



BEIJING +30 COUNTRY REPORT

**Thirtieth Anniversary of the
Fourth World Conference on Women and Adoption of the
Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)**

30 June 2024

SECTION ONE: HIGHLIGHTS

Zimbabwe has made significant strides in gender equality and women's empowerment, which have been marked by comprehensive legislative reforms and proactive policies. Key legislative reforms include the harmonisation of marriage laws, which ensures equal rights and obligations for spouses and sets the minimum marriage age at 18, mandatory sentencing for rape and aggravated indecent assault, which aims to deter sexual violence through a minimum 15-year prison sentence, the Cybercrime and Data Protection Act to address GBV in digital spaces and the Labour Amendment Act which addresses workplace violence and harassment. However, sexual harassment remains a pervasive issue. Current legislation is fragmented and lacks comprehensive coverage, necessitating more robust laws to address and prevent sexual harassment effectively.

Efforts to combat violence against women and girls saw the implementation of mandatory sentencing for rape and the development of the Zimbabwe National Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence (2023-2030). Initiatives targeting marginalised groups, such as mobile One-Stop Centers and community-based shelters providing GBV services in remote areas and programs supporting women and girls with disabilities and those living with HIV/AIDS, have been implemented.

Education reforms have also played a pivotal role, including the Education Amendment Act, which prohibits the expulsion of pregnant girls from schools, and affirmative action in STEM fields, which has increased female participation in traditionally male-dominated sectors.

The government made several policy interventions and key decisions to strengthen Science, Technology and Innovation for the country's sustainable development. Noting the existing gaps in access and use of digital technologies and in a bid to reduce the digital divide and also technologically empower marginalised communities, the Government of Zimbabwe has put in measures for bridging the gender digital divide such as Community Information Centres and Internet Connectivity in Primary and Secondary Schools.

Women's Economic empowerment and financial inclusion has been enhanced by establishing a revolving Women's Empowerment Fund, establishing the Women's Micro-Finance Bank, Empower Bank and launching the National Financial Inclusion Strategy II (2021-2025) and related collateral registry. The "Agric for She" program and adopting climate-smart agriculture through the Pfumvudza/Intwasa concept have significantly boosted women's participation in agriculture, contributing to food security and economic resilience. However more reach is required for women in rural areas and in the informal sector.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the climate change crisis through Cyclone Idai exacerbated existing vulnerabilities, increasing GBV and economic hardships for women. One of the lessons from COVID-19 and the climate crisis is that emergency preparedness plans need to include gendered analysis and a gender-responsive approach to strengthen response to violence against women and girls during humanitarian and other crises if all forms of GBV remain classified as 'essential services. COVID-19 spurred innovations like virtual courts and the Integrated Electronic Case Management System to enhance access to justice. In line with the United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties (COP)25 and the Lima Gender Action Plan, Zimbabwe developed a Climate Change Gender Action Plan in order to prioritise a gender approach to climate change. Furthermore Zimbabwe developed a Gender Actionplan for Disaster Risk Management for effective gender planning and response to disasters.

Limited gender data presents a substantial challenge to programming and policy making for gender equality. Comprehensive, reliable and timely data is crucial for understanding the specific issues women face, monitoring progress, and designing effective policies and interventions, hampering the ability to accurately identify and address the unique needs and challenges of women and girls.

Inadequate funding of gender equality programmes in Zimbabwe has also affected their achievement. Over the years, the National Gender Machinery has received inadequate budgetary allocations, leaving it to operate with minimal funding.

The Government of Zimbabwe has set aside key priorities for the next five years, which include enacting a Gender Equality Act to fully realise the constitutional imperatives of gender equality, enactment of a Sexual Harassment Act to address the rising cases of sexual harassment, implementing the Zimbabwe National Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence (2023-2030) for eliminating violence against women and girls, implementation of the National Women in Leadership and Decision-Making Strategy 2023-2030 to increase women's participation and representation, implementation of the National Action Plan on resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security(2023) and the full implementation of the Zimbabwe Climate Change Gender Action Plan to promote gender equality in environmental sustainability, climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies.

SECTION TWO: PRIORITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS

a) OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS- THE MOST IMPORTANT ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS IN PROGRESS TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Amid significant hurdles such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the impacts of climate change on agriculture, Zimbabwe has made strides in various key areas. Zimbabwe has made significant strides in gender equality and women's empowerment, which have been marked by comprehensive legislative reforms and proactive policies. Key legislative reforms include the harmonisation of marriage laws, which ensures equal rights and obligations for spouses and sets the minimum marriage age at 18, mandatory sentencing for rape and aggravated indecent assault, which aims to deter sexual violence through a minimum 15-year prison sentence, the Cybercrime and Data Protection Act to address GBV in digital spaces and the Labour Amendment Act which addresses workplace violence and harassment.

The confluence of crises, notably the COVID-19 pandemic, posed challenges but spurred innovations like virtual courts and the Integrated Electronic Case Management System to enhance access to justice.

Education reforms have also played a pivotal role, including the Education Amendment Act, which prohibits the expulsion of pregnant girls from schools, and affirmative action in STEM fields, which has increased female participation in traditionally male-dominated sectors.

Economic empowerment initiatives have also seen notable progress. The "Agric for She" program and adopting climate-smart agriculture through the Pfumvudza/Intwasa concept have significantly boosted women's participation in agriculture, contributing to food security and economic resilience. Furthermore, financial inclusion has been enhanced by establishing a revolving Women's Empowerment Fund, establishing the Women's Micro-Finance Bank and launching the National Financial Inclusion Strategy II (2021-2025).

Increasing climate change impacts have affected agricultural productivity and food security, disproportionately impacting women. This has necessitated the development of the Zimbabwe Climate Change Gender Action Plan following adopting the Gender Action Plan at the United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties (COP)25 in 2019. Establishing the Zimbabwe Climate Change Gender Action Plan illustrates a commitment to integrating gender perspectives into environmental sustainability efforts.

Efforts to combat violence against women and girls saw the implementation of mandatory sentencing for rape and the development of the Zimbabwe National Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence (2023-2030). Initiatives targeting marginalised groups, such as mobile One-Stop Centers and community-based shelters providing GBV services in remote areas and programs supporting women and girls with disabilities and those living with HIV/AIDS, have been implemented.

In politics and decision-making, political participation was encouraged through the "Women in Leadership and Decision-Making Strategy" and training programs for aspiring female political candidates. Furthermore, political participation has been bolstered by the extension of the National Assembly women's quota and the introduction of a 30% quota at the local government level. Initiatives like the "Women Rise in Politics" program and the Zimbabwe National Action

Plan on UNSCR 1325 have promoted women's involvement in leadership and peacebuilding roles.

Building on the lessons learnt and gaps realised in the past five years, the Government of Zimbabwe has set aside key priorities for the next five years, which include enacting a Gender Equality Act to fully realise the constitutional imperatives of gender equality, enactment of a Sexual Harassment Act to address the rising cases of sexual harassment, implementation of the Zimbabwe National Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence (2023-2030) for eliminating violence against women and girls, implementation of the National Women in Leadership and Decision-Making Strategy 2023-2030 to increase women's participation and representation and the full implementation of the Zimbabwe Climate Change Gender Action Plan to promote gender equality in environmental sustainability, climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Despite the above achievements, gaps and challenges to achieving gender equality persist. Although the Constitution provides core fundamentals for a gender-responsive framework, harmonising some laws with the Constitution remains a challenge hindering the full enjoyment of Constitutional guarantees.

The Country continues to grapple with several socio-economic challenges, which include high incidences of gender-based violence and child marriage, among others. In addition, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic did not spare the country as its aftermath weighed on the already constrained resources and, in a way, reversed the gains made over the years in advancing gender equality.

In Zimbabwe, women remain underrepresented in decision-making positions in all sectors, including politics, the civil service, and the private sector. Gender parity in women's representation has not been achieved at all levels and has declined over the past years. Despite constituting 52% of the population and most voters, women only hold 31% of the National Assembly seats, notwithstanding a quota system allowing for 60 seats per Section 124 of the Constitution and 12% of Councillors' seats.¹ At the National Assembly, among the 210 seats not under the quota system, only 25 are held by women (12%). Representation at the National Assembly and local Government level is far below the 50% prescribed in Section 17 of the Constitution, as well as in regional and international frameworks on gender equality such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Maputo Protocol and Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol. Such glaring gender disparities in the political sphere are a cause for concern. It violates Sections 17, 56 and 80 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, which affirms equal participation and representation of women in all sectors.

On economic empowerment, women face obstacles that include lack of access to capital or limited financial inclusion, dominance in the informal economy, which is associated with decent work deficits characterised by lack of social security, Infrastructure challenges, limited access to or ownership of economic resources, dominance in subsistence agriculture and over-representation in vulnerable employment. Financial inclusion also remains a challenge, particularly for marginalised groups such as women, youth and rural populations, who often lack access to quality financial products and services. Poor road transportation and network,

¹ UN Women, Zimbabwe Local Government Country Profile: [Zimbabwe | Women in Local Government \(unwomen.org\)](https://unwomen.org/en/publications/zimbabwe-local-government-country-profile)

energy and access to water and sanitation continue to undermine women's efforts in economic empowerment initiatives.

Persistent gender gaps in STEM education and careers have also been noted. While policies have been implemented to encourage female participation, deep-rooted stereotypes and biases continue to hinder progress.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing vulnerabilities, increasing GBV and economic hardships for women. Additionally, sexual harassment remains a pervasive issue. Current legislation is fragmented and lacks comprehensive coverage, necessitating more robust laws to address and prevent sexual harassment effectively.

Healthcare services for women, particularly in maternal health, face critical challenges. The increase in institutional mortality rates highlights deficiencies in quality healthcare services, exacerbated by a high turnover of healthcare workers and a lack of essential medical supplies. Social norms and stigmas further complicate efforts to support pregnant girls and young mothers in continuing their education.

Furthermore, while the decentralisation of legal services and courts has improved access to justice, female representation in customary law institutions remains inadequate. These institutions are predominantly male, which affects the outcomes of dispute resolutions, particularly those involving women.

Climate change has created significant setbacks to achieving gender equality in Zimbabwe, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and creating new challenges for women and girls. The effects of climate change often force men to migrate for better economic opportunities, leaving women to manage households alone under increasingly challenging conditions. This increases women's workload and exposes them to further risks and vulnerabilities, thus limiting their ability to participate in meaningful national developmental programmes effectively.

Sociocultural norms in Zimbabwe significantly impede the achievement of gender equality. Deeply entrenched patriarchal beliefs and traditional practices often dictate the roles and behaviours expected of men and women, reinforcing gender hierarchies that favour men. Women and girls frequently face pressure to conform to traditional roles, such as caregiving and household responsibilities, which limits their opportunities for personal and professional growth. These negative socio-cultural norms have also strategically penetrated institutions across various sectors, further deepening systemic gender inequality in Zimbabwe.

The lack of data and research presents a substantial challenge to achieving gender equality in Zimbabwe. Comprehensive, reliable data is crucial for understanding the specific issues women face, monitoring progress, and designing effective policies and interventions. However, there is often a significant gap in gender-disaggregated data and research in the country. This deficiency hampers the ability to accurately identify and address the unique needs and challenges of women and girls. Without detailed information, policymakers and organisations struggle to develop targeted strategies that can effectively tackle gender issues. Moreover, the absence of robust data makes measuring the impact of existing programs and policies difficult, leading to inefficient allocation of resources and efforts.

Inadequate funding of gender equality programmes in Zimbabwe has also affected their achievement. Over the years, the National Gender Machinery has received inadequate budgetary allocations, leaving it to operate with minimal funding. Insufficient financial

resources limit the scope and effectiveness of programs promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in Zimbabwe.

While Zimbabwe has made commendable progress in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, ongoing efforts are required to address the remaining challenges. Enhancing educational and economic opportunities, ensuring comprehensive legal protections, and shifting societal norms are essential to achieving gender equality.

b) OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS- THE TOP FIVE PRIORITIES FOR ACCELERATING PROGRESS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN ZIMBABWE THROUGH LAWS, POLICIES AND/OR PROGRAMMES

The Government of Zimbabwe continues implementing various measures to accelerate progress for women and girls in the Country. The period under review has been characterised by challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the increased impact of climate change, especially on agricultural productivity, affecting food security in the Country. The Country has also continued to witness high incidences of violence against women and girls. The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (2019) reports that 39% of women and girls aged between 15 and 49 have experienced physical violence, whilst 12% have experienced sexual violence. On the other hand, the 2022 Zimbabwe Population and Housing Census Report indicates that 18.9% of women aged 20-24 were married or got into a union before age 18. The report further mentions that the proportion was higher, at 27.4% in rural areas compared to 10.2% in urban areas. Therefore, to this end, the Government, during the period under review, prioritised the following key areas to accelerate progress for women and girls in the Country.

- Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice
- Poverty eradication, agricultural productivity and food security
- Eliminating violence against women and girls
- Political participation and representation
- Strengthening women's participation in ensuring environmental sustainability

a) Equality and Non-Discrimination under the law and access to justice

The Zimbabwean Constitution in Section 56 provides for equality and non-discrimination and Section 56 (1) states that "All persons are equal before the law and have the right to equal protection and benefit of the law. Further, the Constitution in Section 31 provides for provision of Legal Aid and states that, "the state must take all practical measures, within the limits of the resources available to it, to provide legal representation in civil and criminal cases for people who need it and are unable to afford legal practitioners of their choice" To actualise these provisions, the Government of Zimbabwe has implemented the following measures.

Harmonisation of Marriage Laws

In May 2022, the GoZ passed into law the Marriages Act [Chapter 5:17], which repealed the Marriages Act [Chapter 5:11] and the Customary Marriages Act [Chapter 5:07], comprehensively rendering all marriages equal. The new law provides that spouses have equal rights and obligations during marriage and at its dissolution. The law stipulates 18 years as the minimum age of marriage for both sexes and prohibits forced marriages and child marriages.

Mandatory sentencing of rape and aggravated indecent assault

Due to rising cases of rape and sexual violence and persistent irregularities in sentencing patterns for rape cases, the Government of Zimbabwe, in 2022, adopted a minimum mandatory sentencing of 15 years for perpetrators of rape. The adoption of the minimum mandatory sentencing is expected to act as a deterrent measure to potential offenders. Section 65 of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act has been amended to provide for the minimum mandatory sentence and that if the case has been committed in aggravated circumstance, the perpetrator will be sentenced to life imprisonment. The Act has further been amended to provide a 15-year minimum mandatory sentencing for aggravated indecent assault.

Protection of girls from sexual exploitation and abuse

The Statutory Instrument 2 of 2024 stipulates, among other things, the age of consent to 18 and it is designed to protect children, particularly girls under 18, from sexual exploitation and abuse. The section bridges the gap that previously existed in law, where the Criminal Code defined a young person as someone below the age of 16 while the Constitution defined a young person as someone below the age of 18 years. The law also lays out a punishment of a maximum of 10 years that will deter offenders, thereby lessening instances of such crimes occurring. By setting the age of consent at 18, the law establishes a clear boundary that ensures individuals below this age are not considered capable of providing informed consent to engage in sexual activities. This helps to prevent situations where young children are taken advantage of by adults who may exploit their vulnerability and lack of understanding.

Labour Amendment Act (No 11 of 2023)

Zimbabwe Labour Amendment Act (No 11 of 2023) – Aligns the country's labour law to the ILO Convention 190 by (1) containing key definitions on GBV, sexual harassment, as well as violence and harassment; (2) qualifies the context in which violence and harassment can occur in the workplace, whether directly or indirectly; and (3) outlines the sanctions, which range from dismissal, or imprisonment, depending on the gravity of the infraction, to be imposed on the person who violates others in the workplace.

Decentralisation of the Legal Aid Directorate

In line with provisions of Section 31 of the Constitution on Legal aid, the GoZ, through the Legal Aid Directorate (LAD), provides legal aid to the indigent and special groups and, in addition, works closely with civil society actors in facilitating the provision of legal aid services through a system of referrals. As a government institution, LAD is currently in all ten (10) provinces of Zimbabwe. The decentralisation of the districts has commenced with four (4) district offices being opened, namely Chiredzi, Chipinge, Chivhu, and Gokwe. The decentralisation enhanced access to justice by women and other vulnerable groups who disproportionately experience myriad barriers in securing legal recourse. During the period under review, many women have accessed legal services through LAD free of charge on a range of matters, including custody, protection orders, and divorce, among others.

The Legal AID Directorate's Strategic Plan and National Legal AID Coordination Framework were developed as a critical step in strengthening the institution to carry out its mandate to provide access to justice in GBV/ SGBV cases for the most vulnerable who are unable to

afford legal representation in the cases. Also, with sensitisation and technical support from Spotlight, the Legal AID Directorate recognised GBV survivors as clients. The case and the LAD started in January 2020 to record/classify all GBV cases handled.

Decentralisation of the courts

The GoZ continues to decentralise courts in Zimbabwe to improve access to justice. Zimbabwe now has High Court stations in five of the country's ten provinces. Magistrates' courts are also being established in major high-density areas. For example, magistrates' courts have been established in the high-density suburbs of Epworth, Budiriro, Entumbane, Nkulumane and Glen Norah in Harare and Bulawayo. This initiative has increased women and other marginalised groups' access to justice.

Creation of virtual courts

The COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges but also brought the opportunity for technological advancements within the justice sector. The GoZ, with the technical support from the development partners, established virtual courts in each of the 10 Provinces in the Country. At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, physical attendance in the courtroom became impossible, creating a formidable barrier to access to justice. To this end, the GoZ introduced virtual courts where litigants convene virtually to access justice in virtual courts. The primary intention of e-courts is to make the justice delivery system affordable, transparent, speedy and accountable by limiting paper filing witnesses' interests, reducing the backlog of pending cases and, most importantly, the number of unscrupulous activities. The introduction of e-courts and the electronic case management system is thus a long-term innovation by the government to curb challenges in accessing justice and, in the process, address issues like corruption as it promotes transparency and is very cost-effective.

To complement the virtual courts, the Government of Zimbabwe has introduced the Integrated Electronic Case Management System (IECMS), a web and computer-based system that manages and tracks court processes filed in the court registries.

b) Poverty eradication, agricultural productivity and food security

The Constitution provides for the right to sufficient food and compels the State to take reasonable measures to achieve the progressive realisation of this right. The Constitution also provides for food security as one of the National Objectives. To address poverty, particularly the feminisation of poverty, agriculture productivity and food security, the Government of Zimbabwe has spearheaded the following gender-responsive programmes:

- In November 2022, the Ministry of Agriculture launched the “Agric for She” programme, which has seen more women contributing to food security and increasingly taking agriculture as a business. The programme, the brainchild of the First Lady, Dr Auxilia Mnangagwa, was launched in 2022. It has become an integral part of farming in the country, scaling up sustainable food and nutritional security, income and opportunities for value addition and development of the agro-business value chain for women.
- In 2023, 17,519 women received fertiliser, seed and chemicals under the “Agric for She” programme. Vulnerable groups like the elderly, widows, orphans and those with disabilities are some of the beneficiaries.
- Climate-smart agriculture through the Pfumvudza/Intwasa concept is intended for climate-proof agriculture. The Pfumvudza/Intwasa concept is one of the conservation agriculture options through which the Presidential Input Support Programme targeted

1.8 million farmers and is expected to produce up to 1.8 million tonnes of grain nationally. The concept has contributed to food security at the household level. (to get more information from the of agriculture)

- Mechanisation – it involves the provision of farming machinery to farmers for modernising agriculture, leading to higher productivity and production, thus ensuring food security in the country.

c) Eliminating violence against women and girls

During the period under review, significant milestones were made in putting in place legislation and policies that protect women and girls from violence. The Government of Zimbabwe passed the Marriage Act [Chapter 5:17], which, among other provisions, criminalises child marriage by setting the minimum age of all marriages at 18 and protecting children from sexual exploitation. Further, the Government has adopted the Cybercrime and Data Protection Act, which criminalises Gender-based Violence perpetrated through online platforms. In addition, the country adopted the Zimbabwe National Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence (2023-2030). The strategy seeks to strengthen the delivery of adequate, accessible and responsive protection, care and support services to those affected by GBV and promote prevention and early identification of GBV. With support from the Global Spotlight Initiative Programme, the GoZ adopted a High-Level Political Compact on Ending Gender-Based Violence and Harmful Practices (HLPC), which was signed by His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, H.E Cde E.D Mnangagwa in October 2021. The HLPC demonstrates the increased effort and political will to eliminate violence against women and girls and harmful practices in Zimbabwe. This strategic intervention provides the foundation for the sustainability of the government's work on GBV. The HLPC establishes accountability in eradicating GBV at the Highest Level, with the President as the key champion and advocate. It also establishes a mechanism for financial investment in ending GBV from the Government and for addressing the socio-economic costs of GBV.

d) Political participation and representation

Increasing women's participation and representation was one of the Country's priority areas during the period under review. To this end, the Government of Zimbabwe 2023 adopted the Women in Leadership and Decision-Making Strategy to promote full participation and representation of women in decision-making. The Strategy focuses on five (5) thematic areas: women's participation in politics, private sector, public sector, civil society and community development. In addition, the Government of Zimbabwe, through the Zimbabwe Gender Commission, launched the Training and mentorship programme for aspiring women political candidates dubbed "Women Rise in Politics" (WRiP). Through the initiative, women were equipped with knowledge and skills to equip themselves for political office. A total of 425 Candidates were capacitated through this initiative, and resultantly, 18 candidates contested at the National Assembly level in the 2023 Harmonised Elections, whilst 44 candidates contested at the Local Authority level. Several civil society organisations also implemented similar training programmes for aspiring women political candidates. However, the results from the last election do not reflect the level of effort put into supporting women. Nevertheless, work has already started with ongoing work to audit the main political parties for gender and line-up training for aspiring candidates.

e) Strengthening women's participation in ensuring environmental sustainability

Considering the disproportionate impact of climate change and environmental changes on women, the Government of Zimbabwe has developed the initiatives to increase environmental sustainability such as the National Clean Cooking Strategy to promote sustainable cooking practices and address environmental and health challenges associated with traditional cooking methods.

c) OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS- SPECIFIC ACTIONS TAKEN TO PREVENT DISCRIMINATION AND PROMOTE THE RIGHTS OF MARGINALISED GROUPS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

a) Women and girls living in remote areas

Reflecting the principles of non-discrimination and “leaving no one behind”, the government of Zimbabwe, through the UN-supported Spotlight Initiative, enabled GBV services to reach the most vulnerable populations with the launch in December 2019 of one of the first Mobile One-Stop Centres (OSC) for the provision of multi-sectoral GBV services in remote and hard to reach areas. The target group for the Mobile One-Stop Centres are women and girls in rural areas, young women and adolescent girls in impoverished urban settlements and young women living with HIV. Traditionally, multi-sectoral services were primarily available at the provincial and district level. The introduction of the mobile OSC model enhanced service access among the most vulnerable GBV survivors in remote and hard-to-reach areas. Beneficiary feedback includes positive insights on the benefits of a mobile service, which eliminates current challenges to reach provincial and district-based services (e.g. transport fees) and the Mobile OSCs help to prioritise the delivery of GBV services in remote areas. Community volunteers responsible for GBV awareness raising and referrals have also reported that the availability of mobile services closer to the communities has made outreach efforts more effective and contributed to an increase in the number of referrals who successfully made use of GBV services (e.g. within 72h of SGBV reporting, survivors’ empowerment to report long term IPV perpetrators through elimination of mobility constraint. Mobile OSC campaigns were conducted in 12 districts. In 2019, 749 survivors accessed services through the Mobile OSC (644 females, 105 males). Service delivery was associated with community mobilisation and edutainment activities, such as roadshows (a popular drama and music edutainment model out of a moving truck).

b) Women and Girls with disabilities

The Constitution in Section 56 (3) outlines grounds for non-discrimination, and disability is among these grounds. To actualise these provisions and to promote the rights of women and girls with disabilities, the Government of Zimbabwe in 2021 adopted the National Disability Policy to facilitate inclusion of persons with disabilities in all facets of life and to end discrimination, marginalisation and exclusion of persons with all kinds of disabilities. In addition, the Persons with Disabilities Bill is before parliament. Key provisions include provisions on fundamental rights and freedoms of Persons with Disabilities, Employment of persons with disabilities, social protection mechanisms for PWDs and participation in politics and public life. However, the Government of Zimbabwe has made strides in promoting disability rights, especially in the public sector, by appointing Directors for Gender Mainstreaming, Inclusivity and Wellness, who, among other duties, are responsible for ensuring disability mainstreaming.

Through the Global Spotlight Initiative, women and girls with disabilities and Organisations of Persons with disabilities (OPDs) were supported to engage in consultations with duty bearers on laws and policies on disability and to make submissions to Parliament on disability inclusion and rights, GBV and SRHR issues faced by women with disability.

c) Women and girls living with HIV/AIDS

The Government, through the Ministry of Health and Childcare (MoHCC) in partnership with the National AIDS Council, is coordinating the Zvandiri programme (Zvandiri meaning ‘as I am’ in English) to equip children, adolescents and young people living with HIV (CAYPLHIV) with knowledge, skills and confidence to cope with their HIV status and to live healthy, safe, fulfilled lives. Since its inception, Africaid has worked in partnership with the Zimbabwean Ministry of Health and Childcare (MoHCC), the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and the National AIDS Council of Zimbabwe, have together developed a globally recognised, evidence-based, peer-led model for supporting CAYPLHIV. This model of differentiated service delivery combines clinic and community peer-led interventions which seek to improve CAYPLHIV’s uptake of HIV testing services, retention, adherence, and viral suppression, as well as their mental health, protection and sexual reproductive health. The *Zvandiri* approach centres on trained, mentored adolescents and young people living with HIV, 18-24 years, known as Community Adolescent Treatment Supporters (CATS). The government of Zimbabwe adopted the Zvandiri approach and has scaled up to 51 of 63 districts in Zimbabwe with funding from PEPFAR, UNICEF and other partners. It has expanded further to include disability, mental health, social protection, SRH, and PMTCT services for CAYPLHIV.

Further, the National AIDS Council is complementing the government of Zimbabwe and NGOs in implementing the Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored and Safe (DREAMS) program. The DREAMS program is targeting Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) aged 10 – 24 years of age who are vulnerable and at risk of getting HIV and AIDS. The project is appropriately placed to complement the Government of Zimbabwe's (GOZ) priorities towards ending AIDS by 2030. It is aligned with the Zimbabwe National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan (ZNASP) 2015- 2020, the National ASRHR Strategy 2016-2020 and the National Gender Policy, among other key instruments. Adolescent girls and young women face many challenges related to their development. These challenges include unemployment, limited educational opportunities, gender-based violence, inter-generational relationships, child marriages, early pregnancies, HIV infection and other adverse reproductive health outcomes. The Country’s gender-transformative approach guides the DREAMS, and it aims to prevent HIV infection in adolescent girls and young women by keeping them in school, improving their ability to exercise their rights, reducing Gender Based Violence (GBV) and increasing access to youth-friendly services. The Model consists of comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services, HIV testing and counselling and social protection interventions using a gender-responsive, youth-focused approach. This model is rooted in evidence which shows that HIV uniquely impacts Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) due to the complex vulnerabilities and barriers they experience when seeking and accessing adolescent-friendly and gender-responsive quality services. Key project activities address girls’ education, increased access, use, and quality of health services by AGYWs, providing accurate information and supportive family and community structures.

d) OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS- HOW THE CONFLUENCE OF DIFFERENT CRISES AFFECTED THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BPFA IN YOUR COUNTRY, AND WHAT MEASURES HAVE YOU TAKEN TO PREVENT THEIR NEGATIVE IMPACT ON PROGRESS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

COVID-19 affected the health and well-being of all, with women and girls being disproportionately affected, with more women contracting COVID-19 (54%) than men (46%) due to exposure as a result of their care roles and responsibilities. However, more men died of COVID (61%) compared to women (39%) because women tended to have positive health-seeking behaviour and were less complacent about the effects of the virus. There was disruption of health services during the pandemic, with partial to complete disruption highly prevalent (94%) in hospitals and 78% in clinics for family planning services, 89% in hospitals and 71% in clinics for antenatal care and 84% and 71% in clinics for institutional births. Disruptions of services were also high concerning cervical cancer diagnosis and treatment (94% in hospitals and 80% in clinics) and urgent blood transfusion services (83% in hospitals and 80% in clinics), which is critical for emergency obstetric care and maternal mortality reduction. Women are affected most as they are the ones who seek these services. Hence, maternal and child deaths per month increased (figures). Whilst lockdown and quarantine for travel measures were taken to reduce infections, more guidance was required for the services maintained during the pandemic.

Only businesses designed as essential were allowed to open during the lockdown period. All other citizens were confined to their homes except for trips to the grocery store and seeking medical attention. Women comprise (percentage) of the informal sector, experienced severe disruption to their economic activities, lost their sources of income, impeding their ability to buy food and other essentials. The crisis also resulted in the loss of jobs, primarily jobs performed by women in the service sectors such as hospitality, food and beverage, and retail services (percentages). The government and non-governmental organisations provide aid relief for vulnerable people, including cash transfers- though it was inadequate considering the house and national needs.

Increased stress due to the financial hardships caused by the restricted movements further contributed to the rise in GBV. Hotlines created by service providers were reporting steep rises in calls about domestic violence. Musasa Project, a social services organisation, noted that in the first 11 days of the lockdown, 764 cases of domestic violence were reported, significantly higher than the 500-600 cases reported each month before the lockdown (Sachiti, 2020). For women who already live with abusive partners, being locked in homes separated them from people and resources that can provide support and few opportunities to distance themselves from their abusers.

Initially there was an absence of a gendered analysis and gender responsive approach in the National COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plans. Therefore, GBV was not initially classified as an essential service until it became a crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic illustrated the political, economic, and social inequalities that continue to worsen the status of women and girls and increase their vulnerability to all forms of GBV. By GBV services being classified as 'essential services' enabled the Spotlight Initiative and other gender equality and women's rights groups to react as quickly as possible and to continue to shine a light on the negative impact of gender inequalities. One of the lessons from COVID-19 is that Emergency preparedness plans need to

be strengthened to act quickly to violence against women and girls during humanitarian and other crises if all forms of GBV remain classified as ‘essential services.’

In January and February 2021, a government report indicated that nearly 5,000 teenage girls became pregnant, with 1,800 entering into early marriages (Mavhunga, 2021). More vulnerable students could not return to the education system when schools reopened after the first lockdown. In Manicaland province, 415 girls in examination classes did not return to school, having entered into early marriage (Dzinamarira & Masuka, 2020). While pregnant girls and mothers are allowed to continue their education after the passing of the Education Amendment Act, stigma prevents many from attending lessons.

Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), on 2nd April 2020, presented an appeal for financial assistance amounting to USD 84.9 million to avert the crisis. Under the HRP's provisions, critical sector employers were granted incentives to preserve employment and avoid mass lay-off of workers. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe was to devise mechanisms for credit support, liquidity and asset purchase programs to prevent serious credit and liquidity crunch in domestic financial markets. But by the end of April, the COVID-19 pandemic had rendered approximately 7 million people in rural and urban centres in dire need of assistance, including food handouts. Data compiled in July 2020 by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) shows that nearly 4.3 million people in rural communities were severely food insecure, with 2.2 million 'cereal food insecure' in urban areas.

e) OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS- THE PRIORITIES FOR ACCELERATING PROGRESS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN YOUR COUNTRY THROUGH LAWS, POLICIES AND/OR PROGRAMMES

Section 2 highlights the country's priorities in the past five years. Building on the lessons learnt and Gaps realised in the past five years, the State Party is going to pursue the following priorities in the next five years;

a) Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice

Gender Equality Act

To fully realise the constitutional imperatives of gender equality, the government of Zimbabwe will pursue enacting a gender equality act. The Act will enable effect to be given to Gender Equality Provisions in the Constitution, including certain aspects of and provisions of CEDAW and the African Charter on human and people's rights on women's rights in Africa. The Act will call for, among other things.

- Elimination of gender stereotyping by stating clearly that both men and women are equitable before the law.
- Eliminating cultural practices and prejudices that define one group as superior while another group is inferior and support the identification and elimination of systemic causes of gender inequality in policy, programs and delivery of services.
- Special measures to give women opportunities to participate in political and government leadership by giving special percentages to women to push them further in leadership positions in Zimbabwe. These measures include but are not limited to women being given 50% of appointive and elective positions wherever they exist.
- Elimination of discrimination against women in health care services, primarily in the provision of SRHR and maternal health care
- Elimination of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

- Elimination of discrimination in employment,
- Declaration of any form of discrimination as an offence with consequences if convicted, including jail term and/or fine.

Sexual Harassment Act

To address the rising cases of sexual harassment, the Government of Zimbabwe, in the next five years, will pursue the enactment of a Sexual Harassment Act. Sexual Harassment has remained a serious challenge, yet it is not clearly defined in the existing laws. Sexual Harassment issues are currently enshrined in different pieces of legislation, particularly the Labour Act, the Domestic Violence Act, the Criminal Law [Codification and Reform] Act and Statutory Instrument 1 of 2000. However, these provisions have not comprehensively addressed issues of Sexual Harassment and therefore, comprehensive Sexual Harassment legislation is required to cover all forms of sexual harassment, i.e. Sexual harassment in the workplace, sexual harassment in tertiary institutions, Sexual harassment in public spaces and sexual harassment in private/domestic settings. The proposed legislation is also expected to provide penalties and remedies for sexual harassment.

b) Eliminating violence against women and girls

The Country's priorities for eliminating violence against women and girls in the next five years are informed by the Zimbabwe National Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence (2023-2030). The National Strategy sets the following priorities until 2030;

- Prevention of GBV through law reform, implementation of GBV Policies and Strategies, awareness raising and norm changing, male engagement and women's economic empowerment
- GBV Response through the provision of protection, care and support services
- Capacity strengthening of national and sub-national stakeholders to effectively and efficiently respond to GBV.
- Strengthening coordination, accountability and partnerships

c) Political participation and representation

The National Women in Leadership and Decision-Making Strategy 2023-2030 shapes the priorities for increasing women's participation and representation. Some of the key priorities in the strategy include;

- Reform of the Electoral laws to enhance women's participation in politics and to protect women from Violence in Elections
- Capacity development of sitting and aspiring women politicians
- Engagement with political parties for alignment of political party constitutions, processes and procedures to the gender equality provisions of the constitution
- Regulation and registration of political parties to influence internal democracy through adherence to constitutional provisions on gender equality.
- Review of the Political Parties Finance Act for increased access to financial support by women politicians.

d) Promoting gender equality as part of environmental sustainability, climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies

The Government of Zimbabwe recently launched the Zimbabwe Climate Change Gender Action Plan, following the adoption of the Gender Action Plan at the United Nations Framework

Conference on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties (COP)25 in 2019. In the Gender Action Plan, the following are the key priorities for the Country in the next five years;

- Gender Responsive Climate Financing
- Empower women to produce and use sustainable and alternative energy sources.
- Mainstream gender in climate change mitigation.
- Promote gender-responsive climate-smart agricultural technologies, particularly for women farmers.
- Strengthen women’s participation in forest and biodiversity management.
- Mainstream gender in the formulation and implementation of policies, laws and by-laws around integrated solid waste management

SECTION THREE: PROGRESS ACROSS THE 12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN: INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT, SHARED PROSPERITY AND DECENT WORK

f) OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS- ACTIONS TAKEN TO ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WORLD OF WORK (INCLUDING INFORMAL AND NON-STANDARD EMPLOYMENT AS WELL AS ENTREPRENEURSHIP)

Through the Labour Amendment Act No. 11 of 2023, the government sought to align the Labour Act with the Zimbabwe Constitution section 65 and the International Labour Organisation Convention ratified by Zimbabwe. The following are the progressive gender provisions from the new law:

- **Protection from violence and harassment in the world of work:**
 - The Act broadened definitions and protection of employees against sexual harassment and gender-based violence and the scope of coverage extended to the world of work, which includes violence that occurs beyond the physical workplace (s2, s6 and s8)
 - Prohibition of discrimination in employment and occupation: The Amendment Strengthened protection from discrimination in section 5, which now specifies equal remuneration for male and female workers. This clarifies that the Act outlaws discrimination based on gender... "No employer shall fail to pay equal remuneration to male and female employees for work of equal value."
 - Maternity protection: (s18) New provision removes the qualification period of one year, thereby making the provision non – discriminatory and aligned to the Constitution. The number of maternity leaves accorded is now unlimited- there is no longer a requirement for a two-year interval and a maximum of three pregnancies while employed by one employer. However, there are no mechanisms to protect young-bearing women from apparent likely discrimination based on this provision.

b) Measures to prevent sexual harassment, including in the workplace.

In 2020, the Public Service Commission undertook a Baseline Study that assessed the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions towards sexual harassment within the Public Service. The results of the study confirmed that sexual harassment (both verbal and physical) remains common, inadequately addressed, and negatively impacts the effectiveness and efficiency of employees. The findings also confirmed the need for collective and coordinated action towards addressing sexual harassment. This led to the development of a Sexual Harassment Policy. The main principle of the policy is to "protect the dignity of the workers in the Public Service, which is an imperative pre-requisite for maximum work productivity and effective service delivery".

The policy seeks to address the shortcomings that have existed in the public service when dealing with sexual harassment and provides for a conducive work environment that is free from sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse. The policy provides guidelines on reporting, investigating, and procedures for handling cases of sexual harassment, and this is key in addressing the impacts of sexual harassment. Additionally, the policy helps to reduce sexual harassment cases and create a safer workspace that is coupled with practical measures and systems that prevent and respond to sexual harassment.

In 2023, the Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC), the MWACSMED and several CSOs conducted public awareness interventions on sexual harassment in tertiary institutions, public institutions and workspaces. The awareness-raising sessions by the ZGC in tertiary institutions revealed that sexual harassment in the form of lecture-student relationships was prevalent in all institutions and fuelled mainly by power dynamics. In most instances, the harassment was transactional in that students would be coerced to comply with sexual demands in return for better academic grades. A key outcome of the public education and awareness sessions in tertiary institutions is increased knowledge among both staff and students on unacceptable behaviours concerning sexual harassment and the importance of reporting issues to enable effective responses, particularly in the context of sexual assault and rape.

The ZGC developed a training manual for workplace policy development and programme implementation. In partnership with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the ZGC published the National Strategy for Eliminating Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Violence in the Workplace in 2021. The strategy sought to implement ILO Convention 190 to make workplaces safer by mitigating sexual harassment. The two documents targeted the Tripartite Negotiating Forum partners (government, labour and employers). They guided public and private sectors to effectively respond to issues of violence and harassment through policies and programmes resulting in violence-free workplaces. However, the inclusion of persons with disabilities remains an issue for consideration. Over the years, ZGC has investigated cases of sexual and gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, rape, domestic violence, child abuse and child marriages. In 2020, 32 cases were investigated; 42 cases were investigated in 2021, 30 were investigated in 2022, and 32 were investigated in 2023.

c) Improved financial inclusion and access to credit, including for self-employed women.

The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe launched the second phase of the National Financial Inclusion Strategy for 2021-2025, taking over from the NFIS1, which had run from 2016-2020. The NFIS framework underpins efforts by the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, the Government of Zimbabwe, the private sector, and other stakeholders to achieve a shared vision of financial and economic inclusivity in the country. It provides a platform for public-private coordination, cooperation, and harmonisation of policies and programs related to financial inclusion in Zimbabwe. The NFISII aims to increase women's financial inclusion among disadvantaged groups such as youth, MSMEs, and rural and other small-scale agricultural communities. This facilitated the development and the participation of women and youth in agriculture, mining, and horticulture, as well as the development of value chains in agriculture, mining, horticulture, and the generation of exports.

The RBZ also established a collateral registry and expanded the credit registry system to include a range of movable properties and assets eligible for use as collateral in accessing bank credit. They also established a US\$15 million revolving Women's Empowerment Fund to facilitate the

development of value chains in agriculture, mining, horticulture, and the generation of exports. The government established the Women's Microfinance Bank (ZWMB) and the Empower Bank. As of December 2019, 12 of 19 banking institutions had established women's desks and 17 had established MSMEs desks. Accounts rose from 769 883 in 2016 to 1,736,285 in 2018 (126% increase) by September 2019. From the 210 registered microfinance institutions from March 2018 to March 2019, 160 074 borrowers were women, translating to 39.79% of the total borrowers. The value of the loans disbursed to women for the same period was US\$111.54 million, translating to 25.2% of the total value of loans disbursed. The value of loans to women also rose by 56% from US\$277.30 million to US\$432.36 million in the same period. Direct loans from the banking sector to women have been increasing in value, from US\$310.78 million in December 2017 to US\$432.36 million in December 2018, respectively, an increase of 39.1%. In addition, loans to MSMEs owned by women are available. Below are details of the loans made to women by banking and microfinance institutions. The decline in the number of women and women-owned SMEs accessing loans from banks was largely attributed to a number of short-term loans that matured during the period under review.

WOMEN ACCESSING LOANS IN THE BANKING SYSTEM

Indicator	31 December	31 March	Change
Number of loans to women	185,326	185,326	2.79%
Inflation-adjusted value of loans to women	ZW\$721.43 billion	ZW\$721.43 billion	ZW\$721.43 billion
Average loans to women as a percentage of total bank loans	7.76%	7.76%	7.76%
No. of SMEs owned by women accessing loans from banks	3,640	3,605	-0.96%
Percentage of women-owned SMEs accessing loans from banks	31.88%	21.16%	-10.71%
Inflation adjusted value of loans to SMEs owned by women	ZW\$119.66 billion	ZW\$120.90 billion	1.03%

The (ZWMB), a deposit-taking microfinance bank that commenced operations in 2018, is set to economically and socially empower women through innovative financial solutions and capacity building. Over the five years (2018-2023) of operations, a total of 161,784 women and communities accessed savings accounts, while 115,453 benefited from loans out of the 109,273 projects funded, creating and sustaining 137,611 and 173,709 jobs, respectively. Most of the projects were from the agriculture sector (82%), reaching out to women in rural and marginal areas and those with disabilities.

To further enhance the financial inclusion of women, the government, through the national budget, allocated an average of 0.1% for the Women Development Fund each year, 0.1% for the Zimbabwe Community Development Fund and 0.8% for the Small to Medium Enterprise Development Corporation (SMEDCO) Fund. The Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development administers these funds. Over the past five years, \$6.48

billion Zimbabwe dollars (rtgs) has been disbursed under these three funds and 11064 women have benefited from these funds. The funds targeted women, youth and those with disabilities, mainly in rural areas and in various business value chains.

The GoZ 2020 disbursed ZWL 163 million to finance businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds were shared between the Zimbabwe Women Micro-Finance Bank, which was allocated ZWL54 Million to benefit 14280 women. The remaining ZWL 109 million was allocated to the SMEDCO, which benefited 188 enterprises across the country, and out of these, 44% of the beneficiaries were women to safeguard equality in the distribution of loans.

To address the unmet need for finance and to help foster a culture of saving and discipline, several women participate in saving schemes and credit cooperative societies (SACCOs). SACCOs offer short-term loans, savings, motor vehicle, funeral, and health insurance. 1,244 SACCOs comprised this subsector in mid-2020, comprising a total membership of 28,815. 89. The NFISII expanded its focus to include SACCOS- to boost social protection for women and other vulnerable populations.

Despite the progress in pursuing an inclusive financial sector, gaps still exist in access to, usage and quality of financial products and services, especially for MSMEs of women, youth, rural population, small-scale agricultural sector and persons with disabilities. Capacity building is still required in entrepreneurial skills, business development, climate-resilient businesses, financial literacy, business management and digital skills.

7. IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS: ACTIONS TAKEN TO RECOGNISE, REDUCE AND/OR REDISTRIBUTE UNPAID CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK, PROMOTE WORK-LIFE AND FAMILY BALANCE AND STRENGTHEN THE RIGHTS OF PAID CARE WORKERS

As part of its commitment to monitoring global commitments on the world of work, including under Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and Goal 5 (Gender Equality) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Zimbabwe, through the Zimbabwe Statistical Office carries out the Labour Force Surveys and child labour survey every quarter as the primary source of information. These surveys aim to provide information for policy formulation on employment, human capital development strategies, macro-economic development, income support and social programmes. The survey findings also compile the economy's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). They provide structural information on the number and characteristics of the employed, which includes their jobs and working conditions, the job search activities of those without work, informal employment, unpaid forms of work, the number of hours one usually works per week-categorised according to main job, second job, other jobs and total. This survey also includes private household employees/domestic workers. Many workers are employed in several jobs to maximise income streams in a desperate attempt to raise their incomes. 45.5 % of workers work excessive hours (over 48-hour limits in the ILO's Hours of Work Conventions, 1919 (No. 1) and 1930). This is of great concern as this is family unfriendly. However, some progress has been made towards facilitating informal enterprises' needs, e.g., by opening people's markets. A draft National Formalization Strategy & Implementation Plan is in place for discussion and consideration.

Maternity Leave

One of the drastic changes brought about by the Labour Amendment Act is the regulation of maternity leave. Before the amendment, the sections regulating maternity leave provided for a qualifying service before one would be entitled to go on maternity leave. A female employee must serve an employer for at least one year before qualifying for maternity leave. The Labour Amendment Act has done away with this requirement. This means that every female employee can enjoy 98 days of paid maternity leave, irrespective of the period of service to an employer. The removal of the qualifying service also means that employees in fixed-term contracts are entitled to enjoy the maternity leave benefit in the same manner as permanent employees. The amendment also removes the maximum number of times a female employee can take maternity leave. Before the amendment, a female employee could only enjoy maternity leave on full pay for a maximum of three periods with one employer. The number of maternity leaves accorded is now unlimited.

Invested in time- and labour-saving infrastructure, such as public transport, electricity, water and sanitation, to reduce the burden of unpaid care and domestic work on women

Investment in public service buses continued from the period before COVID. During COVID, limited personnel were allowed in the offices on a rotational basis. Movement had to be effective and reduce congestion and the risk of infection. Public service continued to provide for civil servants on duty and transport them to and from work. This allowed workers to arrive home early and safely. This service has remained in place and is a cheaper way to transport civil servants at staggering bus times and a subsidised cost of 50ZWL per trip. This service has benefited women by saving them transport costs and increasing family time after work.

The government is committed to providing local-level service to empower women. Developmental programs, such as the Rural Electrification Programme, Renewable Energy Scheme, and the Presidential Borehole Drilling Scheme, promote women's equality and heighten the agenda of women in energy. The National Development Strategy 1 indicates that the country reached 77% of the population's target with access to clean and safe drinking water. The performance was attributable to interventions that included borehole drilling per village, rehabilitation of existing boreholes, and rehabilitation of water treatment plants and reticulation systems in urban areas and growth points. These programmes emancipate women by reducing the burden of accessing water and other energy sources, particularly for rural women. It also allows women to engage in different aspects of life. This has enabled proper management of water points and reduced potential conflicts and SGBV.

Legal changes regarding the division of marital assets or pension entitlements after divorce that acknowledge women's unpaid contribution to the family during marriage introduced.

The primary purpose of the New Marriage Acts (chapter 5:15) of May 2022 was to consolidate marriage laws. The Act recognises three types of marriages, including customary marriages. It extends protection to spouses in polygamous customary marriages to eliminate discrimination of spouses by ensuring fairness during and at the dissolution of the polygamous customary marriage. Furthermore, the Act criminalises child marriages and prohibits forced marriages and pledging of girls for marriage among the harmful cultural practices that it outlaws. Nothing in the new Act proscribes women in marriages to acquire their property separately. All marriages in Zimbabwe are out of the community of property, which, in essence, extends a degree of

protection in respect of proprietary rights for women in marriages who would have acquired their property.

8. IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS- ACTIONS TAKEN TO REDUCE THE GENDER DIGITAL DIVIDE?

The Government's National Development Strategy (NDS1) emphasizes creating an innovation-led and knowledge-based society that utilises science and technology to deliver broad-based economic transformation and socioeconomic opportunities for Zimbabwe.

In 2018, the Government conducted a National Critical Skills Audit, which confirmed the existence of significant skills gaps in Sciences, Engineering and Technology, ICT, Medical and Health Sciences and Agriculture, with women predominantly being disadvantaged. Further, the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICs) (2019) reports that 72% of women in Zimbabwe own mobile phones, 28.6% have ever used a computer and 33% have ever used the internet. On the other hand, MICs (2019) reports that 73% of men own mobile phones, 37% have ever used a computer and 45% have ever used the internet.

In response, the government made several Policy interventions and key decisions to strengthen Science, Technology and Innovation for the country's sustainable development. Noting the existing gaps in access and use of digital technologies and in a bid to reduce the digital divide and also technologically empower marginalised communities, the Government of Zimbabwe has put in place the following measures for bridging the gender digital divide.

- Community Information Centres (CIC)-established 202 Community Information Centres nationwide to ensure that ICTs are extended to marginalised communities in Zimbabwe. These centres are established in areas with limited availability of ICT gadgets such as laptops, tablets, or smartphones, and they have challenges in service affordability. Community Information Centres are, therefore, meant to bridge the digital divide between the rich and the poor people in communities and also between men and women, boys and girls. The primary purpose that drives the establishment of CICs is to achieve equality in accessing information, thereby bridging the digital divide between urban and rural folk. The CICs have stimulated growth and job creation, serving as electronic libraries where communities seek information about their needs. These are one-stop ICT access points in all the ten provinces of Zimbabwe. The CICs have offered the public free access to computers since 2021, enabling economically disadvantaged groups such as women to access the information highway at no cost. Further, the CICs have facilitated e-trading for women and SMEs as they can now trade or market their produce and wares through social media platforms.

Community information centres have also become centres for ICT training, and every province has CICs that offer basic training on the use of ICTs and computers. These trainings are critical in reducing the digital divide and ensuring accessibility by all members of the communities, including those who have not had previous exposure to ICT. However, other obstacles still exist which make it difficult for women to use the CICs as much as men, as indicated by statistics owing to time poverty, which emanates from the multiple roles that women play in the home.

- Internet Connectivity in Primary and Secondary Schools - Zimbabwe has embarked on a drive to establish internet connectivity in primary and secondary schools. The project provides primary and secondary schools with computer devices and Internet connectivity. Additionally, curriculum content was provided with teacher training on lesson delivery, class management and keeping school records on the same platform. Each beneficiary school received 80 student laptops, 10 tutor laptops, student and tutor desks and chairs, two projectors and screens, power supplies and solar panels. The project scope also includes providing functional websites with a Learning Management System (e-learning) materials, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephony, e-mail services and tele-education/video conferencing facilities. To date, 860 schools have benefitted from this project.
 - Through partnerships with Civil Society Organisations, Zimbabwe is establishing education and learning centres for girls where online programmes are conducted. These have become hubs that promote girls' participation in other regional and international meetings, such as the CSW, AU platforms, and SADC PF, among other policy-making spaces.
 - Women in ICT: The Government of Zimbabwe (March 2024) launched the Women in ICT Zimbabwe (WICTZ) to empower women to make an impact and take active leadership roles in the ICT sector. The initiative is benefitting women and girls from across the country by driving the development and application of new technologies (to get more information from the relevant ministry)

9. IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS- THE MACROECONOMIC AND FISCAL POLICY ENVIRONMENT AFFECTED THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BPFA IN YOUR COUNTRY, AND WHAT MACROECONOMIC POLICIES HAS YOUR COUNTRY IMPLEMENTED IN SUPPORT OF A MORE GENDER-EQUAL ECONOMY

After implementing the Transitional Stabilisation Programme (TSP), the GoZ embarked on the National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1) (2021-2025) macro-economic blueprint informed by the achievements of the TSP aimed at stabilising and stimulating economic growth. The NDS1 provides an inclusive development path, focusing on the judicious use of the country's resources to equitably accelerate sustainable economic growth and development in pursuit of the Nation's Vision of achieving a "Prosperous and Empowered Upper Middle-Income Society by 2030. The Strategy identifies its priorities as Economic Growth and Stability, Food Security and Nutrition, Governance Moving the Economy up the Value Chain & Structural Transformation, Human Capital Development, Environmental Protection, Climate Resilience and Natural Resource Management, Housing Delivery ICT and Digital Economy; Health and Well-being; Transport, Infrastructure & Utilities; Image building and International Engagement and Re-engagement; Social Protection; Youth, Sport and Culture and Devolution. The successful implementation of the Strategy is pegged on the success of other factors, including the global recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, local economic recovery on the back of firming international mineral prices and agriculture recovery. The Strategy supports cross-cutting issues such as gender, youth, people living with disabilities, arts and creative industry, environment and information communication technology in all thematic working programmes.

POVERTY ERADICATION, SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SOCIAL SERVICES

10. IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS- ACTIONS TAKEN TO REDUCE/ERADICATE POVERTY AMONG WOMEN AND GIRLS

The government prioritises the empowerment of youth and women. This has been possible through providing loans and opportunities across sectors of the economy/ value chains. In 2022, 1.1 million youths benefited from government funds and microfinance banks. This is attributed to establishing youth focal desks in line Ministries and appointing Directors of Gender, Inclusivity and Wellness in Ministries mainly to the support of development partners. This facilitated the collection of data on youth and women empowerment initiatives. In 2022, 187 611 youths were trained in business skills. This resulted in the employment of a two-pronged approach to training, which involved institutional-based and community skills outreach training for all beneficiaries identified.

Several SMEs (women and youths) were identified for skill training, product development and access to market assistance under ZIMTRADE. Women's businesses grew significantly in the agriculture value chains. The Ministry of Youth continued to provide TVET training to young women and men through its vocational training centres. Women entrepreneurs continue to benefit from the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community and SMEs, the SMES facilities in Banks, The Women's Finance Bank, The SMEDCO, and many privately led and CSO-led initiatives.

The government identified social protection as key to reducing poverty and vulnerability, re-dressing inequality, and promoting inclusive growth and development. In NDS 1, these outcome performances are measured by four key performance indicators: social assistance, social care and support services, livelihoods, and social insurance. Social aid was realised through food assistance for food-insecure households, school feeding programmes, social cash transfers, and the basic education assistance module (BEAM). The government strengthened social protection programmes for women and girls, e.g. cash transfers for women and food for work activities through public works.

In 2021, 2.3 million households were set to benefit from food assistance. Of that target, 3 million were reached, giving a positive variance of 665 418. In 2022, 3.2 million beneficiaries were reached, giving a positive variance of 839,988. In 2022, 4,601 schools implemented the feeding programme, notwithstanding constraints due to COVID-19-induced lockdowns and challenges with the procurement processes. This positively affected women who were responsible for providing food for the family.

Harmonised cash transfers- This programme is where the GoZ pays out a monthly cash stipend to every household deemed indigent for its sustenance. The target criteria for this cash recipient group are labour constraints and food for low-income families. The programme aims to reduce poverty and enable households to live decent lives. The cash is disbursed bi-monthly, and the amounts have been increased from the 1st of October 2019 as follows: one beneficiary from \$10 to \$100, two beneficiaries from \$15 to \$150, three beneficiaries from \$20 to \$200 and four beneficiaries from \$25 to \$250. In 2021 and 2022, the number of beneficiaries reached were 243 094 and 435 837 households, respectively (with concerns of underreporting by some agencies). Previously, food mitigation programmes and food distribution have been confined to rural communities. Still, the latest Zimvac report indicated moderate to severe poverty in urban areas and as a result, food distribution has started in areas such as Kuwadzana, GlenView and Dzivarasekwa.

Assisted Medical Treatment Order (AMTO)- This is a facility where GoZ pays medical bills for vulnerable groups at government medical facilities.

Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) This facility is where GoZ pays school fees and buys other school requirements for children from poor backgrounds in primary and secondary schools. During the first half of the NDS 1 implementation evaluation (2022), 3.2 million learners out of a target of 3 million learners were supported, notwithstanding COVID-19-induced lockdowns, which saw schools being closed during the first term of 2021, consequently affecting the registration of some learners.

For sustainable communities, initiatives were meant to address poverty by improving resilience at community level livelihoods included the Presidential inputs scheme, Pfumvudza/Intwasa; empowerment loans; access to productive assets; skills training; as well as other empowerment opportunities for access by the youths across sectors of the economy. The Presidential inputs scheme was to reach 2.3 million (more than half are women) smallholder farmers with inputs, with 3.5 million benefitting, against the background of timeous provision.

Strengthened and decentralised decentralise the legal aid Directory and introduced and strengthened low-cost legal services for women living in poverty.

11. IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS- ACTIONS TAKEN TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS?

The Government of Zimbabwe recognises access to adequate social protection as a fundamental right to ensure widespread human welfare. The Constitution of Zimbabwe in Section (30) states, “The State must take all practical measures, within its limit of resources available to it, to provide social security and social care to those in need.” In line with this provision, the Government of Zimbabwe has put in place policies and laws that facilitate the provision of protection. The central policy framework for the provision of social protection in Zimbabwe is the National Social Protection Policy Framework, which provides a guiding framework for the provision of social protection in Zimbabwe. According to the National Social Protection Policy Framework (2016), the social protection system in Zimbabwe is centred on five pillars:

- Social Assistance
- Social insurance
- Labour market reforms
- Livelihood and resilience interventions
- Social Support and Care

To this end, The GoZ is implementing social protection programmes aimed at cushioning the vulnerable and indigent, who are mainly women and girls, through the following programmes:

- a) Harmonised cash transfers- This is a programme where the GoZ pays out a monthly cash stipend to every household deemed indigent for its sustenance. The targeting criteria for this group of cash recipients is that GoZ targets labour constraints and food for low-income families. The programme aims to reduce household poverty, improve economic household power and improve the lives of vulnerable groups. The cash is disbursed bi-monthly, and the amounts have been increased from the 1st of October 2019 as follows: one beneficiary

from \$10 to \$100, two beneficiaries from \$15 to \$150, three beneficiaries from \$20 to \$200 and four beneficiaries from \$25 to \$250.

- b) Assisted Medical Treatment Order (AMTO)- This is a facility where GoZ pays medical bills for vulnerable groups at government medical facilities.
- c) Food Mitigation -This is a facility where the government and development partners provide grain to marginalised and poor communities monthly, in quantities determined by analysing the needs of each household and depending on the country's ecological region. Previously, food mitigation programmes and food distribution were confined to rural communities. Still, the latest Zimvac report indicated moderate to severe poverty in urban areas. As a result, food distribution has started in some urban areas such as Kuwadzana, Glenview, and Dzivarasekwa.
- d) Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) - This facility is where GoZ pays school fees and buys other school requirements for children from poor backgrounds in primary and secondary schools. BEAM has increased its target coverage to 1,5 million for primary and secondary pupils during the 2022 financial year. BEAM also provides school uniforms and stationery for the beneficiaries as part of the Social Protection pillar under the National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1). In 2021, For primary school learners, 313 185 Females and 310 171 male students benefited from BEAM; for secondary school, 7595 females and 8034 male learners benefitted from BEAM.
 - The Government of Zimbabwe is also spearheading the establishment of One-Stop Centres, which offer comprehensive services for GBV survivors, namely clinical services, legal services, police services and psychosocial support under one roof, at zero costs to the survivors. The One-Stop Centres are complemented by safe shelters, which are run mainly by CSOs and are meant to provide temporary shelter to survivors of GBV. Safe shelters have been established at the community level as infrastructure for the social protection of women who find themselves in life-threatening situations.

Social protection innovations adopted in response to the COVID-19

To cushion women, SMEs and other vulnerable groups from the impact of Covid 19, the Government of Zimbabwe, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, introduced a Zwl\$18 billion Stimulus package (translating to 9% of GDP) to cushion businesses, SMEs and other vulnerable groups from the economic impact of the pandemic. The Stimulus package was designed as follows:

- Agriculture support – ZWL\$6.08 billion
 - Working capital fund – ZWL\$3.02 billion
 - Mining Sector Fund – ZWL\$1 billion
 - SME Support Fund - ZWL\$0.50 billion
 - Tourism support fund – ZWL\$0.50
 - Arts Sector Fund ZWL\$0.020
 - Liquidity release from statutory reserves – ZWL\$2 billion
 - Health Sector Support Fund – ZWL\$1 billion
 - Broad relief measures – ZWL\$1.50 billion
 - Food grant – ZWL\$2.40 billionⁱ
- The Government of Zimbabwe prioritises social protection financing in its annual budgets. As such, in the 2024 national budget, the Government made the following budgetary allocations under social protection.

- Z\$2.4 trillion for the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare to scale up coverage and scope of flagship interventions such as the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM), Harmonised cash transfer programme, Food Deficit Mitigation, health assistance, child protection services, support to the elderly and persons with disabilities and the Presidential Input Scheme.
- The government, through BEAM, will provide Z\$805 billion as an educational safety net for around 1.5 million vulnerable and orphaned learners in all provinces to cover school fees, uniforms, teaching and learning materials.
- Food Mitigation guided by the forecasted El-Nino-induced drought during the 2023/24 season, a Budget of Z\$100 billion was allocated for grain distribution to the affected communities to cope with the impact of drought.

The country also benefits from development partners' assistance of US\$48 million in 2024 through the World Food Programme (WFP). In addition, the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office supports the vulnerable with cash transfers, including the food insecure people, with projected disbursements of USD\$1 million in 2024.

In the future, the government will use the social protection integrated Management Information System (MIS) to effectively target and track beneficiaries under the various programmes.

12. IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS- ACTIONS TAKEN TO IMPROVE HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN YOUR COUNTRY?

- a) The GoZ is aligning the Medical Services Act to the Constitution to guarantee the right to healthcare. The GoZ is also enacting the Medical Aid Societies Act to strengthen the regulation of medical aid societies by establishing a National Regulatory Authority. The government will establish a National Health Insurance Scheme to ensure every citizen can access a defined essential health package. Thus, the government intends to enact the National Health Insurance Act to guide this aspiration.

The GoZ has made significant strides to address the challenges of access to healthcare services by establishing grassroots health facilities in previously hard-to-reach communities (health posts). The GoZ has also increased efforts to capacitate healthcare workers in skilled birth attendance and to train more healthcare workers for all levels of care, including remote and hard-to-reach areas. The target is to deliver five 60-bed district hospitals and thirty 20-bed health centres in the country under a US\$210 million facility, with each health post serving three hundred and fifty households, thus decreasing distance. To date, health centres in Stoneridge in Harare and Cowdary Park in Bulawayo have been completed and are providing services to the public. The GoZ has embarked on a drive to equip health facilities with critical maternal/obstetrics and newborn health equipment at all levels. Procurement for at least 96 maternity theatres is currently in progress, with each operating theatre set to receive an operating theatre table, an anaesthetic machine, an operating theatre light, and a suction machine, among other items. In line with the Abuja declaration, the expenditure for public health in 2021 per capita met the target at US\$48.94, against a target of US\$35. The positive performance was attributable to increased domestic resources allocated towards health during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. At any other time without a pandemic, the health budget remains lower than the 15% prescribed in the Maputo Protocol. Other initiatives to ensure access to universal health care include:

- The GoZ is working on a National Health Insurance Scheme to ensure that every citizen has access to a basic package of services at a point of care without facing any financial outlet.
- The National Health Strategy (NHS 2021-2025) provides strategic directions to improve access to care to provide financial protection.
- Recognising that community health remains a key opportunity to advance Universal Health Coverage, the Government, through MoHCC, has streamlined packages provided at the community level. Following adopting the Primary Health Care Strategy, which established the Village Health Worker program, Zimbabwe moved from a curative-focused healthcare system to a preventive and promotive model. The Village Health Worker cadres continue to provide a varied health care package across districts and provinces.
- A Community Systems Strengthening Framework for Health was developed to eliminate inefficiencies in community health financing, governance and other essential functions such as training, development and alignment of the service package.
- Comprehensive Health Package (CHP) outlines a core package of evidence-based and cost-effective PHC interventions that will improve the health of Zimbabweans in both rural and urban communities. In developing the package of services for the community level, the MoHCC used the life-course approach to ensure equity across populations. This approach focuses on a healthy start to life and targets the needs of people at critical periods throughout their lifetimes. It promotes timely investments with a high rate of return for public health and the economy by addressing the root causes and not the consequences of health. For effective implementation, the package of services outlined in the CHP will be delivered as an integrated whole. The MoHCC and all partners involved in PHC service delivery will use this package as a guide when implementing health programmes.

Aimed at delivering the right interventions at the proper stages of life at the appropriate level of care, the CHP follows an integrated life course and continuum of care approach. While the life course approach links the physical and social hazards during gestation, childhood, adolescence, young adulthood and midlife that affect chronic disease risk and health outcomes later in life, an effective continuum of care refers to the continuity of individual care and ensures that appropriate care is available wherever it was needed and linked where necessary to other levels of care. The continuum of care approach involves a system that guides and tracks patients over time through a comprehensive array of health services that span all levels and intensities of care. The approach targeted three primary levels of continuity in care: Informational Continuity, Management Continuity and Relational Continuity. Integration along the continuum also promotes opportunities to link with other essential programs along the continuum of care, such as nutrition promotion and more vertical programs, such as prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV, Malaria control and Immunisation programs. CHP Interventions offers Promotional, Preventive and Curative Services, including Reproductive Health, Pregnancy ANC, Postpartum Care, Newborn Care (0-28 Days), Infancy and Childhood Care split into different age groups to focus rehabilitation and support (28 days to 5 years); Community IMNCI/ICCM for under 5; 6 to 9 years; 10 to 14 years and 15 years and above, Geriatric Care, Key Populations and Population-Based Support.

The GoZ has also increased access to health services at the community level by establishing health posts below the clinic level. Each health post serves three hundred and fifty households;

thus, it decreases distance. However, these centres have challenges providing comprehensive services as they lack essential medicines.

Maternal Mortality

The maternal mortality ratio declined from 462 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2019 to 363 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2022. The institutional perinatal mortality rate increased to 32 deaths per 1000 births in 2022 from 30 in 2021. This alarming trend occurs against the background of challenges with the quality of care during pregnancy, labour and delivery, late bookings by pregnant mothers, high turnover of midwives and nurses due to the attrition rates experienced in the sector, as well as a shortage of essential equipment and supplies for managing delivery of pregnant mothers and care of the newborn. 2021 Institutional deliveries recorded 88%; in 2022, the rate increased to 89%. This means that the proportion of pregnant women who deliver in health institutions has steadily increased. However, the proportion of pregnant women booking early for antenatal care was deficient, at 28% in 2021 and slightly decreased to 27.2% in 2022. This was attributed to religious beliefs and socio-cultural factors, access to health facilities, and those attributable to levying user fees in some health facilities.

Family Planning

The demand for Family Planning services remained low, with only 1,590,226 covered in 2022. The government noted that broadening coverage will require overcoming challenges related to human resource constraints, staff attrition, and inadequate service demand.

In complimenting the government's effort, SAYWHAT, an NGO focusing on the youth, adopted a comprehensive approach to addressing sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and gender-based violence (GBV) issues among students in tertiary institutions and surrounding communities. Rather than a clinical focus, the organization provides holistic health education and information to empower students and other young people to make informed decisions about their well-being. SAYWHAT's programs aim to enhance the target population's risk perception and health-seeking behaviour, enabling them to access appropriate services. SAYWHAT has established resource centres within higher learning institutions, operates a call centre (577), and organizes periodic health service fairs in collaboration with the institutions to facilitate access to care. These initiatives connect students and community members with clinical service providers, ensuring they can obtain the necessary SRHR and GBV-related support and services. Underpinning SAYWHAT's work strongly focuses on behavioural change models, which guide the development and implementation of the organization's interventions. As of December 2023, the organisation reached over 2 million (52% female) young people with information services. Over 12,000 (63% females) were referred for further services.

b) Developed gender-sensitive approaches to the prevention and treatment of chronic and non-communicable diseases (e.g. cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic respiratory disease, and diabetes)

In 2021, the proportion of visual inspection with acetic acid and cervicography (VIAC) positive women treated for pre-cancerous lesions of the cervix was surpassed at 108%, against a target of 79%. This dramatic rise to above 100% was because of a backlog of patients from the previous year (2020) who could not get treatment that year and were carried over and got treatment in 2021. In 2022, the performance was 79%, meaning that 79% of women who tested positive for

pre-cancerous lesions of the cervix were treated. The First Lady’s “Health Bus”, which provided mobile screening/testing for cervical cancer nationwide, made this initiative possible.

The government launched the Zimbabwe School Health Policy in March 2018 to operationalise comprehensive school health programming from when children enter the Infant level to the completion of secondary education. The following gender-specific public awareness/health promotion campaigns to address the harmful cultural and religious practices that negatively affect the health and well-being of children, especially the girl child, were undertaken:

- Dialogue and capacitation of community leaders is a continuous process.
- Awareness campaigns targeting children on Child Rights.
- A policy has been put in place that all survivors of sexual violence should be attended to at the first port of call, which is usually the health institution, overriding the previous policy where a survivor of sexual violence was expected to report to the police first before being attended to.
- To promote the health and well-being of children in such situations, they also benefit from the free maternity fees to encourage access and prevent complications and mortality.
- Through the Ministry of Health and Child Care, the government has health personnel who go into the apostolic shrines to raise awareness of the dangers of harmful cultural and religious practices.
- The Marriages Act is now in place and criminalises child marriages.

Content on harmful cultural and religious practices has been mainstreamed into the primary and secondary education curriculum as part of the human-rights-based approach adopted by the GoZ. The Education Act [Chapter 25:04] has been aligned with the Constitution of Zimbabwe to take on board the Bill of Rights for children. Ongoing community engagement on such issues is part of the education strategic plan.

- c) **Taken action to expand access to health services for marginalised groups of women and girls:** To prevent cervical cancer in women, the government embarked on cancer vaccination in girls under the age of 12 in schools. Below are the number of girls vaccinated in 2021 and 2022.

The HPV immunisation figures for Zimbabwe for 2021:

Year	Dose 1	Dose2
2021	286165	253150
2022	2096	1381

Community E-Health and E-Commerce Centres

XMarket Zimbabwe Private Limited, trading under the brand name ZimSmart Villages, is a pioneering e-health and e-commerce company based in Zimbabwe. The company is dedicated to bridging the digital divide and enhancing healthcare and commercial services in rural and underserved areas of Zimbabwe. ZimSmart Villages collaborates closely with the Ministry of ICTs, Post and Courier Services, Zimbabwe Postal Services, and other public and private entities to realize its vision. The vision is to revolutionize access to healthcare and retail services in Zimbabwe through technology, thereby improving the quality of life for its citizens, especially those in remote and underserved regions. The long-term goal is to establish 200 e-health and e-commerce hubs inside post offices, 1000 agent shops and 10000 female community agents (BatsiWomen) across Zimbabwe by the end of 2024, making a substantial contribution to the nation’s healthcare infrastructure and digital economy.

ZimSmart Villages operates by establishing e-health and e-commerce hubs across Zimbabwe. These hubs serve as central points where underserved communities access vital health services online and engage in e-commerce activities, thus fostering economic growth and improving healthcare accessibility. To date, four pilot sites in Chikomba, Nyanga, Precabe Farm in Kwekwe and Maria Theresa Clinic have been successfully launched, significantly impacting these communities by complementing the efforts of the First Lady as the National Health Ambassador. The target is to establish 200 hubs, 1,000 agent shops and 10,000 community agents (BatsiWomen) by the end of 2024.

13. IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS- ACTIONS TAKEN TO IMPROVE EDUCATION OUTCOMES AND SKILLS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS, INCLUDING IN SECTORS WHERE THEY ARE UNDERREPRESENTED?

The Government of Zimbabwe has made strides in facilitating inclusive education. To guarantee inclusive education, the Government of Zimbabwe, through the just-ended curriculum review process, prioritises gender mainstreaming in the education curriculum to address gender bias, gender stereotypes and harmful social norms and attitudes.

The Government of Zimbabwe has also adopted a whole-of-government approach to retain girls in school. Through the Education Amendment Act, Schools are no longer allowed to exclude pupils from school based on pregnancy. To this end, schools are now prohibited from expelling girls who fall pregnant. Girls who fall pregnant are offered an opportunity to be readmitted back into school after childbirth. Notably, the Country has noted an increase in the number of female pupils who have been readmitted to schools after falling pregnant, as illustrated in the table below:

School Level	Year	Readmission at the current school
Primary	2018	79
	2019	139
	2020	51
	2021	157
	2022	121
Secondary	2018	499
	2019	497
	2020	604
	2021	859
	2022	952

Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics remain key government policies. Several interventions have been implemented to empower the girl child, afford equal opportunities and narrow the gender gap in STEM domains. These include:

- a) STEM has been mainstreamed from infant education to higher and tertiary education levels. STEM is central to the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education, from early childhood development to advanced-level education. Science and technical-vocational education are compulsory at primary and lower secondary education levels to eliminate the stereotypes and encourage the undertaking of STEM career pathways from as early as ECD.

- b) The GoZ is reviving technical high schools in all provinces, starting with one school in each province as preparation for the learners before they enrol into tertiary institutions. Female students also benefit from this initiative. All teacher training colleges have been mandated to produce science teachers to ensure that all schools, including those in remote areas, have adequate science teachers.
- c) The Government continues to implement affirmative action measures by prioritising girls where students have the same points (qualification) to enter into a science programme. This recognizes the challenges the girl child faces in her science education journey. This strategy has significantly increased the number of girls in specific STEM disciplines.
- d) Development of ICT infrastructure such as computers and internet facilities to support the girl-child in marginalized areas so that they are up to date with the changes in science and technology. The digitization programme has significantly increased the capacity of the girl child to take up sciences. In 2023, the GoZ organised the inaugural Concord Young Women in Business Global ICT Programme, attracting women from rural and urban areas. The programme is designed to empower young women with skills in utilising information communication technology (ICT) to enhance their competencies and skills. About 7840 women from the ten (10) Provinces of the country were awarded Certificates of Competence.
- e) Role modelling, career guidance, and mentorship programmes are also being implemented to demystify the negative stereotype that STEM is a male domain.
- f) The reconfiguration of the Zimbabwe education system to Education 5.0 also supports the increased participation of women and girls in STEM. Education 5.0 expands the tripartite mission of public universities in teaching, research, and community service, including innovation and industrialization. Education 5.0 aims to equip Zimbabwe's general population, particularly the youth, with heritage-based, demand-driven, technical, technological and entrepreneurial skills that translate knowledge into tangible goods and services towards the economy's turnaround, including rural industrialisation. Strengthened implementation of Education 5.0 has seen the creation of innovation hubs and industrial parks, resulting in the development of many innovations, patents, and start-ups through Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions. There is a notable increased participation of women in the development of innovations, patents, and start-ups.
- g) To strengthen STEM participation of women and youths in rural and disadvantaged communities, the Government of Zimbabwe continues to improve access to Technical and Vocational Education and Training through the Integrated Skills Expansion Programme (ISEOP) introduced in 2022. Through the Integrated Skills Expansion Programme, all secondary and advanced level students in all parts of the Country undergo Higher Education Examination Council (HEXCO) short module courses that provide competency-based, technical, and vocational education. Out-of-school youths in communities are also the key targets of this programme. The programme removes the barriers of distance and long traditional duration for training, which usually systematically hinder women and girls from participating in STEM and the barrier of the five 'O' levels requirement mandated by the conventional courses.
- h) Efforts are underway to make science laboratories, technical workshops, and equipment available at all schools, including mobile science laboratories. Technical and vocational learning areas have expanded, particularly in secondary education.
- i) The curriculum assessment framework has been transformed to include the school-based/ Continuous Assessment of Learning Activities to strengthen the practical application of theory.

- j) To maintain sustained growth and development in both the quality and quantity of the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system, in 2023, the Government of Zimbabwe adopted and launched a gender-sensitive and inclusive TVET Policy. The Policy seeks to stabilise the teaching and learning environment by reconfiguring and strengthening the TVET programme infrastructure, strengthening TVET human capital infrastructure, strengthening the development and maintenance of physical and digital TVET infrastructure, strengthening the TVET legal infrastructure and the deployment of innovative financing infrastructure for technical vocational education and training. Its implementation will significantly benefit and increase the participation of women in Technical Vocational Education and Training. Vocational and entrepreneurship programs have enhanced women’s skill sets, empowering them to contribute to their economic empowerment and participation in various sectors.
- k) The Republic of Zimbabwe, through the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development, enacted Inclusive Work for Fees and Increase in uptake of Science and Mathematics policies, which promote girls and women to access education and training. The institutionalization of the Second Science and Technology (2012) policy was strengthened, leading to the tooling and re-tooling of science laboratories. STEM Scholarships and incentives are provided to girls pursuing STEM-related studies. The initiatives resulted in increased enrolment of women in tertiary education institutions, particularly increased participation in STEM. For the academic years 2020 to 2022, Twenty-Three Thousand Five Hundred and Thirty-Seven (23 537) females graduated in Tertiary Education Institutions, with 7 862 specialising in STEM disciplines, representing 33% of total female graduates. In the first semester of the 2024 academic year, 30 199 female students enrolled, with 6 067 specialising in STEM disciplines, representing 20%. The enrolment is anticipated to increase in the August 2024 intake.

14. ACTIONS TAKEN TO ENSURE THAT ECONOMIC RECOVERY FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC CLOSES GENDER GAPS IN POVERTY, EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL PROTECTION, EDUCATION, AND/OR HEALTH THAT THE PANDEMIC HAS EXACERBATED

The GoZ 2020 disbursed ZWL 163 million to finance businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds were shared between the Zimbabwe Women Micro-Finance Bank, which allocated ZWL54 million to benefit 14280 women. The remaining ZWL 109 million was allocated to the Small to Medium Enterprise Development Corporation (SMEDCO), which benefited 188 enterprises across the country. Out of these, 44% of the beneficiaries were women to safeguard equality in the distribution of loans. Through the Zimbabwe Women Microfinance Bank and SMEDCO, the GoZ continues to offer women a wide range of financial packages, including loans, asset financing, investment, and savings. These are provided with minimum interest rates, flexible borrowing conditions, and little collateral requirements guided by the collateral registry published by the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe.

In 2020, GoZ launched the Zimbabwe National Housing Human Settlement Policy (ZNHHP) to ensure well-planned, well-governed, and sustainable human settlements for all people, including those with low incomes and marginalised and rural populations. The policy entails social housing, an initiative spearheaded by government and local authorities to assist those who do not qualify or cannot afford rentals. It also carries a component of sanitisation and regularisation, where informal settlements will be regularised and sanitised by installing proper

water and sewer systems to meet basic human settlement standards. The policy stipulates that, on allocating housing, goods, and services, 10% shall be reserved explicitly for women. Further, the GoZ is reviewing its legislation to eliminate discrimination against women regarding the inheritance of communal land and other circumstances arising from marital status and succession.

The GoZ is committed at the national level to empowering women more in the energy sector. Relevant developmental programs, such as the Rural Electrification Programme, Renewable Energy Scheme, and the Presidential Borehole Drilling Scheme, promote women's equality and heighten the agenda of women in energy. Such programs emancipate women by reducing the burden of accessing water and other energy sources and allowing rural women, mainly, to engage in different aspects of life.

Epworth Safe Market

Ministry of Women's Affairs, Small and Medium Enterprises and Community Development has established a Safe Market for women in Epworth, Overspill area. The project seeks to bring transformative change towards SGBV in public spaces and its impact. Secondly, conscious of the financial challenges facing many local authorities that restrict their ability to provide essential services and women-friendly infrastructure, the project seeks to leverage the mutual benefits of Public Private Partnership by encouraging investing in economically viable and safe public spaces. Finally, the project aims to address the social norms and gender stereotypes that normalise violence against women in public spaces by changing the attitudes and behaviours of individuals and communities towards women and girls. The project has benefited 100 women and men vendors and Small and Medium Enterprises. The project will be replicated in other provinces such as Masvingo, Matabeleland South and Manicaland.

FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE, STIGMA AND STEREOTYPES

15. OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS- FORMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND SPECIFIC CONTEXTS OR SETTINGS PRIORITIZED FOR ACTION

The current GBV prevalence status in Zimbabwe makes a compelling case for concerted and urgent action by the Zimbabwean Government and key stakeholders. GBV was on the rise in 2020. Preliminary data suggests a sharp rise in violence against women and girls emanating from the COVID-19 pandemic, which is synonymous with the global trend. COVID-19 has exacerbated age, gender, and disability inequalities and placed women, girls, and other vulnerable groups at increased risk of GBV, SGBV and intimate partner violence (IPV). IPV In the context of the COVID-19 movement, restrictions and isolation measures put in place to curb the spread of the pandemic increased instances of domestic and intimate partner violence to unprecedented levels, particularly during the initial lockdown period that started in March 2020. Since the start of the lockdown, national GBV hotlines have recorded a call increase of over 90%. The helpline received an increase of 43% in daily calls. The National GBV Hotline (Musasa) recorded 4615 calls from the beginning of the lockdown on 30 March until 15 July.

Intimate partner violence, including sexual violence and marital rape

According to MICS 2019, women who have ever been married have experienced emotional (22.2%), physical (16.6%) or sexual violence (6.1%) from their husband/partner in the past 12 months. According to ZDHS 2015, more than one in three (35%) ever-married women aged 15-

49 have experienced spousal violence (physical or sexual violence committed by their husbands/partners). 20% of ever-married women have experienced physical or sexual violence by their partner in the year before the survey. Spousal violence is relatively common throughout Zimbabwe, ranging from 20% in Matabeleland North to 45% in Mashonaland West. Tolerant attitudes contribute to the incidence of IPV as many Zimbabweans still consider IPV to be a private matter; hence, the community should not interfere. Statistics on adolescent girls and women aged 15-49 who have experienced sexual violence depict the sad reality that current husband/partner (55.1%), former inmate partner/ boyfriend (7.4%), stranger (5.8%), and other relative (4.7%) are most perpetrators of violence on women and girls. This reality is evident in the fact that GBV is primarily rooted in individual attitudes that condone violence within the family and community.

Consequently, most incidences of gender-based violence manifesting in the form of rape, marital rape, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, psychological abuse, and forced position occur in the private sphere. Some men say that wife beating and marital rape are justified if the wife refuses sex, does not dress modestly, or is disrespectful to her husband. Many women support the idea that abuse is sometimes justifiable because they share the basic belief that men are superior to women. As a result of these negative social norms and cultural practices, women are reluctant to report gender-based violence; hence, the help-seeking behaviour of survivors remains low at 35.6% to 49.9% across all ten provinces. Half of the women, therefore, believe that such abuse is acceptable.

Child Early, Forced Marriages and Violence Against Children

Child Abuse is rife across the country and comes in many forms, the highest being child marriage and sexual abuse, followed by other forms such as physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and child portion. Despite constitutional prohibitions, particularly section 80 (3), which outlaws all laws, customs, traditions and cultural practices that infringe on the rights of women and prohibits forced and child marriages, the trend of child marriage is increasing. The Zimbabwe Gender Commission, with other stakeholders, carried out a national inquiry on sexual exploitation and abuse of vulnerable groups such as young women, girls and child marriages. From their findings, the nature of girl-child marriages varies in form, including child-to-child, child-to-older man, polygamous or monogamous unions. In terms of geographical outlook, child marriages in Zimbabwe are higher (40%) in rural areas than in urban areas (21.3%). Mashonaland Central was at the top of the list of provinces with the highest number of cases of child marriages, with at least 50% of the marriages involving minors (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019). Hotspots were identified, and examples include specific Wards in Mudzi District, Chiredzi District, Wards 4 Majarata, and growth points in Wards 7, Chilonga and Chikombedzi Ward 11 and Gezani Ward 13. Of great concern is the lack of consensus within the communities when it comes to describing child marriages as a problem, with some communities having accepted child marriages as a good option for their children whilst other communities are clear that child marriage is a violation of children's rights. Work needs to focus on addressing the multifaceted and interrelated drivers of child marriages. These include child poverty, lack of school fees, adolescent pregnancy resulting in children being forced to stay with the person responsible for the pregnancy, peer and parental pressure, gaps in the legal system, lack of parental supervision or poor parenting, negative religious practices and harmful cultural practices. A concerted effort is required from various stakeholders at local and national levels to address early and child marriages. For example, The Chiefdoms of Bushu and Nyamaropa, with support from Rosaria Memorial Trust and stakeholders, drafted by-laws on ending child

marriages and upholding children's rights. The by-laws act as a guide to all residents of the chiefdoms and a guide to the chiefs who preside over customary courts (Ministry of Local Government and Public Works/MoWCSMED)

Violence against women and girls facilitated by technology (e.g. online sexual harassment, online stalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images)

Online violence against children increased, especially during the lockdown period. Access to gadgets and the use of social media made children vulnerable. Zimbabwe has distinguished itself as a country committed to fighting online violence by launching the Zimbabwean Child Online Protection Taskforce (ZICOP), signing the Global Alliance's Statement of Action to Tackle Online Child Sexual Exploitation, ratifying the UN Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and becoming the second African country to connect to the global Interpol database on child sexual abuse material. In May 2020, the Spotlight Initiative developed the only GBV technical proposal submission to strengthen the legal provisions in the newly gazette Cyber Security and Data Protection Bill to protect women and children from Online Violence.

Sexual harassment and violence in public places, educational settings and workplaces

Zimbabwe has recorded many forms of violence in the workplace, the highest of which is sexual harassment. Differences between women's and men's exposure to the risk of specific forms of workplace violence are reinforced by sex-segregated workplaces and differential access to economic means, rooted in, among other things, gender roles and cultural factors. Gender-related expectations about 'female' and 'male' behaviour also influence levels of exposure to risk when men and women have the same job tasks in similar conditions. There is a data gap on sexual harassment in the workplace as there has not been a specific study to determine its status and trends. Despite this fact, the country has witnessed several Sexual Harassment cases being brought before the Zimbabwe Gender Commission for investigation, as well as other cases that have been brought before the courts.

The educational spaces have also been breeding grounds for sexual harassment through the "thigh for marks" practice. Several female students have fallen prey to gullible lectures. For this reason, the Gender Commission has also been raising public education/awareness in various tertiary institutions.

Sexual Harassment in public spaces has in the past targeted young women wearing miniskirts. With a number being stripped and ridiculed at the main bus terminuses. Other forms of public violence have been verbal, with a lot of name-calling and body shaming. With support from Spotlight Initiatives, The Public Service Commission has implemented the Sexual Harassment Policy. Efforts are underway to create a Sexual Harassment Act to define sexual harassment and establish a pathway for dealing with it in private and public spaces.

Gender-Based Violence in the Media

The Media is one space where there is a high potential for women and girls to be stereotyped and misrepresented. This comes through the messages carried in the media and challenges of Sexual Harassment among staff members in the newsrooms and clients (including those online). A couple of sexual harassment cases came into the public domain in the past year. Efforts to address discrimination against women in the media and in curbing sexual harassment focused on:

- Creating content that gives women active voices and influences their decisions through programmes such as Women in Farming, Women in Business, Girl Child and the Scribe.
- Improved portrayal of women in the media doing work that was deemed a preserve for males.
- Policies were formulated in the media sector to advance gender equality. The Zimbabwe Media Commission launched a Sexual Harassment Policy to create a media environment free from sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse of women.
- Robust Gender mainstreaming took place in the media sector.

16. IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS- ACTIONS PRIORITIZED TO ADDRESS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The Government of Zimbabwe is committed to addressing gender-based violence as such, implemented several legislative reforms to strengthen the legal framework for addressing gender-based violence in all its forms. To this end, the following laws were enacted during the period under review:

- a) Marriage Act [Chapter 5:17], which criminalizes child marriages, sets the legal minimum age of marriage at 18 years and provides for equality of rights and obligations of spouses during marriage and dissolution
- b) Cybercrime and Data Protection Act – which provides provisions to criminalise online violence against women, girls and children
- c) Labour Amendment Act 2023—This Act aligns the country’s labour law with the ILO Convention 190 by including provisions on violence and harassment at the workplace. It outlines possible sanctions for perpetrators, including dismissal, fine or imprisonment.

Further, The GoZ developed the Zimbabwe National Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence (2023-2030). The strategy seeks to strengthen the delivery of adequate, accessible and responsive protection, care and support services to those affected by GBV and promote prevention and early identification of GBV.

The Government of Zimbabwe continues to give effect to the Protocol on the Multi-Sectoral Management of Sexual Abuse and Violence, which aims to provide a comprehensive and coordinated response to the management of survivors of sexual abuse. This response has also created the Victim Friendly Courts, which protect vulnerable witnesses in sexual abuse cases. Although initially intended for child victims of sexual abuse, it has now been extended to adult female rape survivors. Victim Friendly Units (VFU) at police stations and police posts were also set up to discreetly handle cases of violence against women, child sexual abuse and adult rape, among other issues as well as to ensure that vulnerable witnesses are correctly handled in reporting and processing their cases. Nationally, there are 419 (four hundred and nineteen) victim-friendly police stations situated at national, provincial and district levels.

Strides have been made towards providing comprehensive GBV services to GBV Survivors through establishing One Stop Centres (OSC) across the country and Mobile One Stop Centres. Survivors of violence are provided with comprehensive services under one roof, including health, psychosocial, legal and police services. Mobile One Stop Centres bring these services to remote parts of the country. The government has thirteen (13) one-stop centres across all provinces. In 2022 alone, fifty-one thousand six hundred ninety-nine (51,699) survivors of GBV had accessed service at these One-Stop Centres.

With support from the Global Spotlight Initiative Programme, the GoZ adopted the High-Level Political Compact on Ending Gender-Based Violence and Harmful Practices (HLPC). The HLPC is the first of its kind and demonstrates the increased effort and political will to eliminate violence against women and girls and harmful practices. HLPC is a transformative initiative that enhances national response to Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and Harmful Practices. It is a well-resourced, national, accountable and inclusive compact.

During the period under review, the Constitutional Court of Zimbabwe made several landmark rulings that have advanced the protection of children from harmful cultural practices. Following the abolition of child marriages in the Tsopodzi and Mudzuri case, the Constitutional Court in the Kawenda case, determined in 2021 that the provisions in the Criminal Code relating to sexual offences do not extend complete protection to all children between the ages of sixteen (16) and eighteen (18) from sexual exploitation. This exclusion historically had perpetuated harmful cultural practices such as early child marriages. To this end, the State Party is in the process of amending the Criminal Code on all sexual offences to be responsive to the elimination of exploitation and other harmful practices. (ACHPR 2023)

17. IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS- STRATEGIES HAS YOUR COUNTRY USED TO PREVENT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

GBV Prevention programming in Zimbabwe mainly focuses on strengthening legal and policy frameworks and raising awareness to change harmful social norms and practices. Comprehensive sex education has also been introduced in schools through the Guidance and Counselling Module to educate boys and girls on sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Prevention programmes are mainly spearheaded by community service organizations (CSOs), with funding from development partners and in partnership with the government, traditional leaders, and communities. These initiatives have led to significant policy reforms and greater awareness of GBV, though challenges remain in securing continuity of programming for addressing long-term issues, especially with social norms and customs that enable GBV and discourage help-seeking

GBV Prevention intervention programming in Zimbabwe mainly focuses on strengthening the legal and policy framework and raising awareness to change harmful social norms and practices. To this end, the Government and partners carryout community-based awareness campaigns on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) that focus on raising awareness of Gender-Based Violence and Gender-based Violence Laws, building community activism against gender-based violence, strengthening the capacity of the community to establish mechanisms for preventing and responding to gender-based violence. Sensitisation campaigns also target traditional leaders to capacitate them with information to enable them to take the lead role in discussing transformative masculinity, addressing rigid gender and social norms and the adverse effects of patriarchy. Some of the prevention strategies are highlighted below:

Love Shouldn't Hurt – the programme spearheaded by the ministry of women affairs and Civil Society partners, Population Solutions for Health and PSI, aims to empower men and women in Zimbabwe with knowledge, motivation and the urgency needed to eliminate violence in relationships and in the community. The initiative seeks to:

- a) Create a movement of men and women who shun violence in their community.
- b) Increase knowledge of the negative implications of violence from individual through to community level.
- c) Inspire perpetrators and survivors to resolve conflict in a non-violent manner.
- d) Make non-violence appear manly and attractive.

Sasa Faith is an initiative in which leaders, members and allies of religion come together to prevent violence against women and HIV. It involves a community mobilisation approach and corresponding activities that engage everyone in living the faith-based values of justice, peace and dignity. SASA Faith is implemented by and for the entire faith community. Everyone plays a role and benefits. Katswe Sistahood is implementing faith to curtail Gender-Based Violence in communities. The central communities of action are in Epworth and Kwekwe town.

Pamumvuri – Musasa is implementing the Pamumvuri program in districts where many protection issues and safety nets have collapsed. Food and economic insecurity have primarily contributed to tensions at the household level, resulting in intimate partner violence and child marriages. The project tries to prevent and respond to GBV by strengthening safe reporting platforms. Musasa, with support from UNICEF, is providing quality survivor-sensitive services to adolescent girls and young women survivors of GBV through its Shelters, One Stop Centre (OSC) and the Helpline

Interventions in Mberengwa and Bubi

With support from Oxfam, Musasa continues to reach out to Mberengwa and Bubi communities to increase knowledge levels on GBV response and prevention through various initiatives and improving access to GBV services. This has seen many vulnerable women being able to access GBV services within their communities through mobile one-stop centre services. Existing community structures are being strengthened by capacitating community cadres on GBV response and prevention during emergencies. The project continues to gain sustainability through the community visioning exercise, in which the community is empowered to take on GBV response and prevention. Shelter services continue to serve as a source of relief and information for relevant referrals and support to a higher level of care. Good coordination of work with government stakeholders, local cadres and partners continues to contribute significantly to community engagement and sustainable changes regarding GBV response and prevention. Activities being conducted are community visioning, training community-based clubs on GBV response, prevention during emergencies, GBV and SRH Mobile one-stop centres, Production and airing of radio jingles, Safe space activities, and Provision of shelter services.

The Zimbabwe Gender Commission has been leading prevention efforts around sexual harassment through awareness-raising efforts in tertiary institutions and public and private sector organizations. In 2023, the Commission carried out 12 awareness sessions in tertiary institutions. Further, a National Strategy on Violence and Harassment in the Workplace is in place to guide institutions on strategies to address sexual harassment in the world of work.

18. IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS- ACTIONS TAKEN TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (e.g. online sexual harassment, online stalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images)

Respect and protection of life, bodily integrity and security of the person are fundamental rights protected and guaranteed by the Constitution and the country's laws. This is important as it reflects the reality that women continue to suffer violence both in the private and public spheres. Existing legislation criminalising violation of these rights continues to be amended and reviewed to address newly developing threats to integrity and personal security, such as cyberbullying. The Government of Zimbabwe 2021 promulgated the Cybercrime and Data Protection Act [Chapter 12:07], which creates several criminal offences of online nature, including, among others, the distribution of or publication of personal and or intimate information, including photos without the other party's consent and cyberbullying. The Act contains explicit provisions criminalising online violence against women, girls and children.

19. IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS- MEASURES TAKEN TO RESOURCE WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS WORKING TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO GBV

The State Party has no obligation to resource women's organisations, but these have benefitted as partners and beneficiaries of National Programmes for Prevention and Response. The Government of Zimbabwe acknowledges civil society organisations' role in complementing government efforts in GBV Prevention and Response Efforts. Through the Spotlight Initiative, an EU-funded programme, Women's Organisations were part of the implementing partners for the Initiative. In addition, the Spotlight Initiative had a specific pillar for CSOs. In addition, civil society organisations have also benefitted from being implementing partners for the Global Fund, Dreams programme, and support from UN agencies, among others, in implementing GBV prevention and response programmes.

The MWACSMED often hold coordination meetings with CSOs. This meeting presents an opportunity for all key stakeholder to share their programming and potential areas of collaboration with the ministry and other CSOs.

20. IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS- ACTIONS TAKEN TO ADDRESS THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN AND GIRLS, DISCRIMINATION AND/OR GENDER BIAS IN THE MEDIA, INCLUDING SOCIAL MEDIA

Measures to address gender bias and promote equality in the media, including social media, are crucial for fostering a more inclusive and informed society. Several efforts have been made to address gender biases and the following are some of the initiatives conducted;

- Capacitation of the media personnel on gender-sensitive reporting, i.e. training journalists and engaging editors.
- Lobbying is needed to nurture female sources so that at any given point in time, they can seek comments from women.
- Appointment of women into positions of decision-making in the newsrooms –also shifts perspectives. (Ms Helliata Rushwaya is the chairperson of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) Board, Professor Ruby Magosvongwe is a Chairperson of the Zimbabwe Media Commission, Ms Nomsa Nkala is the head of ZTN Television, Victoria Ruzvidzo is the editor of the Herald (becoming the first woman to edit the flagship paper) and Faith Zaba is the Editor of The Zimbabwe Independent.
- The ICT sector has widened, and more women are included in it.

- Mitigating Sexual Harassment and GBV in the newsrooms through the adoption of a Sexual Harassment Policy for the Media Fraternity, which was launched on 12 April 2024 to provide for the provision and maintenance of a workplace environment that is free from sexual harassment and sexual violence for all media practitioners

However, although positive strides have been made, other efforts that can be implemented to improve the status of women in the media fraternity are as follows;

- a) Institution of Gender-Sensitive Policies and Regulations:
 - Legislation: Strengthen existing laws or enact new ones that explicitly address gender equality in media content.
 - Self-Regulation: Encourage media organizations to adopt gender-sensitive guidelines and codes of conduct.
- b) Promoting Gender Equality in Newsrooms:
 - Representation: Increase the representation of women in media decision-making positions, including editorial boards and management roles.
 - Training: Upscale gender sensitization training for journalists and media professionals to raise awareness about stereotypes and biases.
- c) Content Creation and Reporting:
 - Diverse Perspectives: Encourage journalists to seek diverse sources and voices, including women experts and activists, to ensure balanced reporting.
 - Avoid Stereotypes: Media content should avoid perpetuating harmful stereotypes related to gender roles, appearance, and abilities.
- d) Monitoring and Accountability:
 - Gender Audits: Regularly assess media content for gender bias and discrimination. Independent bodies can conduct audits to identify areas for improvement.
 - Complaint Mechanisms: Establish accessible channels for the public to report gender bias or discrimination in media content.
- e) Promoting Positive Role Models:
 - Highlight Success Stories: Showcase positive stories of women's achievements, leadership, and contributions across various fields.
 - Champion Gender Equality: Media outlets can promote gender equality campaigns and initiatives.
- f) Collaboration and Partnerships:
 - Civil Society Organizations: Collaborate with NGOs and women's rights groups to create awareness and advocate for gender-sensitive media practices.
 - Academic Institutions: Engage universities and journalism schools to integrate gender perspectives into media education.
- g) Social Media Awareness:
 - Digital Literacy: Educate social media users about responsible content sharing and the impact of harmful stereotypes.
 - Online Campaigns: Run awareness campaigns on social media platforms to challenge biases and promote gender equality.

Addressing gender bias is an ongoing process, and collective efforts from media organizations, policymakers, civil society, and the public are essential. A more inclusive media landscape can create a fairer and more equitable society.

21. IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS- ACTIONS TAKEN SPECIFICALLY TAILORED TO ADDRESS VIOLENCE AGAINST MARGINALIZED GROUPS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

The government of Zimbabwe, in partnership with CSOs, has established 23 community-based safe shelters across the country whose purpose is to provide and secure protected temporary shelter to GBV survivors. At the same time, they receive GBV services and await reintegration into their families. In 2021, 1197 (one thousand one hundred and ninety-seven) women were admitted to these safe shelters, where they received skills training that enabled them to start income-generating activities upon reintegration into society.

Community-based shelters meet the needs of women, girls and children fleeing violence and continue to equip survivors with essential life skills to start income-generating activities. Shelters receive support to meet all client's needs while following legal recourse or pursuing a safe reintegration plan. The shelters provide a safe space for recovery and restoration.

As mentioned in 15 above, The Chiefdoms of Bushu and Nyamaropa, with support from Rosaria Memorial Trust and stakeholders, drafted by-laws on ending child marriages and upholding children's rights. The by-laws act as a guide for all residents of the chiefdoms and for the chiefs who preside over customary courts (Ministry of Local Government and Public Works/MoWCSMED).

In order to simultaneously safeguard the security of persons, guaranteeing anonymity and encouraging reporting of cases of gender-based violence, the GoZ established GBV Call Centers and toll-free numbers to make sure services are accessible to all clients, especially women and children. Survivors receive psychosocial support and legal advice through these hotlines and are referred to relevant service providers. The country has more than 20 (twenty) toll-free numbers to assist GBV survivors. These include toll-free numbers housed in the office of the First Lady, Doctor Auxillia Munangagwa, the Zimbabwe Gender Commission and the Musasa Project. In 2022 alone, 54 003 (fifty-four thousand and three) GBV cases were reported to authorities through these platforms, with survivors also accessing services.

Under the Spotlight initiatives, district officials received capacity building on the development of GBV, SRHR and HP coordination mechanisms with communities. The Innovators against GBV (IAGs) within the Spotlight five Provinces spearheaded the start of five campaigns to mobilise communities against the cultures of silence and impunity that continue to drive GBV/SGBV and harmful practices further into the private sphere. These campaigns, which involve religious and traditional leaders, the police, government district officials, community-based organizations, among others, and the communities themselves finding sustainable solutions, have galvanized a community-based movement to eliminate GBV and practices such as early marriage. The Mobile One-Stop Centres (OSCs) for providing multi-sectoral GBV services in remote and hard-to-reach areas are also good practices. During the COVID-19 lockdown period, survivors could not travel to access services at static facilities due to transport unavailability and movement restrictions. The mobile OSCs have been instrumental in ensuring survivors continue to receive critical services. In 2020, Mobile OSCs were conducted for three (3) days every quarter at a static community facility. The MWACSMED and Behaviour Change Facilitators (BCF) are responsible for mobilising the communities for upcoming mobile OSCs within a community. In addition to providing essential services to the people in communities, the mobile OSC

campaigns raise awareness about GBV and the referral pathway to survivors and communities. Information such as the importance of accessing sexual violence treatment at health facilities within 72 hours is given.

PARTICIPATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE INSTITUTIONS

22. IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS- ACTIONS AND MEASURES TO PROMOTE WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC LIFE AND DECISION-MAKING

The Constitution of Zimbabwe provides a robust legal framework for women's participation in public life and decision-making. Sections 17, 56, 67 and 80 provide equal rights and opportunities, including participation in public life and decision-making.

Women’s Quota

Following the lapse of the women’s quota for the National Assembly in 2018 and through lobby and advocacy efforts, Constitutional Amendment Number 2 was adopted, which provided for the extension of the National Assembly women’s quota beyond 2023 for the subsequent two terms. Further, the Constitutional Amendment also provides for a youth quota where ten youths from each of the 10 Provinces, aged between 21 and 35, are elected into the National Assembly. During the period under review, the Government of Zimbabwe has introduced a 30% women’s quota at the Local Government level. The table below represents statistics of women elected in 2023 to Parliament and local government Councils through the quota system:

Quota System	Number of elected Female
National Assembly Women’s Quota	60
National Assembly Youth Quota	3
Local Authority Women’s Quota	602

However, evaluation of the quota system has revealed unintended results of reducing the number of women participating in elections through direct election. The table below indicates regressing trends in the level of participation of women at the National Assembly level since the adoption of the women’s quota in 2013

National Assembly Direct Election Trends Analysis (2013,2018 and 2023)

2013	2018	2023
26 women	25 women	22 women
12.4%	11.9%	10.5%

In addition, women’s participation in political decision-making through the quota system has been met with backlash as the incumbents do not have a constituency and constituency MPs view them as threats; hence, they are not afforded adequate space to work with communities.

Gender Observatory

The Government of Zimbabwe, through the Zimbabwe Gender Commission, established a Gender Observatory as an institutional mechanism to monitor gender equality issues in the 2023 electoral cycle. The Gender Observatory comprises multi-sectoral stakeholders from Government Ministries, Independent Commissions, the Security Sector, Civil Society Organizations and Development Partners to ensure comprehensive coordination of gender issues and concerns in electoral processes. During the 2023 harmonised election, the Gender Observatory embarked on an election monitoring and observation of the pre-electoral, polling and post-electoral environment. The 2023 Gender Observatory managed female candidates' participation and highlights peculiar gender issues throughout the different stages of the electoral cycle, which will inform future programming on women's political participation in Zimbabwe.

Women Candidate training and Mentorship

To address the historical challenges of women's low participation and representation in political decision-making, the Government of Zimbabwe, through the Zimbabwe Gender Commission and other Civil Society partners, initiated various capacity-building initiatives for aspiring women political candidates. The capacity-building initiatives were meant to build the capacity of aspiring candidates to stand for political office by imparting knowledge and skills requisite for political parties. The Capacity building initiatives covered electoral laws and systems, campaigning strategies, resource mobilization, communication, grooming and deportment and public speaking. Through the Women Rise in Politics (WRiP) initiative implemented by the Zimbabwe Gender Commission, 425 female candidates were capacitated ahead of the 2013 Harmonised Election. To ensure diversity and inclusivity, the Initiative made deliberate efforts to target young women, women with disabilities, women from rural areas and women living with HIV/AIDS. The call for nominations specifically encouraged young women, women with disabilities and women living with HIV/AIDS to apply.

Of the 425 candidates capacitated, 18 filed their papers at the nomination court to contest National Assembly seats and 44 at the Local Government level. Six candidates succeeded at the National Assembly, and 14 succeeded at the Local Government level.

Candidates for the capacity-building initiative were drawn from all political parties and independent candidates. The WRiP initiative reached out to 16 districts and two targeted training sessions for candidates who had successfully filed their nomination papers. However, the initiative could not be cascaded to other Districts due to resource constraints. An assessment of the implementation of the Women Rise in Politics (WRiP) Programme revealed the following impact of the training;

- The training managed to improve self-confidence among participating candidates.
- The women political candidates who participated in the training improved the quality of political messaging.
- There was increased tolerance among trainees from different political affiliations.

One key lesson from the WRiP Initiative is that women politicians have the potential to compete strongly against their male counterparts. What is stopping them is limited knowledge, skills and confidence in electoral issues.

African Women Leadership Network

Following the establishment of the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN), Zimbabwe National Chapter in 2020, Women's leadership initiatives are being strengthened through activities and advocacy work towards women's leadership, peace, and social cohesion. The year 2022 saw the establishment of provincial Chapters and focal points which incorporated state universities. The country convened an African Women Leadership Network (AWLN) High-Level Intergenerational Dialogue on Women's Political Participation, which brought together young women aspiring to venture into politics and those who have walked the political journey to exchange notes and share ideas and experiences on how to navigate the political terrain. More than 500 women participated in the event.

Women in Leadership and Decision-Making Strategy

The GoZ developed the Women in Leadership and Decision-Making Strategy in 2023, aimed at promoting full participation and representation of women in decision-making. The Strategy focuses on five (5) thematic areas: women's participation in politics, private sector, public sector, civil society and community development.

In addition, the Government of Zimbabwe has enacted the Public Entities Corporate Governance Act [Chapter 10:31]. The Act realises that promoting gender equality is part of good corporate governance and as such, the Act in Section 11 (7) (a) States that a line minister shall ensure that, so far as practicable, (a) there are equal numbers of men and women on the board of every public entity for which he or she is responsible. Through this provision, Zimbabwe has seen several boards of public entities being gender balanced. In cases of no compliance, the Zimbabwe Gender Commission has consistently issued advisory notes to the responsible Ministers for corrective measures.

To address the gender gaps in leadership and representation, efforts are underway to push for the enactment of a Gender Equality Act. Adopting this Law will facilitate fully actualising provisions in Sections 17 and 56 of the Constitution.

23. IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS- ACTIONS TAKEN TO INCREASE WOMEN'S ACCESS TO EXPRESSION AND PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING IN THE MEDIA, INCLUDING THROUGH INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT)

Taken measures to enhance access, affordability and use of ICTs for women and girls (e.g. free Wi-Fi hubs, community technology centres)

Provided support to women's media networks and organisations

- i. The ZMC was first established as the Media and Information Centre in 2002. The Electoral Amendment of 2008 elevated it to the ZMC. The Constitution reaffirmed the status of the ZMC as an Independent Commission under the Chapter 12 Commissions. Therefore, ZMC is established by Section 248 of the Constitution. The ZMC Act, while providing functions of the ZMC as provided by the Constitution, puts further safeguards for protecting freedom of expression and the press. The ZMC is mandated to investigate issues or circumstances threatening freedom of expression and the media.
- ii. The ZMC also administers the Freedom of Information Act [Chapter 10:34], which provides a framework for enjoying those freedoms as provided by Section 62 of the Constitution. Section 62 of the Constitution provides for the right to access information held by all public entities by members of the public. The law obligates all state entities,

- public entities, and public and commercial entities to provide information upon request for transparency and accountability. The information requested should be in the public interest and to protect a right.
- iii. The Freedom of Information Act repealed the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act [*Chapter 10:27*], which many deemed to infringe on the freedom of the media and the right to free expression.
 - iv. The Commission has nine (9) Commissioners – five (5) males and four (4) females.
 - v. Through Section 249 of the Constitution, ZMC is mandated to uphold, promote and develop freedom of the media, promote and enforce good practices and ethics in the media and to monitor broadcasting in the public interest and, in particular, to ensure fairness and diversity of views broadly representing Zimbabwean society. It is also mandated to receive and consider complaints from the public and, where appropriate, to take action against journalists and other persons employed in the media or broadcasting who are found to have breached any law or any code of conduct applicable to them, to ensure that the people of Zimbabwe have fair and comprehensive access to information as well as to promote fair competition and diversity in the media.
 - vi. In addition to the functions outlined in Section 249 of the Constitution, the ZMC has the following functions, as outlined by the ZMC Act:

To monitor and secure compliance with any –

 - Law regulates media practitioners and media services, including broadcasting, print and electronic media, to ensure respect for the rights protected by section 61 of the Constitution.
 - International treaty to which Zimbabwe is a party concerning the protection, promoting or advancing people's rights concerning the media in Zimbabwe.
 - Collaborating with other independent constitutional Commissions to support and entrench human rights and democracy.
 - vii. In Section 323 of the Constitution, every Independent Commission must submit an annual report to Parliament through the responsible Minister describing its operations and activities.
 - viii. The period under review witnessed several achievements in the following focus areas:
 - a. The ZMC gazetted in September 2021 the Freedom of Information General Regulations that provide for implementing the Freedom of Information Act. Amongst other provisions, the regulations provide for the appointment of Information Officers by public entities, the manner and period Information Officers respond to applications for access to information and the setting up of an Information Appeal Committee which handles appeals by the public denied access to information.
 - b. The ZMC also gazetted the Zimbabwe Media Commission Act General Regulations to set up inquiries and investigations into any conduct threatening freedom of expression and the media. The regulations also provide for the handling of complaints by members of the public regarding breaches of freedom of expression.
 - c. Further, ZMC successfully accredited and registered 10 Media houses in the year 2021, bringing the total number of registered media houses to 178. Of these 2, Zimpapers and ZIANA are state-owned, whilst 176 are privately owned. This is in line with the Commission's Policy regarding universal access to information by the generality of the population. In the same year, the Commission also accredited 3288 media practitioners, 2669 male and 619 females.
 - d. Freedom of Information Appeals: To implement the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the ZMC initiated the gazetting of the Freedom of Information (General)

Regulations 2021. The regulations provide a framework within which the public can apply for access to information held by public entities and how they can approach the ZMC if access to information is denied.

The ZMC could not handle appeals on the refusal by entities to provide information as requested owing to the lack of the above regulations. Notwithstanding, the ZMC received some appeals, advised all the appellants of this challenge and encouraged them to approach the courts in line with the provisions of the Act pending the lapse of the six-month moratorium period.

Information requests brought before the ZMC

APPEAL No.	DATE RECEIVED	SUMMARY
FOI 001/21	17/06/21	The Commercial Federation of Manicaland lodged their appeal application on a request for information from the City of Mutare.
FOI 002/21	28/07/21	The Matabeleland Institute for Human Rights lodged an application with the Commission for information on the Commission's annual report.

- e) The ZMC also received several media complaints in line with Section 249 (e) of the Constitution, and the ZMC managed to resolve some of the complaints as listed below:-

Media Complaints resolved by the Zimbabwe Media Commission in 2021

Complaint Number	Date received	Summary
	07/07/21	-Gambe Law Group wrote the Commission. Their complaint was against the Newsday in terms of Section 249(1) (e) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe.
MC002/21	08/07/21	-The News Consumers Association of Zimbabwe complained to the Commission on behalf of all news consumers of false and unverified news in Zimbabwe.
MC003/21	27/09/21	-Charlene John's Legal and Commercial Consultancy wrote the Commission demanding a retraction of a defamatory news article.
MC004/21	06/10/21	- The Tian Ze Tobacco Company Legal Advisor wrote to the Commission on a misleading and defamatory article. Tian Ze bemoaned the lack of ethics within the media industry.
MC005/21	21/12/21	Costa and Madzonga legal practitioners wrote the Commission alleging that Alpha Media Holdings had published defamatory to their client.

- f) The Zimbabwe Media Commission continues to commemorate and observe key international days and events that mark the values of freedom of and access to information and the work of media practitioners, among other important events, including-
- World Press Freedom Day.
 - International World Radio Day.
 - International Mother Language Day.
 - International Day for Universal Access to Information

24. COUNTRY'S CURRENT NATIONAL WOMEN'S MACHINERY (GOVERNMENT ENTITY EXCLUSIVELY DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN) AND DESCRIBE THE MEASURES THAT YOUR COUNTRY TAKEN OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS TO ESTABLISH AND/OR STRENGTHEN IT.

The Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, and Small Medium Enterprise Development (MWACSMED) is a government entity exclusively dedicated to the promotion and empowerment of women. The Ministry's Main functions are to:

- Formulate, recommend, implement, coordinate, monitor and evaluate policies, strategies and programmes that promote women empowerment, gender equality, community, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and cooperative development.
- Develop and promote value chains for goods and services produced by women, communities, MSMEs and cooperatives.
- Provide, coordinate, and facilitate technical and entrepreneurship skills and business management training to support women, communities, MSMEs, and cooperative empowerment.
- Promote equal and equitable access, control and ownership of resources to address gender inequalities.
- Ensure prevention and response mechanisms to reduce all forms of gender-based violence.
- Develop and maintain through research, databases, and publications on women's empowerment, gender, communities, MSMEs, and cooperatives.
- Coordinate research work and publications on gender and provide gender-sensitive information and sex-disaggregated data for planning and project implementation at all levels and sectors.
- Provide support for technology access and development for women, communities, MSMEs and cooperatives;
- Administer development funds for women, communities, MSMEs and cooperatives; and
- Administer all Acts assigned to the Ministry.

The Ministry has the following Programming Departments.

- Women Affairs
- Gender Policy Planning
- Community Development
- Small and Medium Enterprises and Cooperatives Development

The Ministry has oversight of the following parastatals:

- Small and Medium Enterprises Development (SMEDCO)
- Zimbabwe Women Microfinance Bank (ZWMB)
- National Handcraft Centre
- Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Advisory Council

The MWACSMED is responsible for implementing the Revised NGP. Gender is a cross-cutting thematic area. This means all line ministries, departments, agencies and commissions should address gender equality and women empowerment issues. The

reviewed National Gender Policy (2023-2030) extended thematic areas and strengthened institutional frameworks utilised to monitor and evaluate gender equality and women empowerment issues across all sectors in sync with the Sector Specific Gender mainstreaming guidelines put in place to capacitate specific sectors on Gender responsiveness. With support from the Global Spotlight Initiative Programme, the GoZ adopted the High-Level Political Compact on Ending Gender-Based Violence and Harmful Practices (HLPC). The HLPC is the first of its kind and demonstrates the increased effort and political will to eliminate violence against women and girls and harmful practices. HLPC is a transformative initiative that enhances national response to Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and Harmful Practices. Training has been provided in Budgeting and Budget tracking, Gender Concepts and climate change, among many others.

The GoZ developed the Zimbabwe National Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence (2023-2030). The strategy seeks to strengthen the delivery of adequate, accessible and responsive protection, care and support services to those affected by GBV and promote prevention and early identification of GBV.

Measures has taken over the past five years to establish and/or strengthen the Women’s Machinery

- a) Capacity building programme: This specifically focused on training needs and gaps targeted at members of the gender Machinery and the directors of Gender and Wellness in line ministries. Areas of training were mainly in gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting. In partnership with the Ministry responsible for environment and climate change and the civil protection unit, the MWACSMED carried out gender mainstreaming training in climate change and Disaster Risk Management, respectively.
- b) The government strengthened the gender machinery by appointing the Directors of gender and Wellness in the various ministries. This appointment showed commitment to institutionalising gender in government systems.
- c) The MWACSMED is in the process of finalising the National Coordination Framework. This defines the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in the gender machinery. It enables effective coordination of gender equality initiatives.
- d) Development of the sectoral mainstreaming guidelines- these define critical gender issues from policy/legislative perspective to programming in specific sectors and parastatals. The gender guidelines are easily referenced in sectoral strategic plans and contribute to NDS1, CEDAW, SDGs, and BPfA indicators.

25. IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS- OTHER MECHANISMS AND TOOLS USED TO MAINSTREAM GENDER EQUALITY ACROSS SECTORS? (e.g. gender focal points in the executive, legislature or judiciary; inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms; gender audits, consultations with women’s organizations)

- The Public Service Commission appointed Directors of Gender and Inclusivity across most government ministries. Gender-focal persons fill the gap in a few ministries where appointments are still to be made. This position is housed under the Secretary’s office. Their role is to ensure gender mainstreaming in sectoral ministries and to implement gender-specific initiatives within their Ministries. They address wellness issues within their various ministries and ensure gender-responsive budgets, including budget tracking for gender.

- The Parliament exercises its oversight and legislative role through the Parliamentary Committee on Gender and Development, the Portfolio Committee on Women's Affairs and Gender and the Committee on Legal and Justice.
- The Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013), in Section 246, established Independent Commissions such as the Zimbabwe Gender Commission and The Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission to strengthen institutional mechanisms on gender equality and human rights.
- Civil Society, such as members of the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe, are essential stakeholders in the Gender Machinery. They support the Ministry with resources and capacity for MWACSMED to effectively play its role in coordinating the gender machinery.
- **Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines-** The Ministry has been working on gender mainstreaming guidelines for government sectors. The guidelines quickly reference institutional and programming analysis for gender in various sectors.
- Sectoral gender analysis, training tools and Gender Action Plans- Over the past five years, the MWACSMED has conducted gender analysis in the climate change (specifically NDCs) sector, disaster risk management and biodiversity management. This further led to them developing the Gender Action Plans for those sectors and Gender Mainstreaming Training Manuals. Consultations and collaboration with Civil Society Organisations and other government departments have been fundamental to this process.
- The ZGC is preparing for gender audits of line Ministries, with five audits to be completed by the end of 2024.

26. IF THERE IS A NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTION IN YOUR COUNTRY, WHAT MEASURES HAS IT TAKEN TO ADDRESS VIOLATIONS OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY?

The Government of Zimbabwe, through 2013, established institutions promoting human rights through Section 232 of the Constitution. In particular, the Constitution established the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, the Zimbabwe Gender Commission and the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission. The three human rights commissions have a mandate of addressing violations of women's rights from different perspectives.

The Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) is established in Sections 232 and 242 of the Constitution. It has been operationalised through the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission Act [Chapter 10:30] with the overall mandate of promoting, protecting and enforcing human rights and dealing with maladministration by public institutions and their officials. It is a hybrid institution with a dual mandate following its taking over in 2013 of the Office of the Public Protector functions.

In dispensing its mandate, the Human Rights Commission also deals with violations of women's rights, among other cases which have a bearing on women, such as Property rights, equality and non-discrimination, political rights, right to health care and marriage rights. The following cases on Protection of human rights have been received and handled by the Human Rights Commission from 2020:

Complaints received by ZHRC on human rights violations (2020-2023)

Year	Total	Sex of complainant	
		Male	Female
2020	636	419	217
2021			
2022	1194	961	233
2023	815	551	247

The Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission also works through Thematic Working Groups. As such, the ZHRC has 8 Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) established in accordance with paragraph 7 of the First Schedule of the ZHRC Act. A TWG is a specialized Committee of the Commission that incorporates external stakeholders to facilitate broader participation in the Commission's work. One of the TWGs is on Gender Equality and Women's Rights.

Zimbabwe Gender Commission

The Zimbabwe Gender Commission is established in Sections 232 and 245 of the Constitution with the overall mandate of promoting, protecting and advancing gender equality. Section 246 of the Constitution outlines the Commission's specific mandate to ;

- a) Monitor issues concerning gender equality to ensure gender equality as provided in this Constitution.
- b) Investigate possible violations of rights relating to gender.
- c) Receive and consider complaints from the public and take such action as it deems appropriate.
- d) Conduct research into issues relating to gender and social justice and to recommend changes to laws and practices which lead to discrimination based on gender.
- e) Advise public and private institutions on steps to be taken to ensure gender equality.
- f) Recommend affirmative action programs to achieve gender equality.
- g) Recommend prosecution for criminal violations of rights relating to gender.
- h) Secure appropriate redress where rights relating to gender have been violated, and
- i) Do everything necessary to promote gender equality.

The Zimbabwe Gender Commission Act [Chapter 10:31] further mandates the Commission as follows;

- a) To carry out investigations to address systemic barriers prejudicial to gender equality
- b) To convene the Annual Gender Forum
- c) To do anything permitted by any other statute or legal provision

Within the Zimbabwe Gender Commission's investigative mandate, the Commission conducts investigations on cases involving violations of the rights of women, including sexual violence, harassment, and child marriages, amongst others. Table 1 below shows cases handled by the ZGC during the period under review.

Cases of Gender-Based Violations received by the ZGC in 2020-2023

Forms of Violations	2020	2021	2022	2023
Sexual and gender-based violence	0	42	30	8
Rape				4
Property disputes	12	10	02	3
Maintenance				2
Land disputes		04	01	2

Child marriages & sexual exploitation	-	08	500 ²	2
Labour disputes		02	01	
Chieftainship dispute				1
Political violence				1
Deceased Estate				1
Sexual harassment	12			19
Gender-based discrimination	05	-	-	4
Lobola Dispute				1
Drug and substance abuse				1
Gender Stereotyping in social media and broadcasting services	02	-	-	1

National Peace and Reconciliation Commission

The National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) is an Independent Commission established in terms of the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No 20) Act of 2013. The NPRC's Constitutional mandate and legal framework provide the foundation upon which the Commission unites all Zimbabweans for sustainable peace by resolving past, present and future potential conflicts. This mandate is achieved by the NPRC performing a set of functions as outlined in Section 252 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe as well as in Section 3(2) (a-d) of the NPRC Act Chapter [10:32]

The National Peace and Reconciliation Commission promotes women's rights through the Victim Support, Gender and Diversity Department, charged with the responsibility under section 9 of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) Act (Chapter 10:32) to ensure the following:

- The development of strategies to encourage the participation of women, girls and other marginalized groups in the work of the Commission.
- Mainstreaming of gender imperative into every aspect of the Commission's work.
- Investigating the use of sexual crimes as a weapon during and after conflicts.
- Identifying and assisting victims of gender-based violations and providing such victims with an opportunity, in private or public, to relate their accounts of the violations or harm they have suffered and to set out their needs.

The Commission has implemented policies and effective mechanisms for supporting victims of Conflict-Related Gender-Based Violence (CRBGV), particularly the Gender and Inclusion Policy and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Handling and Supporting Victims of Conflict-Related Gender-Based Violence.

PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

27. IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS- ACTIONS TAKEN TO BUILD AND SUSTAIN PEACE, PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENT THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA

²cases include those handled during the National Inquiry on Child Marriage and sexual exploitation and abuse of young girls including those with disabilities

Zimbabwe is a relatively peaceful country that is not characterised by armed conflicts. However, other structural drivers of conflict, such as unemployment, poverty, urbanisation (without adequate services), climate change, and access to natural resources and services, have led to conflicts at different levels. Conflicts have also emerged due to principles of biodiversity conservation, including human/wildlife conflicts in communities that live next to national parks and animal corridors. In Matabeleland, disputes concerning land use between farmers and miners have become common, and they are sometimes characterised by physical violence.

An average of 45% of the population uses the informal justice system to resolve community disputes and conflicts.³ However, female representation is inadequate in customary law institutions (primary and community courts) mandated to resolve disputes using customary law. The institution is predominantly male, with 286 male chiefs, four female chiefs, and 488 headmen (482 males and six females). Lack of female representation in this institution invariably affects the outcomes of the resolution of disputes, as male traditional leaders may not appreciate the impact of conflicts and abuses on women. In most cases, women seek protection and recourse from an institution that is presided over by men who uphold norms and values that discriminate against women. There is no data on the number and type of cases disaggregated by gender that traditional leaders handle in their jurisdiction.

The Human Rights Commission and the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) are mandated to address human rights, peace and security concerns. One of the initiatives the NPRC initiated successfully was the Safe Space Programme, which was conducted in fulfilment of Section 9(1) of the NPRC Act Chapter 10:32.⁴ The programme gave women the platform to engage the Commission on its transitional justice initiatives. It was premised on the notion that women and girls experience unique violations in times of conflict and are sensitive victims who require safer spaces to tell their stories.⁵ This initiative is in sync with similar initiatives by CSOs such as Heal Zimbabwe. The initiative successfully created safety regarding the confidentiality of the women's narrations, enhancing freedom of speech, improving confidence and knowledge, and promoting positive attitudes and behaviours towards emotional healing. Women's safe spaces primarily fulfil the broader United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (SCR1325), recognising women's under-valued and under-utilised contributions to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding. The collaboration by NPRC with like-minded organisations in implementing this initiative brought to the fore the power of collaboration, which should be used in peacebuilding and security programmes.

The NPRC developed and institutionalised the Gender and Inclusion Policy. This provides a standardised procedural framework and guidelines within which the NPRC and its stakeholders can effectively provide support to victims of gender-based violence violations in a manner that protects the rights and dignity of victims. The aim is to assist the Commission in aligning its work, processes and institutional structures with the gender equality principles provided in the Constitution, the NPRC Act, the National Gender Policy, the NPRC 5year Strategic Plan and regional and international gender equality and human rights standards. To assist the Commission in aligning its work, processes and institutional structures with the

³ National Survey on Citizen's Perception on Access to Justice carried out by Centre for Applied Legal Research

⁴ The programme was rolled out in Mashonaland East (Mutoko), Midlands (Zhombe), Bulawayo (Entumbane), Matabeleland North (Tsholotsho and Matabeleland South (Maphisa)

⁵ <http://kubatana.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/NPRC-and-Women-Safe-Spaces.pdf> Focus on Community Peace Building Practices Issue 3/2019 a publication by Heal

gender equality principles provided in the Constitution, the NPRC Act, the National Gender Policy, the NPRC 5year Strategic Plan and regional and international gender equality and human rights standard, The NPRC further developed Operating Procedures for handling victims of CRGBV. With such capacity, the NPRC has been able to:

- Build capacity on Gender Sensitive Conflict Management Training for Infrastructures for Peace and Women in the Peace and Security Sector. This targeted Women and men in the Provincial Peace Committees (32 Males + 53 females) across the ten provinces in the country. This resulted in increased engagement of women in peacebuilding and advanced the role of women in promoting peace at the national level and the creation of linkages between traditional methods of mediation and UNSCR 1325.
- Capacity building on Electoral Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Management Training targeting Infrastructures for peace and key players in the electoral cycle. This targeted women, men, and youth in the Peace Committees, as well as stakeholders such as FBOs/CSOs, people with disabilities, political parties and government, and MDAs. (390 Males +435 Females) Impacts and lessons learned are that there is a need to use a multifaceted approach to end electoral gender-based violence to achieve fairness and peaceful elections; political parties' Dialogue on managing and ending electoral gender-based violence before, during and after elections is key for peaceful electoral processes and that women and other marginalised groups need financial capacity as a strategy to end electoral gender-based violence.
- Development and maintenance of engendered Conflict Early Warning early response system. This enabled the early detection of conflicts in provinces and take preventive measures. It targeted community members (Women, men, boys and girls. However, the challenge is the inadequate funding to operate it fully.

UNSCR Resolution 1325 has not yet been ratified. However, its provisions have been accommodated in the 2013 Constitution. The MWACSMED launched the National Action Plan on Resolution 1325 a month ago. This indicates that the Government of Zimbabwe considers the provisions of Resolution 1325 seriously.

28. IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS- ACTIONS TAKEN TO INCREASE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP, REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION IN CONFLICT PREVENTION, RESOLUTION, PEACEBUILDING, HUMANITARIAN ACTION AND CRISIS RESPONSE AT DECISION-MAKING LEVELS IN ARMED AND OTHER CONFLICTS AND IN FRAGILE OR CRISIS SETTINGS

The Government of Zimbabwe has made strides in promoting women's peace and security agenda, particularly in increasing women's leadership, representation and participation in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, humanitarian action and crisis response. In May 2024, the Government launched the National Action Plan on UNSCR1325 and other related resolutions. One of the pillars of the National Action Plan is Participation, which aims to create equal opportunities for women and men to be represented and engage fully in peace and security structures and processes.

Over the years, Zimbabwe continues to participate in peacekeeping missions and women continue to be part of peacekeeping missions although their participation remains low. Despite women being lowly represented in peacekeeping missions, they have left a mark with some Zimbabwe Women Peacekeepers excelling in their peacekeeping roles. Major Winnet Zharare

became the first Zimbabwean Peace Keeper to receive a UN Secretary General's Award for the UN Military Gender Advocate in 2021 for her outstanding work fostering gender parity in peace operations.

To promote peace and development following the 2018 Harmonised Elections, the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe established the Political Actors Dialogue (Polad) platform, which was comprised of Political Party Principals of most of the Political Parties which contested in the 2018 Harmonised Elections. The platform was made up of 17 Political Parties and Principals. To facilitate the engagement process, two convenors were appointed: one Chairperson of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission, Rtd Justice S.M Nare (Male) and another Chairperson of the Zimbabwe Gender Commission, Commissioner Margret M. Mukahanana-Sangarwe (Female), therefore providing a gender balance in those facilitating political dialogue.

The Government of Zimbabwe, through the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission, has facilitated the cascading of the women's peace and security agenda at the local level to promote inclusivity through lobbying and advocating for women's participation in peace infrastructures and processes. The NPRC has further capacitated the Provincial Peace Committees in all 10 Provinces on the need for Increased engagement of women in peacebuilding and advanced the role of women in promoting peace at the national level.

29. IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS- ACTIONS TAKEN TO ENHANCE JUDICIAL AND NON-JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY FOR VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN ARMED AND OTHER CONFLICTS OR HUMANITARIAN ACTION AND CRISIS RESPONSE

- The National Peace and Reconciliation Commission is mandated to investigate the use of sexual crimes as a weapon during and after conflicts and to reach out to victims. The Act further mandates the NPRC to assess the needs of victims of gender-based violence and marginalisation and make recommendations to address them, including taking urgent interim measures, policies and programmes to redress such violations and marginalisation.
- In 2024, the Government of Zimbabwe adopted A National Action Plan to implement the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and other related Resolutions. One of the Pillars of the National Action Plan is Protection, which, among other things, focuses on improving intervention strategies for the prevention of violence against women, including promoting accountability for violations.
- Peace Committees at the local level- These enhance peace and security through the effective participation of women in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and promoting entrepreneurship.
- Conflict Early Warning and Early Response (CEWER System): the Commission is finalizing and developing the Conflict Early Warning and Early Response (CEWER) system, which will support the Commission's capacity to detect and respond proactively. This fulfils the Constitutional mandate in Section 252 (g), which empowers NPRC 'to develop mechanisms for early detection of areas of potential conflicts and disputes and to take appropriate preventive measures. The CEWER system development was initiated in 2019
- Provincial Peace Committees (to get more information)
- Code of conduct for political parties –among other things, promotes values and practices of tolerance, respect, and non-violent dialogue to resolve political differences. In addition,

provincial and district-level multi-party liaison committees were set up to resolve conflict before it escalates to violence.

- The Ministry of WACSMED adopted the National GBV Strategy 2023-2030, recognising the importance of addressing GBV in humanitarian settings. As such, Strategic Focus Area 3 of the Strategy focuses on GBV in Emergencies, Humanitarian, Disaster and Conflict Situations.
- During the COVID-19 lockdown, the Government of Zimbabwe, through MoWACSMED, successfully listed GBV Service providers as part of the “essential services” allowed to offer services during the lockdown.

30. IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS: ACTIONS TAKEN TO ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST AND VIOLATIONS OF THE RIGHTS OF THE GIRL CHILD, INCLUDING ADOLESCENT GIRLS?

Several, programmes and strategies specific to tackling sexual and reproductive health for adolescents and youths in Zimbabwe have been promulgated and implemented by the government in collaboration with the private sector and civil society organisations. The national strategies seek to address adolescent and girls’ sexual and reproductive health issues and challenges to support the promotion and protection of their rights.

Empowerment of youths and girls to access sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights: Adolescents and youths face several health and social challenges that infringe on their capacity to assert their rights. For example, they engage in sexual activities (either willingly or through coercion) without adequate knowledge or skills on how to protect themselves – from STIs, including HIV/AIDS, unwanted pregnancy, safe abortion and family planning. The empowerment of youths and girls also depends on complex and interdependent factors, including socio-cultural factors (such as family, peers and communities), education, employment opportunities and access to timely health services.

Government together with CSOs have been working to address and/or provide:

- Comprehensive Sexuality Education
- Youth Friendly Health Services
- Help stop early marriages and child marriages

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION, PROTECTION AND REHABILITATION

31. IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS-ACTIONS TAKEN TO INTEGRATE GENDER PERSPECTIVES AND CONCERNS INTO ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES, INCLUDING CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION, BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND LAND DEGRADATION

Climate Change Gender Action Plan

The GoZ has adopted a Climate Change Gender Action Plan based on a gender analysis of the sector. The Action plan was developed to provide action-oriented interventions to support a more comprehensive, inclusive, and equitable approach to climate change. One of its objectives is to support climate change actors in formulating and implementing gender-responsive policies and interventions that are pro-poor and sensitive to the needs and priorities of women in particular and other marginalised groups.

Zimbabwe adopted its National Climate Policy in 2017 to guide climate change management, enhance the national adaptation capacity, scale up mitigation actions, facilitate the domestication of climate-related global policies and ensure compliance with international mechanisms. Implementing the Policy is supported by the National Climate Change Response Strategy, which aims to mainstream climate change across all sectors of the economy and provides costed mitigation and adaptation options. Currently, Zimbabwe is developing a National Adaptation Plan. The GoZ has conducted a national climate change risk and vulnerability assessment and future climate scenario projections, which inform the selection of appropriate adaptation options. The National Adaptation Plan, informed by the gender analysis, will also develop a financing strategy and a monitoring and evaluation framework for the identified adaptation options.

Regarding climate change mitigation, the country has adopted its Low Emissions Development Strategy (LEDS) in 2022, which will guide climate change mitigation measures across all sectors for 2021–2050. The LEDS identified thirty-eight (38) mitigation actions, renewable energy, energy efficiency, climate-smart agriculture, sustainable forestry management and integrated waste management.

The right to clean and safe drinking water is an internationally recognised right central to realising fundamental human rights, such as the right to life, health, food, and livelihoods. Access to water is an adequate standard of living that further alleviates the burden on women and girls, particularly those living in rural areas who travel long distances for water. Therefore, Section 77 of the Constitution states that "every person has the right to safe, clean and potable water". In this regard, the State is directed to take reasonable legislative and administrative measures within its limits to achieve the progressive realisation of this right. Against this background, the GoZ, in collaboration with development partners, undertook the following programmes:

- a) **Rural Wash programmes:** The goal of rural Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) programmes is to contribute to reducing morbidity and mortality due to WASH-related diseases, reducing the burden of water collection on women and girls, improving the dignity of basic education outcomes and promoting gender equality towards the achievement of the SDGs. The programmes undertaken are detailed in the table below.

Rural wash programmes

Activity	Number
Borehole drilling	2 575
Borehole rehabilitation	5 574
Community-managed piped water schemes	12
Water points rehabilitation	10 377
Construction of Blair Ventilated Improved Pit Latrines	181 646
Open defecation-free villages	1 069

- b) **The Small Towns WASH Programme:** - This programme contributes to reducing diarrheal diseases, including the risk of cholera and other waterborne diseases. The GoZ conducted several activities, including rehabilitation of water and waste-water infrastructure, thereby increasing water supply and wastewater treatment efficiency, operation and maintenance. In addition, the GoZ undertook capacity building and established community health clubs

to promote hygiene in urban areas through health education, resulting in behavioural change.

- c) **Urban Resilience Project:** This project aims to develop a model for urban resilience in Zimbabwe. Urban resilience was achieved by training vulnerable members of urban communities in entrepreneurial skills to stimulate local economic development and improve access to WASH facilities at urban public places through rehabilitating and constructing WASH facilities at public places.
- d) **WASH in Schools:** The goals of WASH in schools are improved access to safely managed WASH infrastructure for learners and teachers (disability—and girl-friendly and age-appropriate), improved hygiene behaviour among learners (with age-appropriate messaging), and enhanced capacity for operating and maintaining WASH infrastructure in the target schools.
- e) **Water resources management:** Tugwi-Mukosi dam was built through the Public Sector Investment Project and commissioned in 2017. The main goal of the dam construction is to improve water security to support livelihoods and irrigation in Masvingo Province. The dam's construction has, amongst other opportunities, improved water security in the Masvingo Province through irrigation, fishing, and tourism, which is meant to improve livelihoods. The GoZ commissioned the Marovanyati Dam, Muchekeranwa Dam, and Biri Dam to alleviate the country's water shortage problems.
- f) **The National Water Harvesting Programme** aims to enhance water security for domestic use and cattle watering in rural communities and enhance food security through irrigation. The information for this programme is detailed below.

Distribution of water harvesting programmes

Programme	Number
construction of Weirs/Small dams	117
nutrition gardens and fishponds, weirs or small dams constructed	48 completed and 158 under construction
Model rooftop systems installed	22
Offtakes implemented	6
integrated projects established	6
dams under construction	11

g) Presidential National Clean-up Campaigns

On the 5th of December 2018, the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe recognising the Constitutional Mandate to uphold environmental fundamental rights and freedoms provided for in section 73 of the constitution of Zimbabwe, the “right to an environment that is not harmful to health and well-being”, declare that every first Friday of each calendar month is a National Clean-Up Day.” The National Clean-Up Day exercise aims to create a clean, safe, healthy environment. It recognises that every individual across the country must clean their surrounding areas, be it places of work, education, religion, recreational and residential premises, to manage waste in the country and create Sustainable Cities and Communities. In residential areas, this initiative relieved women and men, girls and boys who had faced serious challenges related to waste disposal, such as diseases, smells and bad ascetics.

The Gender Action Plan on Climate Change focuses, among other issues, on waste management. This has enabled the addressing of waste management from a gender perspective. It has also encouraged women and youths to set up green initiatives in the waste sector, including composting, recycling and reuse through the production of products for sale.

32. IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS- ACTIONS TAKEN TO INTEGRATE GENDER PERSPECTIVES INTO POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND BUILDING ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE

a) A Gender Analysis of the DRM Sector

The Civil Protection Department in the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works, the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development collaborated with The African Risk Capacity (ARC) Gender Unit and the African Development Bank, to mainstream gender in DRM. A gender analysis (GA) was conducted to provide an overview of the gender situation in DRM in the country.

This analysis informed the development of a Gender Action Plan (GAP) with a clear set of measurable gender indicators and actions. The GAP is premised on available data and studies from the Government of Zimbabwe, development partners, civil society organisations, field visits to selected communities/districts, and national institutions and partners. A Gender Training Manual in DRM and Training of Trainers was designed to ensure gender mainstreaming in DRM.

b) Training and Awareness Raising

In partnership with Africa Risk Capacity, the Zimbabwe government conducted training on gender and DRM for government officials at different levels, civil society organisations, and development partners. Training on gender and DRM was also extended to the Media, where editors of various media houses were trained on gender-sensitive reporting on DRM.

c) High-level Policy Dialogue on Gender and DRM

A policy brief highlighting the gender-specific gaps and opportunities for gender mainstreaming at national and local levels of policies and institutions was produced. A high-level policy dialogue involved key ministers in housing, local government, health, education, finance and environment, climate change, and women's affairs. This raised awareness among policymakers on:

- The gender legislative and policy gaps in disaster management.
- Gender issues in disaster response and recovery
- Gender and DRM capacity-building gaps
- Information and communication
- National and sub-national disaster risk financing frameworks

The issues raised in the policy brief and dialogue were incorporated into the current DRM Bill.

Gender was also integrated into the DRM templates, such as the risk profile.

SECTION FOUR: NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES

33. COUNTRY'S NATIONAL STRATEGY OR ACTION PLAN FOR GENDER EQUALITY, INCLUDING ITS NAME, THE PERIOD IT COVERS, ITS PRIORITY, FUNDING AND ALIGNMENT WITH THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING THE TARGETS UNDER SDG 5.

The Government of Zimbabwe, through the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, has in place a revised National Gender Policy (NGP) (2024-2030). The NGP aims to advance gender equality and equity in Zimbabwe's socioeconomic, cultural, and political development. Its objectives are:

- To promote the advancement of gender equality and equity in all sectors,
- To provide a guiding framework for mainstreaming gender across all sectors,
- To strengthen coordinated planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment programmes across all sectors,
- To strengthen institutional and accountability mechanisms for gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment,
- To set out the national gender equality and women's empowerment priorities

Implementing this policy calls for effective collaboration and coordination of the national machinery. The various institutional roles and responsibilities are defined in the National Gender Machinery Coordination Framework. It is well noted that implementing the NGP requires adequate and sustainable resources. Financial streams to complement government resources are always mobilised from development partners and CSOs.

The NGP priorities the following thematic areas:

1. gender, constitutional and access to justice
2. gender, politics and decision-making
3. women's economic empowerment
4. gender and energy
5. **gender, health and pandemics**
6. gender, education and training
7. gender-based violence (gbv)
8. gender, culture and religion.
9. gender and climate change, disaster risk management and humanitarian response.
10. gender and disability
11. gender, media, information and technologies

The NGP is using the mantra "leave no one behind" is guided by the National Constitution; Section 17 provides for equality and equal rights in all spheres of state and public life and Section 52(2) postulates that women and men have the right to equal treatment and equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social spheres. The NGP also take cognisance of the international and regional frameworks on gender. The NGP is inclusive and, therefore, targets women, men, girls and boys in all their diversities.

34. COUNTRY'S SYSTEM FOR TRACKING THE PROPORTION OF THE NATIONAL BUDGET THAT IS INVESTED IN THE PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN (GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING), INCLUDING THE

APPROXIMATE PROPORTION OF THE NATIONAL BUDGET THAT IS INVESTED IN THIS AREA.

The budget is tracked through two approaches:

Approach 1:

- Expenditure as tracked against budget allocations classified explicitly in the Govt account chart as associated with targeted gender outcomes. Tracking of expenditure is not only focused on budget allocations that are explicitly labelled (e.g. expenditure allocated to addressing gender-based violence/Sexual Harassment or those labelled maternal mortality and specifically under the directors of gender programmes) BUT also on policies that are provided to the general public but target a specific gender (for example, a project focusing on decentralization and local governance that has a particular objective to strengthen women's participation in decision-making at the local level.
- Expenditure is tracked during budget execution against specific budget line items or programme appropriations, which the budget or planning process associated with targeted gender considerations. General public services that operate without a particular focus on gender or gender equality (a program to support local farmers' access to microcredit to purchase agricultural inputs such as pesticides or fertilizers that does not address gender biases in access to and over agricultural inputs, a program targeting youth unemployment that does not address the marginalization of migrant boys and girls)
- Relevant budget line item or programme expenditure is mapped ex-post to specific gender outcomes. General public services explicitly targeted at or used mainly by a particular gender (programs to support high-technology start-ups with specific initiatives to support women tech entrepreneurs, an investment project to construct business hubs that seek to improve women in business and access to finance, safe cities for women and men by providing secure street lightning around stations and streets)

Approach 2:

- Track the flow of resources through a defined institutional framework (different strata of administration) to determine how much of the allocated initial resources reach each in the distribution process. For example, the Gender-responsive PETS asks who (male/female) within the unit benefited. Check if resources for the items specifically targeted to one sex reached the unit. e.g., money meant to build toilets for women and girls.

35. FORMAL MECHANISMS ARE IN PLACE FOR DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS TO PARTICIPATE IN IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION AND THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The different stakeholders' roles and responsibilities are defined in the National Gender Machinery Coordination Framework. The Ministry of Women Affairs, Community and Small Medium Enterprises Developments chairs coordination meetings that include the CSOs and development partners working in the subsectors that address gender equality and women's empowerment.

Gender-Based Violence, a Referral Pathway, is defined for implementing the Domestic Violence Act. The Referral Pathway is defined from local level institutions to the national level. These include the Police- Victim Friendly Unit Coordination and training of the various institutions on gender sensitivity, which The Ministry of Women Affairs, Community and Small Medium Enterprises Developments and the CSOs carry out.

36. HOW STAKEHOLDERS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE PREPARATION OF THE PRESENT NATIONAL REPORT.

The preparation of this report used a mixed methods approach. A desk study and initial participatory consultations/engagements with specific stakeholders, including girls and boys, were carried out. A purposive sample of participants and/or data sources was developed to guide and direct the collection and generation of relevant information at national, provincial and district levels as follows:

1. **The Ministries, Departments and Parastatals (MDS)**- A meeting with this group was based on the guidance document provided. Group discussions were based on the six dimensions of the 12 critical areas. Group discussions focused on:
 - i. Assessing progress made in implementation and identifying challenges encountered
 - ii. Take stock of achievements, identify gaps and setbacks, and outline strategies for addressing those gaps and challenges.
 - iii. Identification of solutions and best practices
 - iv. Specific examples from the various MDS on actions taken in addressing issues raised in the six dimensions
2. **The UN Gender Country Team:** A meeting with this group was done. A discussion on the questions in the guide was done with the group. This was critical in reinforcing work done with the government as outlined in the ZUNDAF. Specific examples were also discussed, including providing reference documents and reports. Follow-up online meetings were held with particular entities to verify the facts.
3. **The Civil Society Organisations:** Meetings were organised with CSOs, specifically those under the women's coalition, those with gender programmes and development partners that support gender programming in government and other CSOs. This group provided a critical eye to the report and provided details of examples and data provided. They also critically discussed the challenges and opportunities available to address the BPfA. A follow-up with individual organisations was done to ascertain the details required for this report.
4. **Individuals and other specific organisations:** Specific organisations such as independent commissions and religious organisations were consulted on particular questions relevant to them. Individuals with specific interests in gender issues were consulted so they could give their perspectives generally and specifically.

37. COUNTRY'S ACTION PLAN AND TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (IF A STATE PARTY), OR OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW OR OTHER UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS THAT ADDRESS GENDER INEQUALITY/DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN.

- a) Zimbabwe presented its 6th Periodic Report on the 3rd of February 2020 and the CEDAW Committee gave some recommendations. A National Action Plan for implementing the recommendations was developed in 2022 and shared amongst stakeholders. A mid-term Report on some of the recommendations was submitted in 2023.
- b) The NAP will be implemented over four years, from 2021 to 2024. In implementing the recommendations, the NAP considered the roles of various stakeholders, including government, development partners, UN agencies, and civil society organisations. For some stakeholders, the NAP has been mainstreamed into their strategic plans, which are developed and aligned with the SDGs and the NDS1.
- c) Government-led Ministries and Independent Agencies coordinate and monitor the implementation of the recommendations. In addition, working with Development Partners and UN Agencies, the government is responsible for mobilising resources to implement the recommendations. CSOs have been essential through advocacy and lobbying on identified gaps.
- d) **Some of the actions have been taken as part of the implementation of the recommendations:**
 - A conducive legal and policy environment has been created for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, e.g., the extension of the quota system, the Marriages Act, the review of the Education Act, policies on menstrual hygiene for girls in school, the review of policies and strategies for promoting gender equality, and the establishment of the posts of Directors for gender mainstreaming, inclusivity and wellness.
 - Developing a strategy for women in decision-making and the NAP for implementing UNSCR 1325, which seeks to promote women's participation in decision-making positions.
 - The concluding observations have been shared with various stakeholders at national and subnational levels.
 - Access to justice has improved by decentralising courts and the LAD.
 - Promoting women's economic empowerment initiatives to end poverty
 - Revitalisation of the National Gender Machinery and developing the National Gender Machinery Framework.
 - Provision of GBV response services through institutional strengthening of responders.
- e) The State Party will continue implementing measures to promote gender equality, achieving substantive equality and empowering women.
- f) Currently, the government is compiling its 7th periodic report.

SECTION FIVE: DATA AND STATISTICS

38. THE MOST IMPORTANT AREAS IN WHICH YOUR COUNTRY HAS MADE THE MOST PROGRESS OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS WHEN IT COMES TO GENDER STATISTICS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

- a) **Established an inter-agency coordination mechanism on gender statistics:**

There is a concerted effort to strengthen the collection, analysis and dissemination of sex Disaggregated data and gender statistics in Zimbabwe. The government formed the Gender Statistics Committee. The work of this committee is coordinated by ZIMSTAT and chaired by MWACSMED, with other government ministries, the UN country team, and CSOs in attendance. They discuss upcoming surveys for gender inclusion and recommend surveys that fill in gender information gaps.

- b) Re-processed existing data (e.g., censuses and surveys) to produce more disaggregated and/or new gender statistics:** The Zimbabwe Statistical Agency (ZIMSTAT) repacked gender statistics from various sources into one publication called Women and Men in Zimbabwe Report in 2019. They are currently finalising the gender thematic report of the 2022 Population Census, which provides many gender statistics.

The Women and Men in Zimbabwe Report focuses on:

- Population composition by sex, province and age
- Household and family: marital status by age, trends in child marriages and living arrangements.
- Health Status and the Environment: life expectancy at birth, child health and survival, mortality, maternal mortality, and health insurance, among other
- Educational and Training: literacy rates by sex, school attendance, educational attainment, school enrolment and enrolment at the tertiary level
- Women's access and ownership of agricultural productive resources: access and ownership of agricultural land, land use rights, ownership of agricultural assets and agriculture labour.
- Participation in economic activities
- Power and participation in decision-making
- Gender-based violence

ZIMSTAT also produce Gender Fact Sheets for the various surveys conducted by ZIMSTAT.

- b) Conducted new surveys to produce national baseline information on specialized topics (e.g., time use, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty, disability):**

From 2022, ZIMSTAT started conducting quarterly labour force surveys, which contain a lot of gender statistics. This was a departure from the previous five-year cycle. Some of the critical gender information includes time use. This is essential to the determination of care work that affects women more. They have also

39. OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS- THE COUNTRY'S PRIORITIES FOR STRENGTHENING NATIONAL GENDER STATISTICS

- a) Strengthen an inter-agency coordination mechanism on gender statistics (e.g., technical working group, inter-agency committee)**

Establishment of the Data for Development and Innovation working group where Gender Statistics will be a sub-theme.

- b) Use more gender-sensitive data in the formulation of policy and implementation of programmes and projects:**

- c) Conduct new surveys to produce national baseline information on specialized topics (e.g., time use, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty, disability)**

Including a time-use module in the quarterly labour force survey

40. GENDER-SPECIFIC INDICATORS⁶ PRIORITIZED FOR MONITORING PROGRESS ON THE SDGS

ZIMSTAT produced for the first time baseline indicators for SDG 5.a.1. This is critical in monitoring the country's progress on that SDG.

The Zimbabwe Gender Commission, within its monitoring mandate, has recently developed and operationalised the Zimbabwe Gender Commission Monitoring and Evaluation Framework with a set of indicators aimed at tracking progress in the implementation of the gender equality provisions in the constitution and other international and regional normative frameworks on gender. The indicators have been benchmarked against the 12 critical areas of the BpfA and other normative gender frameworks. The first report on the Monitoring and Evaluation framework was compiled for 2022-2023, culminating in the release of the first ZGC M & E Gender Statistical Report. This report draws from the data collected across multiple thematic areas, including politics and governance, education and training, and media and health. However, data gaps were noted in thematic areas such as economic empowerment and the environment.

41. DATA DISAGGREGATIONS⁷ ARE ROUTINELY PROVIDED BY MAJOR SURVEYS IN YOUR COUNTRY

Data collection in most major surveys has now incorporated variables used for disaggregation. The 2022 Population and Housing census collected data on educational background, functionality/disability and urban/rural, which are all used for data disaggregation to fulfil the “leaving no one and no place behind” mantra.

Significant challenges in incorporating indicators for disaggregation are very few, as most major surveys already collected other demographics. The ZIMSTAT has included the Washington Group of questions on disability in recent surveys like the Household Budget Survey.

SECTION SIX: CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Key Takeaways

- a) While significant gains have been made for women and girls, gaps persist. Whilst a solid and progressive legal framework for promoting gender equality in the country exists, several implementation gaps remain, including the harmonisation of gender laws with the Constitution.
- b) Consultations with stakeholders highlight capacity constraints across government agencies delivering on the gender mandate in various sectors, which are compounded by siloed approaches to policy implementation. Implementing policies such as gender budgeting is

⁶ The term ‘gender-specific indicators’ is used to refer to indicators that explicitly call for disaggregation by sex and/or refer to gender equality as the underlying objective. For example, SDG indicator 5.c.1 captures the percentage of countries with systems to track public allocations that are directed towards policies and programmes that promote gender equality—the underlying objective is the promotion of gender equality. The term is also used for indicators where women and girls are specified within the indicator as the targeted population (see UN Women. 2018. *Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. New York).

⁷ As specified in A/RES/70/1, with the addition of education, marital status, religion and sexual orientation.

irregular, which impacts the quality of gender programming and is highly dependent on the capacity of the ministries.

- c) Whilst efforts to include women in politics and decision-making have been made through the appointment of women in key decision-making positions and the reservations of seats for women in Parliament and Local government, additional work is required to address structural barriers to increase women's representation in political positions and as leaders in the business environment. Attention should be placed on addressing the gendered norms, including promoting behaviour/attitudinal change to shift patriarchal norms. Opportunities for continued engagement with political parties remain to ensure the GoZ effectively implements gender quotas. There must be a substantial, cross-sectoral change in board leadership in corporate and other environments, a gender parity policy push in state institutions, and a multi-level leadership commitment to improve women's representation in leadership positions.
- d) The MSME women-led sector holds a lot of growth potential. Women-owned or led businesses can benefit from incentives to grow their businesses, including mentorship, networking, skills building, access to affordable financing, subsidized operational costs, and linkages with local and global markets. Cost-effective strategies include broadening the scope of psychology-based socio-economic skills training for female entrepreneurs, which remains an option. Financial inclusion remains a priority. Expanding access to financial inclusion remains essential by promoting saving schemes and providing services to women in remote areas. Consideration of formalising operations of the informal sector, where most women are found, remains critical.
- e) The government, with support from various partners, especially the Spotlight Initiative, invested in addressing Gender-based violence, including issues of child marriages and sexual exploitation. Community mobilisation against the cultures of silence and impunity that continue to drive GBV/SGBV and harmful practices further into the private sphere continues. The campaigns involve religious and traditional leaders, the police, government district officials, and community-based organizations, among others, with communities identifying sustainable solutions that have galvanized a community-based movement to eliminate GBV and practices such as early marriage. More work still needs to be done locally and nationally, including law enforcement, awareness raising and capacity building.
- f) While effort is being put into producing gender-disaggregated data, more is required, especially in defining gender indicators that link with the SDGs, the CEDAW and the BPfA critical areas of concern. This is important for monitoring progress, policy formulation and report writing. Training on national gender data generation and collection is vital and needs to target the ZIMSTAT and other government sectors.
