



**ADDRESS**

**BY**

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
ZIMBABWE**

**AND**

**COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ZIMBABWE  
DEFENCE FORCES,**

**HIS EXCELLENCY, DR. E.D. MNANGAGWA,**

**AT THE**

**LAUNCH OF THE AFRICAN WOMEN LEADERS NETWORK**

**(AWLN) ZIMBABWE CHAPTER**

**25 FEBRUARY 2020**

Director of Ceremony;

Speaker of Parliament, Hon. J.F. Mudenda;

President of Senate, Hon M. M. Chinomona;

Minister of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, Hon. S. G.G Nyoni;

The United Nations Deputy Secretary General, Ms Amina Mohammed;

Assistant Secretary General and Director UNDP's Regional Bureau for Africa, Ms Ahunna Eziakonwa;

The African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, Ms Bineta Diop;

The Executive Director of UN Women, Ms Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka;

African Union Goodwill Ambassador, Dr Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda;

AWLN Zimbabwe Chapter;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my singular honour and privilege to join you today to launch the Zimbabwean Chapter of the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) running under the theme **“Peace and Social Cohesion for Zimbabwe’s Sustainable Development”**. The network brings together African women leaders from various sectors, including government, business, civil society and academia, with the aim of enhancing the leadership of women towards the realization of Africa’s Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

I want to commend all the women leaders who participated in the global conceptualization of the network and thereafter brought the concept back home to assist other women leaders to effectively engage in the country’s development agenda.

I am advised that the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) was launched in New York in 2017 as an action-oriented initiative that seeks to enhance the leadership of African women in bringing transformative changes focusing on peace, security and development on the continent. The network further offers the opportunity for women leaders to create a national platform for coordinated efforts for the development of our country. The launch of this African Women Leaders Network (AWLN), Zimbabwe Chapter is therefore welcome and most opportune.

I exhort you to ensure that this platform provides a coordinated platform for women leaders in Zimbabwe to exchange experiences and expertise with their sisters on the continent, to help inform our own national development discourse. It is my hope that the African Women Leaders Network in Zimbabwe will also provide an important pathway to accelerate the ongoing efforts to

improve the quality of life of our people, in line with our National Vision 2030 as well as the Agenda 2030.

In doing so, AWLN must vigorously empower rural women, mentor young women, and seek the attainment of achieve gender equality as well as inclusion of women in all sectors of the economy. No one should be left behind as we strive to achieve the Africa we all want. This chapter must equally be used to help in the realization of Section 80 of our national Constitution, which emphasizes the women's right to equal opportunities.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Peace and social cohesion are prerequisite for fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Consequently, women's engagement and leadership are indispensable ingredients to peace, stability and sustainable development. Empirical evidence indicates that the participation of women in peace building

processes focus more on reconciliation, economic development, education and justice. In this regard, the inclusion of women must continue to be encouraged from the family and community to the national level.

While women in Zimbabwe and other African countries, may face challenges that limit them from effectively participating in the economic, social and political spheres; I am confident that this new national chapter will generate greater technical and financial support for women's leadership and other women in general.

I encourage you as women leaders to stimulate development and take positions towards the achievement of our national vision 2030. As mothers, sisters, daughters, you are the beacon of morality, integrity and virtuous living. Our continent depends on you to foster, teach and engender our value systems as epitomized by the spirit of Ubuntu.

As African governments we must accelerate the multifaceted empowerment and inclusion of women across all sectors of our economies. We must all do our part to break the glass ceiling and open doors of opportunity. There is nothing that limit women from occupying any position in any sector of the economy.

I call upon the Zimbabwe Chapter to bring to fruition the ongoing efforts to implement the objectives and goals of the network which aims to positively impact the lives of ordinary women and girls in our country. I also encourage you to identify needs and mobilise resources for the Chapter to enable you to fulfill your mandate. Furthermore, I exhort you to bridge the generation gap through the mentorship of young women.

The year 2020 marks the 25th anniversary of the World Conference on Women held in Beijing and its Platform for Action. Our young generation in Africa must

experience a world of equality by leveraging the youth demographic dividend and Africa's vast natural resource.

As women leaders I urge you to speak with one voice as you push your agenda forward, through platforms such as this one. Remember **“united you shall stand and prosper and divided you shall fall and fail.”**

With these remarks I officially launch the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) Zimbabwe Chapter.

**God bless you all!**

**God bless Zimbabwe!**

**I thank you.**