

**REPORT OF
THE WOMEN'S COALITION OF ZIMBABWE
NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
“ZIMBABWEAN WOMEN IN TRANSITION”**



7 APRIL 2009

(CROWN MONOMOTAPA PLAZA HOTEL - GREAT INDABA ROOM)

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LIST OF ACRONYMS:

Women Coalition of Zimbabwe	-	WCoZ
Government Political Agreement	-	GPA
Inclusive Government	-	IG
Zimbabwe National Union-Patriotic Front	-	ZANU-PF
Movement for Democratic Change	-	MDC
Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender & Community Development	-	MWAGCD
Zimbabwe Coalition for Debt and Devt	-	ZIMCDD
National Constitutional Assembly	-	NCA
Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association	-	ZWLA
Women And Law in Southern Africa	-	WLSA
DP Foundation	-	DPF
Women Peacemakers Programme and Research and Advocacy Unit	-	WPPRAU
Envision Zimbabwe	-	EZ
University of Zimbabwe	-	UZ

Women's Action Group	-	WAG
Women and Aids Support Network	-	WASN
Zimbabwe Women Resource and Network	-	ZWRN
Joint Monitoring Implementing Committee	-	JOMIC
Short Term Economic Recovery Programme	-	STERP
National Youth Training Service	-	NYTP
Deputy Clerk of Parliament	-	DCOP
Zimbabwe Election Commission	-	ZEC
Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce	-	ZNCC

THE WOMEN'S COALITION OF ZIMBABWE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON "ZIMBABWEAN WOMEN IN TRANSITION"

1. BACKGROUND

What is the WCoZ?

The WCoZ is a network of women rights activists and women's organisations with national structures. The WCoZ is a forum where women meet to engage in collective activism on issues affecting women and girls in Zimbabwe. Its central role is to provide a core point for activism on women and girl's rights. WCoZ brings females from diverse backgrounds to collectively advocate for the attainment and enjoyment of their rights. The organizational members of the Coalition work in diverse fields including health, legal aid, access to education, gender based violence, torture, skills training, poverty reduction, research, property rights and governance issues.

The Theme for the day was - *Bringing Zimbabwean women to the centre of the transition."*

The Conference's Overall Goal:

- Mobilize women to participate actively in all aspects of the transitional process

The Conference's Objectives:

- ❑ To hold one day conference for women leaders from all over Zimbabwe's rural and urban areas and all political parties
- ❑ Discuss contents of the GPA as it relates to women
- ❑ Discuss critical areas of concern in the transitional process e.g. constitutional review, transitional justice mechanisms, socio-economic and political reconstruction, women's participation in the transitional governance mechanisms etc.

- ❑ Strategize on a way forward for Zimbabwean women.

2. WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS

The Workshop Facilitator Mrs. Joyce Kazembe started the meeting by inviting Reverend Regina Katsande to open the gathering with a prayer. The Reverend committed and surrendered the success of the workshop into the hands of the Almighty through song “*Takomborerwa Muzita raShe*” and prayer.

The Reverend referred to the Pauline writings and encouraged all present to undertake the day’s deliberations in love, peace and oneness, all as beings created by one God. She urged participants to stand united and put aside all that had been dividing them, clothed with the “forward ever and backward never” spirit.

2.1 CHAIRPERSON’S REMARKS

In welcoming the participants, WCoZ Chairperson, Ms Emilia Muchawa acknowledged all present in their different capacities, which included:

- ✓ His Excellency, Sweden’s Ambassador to Zimbabwe – Stan Rylander
- ✓ Minister of Women Affairs, Gender & Community Development (MOWAGCD)– Hon. Dr. Olivia Muchena
- ✓ Minister of State in the Prime Minister’s Office Responsible for National Healing and Reconstruction (MOSPMO-HO)– Hon. Sekai Holland
- ✓ Deputy Minister of Women Affairs, Gender & Community Development (MOWAGCD - Hon. Evelyn Masaiti)
- ✓ Deputy Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs (MJLA)– Hon. Jessie Majome
- ✓ Deputy Clerk of Parliament (DCoP)– Ms. Helen Dingani

Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Welfare– Hon. Tracey Mutinhiri gave special salute to the daughters of Zimbabwe who included representatives from the various civic organisations, Rural women leaders, Academics and Women Church leaders

- ✓ Women Coalition of Zimbabwe Leadership and Membership
- ✓ Members of the different Political Parties - MDC-T, MDC-M, ZANU PF, Mavambo
- ✓ Padare
- ✓ All collaborators and sponsors to the Zimbabwe Women in Transition
- ✓ Women Farmers.

Ms Muchawa cited the GPA as the document that had necessitated this conference and reiterated the importance of identifying challenges emanating from the GPA and nonetheless harnessing it as women to participate meaningfully in all the spaces it provided. She acknowledged efforts of women who had begun the women’s movement in Zimbabwe from the 80’s and particularly saluted founder members of the Women’s Coalition such as Thoko Matshe who was the first chairperson of WCoZ in 1999. It was therefore in the same spirit as the founding principles of the Coalition that this conference was being held – to

ensure women's participation in the changing landscape of Zimbabwe including constitutional reform.

Quoting from the Bible (Isaiah 32 verses 9-13), Ms Muchawa urged 'the daughters of Zimbabwe to rise up and claim [their] space,' end complacency and stop agonizing but participate in nation building. This could be realized by women and girls' unity of purpose. She acknowledged the excellent working relationship that the MoWAGCD and women's organizations had nurtured, strengthening the unity of purposes in advancing the women's cause in Zimbabwe.

2.2 IN SOLIDARITY WITH ZIMBABWEAN WOMEN - ADDRESS BY SWEDEN'S AMBASSADOR TO ZIMBABWE - MR STAN RYLANDER

In introducing him, the facilitator acknowledged Ambassador Rylander's mission in Zimbabwe as having spanned over 3 years, enabling him to witness the country's era of desolation and the new horizon heralded by the IG as a process of rebuilding Zimbabwe. Ms Kazembe also paid tribute to the Swedish Embassy for its support in various projects, among them - Humanitarian Aid, Culture, Arts and Activists.

The Ambassador applauded the fact that Zimbabwe was in transition and expressed hope that the country would be on the mend, especially following the much talked about Victoria Falls Retreat at which the Government had come up with a 100 day plan.

He conceded his Embassy's commitment to advancing issues affecting women, citing that whenever possible, he would avail himself as he had at campaigns by Women and Land and the 'Together We Can end domestic violence by ZWLA in the recent past. He urged interaction among women at all levels, particularly among those elected and their electorate for the success of the transitional process. He cited the women of Rwanda and Sweden, as learning examples for strong representation in Parliament and encouraged Zimbabwean women to build in-roads to influence men in their favour. Ambassador Rylander applauded Padare (Men of Quality), as strategic partners for women in changing men's beliefs and attitudes towards issues affecting women. He pledged his embassy's continued support to the development of women.

2.3 KEY NOTE ADDRESS BY DR. OLIVIA MUCHENA -Hon MP, Minister of WAGCD

In her opening remarks, the Honourable Minister thanked WCoZ for organizing the conference which she said was not just important but also timely given the shifts in the Zimbabwean operating environment.

By way of background, Dr Muchena cited her commitment to women's empowerment as dating back to 1969, when she conducted research on women's involvement in food production. As such, though she was new to the Ministry, the advancement of women was not new on her agenda. She noted that her Ministry had held several meetings with stakeholders, partners and various groups to forge alliances and partnerships in line with the Ministry's vision. She acknowledged the role of WCoZ in coordinating women's organizations and expressed hope that the latter would strengthen its capacity as it was one very strategic partner for the MoWAGCD. In chronicling previous successes, Dr Muchena cited the International Women's

Day Celebrations as one arena where a much had begun to reflect in terms of Zimbabwean women working together across socio-political divisions.

In unpacking the theme of the workshop – “Zimbabwe Women in Transition” Dr Muchena focused on the word “Transition” and related it to words like “in sitting, in transit lounge” where one can have experiences, and is supposed to move from one thing or place to another in a specified time. She explained her understanding of transition with regard to the IG since 15 February 2009. For her, transition almost synonymous with the situation in Zimbabwe and women were already in it, but what were the challenges and potentials for women? She commended the gathering as an enabler for women to appreciate the levels they could realize, something which had never been before the IG era. She likened the IG to a *‘Mushandirapamwe, Nhimbe, Hoka, Humwe, ilima’*, where people gather to work for a common purpose. Dr Muchena said the GPA was the operating document for the IG, which had come about in September 2008 as a result of elections held in March and June of the same year. She emphasized the importance for women to understand the nature of the IG as well as the contents of the GPA for them to operate effectively and remain relevant.

Citing both the GPA and Amendment 19 of the Zimbabwe Constitution, the Minister explained that it stipulated the agenda of the IG. It had been on that basis that the Victoria Falls Retreat had been held, wherein one of the key aims was team building for the IG as a starting point for SMART goals. It was therefore imperative for women to be clear on articles in the GPA most relevant to them as these would be their creed so as to remain focused.

She further encouraged women to take up a declaration of commitment and agree to work together to create genuine, nationally acceptable solutions to the Zimbabwean situation with the aim to resolve political and economic challenges while charting a new direction for Zimbabwe. She challenged women to tabulate their input to Article 3 in the GPA, which talks about the restoration of the economy, stability and growth. As far as governance was concerned, Dr Muchena cited Article 6 which talks about the Constitution as a first priority, while issues of food security and the land question would take precedence in that order. She accepted Article 4 which talks about the configuration of National economic council as is.

The Minister encouraged women to seize the moment as stated in Article 5.9b to mobilize and lobby for land. She urged all women interested to apply for land and if faced with any problems to refer to JOMIC.

On Article 6, the Minister advised women to strategise on what they wanted in the new Constitution as this would be their guarantee once and for all in relation to all the issues they had been fighting for, for years.

Playing on the imagery of football, Dr Muchena explained how women could take up the challenges and exploit opportunities during the IG period. It was important therefore, for women to fully understand the meaning of the IG. This was because the IG could be seen as the Warriors (Zimbabwe’s national soccer team), composed of the best players from rival teams throughout the country and all Zimbabweans were being called to support the IG. While government was conscious of regressive elements who wanted the IG to fail, she urged women as “the Warriors” to be committed to supporting its success. She shared that Government from her perspective was genuinely charting a new political and economic dispensation and there was no going back. She urged all women to be like the children of the Biblical Isaac, who were able to recognize the signs of the times. She noticed that the game between ZANU PF and the two MDC formations was now different under the IG and called upon women leaders to work

hard and educate the communities to close the gap that now existed between the leadership and the community.

While in the past there had been political animosity, leaders in Government were now mingling and talking to each other, having undergone several rigorous exercises of team building at the Victoria Falls Retreat, preceded by the new sitting arrangement in Parliament of mingling them. The Minister noted that these exercises had helped Cabinet to learn to work together and acknowledge their unity as Zimbabweans who all love their country. Women were urged to be vigilant, focused and knowledgeable about the operating environment. She articulated the two priority areas identified by the Victoria Falls Retreat as being the Constitution and food security. As MoWAGCD, they had advocated for the re-establishment of the *“ka tseu / bindu”* which was a hectare of land belonging to a woman in a household, where she could generate income for herself and children and ensure food security within the home. This had been accepted by the meeting and included in the 100 day-plan.

The Ministry was working at hiring consultants to coordinate the efforts and processes by all stakeholders and would also engage in study tours to Sweden and Rwanda as a learning experience.

Participants were urged to shun away from people pretending to support the GPA while intending to derail all efforts. It was important for Zimbabwe to concentrate and achieve what has been outlined in the GPA, Dr Muchena said. As such, all women were urged to participate in the strategizing process – planning to win the game and understanding how to plan to win psychologically, socially and economically, notwithstanding the need to suggest how to move forward despite all the hurt and pain. She outlined that there was an organ set under the National Healing – reconciliation and unity which would come up with a framework on how the healing would be conceptualized.

Dr Muchena called on the women to rebrand the Zimbabwean woman as an empowered one, in order to achieve the vision of a vibrant Zimbabwean women’s movement, which would be empowered politically, economically, socially, psychologically.

2.4 AN ANALYSIS OF THE GPA AS IT RELATES TO WOMEN - BY RUTENDO HADEBE, CHAIRPERSON, ZIMCDD

In unpacking the GPA for the participants, Ms Hadebe focused on the sections where women should take cognizance and acquaint themselves with the framework, understanding their provisions in the GPA. She reiterated the importance for women to know the GPA.

In outlining what she termed the ‘flaws’ of the document Ms Hadebe cited the GPA as gender-blind, as it did not speak about women’s issues. She however attributed this to the composition of the panel that came up with the working document. She cited the possibility of redressing this in the Constitution-making process. An example was the GPA preamble – which reflects that people still have baggage of past imbalances. Instead of disengaging, she proposed that such issues should be discussed and addressed, for example – women who were raped, whose homes were burnt.

Citing Article 3 which talks about issues of economics, she noted that as very relevant to women and suggested that women find a link within the Articles, as issues of consumer protection and economic justice aim to empower women. She urged women to claim space

in issues of national economic council areas previously dominated by men. It was important for women not to miss the bus, but to know the information and raise questions regarding women's issues.

Ms Hadebe identified Article 5 which talks about the land question as synonymous to the Zimbabwean land tenure and ownership and queried the role that could be played by women. She referred to the land audit that was done and urged women to find out how to claim space as land would economically empower them.

Articles 10, 11 and 12 speak on issues of freedom of expression and association were highlighted as needing to be addressed to open up spaces for the next generation.

On the issue of the new Constitution, Ms Hadebe argued that if women constituted 52% of the population, surely they should have got more than the 14% representation they currently had in Parliament. The question that still remained was how would the 14% adequately represent the 52% of the population? She urged women to come up with solutions on how to address the imbalances in leadership, cabinet, and parliament. Women looked forward to a people driven process – all people should engage it for it to become a people's process and needed to ensure that women were represented in every committee.

Article 7 on Promotion of Equality, National Healing, Cohesion and Unity, with Health being a political crisis, noted that very little was said including the right to food, shelter. Political crisis was linked to the things that affect women.

Article 13- while this section begins to talk about reformation of the uniformed forces, the article is silent on the need to have a force that is gender responsive and sensitive. The perception of dealing with victims should be done differently as women suffer and experience things differently from men.

Article 14, Traditional Leaders – issue should be debated further in order to generate ideas for the next generation.

Article 15, National Youth Training Programme (NYTP), the general sentiments among women about NYTP was that it was shrouded in rumours about immoral behaviour and that though the intention was noble, implementation had become a threat to the future of the youth. She called for a public relations and general awareness campaign to be undertaken for the nation to fully understand the NYTP as well as GPA in order to address issues of baggage.

2.5 LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE 1999 – 2000 CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW PROCESS – THOKO MATSHE, FORMER CHAIRPERSON OF NCA

In stating her politics, Ms Matshe declared that she believed in consulting women only for processes affecting them and only including men when all key decisions had been covered. She expressed herself as a believer in the GPA and encouraged all women to take it forward and witness Zimbabwe moving forward and not backward. She emphasized the need for the new democratic constitution to be all inclusive, be a people driven process and to carry the actual meaning.

Turning to the Bible in substantiation of her politics, Ms Matshe referred to Ephesians 5 verses 21-33 which talk about marriage, submission and love, citing that most male chauvinists did not read the verses in their entirety but chose to end on the bit about wives submitting themselves to their husbands. She explained that when a man loves a woman, his duty should be that of empowering and not a degrading her. She articulated her worries about the unfairness in the representation of women in Parliament, which now therefore distorted the meaning of inclusive.

Ms Matshe queried the notion of Culture as being repressive to women, asking whose culture it really was and who in society were the custodians of culture as it pertained to economic power. She warned women from becoming folders and later discovering their exclusion at the end of fundamental processes. She used an example that most women may be at rail stations but the train may not have arrived; which then may not mean that they are already travelling because they are on the platform. She warned that arrivals come and go and cautioned women to keep watch on the games men were playing around women as in most cases men collaborate and women are not consulted even in Cabinet sometimes, she said.

On the Constitution, Ms Matshe advised that the process involved a lot of hard work but encouraged women to take heart and not to lose focus because of minor misunderstandings. She said usually women had a tendency of spending time arguing and ending up losing focus of the discourse of disempowering them. She shared experiences of the 1999 Constitutional process and highlighted the weak points they learnt from that experience. As a result of past experiences she discouraged the women from re-inventing the wheel but to analyse and utilize what was available. She suggested that the Coalition review the women's charter, undertake advocacy as a campaign, aiming to have women representation in the Constitution Committees and Sub-Committees. She urged all women to stand where they can give influence – *"kwete gurusvusu"*.

Women need to know where and when they can have the influence, and not to miss the boat because they will drown. She advised that sometimes it pays to be selfish and reminded women to concentrate on things that can be changed, and not on things that cannot be changed. Women need to watch the time frame and identify exactly that which they can push forward and be able to influence during the seven months of the constitution making. She urged women to depend on themselves and ensure women place themselves on top of the situation, have clear strategies and timely intervention and effort. She asked women to move away from redundant slogans and covering other people's backs as there was no one to cover their back.

She reiterated that 'the IG is TIME BOUND, if women miss the boat they will drown'.

2.6 LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE 1999 - 2000 CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM PERIOD - HONOURABLE JESSIE MAJOME MP, DEPUTY MINISTER of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs and Former Constitutional Commissioner

Articulating her experiences, Hon Majome cited that in all her activism, she noted women were outsiders euphemistically put as *"Varoora"- daughters-in-law*, whether in politics or anywhere. As such, *"muroora/mutorwa"* is married to the whole village and performs functions of service and hard labour to keep the family going; as an alien -

“muroora/mutorwa” does not belong and therefore cannot inherit from that family, not even land.

Hon Majome cited that in the current National Constitution, women were aliens and needed to have a general consensus for their position in the new Constitution. She urged women to advocate for a Constitution that depicts women’s views, since at the moment Zimbabwe had the worst Constitution as far as women’s issues were concerned. She reminded participants that women were the most people in need of a new Constitution as they were left out in the previous Constitution.

She urged women not to relax and miss the bus but to push for the women’s agenda. She asked women to be faithful to self as women, noting the current Constitution as discriminating as far as women’s rights are concerned. She quoted section 23 which prevents discrimination on grounds of sex only and summarized the other shortcomings in the current Constitution as being:

- 1- Section 23 which discriminates women and other people in public spheres – does not cover women’s lives in private spaces such as homes or offices where most violations to their rights occur.
- 2- Constitution gives credence to discrimination in marriage and inheritance
- 3- Constitution allows discrimination against women for qualifications for public office –
- 4- Constitution allows discrimination again in the use of public revenues in the way it allocates money buy guns and bullets instead of building clinics
- 5- Constitution allows discrimination in the application of customary or general law in respect to communal land
- 6- Allows affirmative action for certain sections of society not others and women remain vulnerable
- 7- It does not consider reproductive rights, has nothing about social and economical rights, health and education,
- 8- It does not have room for the creation of a gender commission
- 9- It does not at all recognize equality of the sexes of all human beings
- 10- It does not provide for quotas for representation for women unlike Sudan which has national constitution which says at least 25% shall be women. There is need for women to insist on the entrenchment of a quota or 50-50% representation in the constitution
- 11- It does not automatically domesticate international conventions, protocols and treaties, but waits that these be passed into Acts of Parliament first.
- 12- Does not recognize children’s rights, which are also women rights.

She noted a learning point for Zimbabwe could be adoption of section 33 of the Uganda constitution which notes the rights of women as an integral part of women’s lives.

She advised that women do not create platforms and should take the prevailing scenario as an opportunity and take the Constitution by its horns. She further urged women to research for the tools as a basis for arguments for the formulation of a Gender Commission. She urged women to use the media as a tool that will assist on gender discourse and hence the need to come up with a Media Commission for women.

The Minister of WAGCD admitted that women in politics do not have control of their lives and urged Women Coalition to be pro-active as the GPA was no longer for renegotiating as it is already signed. She advised that what women could do was to map a way forward and used the imagery of soccer, telling women they belonged to a division and needed to plan to win the premier league. She urged women to come up with a road map and the MoWAGCD would assist by inviting women from other countries to share their experiences to assist women of Zimbabwe move in a coordinated fashion.

2.7 NATIONAL HEALING ORGAN - HONOURABLE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE - SEKAI HOLLAND

Minister Holland called on women to stop wasting time but engage themselves in appropriate spaces. She expressed disappointment that no women's groups or representatives had met with her since the setting up of the national organ, yet several men's groups had sought her audience. She welcomed all women groups to visit her for further deliberations on National Healing.

She urged women to utilize available opportunities to make their voices heard. On the GPA, she said this was a product of the three political parties, who had committed to its successes despite varied comments from detractors. The Zimbabwean situation therefore under the GPA called for women not only to be supportive but to seek wisdom like the Biblical King Solomon, she said, outlining the four key pillars as being:

- 1) The Democratization process – in which women were urged to be implementers of the process and desist from irrelevant talk
- 2) The Humanitarian Crisis – in which women needed to be responsive to issues of violence, food security and other operations, with NGOs being on the ground to cover the necessary work
- 3) The Short Term Economic Recovery Programme – STERP, wherein the political agents had already begun their work and progress was visible
- 4) National Healing – which comprised reconciliation and integration of Zimbabwean society through sustainable justice, a period of building bridges and making amends.

The Minister advised that preparations for the launch of the National Healing Organ were underway, emphasizing that the Organ was an independent body, very much apolitical, such that people should regard it as a safe space. Women were urged to shun away from issues of status but to develop mutual respect as justice was in abundance. She said there was wide consultation on NHO including *"Masvikiro"*, *Churches etc* and urged women not to hesitate but to be free and forward their grievances to JOMIC.

3. REPORT BACK SESSION - PRESENTATIONS FROM GROUPS

Having broken into groups to address specific issues for women's concern, participants reconvened to report back and have a plenary session. Though different organizations led the discussions, participation in these groups included a cross section of participants at the conference to ensure that all represented sectors were part of each of the six groups. Below are the presentations from each of the groups.

GROUP 1 - WOMEN AND THE CONSTITUTION

Discussions on this subject were led by the Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWLA) and the Women Lawyers of Southern Africa (WILSA). The group chose to enlist issues they considered a priority for all stakeholders in the drafting of the new constitution and articulated them as:

- ❑ Protection of women's rights in issues of, inheritance and ownership of property
- ❑ Women and law – redressing the inequality in Zimbabwean law
- ❑ Promoting Socio economic rights of women
- ❑ Advocating for adoption and utilization of International charters
- ❑ Unpacking the Constitution and articulating relevant aspects within it for Women
- ❑ Promoting unity among women to enable them to speak with one voice
- ❑ Articulating issues affecting women accurately
- ❑ Identifying women who can do certain things and push them into sub-committees
- ❑ Urging women to indicate their areas of interest on the constitution
- ❑ Getting people already involved with the Constitution to advise women and the general public on options available and areas of key concern
- ❑ Inclusion of people living with disabilities
- ❑ Supporting women MPs

GROUP 2 - POSITIONING WOMEN IN ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION AND EMPOWERMENT

This group's discussions were facilitated by the Zimbabwe Women Resource Centre and Network, well known for advocating for gender budgeting inclusive of women's concerns. The women noted that to strategically position women in the economic reconstruction based on the GPA principles, the following issues needed attention:

- ❑ Introducing education at grass roots level
- ❑ Skills training in various trades to empower women
- ❑ Access to information and knowledge
- ❑ Information availability for all women including Braille for the visually handicapped
- ❑ Information simplified and translated into local languages for easy reading and understanding. Relevant and simplified information made available to women especially those from the grass-roots
- ❑ Participation in asset registration
- ❑ Women's active participation in assessment and allocation of land, capital loans and appropriate technology e.g. land for urban agriculture
- ❑ Women's reading and understanding of bi-lateral agreements and budgets
- ❑ Access to information on trade and markets in terms of language
- ❑ Affordability and availability of Transport
- ❑ Need for improvement of gender sensitivity at ZimTrade and ZNCC
- ❑ Women representation in economic forums - need for representatives of women's groups
- ❑ National asset and registry – explanations as to what it is that should be availed to women which will enable them to participate
- ❑ Women's participation in the finalization of Land Policy
- ❑ Women's economic empowerment in the informal sector and employment policies strengthened

- ❑ Decentralization and involvement of women in farming and mining
- ❑ Statistical data on women targeting big business ventures
- ❑ JOMIC –participation of more women, perhaps a gender balance
- ❑ Eradicating the Mafia approach of aggression for selfish gain in business
- ❑ Alignment and engagement of women with disability
- ❑ Confidence building among women
- ❑ Engagement of women in National Contracts
- ❑ Establishment of competitive markets for women
- ❑ Understanding poverty reduction strategies
- ❑ Participation in Peace building and National Healing
- ❑ Economic decentralization e.g. the granite from Mutoko, yet locals have no economic benefit and the area remains poverty stricken

GROUP 3 - WOMEN'S HEALTH AND HIV & AIDS

The two well known organizations committed to issues of women's reproductive health rights (Women's Action Group) and advocacy against HIV and AIDS (Women and AIDS Support Network) led discussions on the above topic. The focus was on the issues of concern and how the group wished them redressed in the new operation environment under the GPA. Below are the group's concerns and proposals:

- ❑ Health situation in Zimbabwe now deplorable – the collapse of the health delivery system led to the outbreak of Cholera
- ❑ Access to health – medical attention and the displacement of people that happened during Murambatsvina 2005 resulted in most people being misplaced and resettled elsewhere
- ❑ Treatment of HIV & AIDS got so many hidden costs – besides the free ARVs, there are costs for the CD4 Count, tests on liver function most people cannot afford
- ❑ Maternal health – people being asked to pay US\$1000 for pre-natal and during post natal care another US\$1000. These amounts are out of reach to most Zimbabweans including the employed group
- ❑ Delays in maternal health – during payment negotiations payment is always in advance or upfront resulting in unnecessary deaths
- ❑ Transport delays due to non-availability – resulting in unwarranted deaths
- ❑ Demographic health survey show that for every 1000 children born, 550 of the mothers die during birth
- ❑ Right to abort – 2000 women die per year due to conditions that can be prevented, emergencies should be treated as emergencies
- ❑ Sanitary wear is not affordable to most women
- ❑ Health problems – home based care for chronic diseases is done by women and is mostly free service
- ❑ Women are not able to reject unprotected sex in their homes and this becomes domestic violence and abuse
- ❑ There are no provisions and protection for the things that happen in private

Way forward:

- Health should become a right to everyone and should be recognized in the constitution and supported by a budget in terms of financial and human resources
- ❑ Should recognize unpaid services such as births, should be offered a free health service or subsidized for those who cannot afford
- ❑ Recommended a national package for ART, food, opportunistic psychological support needed by people looking after sick people.
- ❑ Farming community – if tested and diagnosed HIV positive, need a statutory instrument to protect them from job losses
- ❑ Domestic support resources – should be available for implementation
- ❑ Girl child empowerment – girls should be given sexual knowledge at an early age.

GROUP 4 - WOMEN, TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE AND PEACE BUILDING

This subject was led by the DP Foundation, Women Peacemakers Programme and Research and Advocacy Unit. Participants to this group identified the following issues as key for progress:

Transitional and Peace Building - Justice

- ❑ There is a myth to most people
- ❑ Definition refers to the short term temporary human rights addresses
- ❑ Goals to include addressing and attempting to heal
- ❑ Bringing close healing to society and truth telling during conflict
- ❑ Bring justice to perpetrators
- ❑ Co-existing in peace
- ❑ Building bridges, making amends

Why is it important

- ❑ Women and men suffer and experience things differently during war and conflict times. Women's bodies and sexual violence –
- ❑ Women bear the brunt of battle fields even if they were not involved. Men can easily leave the rural home go to somewhere else while women continue to suffer because of family and commitment. Research should document that for future reference so that there will not be any repeats
- ❑ “Shed the Weight” was initiated in Liberia it created a platform to the survivors to share their stories and comfort each other
- ❑ Women's consequences are wide and far reaching as they suffer stigma of unwanted pregnancies and may contract HIV or AIDS in the process. Some women have suffered trauma in their marriages such as divorce because of the predicament
- ❑ During conflict and after, local organizations should advocate for women's rights – pave way for women's voices. Example of the women of Nairobi – the Mano River, the Nairobi declaration paved the way for women's voices to be heard
- ❑ Any transitional process should be directed by those who serve and therefore should go down to grass roots levels
- ❑ Cultural context – need to explore traditional ways to resolve conflict
- ❑ Breadwinners in most cases are men, so when they are killed the women suffer loss, in status, trauma
- ❑ Aspect of fear needs to be addressed for victims and perpetrators
- ❑ Women suffer in silence and therefore should be availed a safe and secure environment

- ❑ Dissemination of information should also be available in vernacular
- ❑ Psycho-social support to link women with past and present
- ❑ Civil society – the truth should be said and justice allowed to take its course
- ❑ Gender rights commission should be set – need to decide on who will make this and the issues to be considered
- ❑ Time frame for transitional justice – need to be specific, which period is it covering - from 2008 to date only, or should include post independence period. State period to be covered
- ❑ Women matters should be addressed by an active women’s movement
- ❑ Be gender sensitive – children are tomorrow’s leaders
- ❑ No impunity but promotion of social rights
- ❑ Lobbying for protection of women

GROUP 5 – WOMEN’S EDUCATION AND LITERATURE

Envision Zimbabwe and the University of Zimbabwe led discussions for this group, drawing on the expertise of academics such as Professor Rudo Gaidzanwa. Their situation analysis was as follows:

- ❑ State of education almost non-existent - need possible intervention
- ❑ Access for all – education should be easily accessible it is now prohibitive to many children as a result of high fees and levies being charged
- ❑ Need to narrow gap between rural, urban and private education. The rural and high density schools’ pass rate leave a lot to be desired
- ❑ Absolute lack of efficiency
- ❑ Absence of clear introduction and integration of commercial subjects
- ❑ History syllabus skewed
- ❑ Girls are vulnerable to abuses on public transport when they commute to schools or walk long distances on foot

Way Forward:

- ❑ Need urgent intervention in the short term
- ❑ Redress the brain drain to address the teachers’ deficit – need to introduce ZINTEC programmes to allow schools to have qualified teachers and then phase out temporary teachers in the long run
- ❑ Need a gender balance in training institutions of student teachers
- ❑ Salaries should be improved
- ❑ Inject more resources to revamp the rural schools pass rate
- ❑ Need to involve SDA or other committees
- ❑ Restructure science and information, vocational, commercial, HIV & AIDS skills education
- ❑ Facilitate enrolment in Science and Mathematics in high density schools
- ❑ Re-introduce grants to students in higher learning institutions on a sound financial basis
- ❑ Nation should reprioritize budgeting for education sector
- ❑ Value of education system was in shreds need to revamp education back to its glorious state
- ❑ Advocate for standard uniform prices
- ❑ Restoration of dignity of teachers

- ❑ Disabled children should be considered with proper facilities to be integrated in the education system
- ❑ Make Birth Certificates of children affordable and accessible

GROUP 6 – WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN TRANSITIONAL BODIES AND THEREAFTER

Focusing mainly on the GPA, The Women's Trust and Women In Politics Support Unit led the discussions which began by identifying implementing bodies in governing the inclusive government as being the JOMIC. They went on to articulate the following issues:

- ❑ Issue of select committees on the Constitution, Gender Commission, Media Commission, Economic Constitution, ZEC and Anti-corruption Commissions. There is need for public education about such bodies so that people are aware of their roles
- ❑ Need to understand as women the roles and powers or terms of reference of the GPA
- ❑ Two commissions are missing from the GPA, one on gender and the other an organ on National Healing
- ❑ Economic stability – women's interests should be represented in that body
- ❑ National Economic Council – it has been provided for but there is need to identify key deliverables which should include gender experts
- ❑ Select committees on the Constitution making – the majority are men. Gender parity should be observed –According to GPA Article 20, women should demand 50% representation in the Constitution committee and sub-committees
- ❑ A petition on the select committee to be sent to Parliament together with a draft letter lobbying for representation in the select committees
- ❑ Doubt credibility of JOMIC on women's interest whose representation is nine men and three women who are not even co-chairs
- ❑ The land audit
- ❑ Implementation of the GPA should be recognized in the key ministries
- ❑ Proposed capacitating on issues of gender that relates to women.
- ❑ Need to look at and engage the different ministries on the implementation.

4. PRESENTATION BY HONOURABLE DEPUTY MINISTER OF WAGCD- E. MASAITI

The Deputy Minister urged women to work hard to produce leaders that will drive the women's agenda. She articulated the need for women to communicate with JOMIC on the prevailing imbalances regarding representation in the IG. She urged women to push forward and represent all other sectors of women including those from the grass-roots.

Honourable Masaiti noted that MoWAGCD was an action orientated ministry which utilized people's strengths and augmented efforts. As it were, women could learn from the ministry by working with strategically positioned links such as Honourable Oppah Muchinguri and Honourable Priscillah Misihairambwi-Mushonga.

As it were, the Ministry had developed a coordinating structure of partners to avoid duplication and the Minister of WAGCD had taken cognizance of civic society partnering with donors and advised them that such issues were now covered under STERP.

The Ministry of WAGCD was looking forward to the women's conference on 15 May 2009 where they would chart in roads for women and have an agenda that is time bound.

5. DRAFT PETITION

A draft letter of petition which had to be submitted to Parliament the next day on 8 April 2009 was read and adopted in general with a few amendments. It prioritized the following issues which came out in the conference:

- ❑ Request for 50% representation of women in the Committees and Sub-Committees to be set for the Constitution making
- ❑ Demand to JOMIC on the parity of representation in Parliament which should be on a 50-50 basis.
- ❑ Attachment of signed forms of petition from the participants to be sent with the letter.

Participants acknowledged the challenges of access to sanitary ware by most rural women and committed to seeking assistance in redressing this issue.

LESSONS LEARNT

- ❖ Women should unite in love and peace for a common purpose, United they stand and divided they fall
- ❖ Women should put aside any dividing barriers and move forward with one agenda
- ❖ Women should take up challenges coming from the GPA and work to resolve them
- ❖ Women should participate in the Constitution making process
- ❖ The period of complacency, division is over and women are required to rise up and shine as special daughters of Zimbabwe and stop agonizing.
- ❖ It is time to derive direction of where women want to go
- ❖ Women should work with women in elected bodies e.g. emulate the women of Rwanda, Sweden and Mano River in Nairobi
- ❖ Zimbabwean women should start in-roads to changing men's thoughts
- ❖ Work closely with Padare and other partners supporting women's empowerment
- ❖ Map a way forward before the new Constitution is set up
- ❖ Strategize and identify challenges and potentials that pertain to women
- ❖ Focus on the most relevant issues
- ❖ Women should read and understand GPA, IG, STERP and Constitution process to enable effective operation
- ❖ Declaration of commitment declared and agreed to work together to create and achieve genuine national acceptable solutions to the Zimbabwean situation
- ❖ Women should take advantage of the time in moment
- ❖ Women should lobby for land
- ❖ Women should call to address imbalances concerning the baggage's of past imbalances
- ❖ Women to adopt a slogan - Forward ever backward never
- ❖ The concept of 1 hectare "*tseu/isiphala, bindu*" to be realised to ensure food security
- ❖ Both politicians and civic organizations to stand united
- ❖ Women to advocate for women's interest through Ministry of WAGCD
- ❖ Names to be selected for the select committees to be submitted to the DCOP which should be done by 14 April 2009
- ❖ Have a set of demands specific to the different ministries for monitoring purposes - Parliament, GPA, JOMIC
- ❖ Women should read and be informed

Mr. Paul Mujuru of Padare advised the women that their organization was advocating for a total change of mindsets as God-given rights for power balance should be favourable. He wanted “*Madoda, Varume kuti vatapudze masimba avo*” he said, at both family and political levels to share power. He said power is important if it is shared between men and women as this enabled peace to prevail in homes and the Nation. With all the resolutions made in an emphatic manner Padare wanted to take advantage of the current political wheel as real men.

Mrs. Moyo of the Lutheran Church in sharing Grace, urged all women to continue praying for Zimbabwe for answers from God. Participants expressed great appreciation for words of encouragement from a prophecy of 1998 about Zimbabwe from Cindy Wright, which was read by the Minister of WAGCD. In it, Dr Muchena said, was nothing but hope for a Zimbabwe with empowered women.

6. VOTE OF THANKS

In bidding farewell to the participants, WCoZ Board Treasurer, Ms Moira Ngaru thanked all participants for accepting the invitation and attending the conference. She cited that the one day event had kick-started a process of great involvement of women in the decisions of issues that affected them. Indeed the meeting had been a success as an excess of 200 participants had attended, she said, urging women to nurture and utilize the new baby (GPA) without wasting time in bickering. She particularly thanked all representatives of stakeholders present and assured them that the day’s proceedings had been captured and would be available for all to revisit.

ANNEX 1

WOMEN’S COALITION NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON “ZIMBABWEAN WOMEN IN TRANSITION”

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

- ✓ His Excellency the Swedish Ambassador to Zimbabwe – Sten Rylander
- ✓ Honourable Dr. Olivia Muchena – Minister of Women Affairs, Gender & Community Development (MOWAGCD)
- ✓ Honourable Sekai Holland – Minister of State in the Prime Minister’s Office (Healing Organ) (MOSPMO-HO)
- ✓ Honourable Evelyn Masaiti - Deputy Minister of Women Affairs, Gender & Community Development (MOWAGCD)
- ✓ Honourable Jessie Majome – Deputy Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs (MJLA)
- ✓ Mrs. Helen Dingani – Deputy Clerk of Parliament (DCOP)
- ✓ Honourable Tracey Mutinhiri -

- ✓ Special daughters of Zimbabwe from the various civic organisations, Rural women leaders, Academics and Women Church leaders
- ✓ Women Coalition of Zimbabwe Leadership and Membership
- ✓ Members of the different Political Parties - MDC-T, MDC-M, ZANU PF, Mavambo
- ✓ Padare
- ✓ All collaborators and sponsors to the Zimbabwe Women in Transition
- ✓ Women Farmers.

ANNEX 2

Programme of Events

Programme of the National Workshop - Zimbabwean Women in Transition

Chairperson - Joyce Kazembe

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 8.00 -8.20 | Arrivals and registrations |
| 8.20 - 8.30 | Welcome Remarks by Emilia Muchawa, Chairperson of Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe |
| 8.30 - 8.40 | Solidarity with Zimbabwean women by the Swedish Ambassador to Zimbabwe, Mr. Stan Rylander |
| 8.40 - 8.55 | Keynote Address by Dr. Olivia Muchena, MP, Minister of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development |
| 8.55 - 9.20 | An analysis of the GPA as it relates to women by Rutendo Hadebe, Chairperson, ZIMCODD |
| 9.20 - 9.35 | Lessons Learnt from the 1999 - 2000 Constitutional Review Process - Thoko Matshe, Former Chairperson of NCA |
| 9.35 - 9.55 | Lessons Learnt from the 1999 - 2000 Constitutional Reform Period - Honourable Jessie Majome MP, Deputy Minister and former Constitutional Commissioner |
| 9.55 - 10.30 | Plenary |
| 10.00 - 10.30 | Tea |
| Mid-morning Breakout session | |
| 11.00 - 1.00 | Breakout sessions |
| i. | Women and the constitution - Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association and W in Law Southern Africa |

- ii. Women, Transitional Justice and Peace building - DP Foundation, Women Peacemakers Programme and Research and Advocacy Unit
- iii. Women participation in transitional bodies and thereafter - The Women's Trust and Women in Politics Support Unit
- iv. Women's education and literature - Envision Zimbabwe and University of Zimbabwe
- v. Women's health and HIV & AIDS - Women's Action Group and Women and Aids Support Network
- vi. Positioning women in economic reconstruction and empowerment - Zimbabwe Women Resource and Network

Afternoon session, Report back and Conclusion

- 2.00 - 4.00 Report back session
- 4.00 - 4.20 Summary and Wrap up
- 4.20 - 4.30 Vote of thanks and departures

ANNEX 3

HANDOUTS

- 1) Agreement between the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the two Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) formations, on resolving the challenges facing Zimbabwe
- 2) Women, Transitional Justice and Peace Building
- 3) Women 's Health and HIV AND AIDS
- 4) Women and the Constitutional Reform Process
- 5) Women's Participation in Transitional Bodies and thereafter
- 6) Gender Sector Presentation of 27th March 2009



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