevalence of HIV/AIDS (33.7%) and recurrent droughts have been attributed to the deteriorating situation.

There are very high disparities in the distribution of income, which is estimated at 0.57 using the Gini coefficient¹¹

Challenges

1. The deadly combination of food shortage, malnutrition and HIV/AIDs in the face of economic problems is a great challenge to the government.
2. Funding is essential for the agrarian reform to succeed. Signs of recovery are already evident in the past agricultural season.
3. There is need for women's ngos to focus more on the strategic issues than the practical issues of household responsibilities etc.
4. Women have been overburdened as caregivers as well as producers and providers of household food
5. It is good that structural adjustment reforms that shifted social responsibilities from governments to individual households have been done away with to some extent (at least ESAP is no longer in place). It is important that the homegrown initiatives should focus more on the social issues especially the burden of care borne by the women.
6. High poverty levels usually force people to adopt unprecedented survival strategies like increased incidences of sex work among women and girls in an attempt to put food on the table. This unfortunate situation promotes the spread of HIV/AIDs, as unprotected sexual encounter would fetch more money.
7. There is need to reduce Zimbabwean agriculture's dependence on direct rainfall levels and move instead to irrigation systems that are more reliable in food production levels. This should be expanded to cover smallholder farmers too.

Recommendations

- Reduce the numbers of people living in poverty by formulating and implementing pro-poor macroeconomic policy strategies
- Develop a nutrition advocacy strategy for people living with HIV and AIDS
- Establish comprehensive food and nutrition surveillance systems and consolidate existing nutrition programmes.
- Establish more irrigation systems to reduce dependence on rain fed agriculture

¹¹ The Gini coefficient is a number between 0 and 1 that measures the degree of inequality in the distribution of income in a given society. A coefficient of 0 would mean minimum inequality where members get the same income. A coefficient of one would mean that only one person gets all the income and the rest get nothing.

CONCLUSIONS

The Government of Zimbabwe has enacted legal frameworks, policies and strategies in education, women in decision-making, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, gender equality and equity, children and the youth, including women rights in order to achieve social development.

Economic empowerment has been the Government's major thrust to enable the general populace to be players in the economic arena. The land reform, agrarian reforms, Reserve Bank fiscal reforms are examples of the governments desire to empower the populace with the means of production. The establishment of the SMEs and the promulgation of the Economic Indigenisation policies and strategies, among others, have had a positive impact in terms of economic development. In fact three whole ministries were created: Ministries of Indigenisation, Policy Implementation, and Small and Medium Enterprises Development.

MYGEC and gender activists need to be involved in the ICT Policy Formulation process to ensure that social and gender concerns are addressed and conditions are set to facilitate women's access to and use of ICTs

The Government of Zimbabwe has adopted a multi-pronged approach in terms of rural development and Poverty alleviation and HIV and AIDS.

Major achievements were scored in the education sectors where deliberate attempts were made to increase enrolment rates and target to support the under-privileged in the education sector.

Commitments were made at the Johannesburg Summit in 2002 to ensure environmental programmes and projects both before and after the summit were put in place in order to realise environmental sustainability.

Although major scores were achieved in terms of social, economic and environmental development, they were not without challenges. The major constraints have been; negative impact of HIV/AIDS, negative cultural traits, reduced economic activity, drought and the brain drain.

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