



Zimbabwe
Gender
Commission

2023 ANNUAL
REPORT

LETTER TO PARLIAMENT

Section 323 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (NO 20) Act of 2013 requires every Commission to submit to Parliament, through the responsible Minister, an Annual Report describing fully its operations and activities.

The Zimbabwe Gender Commission accordingly submits its seventh Annual Report to the National Assembly for tabling in accordance with these legal requirements.



Margaret M. Mukahanana-Sangarwe

Chairperson: Zimbabwe Gender Commission



FOREWORD

On behalf of the Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC), I am pleased to present the Annual Report for 2023. This year marked a pivotal moment in Zimbabwean democracy with the general elections that were held in August 2023.

While the elections were a significant event, the ZGC is deeply concerned about the low participation of women as candidates. The number of women contesting for elected positions remained disappointingly low, and even fewer women secured victories. Systemic barriers and high nomination fees undoubtedly disenfranchised many aspiring women candidates. This low representation reflects the ongoing challenges we face in achieving gender equality in Zimbabwe.

Furthermore, the year 2023 saw Zimbabwe grappling with significant economic difficulties. These challenges not only affect the overall well-being of the nation but disproportionately impact women, further widening the gender gap. The economic hardship exacerbates existing inequalities, making it harder for women to access resources and opportunities.

Beyond economic concerns, social and cultural norms that perpetuate gender inequality continue to exist. These deeply ingrained practices require sustained efforts to dismantle and replace them with practices promoting equity and respect for women's rights. In light of these challenges, the ZGC continues emphasizing the critical need for legislative and policy reforms. A robust legal framework that promotes gender equality is essential, hence the Commission's commitment to advance the prioritisation of enactment of laws that dismantle discriminatory practices and empower women to participate fully in all spheres of life.

This report details the Commission's activities and achievements in 2023, highlighting the ongoing struggle and the projected trajectory for 2024. I invite you to delve into the report to gain a deeper understanding of the milestones and challenges encountered in the Commission's efforts to advance gender equality in Zimbabwe, in line with its mandate. Great appreciation is notable, particularly for the collaborative efforts attributable to the significant progress realised.

As a Commission, we remain indebted to all stakeholders, particularly the Government of Zimbabwe, development partners and civil society organisations for the financial and technical support during the Financial Year under review. Gratitude also extends to members of the public, for whom the Commission is in service. My most sincere gratitude goes to the Commissioners and Secretariat for their contribution to the attainment of the Commission's mandate.



Margaret M. Mukahanana-Sangarwe

Chairperson: Zimbabwe Gender Commission

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC) presents its 2023 Annual Report, highlighting its activities and achievements in promoting gender equality throughout 2023. The report provides an analysis of the key initiatives which the Commission undertook during the year. Gender Equality Promotion is central in ensuring the monitoring role of the Commission is attained with lobbying, policy advocacy and awareness-raising complementing. Specific activities were undertaken to ensure adherence to gender equality provisions.

The report is structured into three (3) major sections namely, Gender Equality Promotion, Legal and Investigations and Governance and Administration.

i. Gender Equality Promotion

Key achievements

- Conducted 12 public awareness interventions on sexual harassment in tertiary institutions, reaching 8189 participants.
- Developed a workplace training manual for policy development and programme implementation.
- Produced a national inquiry report on child marriages.
- Conducted gender sensitization workshops and community dialogues.
- Showcased work at exhibitions and participated in commemorative events.
- Gender Equality in Political Participation: The Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC) organized a Multi-Party Gender Conference to address gender imbalances in political parties ahead of the 2023 Harmonised Elections. The conference resulted in the development of the Women's Charter, outlining demands for gender equality in politics.
- Capacity Building for Women Candidates: ZGC conducted targeted training workshops for women candidates to equip them with skills and knowledge necessary for effective participation in the elections. This initiative resulted in 37 women successfully elected to various political offices.
- Establishment of the 2023 Gender Observatory: ZGC set up a Gender Observatory to monitor gender equality issues throughout the electoral cycle, covering various aspects such as voter registration, nomination processes, and polling. This collaborative effort involved various stakeholders and aimed at ensuring equitable and gender-responsive electoral processes.
- Gender Analysis of Election Outcome: Following the 2023 Harmonised Elections, ZGC conducted a gender analysis of the election outcome, revealing the representation of women in key positions. The analysis highlighted areas of progress and identified areas needing improvement in achieving gender parity.
- National Gender Forum: ZGC convened a National Gender Forum to discuss factors contributing to the gender gap in political representation and propose strategies for enhancing women's participation and representation in politics and decision-making processes.

Challenges:

- Lack of awareness of sexual harassment policies in some institutions.
- Gender disparities in participation in awareness programs.
- Gaps in understanding gender issues inclusively.
- Challenges in tackling sexual harassment in workplaces and institutions.
- Limited resources and capacity for comprehensive response to gender-based violence.
- Need for legislative reforms and policy implementation to address gender inequalities effectively.

ii. Legal and Investigations

The Legal and Investigations Department of the Commission worked diligently in 2023, operating in accordance with constitutional and statutory mandates. The key points were:

- Cases Handled: The department managed 51 cases, ranging from assault and domestic violence to gender discrimination and sexual harassment, reflecting the breadth of its responsibilities.
- Investigations: Notably, investigations into cases such as the Lobels and Pick n Pay incidents revealed systemic issues within companies, including a lack of sexual harassment policies and compromised reporting structures.
- Investigative Research on Gender Issues: Comprehensive investigations were conducted at border posts, uncovering challenges faced by women traders, including economic, administrative, and infrastructural barriers,

as well as instances of sexual exploitation and violence.

- **Mobile Legal One Stop Centres:** Six centres were established across three provinces, providing legal aid and psychosocial support to marginalized communities, resulting in strengthened multi-sectoral referrals and increased awareness of legal rights.
- **Legal Assistance:** The unit assisted 1170 clients through mobile clinics, addressing a range of issues from domestic violence to land disputes, and also offered free legal advice at public forums.
- **Legal Services to the Commission:** The department provided legal support to the Commission, interpreting legislative provisions, offering legal opinions, and conducting training workshops.
- **Other Achievements:** The establishment of a call centre and a case management system improved complaint handling and data management processes.

Challenges: Challenges included the need for stronger penalties for gender-based violence cases, insufficient funds hindering research and follow-ups, lack of IT resources, complainant reluctance, and delays due to a centralized system.

iii. Governance and Administration

- **Staff Establishment:** The Commission's staff increased to 118 by December 2023, with ongoing recruitment to fill remaining positions. The breakdown across programs showed 56% female and 44% male staff.
- **Expenditures:** The Commission spent 95% of its revised budget, with 24% on employment costs, 57% on operational expenses, and 14% on assets acquisition.
- **IPSAS Implementation:** A strategy for IPSAS implementation was submitted, with a committee appointed to oversee the process, aiming for full migration by December 2025.
- **Regional Offices:** Five regional offices were decentralized, with operationalization in progress, although office space is yet to be secured for some regions.
- **Procurement:** Seven contracts totalling USD 3,166,452.70 were concluded for asset acquisition. The introduction of an electronic procurement system posed challenges due to economic volatility.
- **Training and Development:** Strategic planning workshops, staff inductions, IPSAS awareness training, and IT system workshops were conducted.
- **Information Technology:** ICT initiatives were enhanced, including the procurement of mobile gadgets, desktops, and printers, along with the operationalization of a case management system and a call centre.

Challenges: Challenges included price and exchange rate volatility, delays in fund releases, office space constraints, limited funds for workshops, staff incapacitation due to lack of tools, and delays in staff transfers from other MDAs.

Recommendations and Conclusion:

Based on its findings and experiences in 2023, the ZGC put forward several recommendations to stakeholders. These include; urgent action to enact laws and policies promoting gender equality, strengthen monitoring mechanisms to ensure compliance, allocate adequate resources to support gender equality initiatives, invest in capacity building for stakeholders, and foster collaboration and partnerships. Despite challenges, the ZGC remains steadfast in its commitment to promoting gender equality and eliminating gender-based discrimination in Zimbabwe, aiming to create a more equitable and inclusive society where women and men enjoy equal rights and opportunities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC) wishes to thank the Government of Zimbabwe and institutions who contributed in various ways towards the achievements of the Commission's Key Result Areas in the year 2023.

The Commission wishes to acknowledge the technical and financial support from the following Development Partners:

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)
- International Labour Organisation (ILO)
- European Union (EU) through the Spotlight Initiative
- Raoul Wallenberg Institute (RWI)

The Commission is also appreciative of the support received from various stakeholders, including the National Gender Machinery, members of the Gender Observatory, Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe and community members at various levels. The valuable support rendered by development partners and stakeholders contributed to making the implementation of the work possible. ZGC also acknowledges with thanks its Commissioners and Secretariat who showed dedication and commitment in delivering the Constitutional mandate throughout the year.

ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
CUZ	Catholic University in Zimbabwe
CBD	Central Business District
CGE	Commission for Gender Equality (South Africa)
CoH	City of Harare
COP	Conference of Parties
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FSNT	Female Student Network Trust
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GEMS	Government Employees Mutual Savings Fund
GEP	Gender Equality Promotion
GO	Gender Observatory
HR	Human Resources
IEC	Information Education and Communication
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPSAS	International Public Sector Accounting Standards
IT	Information Technology
IWD	International Women's Day
NGEC	Kenyan National Gender Equality Commission
LRF	Legal Resources Foundation
MWACSMED	Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOSC	Mobile One Stop Centre
MWH	Maternity Waiting Homes
NGF	National Gender Forum
NHRIs	National Human Rights Institutions
NHS	National Handling Services
PEI	Public Education and Information
PWD	Persons with Disability
PRAZ	Procurement Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe

PPDA	Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets
RBZ	Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SGBV	Sexual Gender Based Violence
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SRH	Sexual Reproductive Health
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNSCR 1325	Nations Security Council Resolution 1325
VAWIE	Violence against Women in Elections)
VFU	Victim Friendly Unit
WLSA	Women and Law in Southern Africa
WPP	Women Political Participation
WRIP	Women Rise in Politics
WUA	Women's University Africa
ZACRAS	Zimbabwe Association of Community Radio Stations
ZAS	Zimbabwe Agricultural Show
ZBC	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation
ZEC	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission
ZESA	Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority
ZESN	Zimbabwe Election Support Network
ZGC	Zimbabwe Gender Commission
ZITF	Zimbabwe International Trade Fair
ZNBWB	Zimbabwe National Boxing and Wrestling Control Board
ZOC	Zimbabwe Olympics Committee
ZRP	Zimbabwe Republic Police
ZWMB	Zimbabwe Women's Micro-Finance Bank

1. INTRODUCTION

The Zimbabwe Gender Commission maintained its presence on the political, economic and social spheres in 2023, promoting gender equality and equity as outlined in Section 246 of the Constitution. Engagement with targeted stakeholders enabled traction in addressing gender inequalities and injustices through the Commission's three programmatic areas of Gender Equality Promotion, Legal and Investigations and Governance and Administration pillars. The Commission noted a significant increase in the number of multi-stakeholder engagements in advocacy work, legal interventions as well as strengthened partnerships.

Given that 2023 was an election year, the Commission accelerated its monitoring mandate in assessing traction in women's participation on the political terrain, focusing on women's participation, particularly in the uptake of leadership positions. Gender-related violence was also on the radar in relation to the electoral space, translating to the need for more stringent monitoring mechanisms with an even more effective response system to gender-related violations in tandem with the context.

The Commission continued increasing public awareness of its functions, advising public and private institutions on steps to be taken to ensure gender equality. Similarly, research into issues relating to gender and social justice were done, resulting in a significant number of knowledge products to inform stakeholder engagements on possible changes to laws, customs and practices to uphold the constitutional guarantees of gender equality and non-discrimination in public and private sectors. An attributable outcome of the Commission work during the period under review is the rise in media reportage of cases of sexual harassment and gender-based violence. It has however been noted that there is need for training of media in gender-sensitive reporting.

Internally, the Commission grew its staff and expanded its presence in provinces, widening its reach geographically, and increasing its visibility and effectiveness. Tracking progress across the work of the different departments was done by the newly established Monitoring and Evaluation unit, a milestone envisaged to further enhance the link between the Commission's work in the whole of Government approach, in line with the National Monitoring and Evaluation framework. The year 2023 is notable in that ZGC now has all requisite units to ensure good governance, Internal Audit, Procurement and Public Relations as well as a full complement of Commissioners, following the appointment of three Commissioners to fill in vacancies.

This report details the milestones realised by the Commission across all departments, acknowledges the challenges encountered, and makes recommendations to various stakeholders for redressing these challenges, both contextual and operational.

2. GENDER EQUALITY PROMOTION

Gender Equality Promotion (GEP) programme is a significant pillar of the Commission’s work. Under the programme, various efforts to promote gender equality are instituted, targeting both the public and private sectors. Through conducting needs assessments of various socio-economic and political sectors, appropriate public education interventions are carried out through the Public Education and Information Unit. Tailor-made programmes are developed to ensure their relevance to target stakeholders. For example, the need for curbing sexual harassment particularly targeting first year students in tertiary institutions has resulted in the Unit undertaking scheduled public awareness interventions throughout the country. In-depth research on systemic barriers to gender equality is also a key concern under GEP, hence the continued engagement of different communities using a scholarly approach to ensure the researches are for use, not just within the Commission, but as baseline tools for stakeholders desiring to undertake interventions in similar fields. The Research and Programming Unit leads in undertaking research to inform policy alternatives, and further designs programmes to address identified gaps in the gender equality response.

During the period under review, both units celebrated milestones in increasing public education and awareness on gender issues, (including mitigating Gender-Based Violence) as well as generating research publications and responsive programming particularly in enhancing human rights awareness in relation to gender.

2.1. PUBLIC EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

A significant number of strategic public engagements were held, aimed at raising awareness on gender issues in line with the Commission’s mandate in promoting gender equality.

2.1.1. Sexual Harassment Awareness sessions

A total of 12 public awareness interventions were held in tertiary institutions throughout the country, focusing on sexual harassment. The institutions were:

- Chinhoyi University of Technology
- Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology
- Harare Polytechnic College
- Catholic University of Zimbabwe
- Zimbabwe Open University
- Women’s University in Africa
- Midlands State University (Gweru and Zvishavane campuses)
- Bindura University of Science Education
- Belvedere Teacher’s College and
- Great Zimbabwe University (Main campus and Mashava)



Sexual harassment awareness programme at the University of Zimbabwe

Focus on sexual harassment was in response to the research findings as well as requests by the tertiary institutions on the vulnerability of new students. According to research, there was a prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among students because of unprotected sexual encounters, with the higher cohort being from among the first-year students. Key objectives of the awareness sessions were to:

- equip students and staff members with knowledge on what constitutes sexual harassment and its implications.
- sensitize and engage students and staff members on the Constitutional mandate of the Zimbabwe Gender Commission.
- receive complaints, suggestions, and comments from the public and
- offer relevant assistance to the issues raised during the engagement process.

A total of 8189 participants were reached, comprising 3486 males and 4703 females. The Commission noted that 8 of the 12 institutions already have functional Sexual Harassment Policies. The awareness sessions therefore enabled appreciation of the policies and served as an assurance measure of the effectiveness of lodging sexual harassment complaints, particularly in the context of ensuring both staff and students at the institutions were made aware of the role of ZGC as an Independent Commission mandated with redressing gender-related violations. The other 2 institutions had Sexual Harassment Policy drafts, while the remaining 2 were challenged to put policies in place. The sessions revealed that sexual harassment in the form of lecturer-student relationship was quite prevalent in institutions of Higher and Tertiary Education, fueled mostly 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. Cases of same-sex sexual harassment were also highlighted during these sessions.

On another level, lecturers and non-teaching staff indicated that the challenges they often faced with the students involved



Students following proceedings during a sexual harassment awareness programme at Women's University in Africa

the manner in which some of the female students dressed such as mini-skirts, short dresses and revealing clothes, nurturing conducive contexts for such abuses. In terms of measuring awareness of sexual harassment among both students and staff, it was noted that not everyone was aware of the existence of sexual harassment policies in institutions that indicated having the policies. As such, there was need for awareness-raising at multiple levels to enable use of the policies for effectiveness.

A key outcome from the public education and awareness sessions was increased knowledge among both staff and students on unacceptable behaviours in relation to sexual harassment, and the importance of reporting issues to enable effective responses, particularly in the context of sexual assault and rape. Such awareness would enable demand for, and access to post-exposure prophylaxis and counselling, to victims of sexual harassment, among other issues. Deliberations with both staff and students brought out the recommendation for all tertiary

institutions to have sexual harassment policies in place, with appropriate sanctions to be taken on perpetrators as a clearly spelt out principle. It was believed that sanctions were to serve as deterrents to sexual harassment offences within tertiary institutions.

2.1.2. Publications Launched

2.1.2.1. Workplace Training Manual for Workplace Policy Development and Programme Implementation

The Commission developed a training manual for workplace policy development and programme implementation, focusing on addressing gender-based violence and sexual harassment in the workplace. The manual was launched in Harare on the 21st of September 2023, the International Day of Peace, signifying the importance of conducive workplaces, free from all forms of violence, including sexual harassment.



ZGC Chairperson, Commissioner W. Mukahanana-Sangarwe (right) and ILO Officer in Charge, Ms Anna-Marie Kiaga officially launching the training manual

The manual was a follow up to the Commission's previous publication, the National Strategy for the Elimination of Sexual Harassment and Gender Based Violence in the Workplace, done in partnership with the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The strategy sought to implement ILO Convention 190 on making workplaces safer by mitigating sexual harassment. Development of the Training Manual on the policy development process was therefore a culmination of extensive consultation processes with the Tripartite Negotiating Forum partners, comprising representatives from Government, Labour and Employers. It is envisaged that the training manual will guide all workplaces in both the public and private sectors to effectively respond to issues of violence and harassment through policies and programmes that result in violence free workplaces.

Gracing the event were stakeholders from various sectors, with organizations such as Women in Law in Southern Africa (WLSA), Zimbabwe Congress for Trade Unions (ZCTU), Zimbabwe Federation for Trade Unions (ZFTU), Federation of Disabled People in Zimbabwe and Government Ministries. A total number of 65 participants took part in the launch, comprising 49 women and 16 men. The launch provided a platform for stakeholders to highlight the importance of availing the manual various languages and in braille for wider distribution and inclusion of persons with disability. The Commission committed to consistently monitor use of

the manual and evaluating its effectiveness within the organisations represented. The manual was distributed to the Office of the President and Cabinet, Public Service Commission, all Ministries, media institutions including the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Services and all stakeholders who attended the launch.

2.1.2.2. National Inquiry Report on Child Marriages

Following a national inquiry on child marriages, sexual exploitation and abuse of young girls in Zimbabwe, the Commission produced a report on the subject. While reports on the prevalence of child marriage and sexual exploitation of girls was very high, the Commission noted the importance of undertaking extensive research and producing data that could be referenced in relation to the situation in Zimbabwe. The research was triggered by the unfortunate death of 14-year-old Anna Machaya on the 16th of July 2021 whilst giving birth at a religious shrine.

The inquiry process prioritized capturing voices of survivors, while also extensively engaging stakeholders and members of the public at local level. This process enabled a holistic understanding of the problem and possible recommendations to inform multisectoral responses. As the nation commemorated the International Day of the Girl Child on the 11th of October, the Commission joined these commemorations by launching the report on the National Inquiry on Child Marriages, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Young Girls, Including Girls With Disability.

Guest of Honour, Minister of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, Honourable Senator



L to R: ZMC Executive Secretary, Godwin Phiri; ZGC Vice Chairperson, Commissioner O. Matshalaga; UNDP Team Leader, W. Madombwe; Guest of Honour, Minister M. Mutsvangwa; ZGC Chairperson, Commissioner M. Mukahanana-Sangarwe; ZGC Commissioner, Dr N.M. Nyangulu

Monica Mutsvangwa called upon all stakeholders to complement Government efforts in fighting child marriages. She implored stakeholders to be guided by the findings of the inquiry in undertaking efforts towards eliminating child marriages.

2.1.3. Sexual Harassment Awareness in the Workplace

2.1.3.1. Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC)

During September, a story broke out across various media houses and social media on sexual harassment allegations against senior managers within Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC). The Commission engaged ZBC as part of its mandate of investigating such allegations. In laying the foundation for investigations, ZGC conducted sexual harassment awareness programmes at all studios comprising ZBC Pockets Hill, Mbare, Midlands 95.8FM, and Montrose Studios. To enable a holistic approach, The Commission roped in the Ministry of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services, to enable cascading of the importance of this discourse across all media. The engagements enabled unpacking of the various facets of sexual harassment in the workspaces, including:



Public Education Officer Ms T. Danda leading a plenary session with ZBC Secretariat at Pockets Hill

- increased knowledge on what constitutes sexual harassment.
- clarity on sexual harassment reporting mechanisms.
- increased knowledge on the existing policies, and the extent to which this address sexual harassment
- articulating the need for tighter investigating procedure to avoid victims/ perpetrators using the situation to their advantage.
- addressing trust issues on effective implementation of policies by

management

- commitment by the management to address sexual harassment, particularly in the context of some members of management being perpetrators.

Throughout the sessions, the staff expressed the need for the country to ratify and domesticate ILO Convention 190 and enact the Sexual Harassment law at national level. Development of workplace sexual harassment policies with clear reporting procedures and penalties was also recommended. Staff also felt that the ZBC sexual harassment policy and the code of conduct needed to be reviewed with staff input to ensure currency in addressing all facets of the malpractice.

2.1.3.2. National Handling Services (NHS)

The Commission conducted a Gender Sensitization and Sexual Harassment training workshop with 17 female staff members from the NHS, under the theme “Gender Sensitization, Empowerment and Leadership Development” on the 29th of September 2023 in Harare. The training was on the heels of receiving and investigating complaints on discrimination at the National Handling



Public Education and Information Manager Ms S. Mudzengerere conducting a sexual harassment awareness session with National Handling Services Staff

Services. Though the sensitisation sessions were targeted at all staff, only women participated. This was noted as a gap in planning by the NHS as the awareness had been labelled a gender programme, therefore deemed a programme targeting women. The Commission noted this as a gap in understanding that gender issues are inclusive of both women and men and highlighted to NHS the need to be inclusive in tackling sexual harassment and GBV as the issues under spotlight included both women and men. It was also highlighted that gender is about male-female relations, not women-specific issues, hence the need to ensure gender programmes within NHS include men to ensure traction in gender relations and gender-sensitive programming. The discussion was held against the backdrop of senior management being male dominated, hence the need for ensuring the “Leaving no-one behind principle”. Key issues raised during discussions included:

- The need to address male dominance in most positions of authority to enable management to be sensitive to issues affecting women in the workplace.
- Identifying systematic barriers hindering women from acquiring positions of influence in the workplace
- The need for executives to note and address staff grievances as part of making the world of work a conducive space for health and well-being.
- Importance of developing and distributing gender and sexual harassment policies, to deter recurrence of sexual harassment issues.

Both awareness-raising sessions brought to the fore the relevance of the Commission, and the level of reliance on it to resolve gender-related violations beyond recommending prosecution.

2.1.4. Community Dialogues

The Commission scaled up its visibility and strengthened its public outreach programmes through community dialogues. A total of 35 community dialogues were conducted in 16 districts, spread over 6 Provinces. Key districts covered under the community dialogues are depicted below:

Province	District
Bulawayo	Bulawayo Central, Khami, Reigate
Matabeleland South	Beitbridge, Bulilima, Gwanda, Mangwe, Umzingwane
Matabeleland North	Victoria Falls, Hwange
Manicaland	Chipinge, Nyanga
Mashonaland East	Mutoko, Mudzi
Mashonaland West	Kariba, Hurungwe



Child Marriage and Gender-Based Violence survivors in Chinyamukwakwa (Chipinge) and Legal Officer Ms V. Ndonde laying out the ZGC investigative role: Mutoko Centre Ward 20

The dialogues focused on child marriage and sexual exploitation, GBV and articulating the Commission’s mandate. Participants in the dialogues were the local and traditional leadership, community members, slum settlers, informal traders-including vendors and cross boarder traders, GBV survivors and commercial sex workers. A total of 1872 participants were reached, comprising 524 men and 1258 women.

During the engagements, community members urged the Commission to conduct more dialogues in all the ten provinces of Zimbabwe, particularly focusing on rural and marginalized areas. There was need to have IEC materials developed and distributed in the 16 official languages to enable each community to access the information in their own languages. The Commission was also encouraged to continue engaging with the Zimbabwe Republic Police Victim Friendly Unit (VFU) and conduct training to equip officers with skills on how to handle gender-related issues and recommend to Parliament, stiffer penalties on gender-related violations.

2.1.5. Exhibitions

The Commission showcased its work at 4 exhibitions namely: Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZITF), Zimbabwe Agricultural Show (ZAS), Midlands Provincial Show and Victoria Falls Show. ZGC’s active presence at these prominent events signified its dedication to advancing gender equality and the visibility of the Commission within the diverse sectors of the economy. In addition, a number of gender-based complaints were reported at the ZGC legal desk for follow up and investigation.

ZITF

The 2023 Zimbabwe International Trade Fair ran under the theme: “Continuous innovation, Global competitiveness.” The commission therefore coined its theme to “Zimbabwe Gender Commission promoting gender mainstreaming in Industry and Commerce”. The purpose was to enhance deliberate recognition of gender mainstreaming as key to achieving both gender equality and women empowerment, alongside other Sustainable Development Goals.



Commissioner N. Chimbetete speaks to Manager Public Relations Audrey Charamba during ZITF 2023

ZAS

The Zimbabwe Agricultural Show was held in Harare from 28 August to 2 September 2023. The Commission publicised the Gender Observatory as the major highlight at the exhibition. The Gender Observatory is a flagship initiative aimed at monitoring and ensuring gender equality during elections. Timing of ZAS was relevant in that visitors to the ZGC stand got to appreciate the role of the Commission as monitors and observers in the context of the just-ended harmonised elections, which had been held on the 23rd and 24th August 2023. Acknowledging the challenges of Violence Against Women In Elections (VAWIE) often reminiscent with such periods, the Commission found it prudent to have the platform to address all forms of VAWIE. Through interactions with members of the public the following feedback was received:

- Appreciation for the education and awareness on gender issues
- Request for ZGC Offices to be decentralised for easy access by the public.
- The need to balance advocacy for both the boy child and girl child in programming to advance gender equality.
- Calls for strengthened ZGC capacity to provide psychosocial support.
- Increased inclusivity particularly in addressing the needs of persons with disability.

Victoria Falls Exhibition

The Commission participated at the Victoria Falls Exhibition held in September. The platform provided an opportunity for the public to know about the Zimbabwe Gender Commission and its Constitutional mandate, programmes done since inception and its decentralisation after approval by the Treasury. During the exhibition, there were no cases reported pertaining to the violation of gender rights. However, participants highlighted that there were numerous issues of violation of gender rights in various organisations especially Sexual Harassment as well as Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. The visitors to the stand were advised to lodge all reports, including anonymous but authentic ones to the Commission through WhatsApp and Toll-Free numbers: Tel One 08004508; Net One 0718222210; Econet 08080644.



Public Relations Officer Joseph Munda and Public Education Officer Michael Madondo address school children at Vic Falls Agricultural Show

Midlands

Due to increasing visibility, ZGC received several gender-related complaints. Cases reported at ZGC legal desk were followed up and investigated by the ZGC Legal, Complaints Handling and Investigations Department.

Gender equality snapshot surveys of exhibitions

The Commission conducted a snap survey of companies which exhibited at the 2023 Zimbabwe International Trade Fair and the Zimbabwe Agricultural Show with the main objective of assessing the integration of gender equality principles within organizations participating at these platforms. The Snap surveys assessed the following issues.

- Gender representation within leadership structures
- Staff composition at exhibition stands.
- Organizations with gender focal persons and
- Availability of Gender Policies and Sexual Harassment Policies.

The analysis revealed a significant gender gap in leadership positions, with most companies falling short of gender parity. Notably, male staff outnumbered female staff at exhibition stands across participating organizations reflecting gender imbalances in access to opportunities and exposure. While 50% of organizations had designated gender focal persons, the majority relied on Human Resources personnel to fulfil this role. Furthermore, the survey identified an absence of formal gender equality policies, although some organizations reported implementing sporadic gender-sensitive programs. Similarly, few organizations possessed comprehensive sexual harassment policies, with most referencing documents like the Human Resources Code of Conduct for guidance.

These findings underscore the imperative need for systematic gender mainstreaming within both public and private sector organizations in Zimbabwe.

2.1.6. Commemorative Events

To commemorate calendar events, the Commission has committed to generating statements with relevant calls to action to encourage stakeholders, particularly duty-bearers to engage a gender-lens in advancing the objectives of those commemorative days. While some of the calls have been heeded, more needs to be done in terms of engagement with the issues by the entire country. The following are the commemorative events that the Commission took note of and engaged with:

a) International Women's Day (8 March)

The Commission joined the world in commemorating the International Women's Day (IWD) which was held under the theme, "*DigitALL: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality*". The theme focused on how technology and education in the digital era can help the empowerment of women and girls across the world. Although there still exists a gender gap in ICT, the Commission acknowledged the initiatives being undertaken by Government and stakeholders to increase girls' participation in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education and careers. It further acknowledged the enactment of the Cyber and Data Protection Act [Chapter 12:07] of 2021 aimed at increasing cyber security and build confidence and trust in the safe use of information and communication technologies by data controllers, their representatives, and data subjects.

b) Day of the African Child (16 June)

The Commission commemorated the Day of the African Child which ran under the theme "*The rights of the child in the digital environment*". The event is commemorated every year on the 16th of June to celebrate the children of Africa and call for serious introspection and commitment towards addressing the numerous challenges facing children, boys, and girls, across the continent. The Commission applauded the Government of Zimbabwe for adopting a progressive legislative framework, key being the national Constitution which recognises, among others, rights of children, the girl child as well as the youth.

c) International Day of Rural Women (15 October)

The Commission joined the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MWACSMED) at the National Launch of the International Day of Rural Women on the 14th of October 2023 in Masvingo Province, Chiredzi District at Muteo Value Addition Cooperative Centre. The Commission took the opportunity to exhibit and receive complaints from stakeholders including women's cooperatives and the community.



ZGC Vice Chairperson Commissioner O. Matshalaga speaks to staff exhibiting in Chiredzi



Guest of Honour, Minister of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, Hon. Sen. M. Mutsvangwa interacting with Public Education Officer Ms T. Zimoto at the ZGC exhibition stand in Chiredzi

Key issues noted were:

- Calls for decentralisation of ZGC at the district level, aimed at increasing the Commission’s visibility.
- Prevalence of cases of child marriage and sexual exploitation due to harmful practices.
- The need for the Commission to conduct public awareness in relation to the constitutional provisions and legal framework on rights relating to gender and children’s rights.
- Deliberate inclusion and acknowledgement of men as victims of gender-based violence, hence the need for the Commission to accelerate male engagement even in that context.

d) 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence

The Commission undertook various activities in commemorating the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence which include monitoring one stop centres and safe shelters, roadshow against femicide and GBV and joined other stakeholders in commemorating the event.

i) Monitoring one stop centres and urban shelter

During the commemorative days, the Commission monitored two One-Stop Centres, the first one under the administration of MWACSMED, and the other Musasa Project, alongside an urban safe shelter. Both facilities are located in Harare, where they play a vital role in providing service to GBV survivors. The monitoring visits were made in line with the objectives of:

- Assessing safe shelters and one-stop centres for survivors of gender-based violence.
- Conducting meetings with implementing partners to have an appreciation of how the shelters are operated in terms of their holding capacity, and any challenges faced, among other issues.
- Interaction with survivors of gender-based violence as they share their experiences.
- Developing a comprehensive report with recommendations to duty bearers for implementation.

2023	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Total number who accessed shelters	34	49	130	50	98	125	133	63	75	29	24	
New clients who accessed shelters		38	122	31	88	114	116	46	66	17	7	
Old Clients admitted in shelters	2	11	8	19	10	11	17	17	9	12	17	
Total clients admitted in shelters	34	49	130	50	98	125	133	63	75	29	24	
Walk in clients	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Mobile counseling	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
PWD		1	1	1	0	2	3	0	2	1	1	

2023 statistics on the Harare Urban Safe Shelter admissions

Key issues noted in the findings included:

- Service provision was structured along four thematic areas namely, counselling, medical care, police and legal services. All these services were being provided under one roof making it easier for the survivors of GBV.
- The staff at the facilities were females only on the basis that most survivors tend to feel comfortable to share and open up when talking to their female counterparts.
- One stop centres also worked closely with other service providers such as ZRP-VFU, Department of Social Services, civil society actors such as MSF, Adult Rape Clinic, ZWLA, and SAYWHAT depending on the severity or nature of the help needed by the survivors.
- Across all the facilities that were observed, it was noted that reports confirmed men as the main perpetrators of GBV against women and girls and were often people known to the victim as either relative, friend or community member.

ZIMBABWE GENDER COMMISSION | 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

- To complement its efforts on walk-in clients and increase its outreach, the Musasa one stop centre has a 24-hour service call centre manned by professionally trained counsellors with coverage on all the 3 networks toll free (Econet, Netone and Telecel). WhatsApp and short message text platforms are also utilised to cater for different social income groups. Over 80 cases are handled daily in the call centre.
- By end of November 2023, over 800 people had been housed at the Musasa urban shelter as revealed in the chart below: In light of the findings obtained, the Commission noted the importance of engaging with the following key issues among stakeholders, inclusive of the MWASMED:
 - Multi-stakeholder approach on mobilization of technical and financial assistance to one stop centres and safe shelters for their efficient functioning and responsiveness to GBV cases.
 - Reconfiguration of the referral pathways to strengthen GBV coordination mechanism and functionality at all levels.
 - Adoption of safe shelter principle to cater for boys and men who are at the whim and exposure to GBV abuse.
 - Humanitarian response systems should effectively prioritise GBV issues and establish buffer zones for vulnerable groups such as women and girls including PWDs.
 - Strengthen multi-sectoral interventions on safeguarding the environment to mitigate effects of climate change and the severity of its negative results on women who bear the brunt.



ZGC Commissioners and Secretariat with Staff at the GBV One Stop Centre facility in Epworth, Harare.

ii) March/ Roadshow against femicide and GBV

The Commission also partnered with Musasa and MWASMED through a high impact march against Femicide and GBV in Harare CBD on the 7th of December 2023. The choice of the theme was against the backdrop of a proliferation of high-profile cases of femicide reported in the country's media. Protest and awareness messages were shared with members of the public, who were mobilised to participate in the campaign.

The march ended at Harare Gardens, where participants gathered for an opportunity to engage with GBV service providers who included MWASMED, ZRP Victim Friendly Unit, Musasa and Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association. The discussions focused on the prevailing status quo in relation to violence against women as well as the importance of investing in services in response to preventing and mitigating violence against women and girls. Focus was also on the existing gaps and challenges, with proposals and recommendations on how to plug these gaps. Key points from the discussions included the need to:

- Encourage GBV survivors to report the abuse.
- Acknowledging men as important in the fight against GBV in their capacity as gender champions in changing mindsets of other men against GBV
- immensely invest in ending GBV in all its forms, with all GBV cases requiring diligent investigation from a development perspective
- address the issues of limited or lack of resources such as transport, medical care and psychosocial support to address the perpetuation of GBV.
- raise awareness on existing laws for people to appreciate processes in obtaining redress and gender justice procedures.

Participants to the roadshow and dialogues were treated to advocacy music and entertainment by a local artist, Jah Signal.

iii) GBV Awareness with Parliamentarians:

Represented by the Director for Gender Equality Promotion, Ms Caroline Matizha, the Commission made a presentation to Parliament on "Strategies to Curb GBV: Invest to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls." The purpose of the engagement with policymakers was to ensure increased appreciation of the nuanced dimensions of GBV as it relates to gender inequalities and the need for deliberate inclusion of gender issues in budget processes, particularly focusing on prevention of violence against women



Artist Jah Signal engaging with the public as he sang anti-GBV songs during the march against femicide

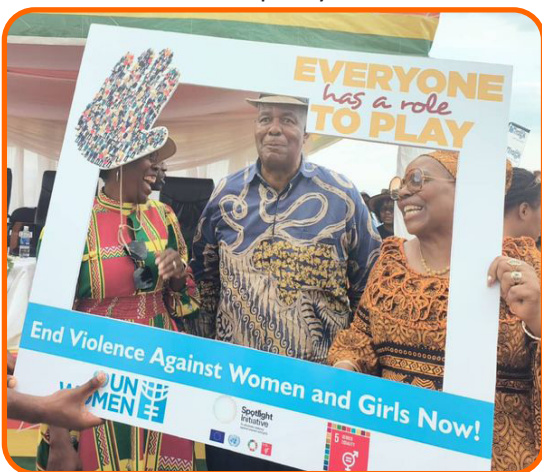


ZGC Director – Gender Equality Promotion C. Matizha, presenting at Parliament

and girls. Key issues articulated in the presentation included:

- Prioritisation of continued advocacy and lobbying for the harmonization of GBV-related laws with the Constitution, i.e., the Age of Consent and Age of Marriage
- Enactment of Sexual Harassment Act
- Providing simplified versions of the laws pertaining to GBV in vernacular, to increase awareness among communities.
- Advocating for the establishment of dedicated and specialized GBV Fast Track Courts including sexual offences to speed up the processing of GBV cases for effective justice delivery.
- Enhancing punitive and deterrent jail sentences by the Judiciary to perpetrators of all forms of gender-based violence
- Enforcing mandatory gender equality policies for both public and private institutions with specific guidelines on handling received cases.
- Raising awareness on GBV through engaging communities in dialogues that spotlight causes and consequences of GBV.
- Providing special attention to high-risk and marginalised groups such as women and girls with disabilities who face up to 10 times more GBV than those without disabilities (UNFPA 2018)
- Facilitating access to post-GBV care services through one stop centres and safe shelters for survivors

- Mainstreaming gender in disaster response training for the Civil Protection Unit, Humanitarian agencies, security services and local leaders in emergency responses
- Encouraging survivors and the community at large to report all forms of GBV for justice and redress.
- Reviewing and implementing the National Action Plan to end Child Marriages and ensure availability of data for informed policy and decision-making.



ZGC Vice-Chairperson, Commissioner Matshalaga with Honourable Minister Sen. M. Mutsvangwa at the Ministry's Launch of the 16 days in Manicaland

iv) National launch 16 days: 25 November 2023

The Commission joined the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprise Development at the National launch of the 16 days of activism against GBV in Hauna, Mutasa District, in Manicaland Province. Through an exhibition, the Commission raised awareness on gender-based violence to the Hauna community.

In her keynote address, MoWASMED Minister, Honourable Senator Monica Mutsvangwa highlighted the importance of recognizing and appreciating the work done by women in the community, particularly in addressing GBV. She articulated the effects of GBV as hindering the nation's progress in achieving gender equality and attainment of the Sustainable Developmental Goals. The Commission was represented by the Vice Chairperson, Commissioner O. Matshalaga and Chief Executive Officer Mrs V. Muwanigwa at the launch.

v) Participation at other partner events: ZGC 16 days in action

The Commission also took part in several events that were lined up by different partners in commemoration of the 16 days which included the Unite Equality Expo, Women’s University Africa (WUA) *include picture of the meeting*, Catholic University in Zimbabwe (CUZ) and the Zimbabwe National Boxing and Wrestling Control Board (ZNBWCB).



ZGC team at Catholic University in Zimbabwe to raise awareness on GBV and sexual harassment



ZGC Secretariat engaging with members of the public whilst exhibiting at the Unite Equality Expo



ZGC Secretariat exhibiting at the 16 days event organised by the Zimbabwe National Boxing and Wrestling Control Board. Here they are pictured with Monalisa Sibanda, Zimbabwe’s first female professional boxer and the Zimbabwe National Boxing and Wrestling Control Board



2.2. RESEARCH AND PROGRAMMING

Through this Unit, the Commission continued its role of monitoring compliance with gender equality and equity provisions outlined in the Constitution, as well as monitoring the extent to which regional and international normative frameworks on Gender Equality which Zimbabwe is party to were upheld.

Given that 2023 was an election year, programming focus was primarily on gender and elections, particularly monitoring compliance with Constitutional provisions on gender equality throughout the electoral cycle.

2.2.1. Multi-Party Gender Conference on Women’s Political Participation



Chairperson of Malawi Women Parliamentary Caucus (left), listens, as Hon. P. Mpariwa, Member of Zimbabwe Women Parliamentary Caucus, speaks

Cognizant of the need to engage early with Political Parties ahead of the 2023 Harmonised Elections, the Commission, in partnership with MoWACSMED, civil society and development partners successfully convened a Multi-Party Gender Conference on the 9th of February 2023 to deliberate on the status of gender equality in political parties and strategies for increasing the participation of women in the 2023 Harmonised Elections. The conference was attended by political parties, Parliamentarians from Zimbabwe and Malawi, National Human Rights Institutions, Government Agencies, Traditional and Religious leaders as well as development partners.

The conference was also convened as a recommendation from the Inter-Political Party round table meeting held in 2022 where the need for a Multi-Party Gender Conference was emphasized, to provide a dialogue platform for political parties' Principals to further deliberate on women's participation in politics.

Following extensive deliberations, the key outcome was the development of the Women's Charter, which was presented to representatives of political parties and duty bearers. The Charter contained women's demands ahead of the 2023 Harmonised Elections. Addressing these demands would enable the women's realisation of their aspirations to occupy political office. Some of the issues in the Charter included:

- i. Alignment of Laws and Electoral Systems to the Constitution**
 - Alignment of the Electoral Act to give powers to the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission to disqualify political parties that do not adhere to 50/50 as they submit party lists.
 - Replacement of First Past the Post Electoral System with Proportional Representation
 - Alignment of Political Party Constitutions to the 50/50 Constitutional Provisions
 - Enactment of a Gender Equality Act to guarantee the full actualisation of gender equality Constitutional provisions.
- ii. Political Parties Financing and Post Election Support**
 - Gender Sensitive and inclusive Political Party selection processes
 - Gender responsive budgeting and funding of political candidates
 - Amendment the Political Parties Financing Act to ensure that political parties are obliged to distribute resources to women candidates of all ages and abilities on an equal basis and in equal measure with men.
 - Capacity building of aspiring candidates by political parties
- iii. Peaceful Participation, Accountability and Ending Impunity**
 - Addressing Violence against women in elections
 - Ensuring conflict resolution management mechanisms are in place to redress gender imbalances, grievances, discrimination, abuse, and sexual harassment of women.
 - Strengthening legislation on Violence against Women in Elections (VAWIE)
- iv. Media**
 - Provision of equal media coverage to both men and women.
 - The media to portray women leaders and aspiring women leaders in a positive manner as seen in the portrayal of male politicians by the media.

Political Parties responded to the demands by the women through signing the Gender Equality Pledge for 2023, where they committed to implementing the demands in the Women's Charter.

2.2.2. Women Candidate Training for the 2023 Harmonised Elections

The Commission successfully conducted targeted women candidate training for candidates who had been successful in their political party's primary candidate selection processes for the 2023 harmonised elections. The training workshops were carried out from the 14th to the 16th of June 2023 in Kwekwe and Bulawayo for the Mashonaland and Matabeleland cohorts respectively. The Commission undertook this process in the realisation that it was imperative to equip women political candidates to adequately prepare them for effective participation in the Harmonised Elections as part of driving the gender equality agenda.



Women candidates group photo during the candidate training in Kwekwe

ZIMBABWE GENDER COMMISSION | 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

The targeted candidate training was in-line with the Women Rise in Politics Initiative which sought to address challenges faced by women as they aspire for political office. The Commission noted that limited capacity in political leadership, limited access to information on political processes, lack of political networks, lack of campaign resources and lack of motivation were some of the hindering factors to women's occupancy of political office. The training empowered women candidates from diverse political parties with requisite skills and knowledge to navigate the political terrain, while in the process building their confidence. Areas covered by the training were on key electoral processes such as the nomination and polling process, campaigning, resource mobilisation, voter contact and engagement, communication and personal branding, grooming and etiquette among other subjects.

A total of 46 aspiring political women candidates participated in the capacity building workshops, and of these, 37 were successfully elected to office, being 12 in the National Assembly and 26 as Local Government Councillors.

However, the Commission had planned to carry out capacity building through Women Rise in Politics initiative in every District however due to resource constraints the Commission had to do a targeted training only for candidates who had succeeded in the Political Parties' candidate selection processes.

2.2.3. The 2023 Gender Observatory



Front Row: ZGC Chairperson, Commissioner M. Mukahanana-Sangarwe with members of the Gender Observatory (GO) and Stakeholders during the launch of the GO

Within the broader mandate of monitoring gender equality issues in electoral processes, the Commission successfully established and operationalised the 2023 Gender Observatory (GO) to monitor gender equality issues throughout the 2023 election period. The 2023 Gender Observatory constituted a broad membership drawn from National Human Rights Institutions, Government Ministries, Civil Society Organisations, the Security Sector and Development Partners, showing a collaborative commitment to achieving equitable and gender-responsive electoral processes in Zimbabwe. In operationalising the GO, the following activities were successfully implemented -

i. Commissioning and sensitisation of Gender Observatory members

Appointment of GO members: 17 members were sensitised on their terms of reference and signed a code of conduct for guidance during their tenure of office.

ii. Long-term Election monitoring and observation

The Commission began the monitoring of the 2023 election cycle from a gender perspective focusing on process and implementation of:

- Biometric Voter Registration
- Nomination Court
- Pre-election environment
- Polling and.
- Post polling processes.

For the Commission, election monitoring and observation mission comprised carrying out a gender analysis of the electoral process as part of strengthening gender responsiveness of governance processes. It also meant evidence-based documentation of good practices and lessons learnt, to enable the production of gender-disaggregated data and proffer recommendations to ensure gender responsive electoral processes.

Biometric Voter Registration (BVR): Monitoring of the National Biometric Voter Registration exercise took place from the 16th to the 21st of March 2023 in 9 Provinces namely Bulawayo, Manicaland, Masvingo, Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland East, Mashonaland West, Matebeleland North, Matebeleland South and Midlands covering a total of 26 Districts and 115 BVR Centres were monitored. The BVR process provided a good opportunity for people in hard-to-reach areas to register to vote particularly against adequate and extensive voter education by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC).

However, the following gaps and challenges noted in the period included:

- Documentation challenges among community members without identity documents as the Biometric Voter registration process was not preceded by the mobile registration process as is custom.
- Obsolete BVR equipment that slowed down the process, resulting in long queues.
- BVR Centres situated at business centres posed a security threat for registrants, ZEC officials and ZEC equipment as they were too close to bottle stores where unruly behaviour by patrons occasionally presented.

- Absence of, and limited access to disability friendly infrastructure, proper water and sanitation facilities for BVR staff especially at BVR Centres situated at business centres and in tents.
- **Nomination Court:** The Commission monitored the Nomination Court process conducted on the 21st of June 2023 and the National Inspection Day conducted on the 22nd of June 2023. Provinces covered were Manicaland, Mashonaland West, Matabeleland South and Midlands. Focus areas for the Commission were: the gender responsiveness of the nomination process as well as the level of women's participation in the nomination process both as candidates and workers of the Electoral Management Body (EMB). In the process, monitoring would cover identification of gender-related challenges in the nomination process and to proffer recommendations to the EMB.

Key gender issues noted from the nomination court processes were:

- Low representation of female candidates amongst the nominated candidates with women constituting 11% and 15% at National Assembly and Local Government levels respectively.
- Exorbitant nomination court fees that disadvantaged and excluded vulnerable groups especially women. Candidates vying for the National Assembly were expected to pay USD \$1000 while those vying for the presidential seat were to pay USD \$20 000. The monitoring teams witnessed women from some political parties failing to file their nomination papers as their political parties would not sponsor them.
- Centralisation of the nomination process brought unwarranted logistical costs for candidates such as accommodation, food and transport.
- The time frame on the announcement of results posed a security challenge for candidates. With most of the nomination courts announcing their results around midnight, this rendered a serious risk to candidates who expressed fear of being ambushed by their opponents. The fear posed greater risk for female candidates.

a) Pre-Election Environment Monitoring

Pre-election monitoring was conducted from the 2nd to the 9th of August 2023 in Manicaland, Masvingo, Midlands, Mashonaland East and Matabeleland North provinces. The exercise focused on monitoring the general pre-election environment. Observations made were that the general environment was calm and peaceful, except in Shurugwi, in the Midlands province where incidences of political violence were reported.

The pre-election monitoring exercise also targeted Women Rise in Politics Programme (WRiP) candidates, following up on them to understand their experiences in the run up to elections. A total of 15 female candidates from WRiP were interviewed. Most articulated gender issues in relation to Political Party candidate selection processes which were not conducive for increasing women's participation as they required rigorous campaigning processes while others relied heavily on strong social capital as selection was through consensus. The candidate selection processes exposed a lot of women candidates to risks of sexual harassment.

b) Monitoring/observation of the election of the National Council of Chiefs

For the first time, the Commission monitored the election of the National Council of Chiefs, conducted on the 3rd of August 2023 in all the 8 rural provinces. The process was male dominated, with the selection process heavily reliant on social capital and consensus among Chiefs. This posed a challenge for female chiefs due to their lack of social networks and traditional views questioning their legitimacy as community leaders in a patriarchal society. However, for the first time, the election saw one female chief, Chief Ndube of Filabusi, Matabeleland South, being elected as a member of the National Chief's Council. Key recommendation is that commitment to diversity and representation by the Chief's body should be shown by them ensuring that all the six women chiefs across the country are automatically included.

c) Polling and post polling monitoring



Director Gender Equality Promotion and a ZGC official working at the Call Centre during the 2023 harmonised election

The Commission, through the 2023 Gender Observatory, successfully conducted a nationwide election observation exercise from the 20th-25th of August 2023. A total of 77 election observers from the gender observatory and ZGC were deployed in all the 10 Provinces and comprehensively covering 26 districts. The monitoring process noted logistical delays in the printing and distribution of ballot papers in some polling stations, particularly those in urban areas. Provinces mostly affected were Bulawayo, Harare and Manicaland. Voting was extended into the night for these provinces, while others extended polling by a day. The issue of night voting had negative implications on vulnerable groups such as women and persons with disabilities which included:

- i. **Participation:** late-hour voting discouraged some vulnerable groups from participating in the electoral process due to the inconvenience and safety concerns it presented.
- ii. **Safety and Security:** Movement at night time is generally risky outside elections. Night voting therefore increased the vulnerability of voters, especially women, the elderly, and people with disabilities.
- iii. **Caregiving Responsibilities:** Night voting presented challenges for women with caregiving responsibilities, as it conflicted with their duties and routines. This resulted in lower voter turnout among women, limiting their representation and influence in the political process.
- iv. **Cyber-bullying of female candidates:** This was prevalent on social media across political parties.

Other observations by the Election Observation mission were that some polling stations were situated in high risky areas such as beerhalls and too close to the roadside, posing safety and security risks to voters. In some instances, electoral officials had to make do with below standard accommodation conditions especially for those deployed in rural areas, at business centres and in tents.

On the upside, most polling stations observed inclusion principles by ensuring persons with disability, the elderly, the sick, nursing and pregnant women were attended to with expediency during voting. There was also a gender-balanced deployment of ZEC and ZRP Officials in most polling stations. The environment generally depicted extensive and inclusive voter education through the prevalence of inclusive billboards, addressing various population demographics, with voter education materials also readily available in vernacular and sign language.

d) Call Centre for the 2023 Harmonised Elections

The Commission established a Call Centre for the 2023 Harmonised Elections with three toll free lines (Telone, Netone and Econet) to increase outreach and accessibility of the GO. The Call Centre was operational 24hrs a day during the election period. A total of 17 cases were recorded during the period, with the majority of cases being referred to the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission and the Zimbabwe Republic Police. Most of the cases received were complaints on the late delivery of ballot papers. ZGC commends Securico, a female-led security company, through its Chief Executive Officer, Ms Divine Ndhlukula, for providing security pro bono for those working the Call Centre during the electoral period. This was in response to a ZGC appeal as the ZRP was short staffed heavily deployed officers countrywide.

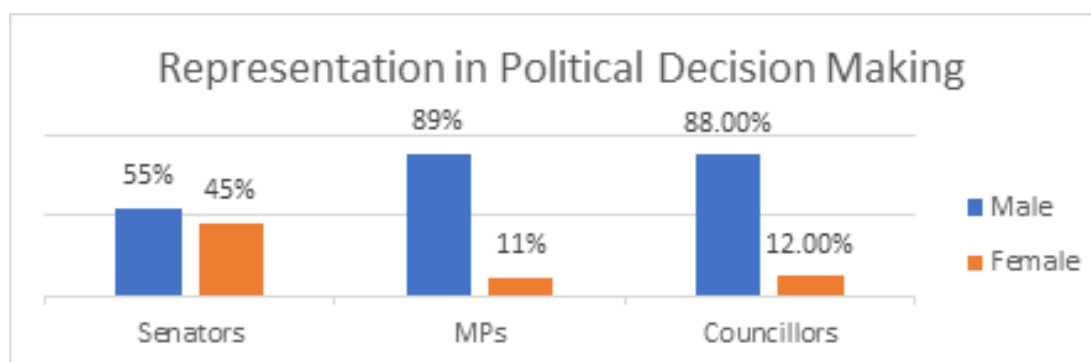
2.2.4. Gender analysis of the 2023 harmonised elections and appointments

Following the 2023 Harmonised Elections, the Commission carried out a gender analysis of the election outcome. The following, findings, relevant immediately after the elections, are the key highlights noted.

Post	Male	Female
President	1	0
Vice Presidents	2	0

The Cabinet

Designation	Women	Men	Total
Cabinet Ministers	7	19	26
Deputy Ministers	7	9	16
Permanent Secretaries	6	20	26
Ministers of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution	4	6	10
Permanent Secretaries for Provincial Affairs	2	8	10



2.2.5. Rapid Gender Assessment of Maternity Waiting Homes (MWH)

Through its monitoring mandate, the Commission undertook a Gender Assessment of Maternity waiting homes from the 23rd to the 29th of July 2023 to ascertain the experiences of pregnant women. The process also sought to identify their needs during their stay at the maternity waiting home in response to safeguarding concerns raised by Global Fund and UNDP specifically on an alleged case of sexual harassment at Zhombe Hospital.

A total of 24 health institutions were assessed across 6 provinces namely, Mashonaland East, Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland West, Manicaland, Matabeleland North and Matabeleland South. Noted issues included dilapidated infrastructure, poor living conditions for pregnant mothers, lack of nutritional support for expecting mothers, shortage of skilled personnel and high security concerns around the maternity waiting homes.

The Commission also noted relatively high statistics of girls below the age of 18 being admitted at the maternity waiting homes. A total of 211 expecting mothers below 18 years were recorded in the period of 12 months at 13 health institutions visited, with health institutions in mining communities recording higher cases of teenage pregnancies.

Key recommendations from the findings include:

- Rehabilitation of MWHs infrastructure
- Strengthen the psychosocial wellbeing of expecting mothers in the MWHs through introduction of wellness programmes and provision of nutritional support to expecting mothers admitted in MWHs.
- Development of a safeguarding policy for MWHs
- Integration of GBV and Care for GBV Survivors within MWHs

2.2.6. National Gender Forum

The Zimbabwe Gender Commission successfully convened and hosted the 2023 National Gender Forum on the 15th of November 2023 in Bindura, Mashonaland Central Province. The 2023 National Gender Forum was held under the theme “*Gender, Politics and Decision Making: Taking stock of 2023 harmonised election and mapping way forward to 2028*”. Participants of the National Gender Forum were drawn from Political Parties, Government Ministries, Civil Society Organisations, Members of Parliament, Councillors and community members reaching a total of 278 participants (90 males and 188 females). The 2023 National Gender Forum was convened with the following objectives-

- i. To explore the socio-cultural, economic, personal and institutional factors that contribute to the gender gap in political representation.
- ii. To propose strategies and policy recommendations to enhance women’s participation and representation in politics and decision-making processes.

The National Gender Forum provided a platform to reflect on the outcome of the 2023 Harmonised elections from a gender perspective. Reflections were also made on some of the factors that contribute to the gender gap in political representation which include the lack of financial resources, prohibitive nomination fees, gender norms that prohibit women from participating, an electoral architecture that is not conducive for women’s participation as well as sexism and misogyny.



The ZGC Chairperson, Commissioner M. Mukahanana-Sangarwe presenting the gender analysis of the 2023 elections results. Next to her is CEO, Mrs V. Muwanigwa

The forum also noted that the women's quota system had provided male politicians with an opportunity to further side-line aspiring women candidates by arguing that since women already have assured seats in parliament through the quota system, they have no reason to contest for the 210 direct elected parliamentary seats. The lack of goodwill and sincerity in addressing the obstacles to women's participation in politics and decision making was also cited as cause for the gender gap in political representation. The major compounding factor is the absence of legislation that compels political parties to field an equal number (50-50) of male and female candidates in elections.

The Forum also collated key strategies and policy recommendations to enhance women's participation and representation in politics and decision-making processes. Key recommendations that emerged from the Forum are as follows-

- Review of Nomination fees to accommodate vulnerable groups such as women, youth and persons with disabilities that do not have the financial muscle.
- Alignment of the Electoral Act to the Constitutional Provisions on Gender Equality to provide for the following.
 - Disqualification of all political parties whose internal Constitutions do not comply with the provisions of the Constitution on gender equality.
 - Replace First Past the Post Electoral System with Proportional Representation
 - Regulation and registration of political parties
- The ZGC and CSO's to lobby the Executive and Parliament for the enactment of the Gender Equality Act under the 10th Parliament. The envisaged Gender Equality Act will legislate 50% for women's representation as provided for in the Constitution.
- Amendment of the Political Parties Finance Act to provide a framework that encourages participation of women and financially supports female candidates.
- Strengthen laws in response to violence against women in elections.
- Economic empowerment for women to capacitate them to make independent decisions to participate in political and decision-making processes.
- Awareness raising on the provisions of the Cyber and Data Protection Act to encourage reporting of perpetrators and impose stiffer penalties for perpetrators of online violence against women in general and women politicians in particular.
- Upscale capacity building initiatives for elected women and aspiring female candidates to build their knowledge base on various issues such as leadership and campaigning skills among others.
- Registration and regulation of political parties to compel them to adhere to constitutional requirements on gender equality.

As has become custom, the Commission had planned to carry out Provincial Gender Forums in preparation to the National Gender Forum but due to resource constraints the Commission did not manage to host these.

2.2.7. Compliance of Public Appointments on boards and other leadership positions in Government

In fulfilling its Constitutional mandate to monitor adherence to gender equality, the Commission issued advisory notes to various institutions that appointed gender imbalanced Boards. These advisory notes serve as an accountability mechanism and proffers recommendations to rectify the identified imbalances and ensure compliance with the Constitution's gender equality principles. Advisory notes were issued as follows.

- i. Minister of Energy and Power Development concerning the Petrotrade Board where the Minister appointed only one female board member out of the 5 Board Members.
- ii. Chairperson of the Public Service Commission concerning the appointment of two gender imbalanced Boards i.e. the Government Employees Mutual Savings Fund (GEMS) board and the Skills, Attraction, Retention and Development Fund board where most board members were men.

Additionally, the Commission issued a commendation letter to the Zimbabwe Olympics Committee for its progressive leadership in appointing a female Chief Executive Officer Ms. Marlene Garikayi for the first time in the history of the ZOC.

2.2.8. Gender Statistical Report 2022-2023

The Commission produced its first Gender Statistical Report based on the Zimbabwe Gender Commission Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. The report provides a comprehensive assessment of gender indicators drawn from data collected across various thematic areas which include Politics and Governance, Education and Training, Media, and Health. The Gender Statistical Report was produced as part of the Commission's ongoing efforts to monitor compliance with gender equality provisions in the Constitution and international norms and standards on gender. The major objective of the gender statistical report is to develop a baseline on sectoral gender indicators for tracking compliance with gender equality provisions set in the Constitution and other international and regional gender equality normative frameworks and to facilitate evidence-based programming.

Statistics were collected from Government Ministries and Departments, Parastatals and Independent Commissions from the period 2022-2023. An analysis of the Gender Statistical report reflected persisting gender imbalances in representation and access. Key recommendations to address the challenges identified from the statistical analysis include:

- i. Government Ministries and Independent Commissions to strengthen capacity in the Alignment of Policies and Strategies to the Gender Equality Provisions in the National Constitution
- ii. Strengthen Collection of sex disaggregated data across Government Institutions and Independent Commissions
- iii. Government Institutions and Independent Commissions to build internal capacity for Gender Mainstreaming
- iv. Comply with Gender Responsive budgeting requirements.

2.2.9. Gender and Human Rights Training

The Zimbabwe Gender Commission in partnership with the Raoul Wallenberg Institute conducted an intensive Gender and Human Rights Training for the Commission’s technical staff from the 11th to the 16th of September 2023. The training was conducted with the major objective of equipping ZGC technical staff with knowledge and practical skills to apply a human rights lens in all its programming. The training further sought to highlight the link between gender and human rights.

A total of 25 technical staff were trained. The training covered critical topics which include International Human Rights Frameworks, International and Regional Frameworks on the Human Rights of Women and Gender equality, State Party Reporting on International and Regional Human Rights Frameworks, Rights of Children and Other Vulnerable Groups, Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), Gender Equality and Devolution among others. Participants obtained practical skills and expert recommendations to ensure the Commission’s programmes better reflect the application of human rights principles.

2.2.10. Gender Analysis of the 2024 National Budget proposal

The Commission conducted a comprehensive gender analysis of the Zimbabwe 2024 National Budget proposal. The gender analysis findings revealed the following key issues among others-

- i. Limited public consultations in the budget preparation process with Parliament mainly focusing on zoom and radio consultations which are by nature not inclusive for most marginalised groups.
- ii. Commendable prioritisation of the social sector in budget allocation although the allocations are still below regional and international benchmarks such as the Abuja Declaration which calls for allocation of 15% of the national budgets towards the Health Sector, the Dakar Declaration which calls for the allocation of 20% of the national budgets to the education sector, and the Social Policy Framework for Africa which calls for 4.5% of the national budgets to be allocated towards social protection.
- iii. Dedication of Z\$15.5 billion towards the procurement of sanitary wear for disadvantaged girls, a move that seeks to tackle a critical gender barrier to girls’ access to education.
- iv. A meagre allocation of funds to the Ministry of Energy and Power Development, which risks exacerbating energy poverty which disproportionately impacts women and marginalized groups. This move has the potential of translating to tangible burdens for women, who, as primary care providers, shoulder the responsibility for household energy needs.
- v. Gendered implications of the increase in passport fees and tollgate fees.

2.2.11. Other Accomplishments

i. CSW Side Event hosted with the ZGC

The Commission, represented by 2 Commissioners and 3 staff members, attended the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women that took place from the 6th to 17th of March 2023 in New York. The session was held under the theme, *“Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls”*.

The meeting was attended by representatives of UN Member States, Continental Bodies, UN Agencies, Regional Economic Communities, and accredited NGOs. The Zimbabwe delegation, led by Honourable Dr S. G. G. Nyoni, Minister of Women Affairs, Community, Small, and Medium Enterprises Development, comprised Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies, Members of Parliament, and Civil Society Organisations representatives.

The 67th session of CSW provided a platform to deliberate on the barriers and gaps towards the achievement of gender-inclusive innovation, technological development, and digital education. Strategies and recommendations to address the gaps for the

achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of innovation and technology development, and digital education. were also discussed.

gender commissions in promoting accountability towards gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls". This was a joint side event conducted in partnership with fellow National Gender Commissions from Africa; The Kenyan National Gender Equality Commission (NGEC) and the South African Commission for Gender Equality (GCE). The convening of the joint side event was in line with the Agreed Conclusions of CSW 62 and General Assembly Resolution 72/181 which emphasized the need for Governments and the Commission on the Status of women in particular to recognise the role played by National Human Rights Institutions in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and to strengthen the capacity of such institutions including through continued participation and contribution to deliberations at relevant United Nations Mechanisms and processes.

Engagements made during the joint side event revealed that the three Commissions share a lot of stark resemblances in as far as their mandates and challenges are concerned. Challenges surrounding systemic underfunding, limited independence and challenges in enforcing the Commissions' recommendations were common across the 3 Commissions. The following areas of cooperation were identified for immediate implementation during.

- The need to continuously share knowledge, expertise and best practises through study visits amongst other interventions.
- The need to jointly lobby through the United Nations Economic and Social Council for automatic CSW membership. Automatic participation at CSW and other international fora was identified as a key tool to strengthen the Monitoring Capacity of Independent Gender Commissions in Africa.
- Lobby for the recognition of Gender Commissions by regional bodies such as the African Union, SADC, ECOWAS

The CSW 67 Session saw the adoption of an outcome document/ political declaration in the form of 'Concluding Observations'. The Concluding Observations are set to guide the implementation of initiatives to support the achievement of gender equality and women empowerment in the context of innovation and technological change and education in the digital age in all UN Member States.

ii. Kenya Learning Visit

The Zimbabwe Gender Commission undertook a Learning and Sharing visit to the Kenya National Gender and Equality Commission from the 17th to the 21st of April 2023 to gain deeper understanding on monitoring elections from a gender perspective. The visit shared the much-needed insights and strategies on instituting a robust monitoring mechanism aimed at promoting gender equality throughout the electoral cycle. Through the interactive engagements, useful best practices were flagged out and these were incorporated in the work of the Commission on elections. Key among these include the establishment of the Call Centre to receive gender related election complaints, monitoring all stages of the electoral cycle and training and incorporating ZGC staff in the election observation mission.



Zimbabwean Delegation, Officials from Kenya National Gender Equality Commission and UN Women Kenya Regional Office Staff

iii. Sweden Learning Visit

The Zimbabwe Gender Commission, Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission, and Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services with support from Raoul Wallenberg Institute for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law under the Zimbabwe Human Rights Capacity Development Programme undertook a Study tour to Sweden from the 9th to the 20th of October 2023. The study visit provided an opportunity to learn from like-minded institutions in Sweden. For Zimbabwe Gender Commission interaction with the Swedish Gender Equality Agency, MAN, Swedish Parliament, Ringson Open Prison provided invaluable insights on promoting gender equality. For Zimbabwe Gender Commission key learnings from Sweden included the need to increase advocacy for timely budgeted disbursement of resources from Treasury as well as the importance of adequate resourcing, including vehicles to enable the Commission to ensure wide reach of programmes to key stakeholders.



Zimbabwean delegation posing for a photo at the Swedish Parliament in Stockholm with a member of parliament and officials from Raoul Wallenberg institute.

3. LEGAL AND INVESTIGATIONS

The Commission conducted several planned activities in compliance with section 246 of the Constitution, Section 2 and Part 3 of the Zimbabwe Gender Commission Act [Chapter 10:31]. In addition, the Commission leveraged on collaborative and partnership initiatives in ensuring the provision of legal and investigative services to the public in line with its strategic mandate.

3.1. Cases handled.

The following are the statistics and nature of cases that were handled by the department during the year 2023:

NATURE OF CASE	NUMBER OF CASES
Assault	1
Chieftainship Dispute	1
Child Abuse	2
Child Marriages	2
Deceased Estate	1
Drug and Substance Abuse	1
Lobola Dispute	1
Domestic Violence	5
Gender Discrimination	4
Insensitive Media Reporting	1
Land Dispute	2
Maintenance	2
Political Violence	1
Property Sharing	3
Rape	4
Sexual Harassment	19
Total	51

3.1.1. Key investigations conducted are as articulated:

a. Lobels Case

The Legal, Complaints Handling and investigations department carried out an investigation into complaints of alleged sexual harassment against a Chief Operations Officer at Lobels Sweets and Biscuits (Bulawayo). The investigation and subsequent hearing established that there were several complainants and that the alleged abuse was being perpetrated by the alleged perpetrator as well as several other members of the Lobels senior management.

There was no sexual harassment policy in place at the company to inform the employees of their rights and the reporting structure at the company was compromised because of widespread nepotism. The abuse had been ongoing for years and there was a practice of dismissing workers who raised concerns or creating a hostile work environment that would force out workers who had grievances.

The overall recommendations were that the company should put in place a sexual harassment policy to protect and inform workers of their rights and grievance procedures. Another recommendation was for the Minister of Women Affairs, Small and Medium Enterprises Development to allow the women to have a class action lawsuit to recover damages. It was recommended that the Zimbabwe Gender Commission should include clauses in its proposed regulations that would enable the Commission to apply for interdicts to stop companies from interfering with investigations by dismissing workers who had reported complaints to the Commission. The report was completed for adoption.

b. Pick n Pay Case

An investigation and hearing were conducted into allegations of sexual harassment against the manager of TM Pick ‘n Pay Marondera Branch. It was alleged by several employees that he would coerce employees to engage in sexual relations with him to secure their continued employment. If they refused, he would take retributive action and create a hostile work environment for them. Some of the workers had been dragged into disciplinary hearings on trumped up charges and they feared he would continue operating without impunity if the Commission did not step in to investigate these allegations. An investigation was conducted, and a hearing

was held but the respondent failed to cooperate and respond to the allegations citing that the Commission needed to gazette a notice for initiating the investigations. The Commission having fully given the alleged perpetrator right to be heard and the alleged perpetrator having waived such right to be heard the Commission continued to decide on the matter. Recommendations were made to Pick n Pay to put a sexual harassment policy in place and to ensure that the alleged perpetrators and enablers were disciplined for their part in fostering an environment where sexual harassment could flourish without any impediment.

3.2. Investigative Research on Systemic Gender Issues That Affect Women at Designated and Undesignated Ports of Exit and Entry in Border Towns

An investigation was conducted by the Zimbabwe Gender Commission and the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission in November 2020 at Plumtree Border Post to gather facts on the allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse of women at the border and the surrounding areas both at legal and illegal entry points. This was a culmination of social media reports indicating the prevalence of sexual crimes of rape and various forms of Gender Based Violence (GBV) being perpetrated on women trying to cross the border and smuggling of commodities across the border.

This gave birth to the need to gather country wide information as it was discovered that these were not isolated incidences and that women cross border traders were facing systemic gender issues at ports of entry and exits. In pursuance of this investigation the Department visited Nyamapanda, Kariba and Chirundu border posts and interviewed key informants and women cross border traders.

Below are the statistics of the stakeholders we engaged during the research:

Area	Stakeholders engaged
Karoi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formally registered Cross border traders, DDC, OPC, ZRP, Women Affairs
Magunje	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief Dendera, Chief Chundu, Sabhuku Kapungu, Sabhuku Chidyamatamba
Chirundu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CESHAAR, IOM, ZRP, Immigration, Port Health, ZIMRA
Kariba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMA, ZRP, Immigration, Port Health, ZIMRA, DDC, Women Affairs
Chirambadeya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mine Action Group, Motor bike transporters (majorijo)
Kotwa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OPC, Council, Women Affairs, DDC
Nyamapanda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMA, ZRP, Immigration, Port Health, ZIMRA
Nyahuku	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Female cross border traders, Army and Police base, Sabhuku Goronga,
Muzezuru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief Goronga, Sabhuku Nyahuna

The key findings from the designated and undesignated ports of entry covered so far were that women faced a myriad of challenges including but not limited to:

Economic challenges: There was lack of capital and the lack of collateral security, which hinders women’s access to loans from formal banking institutions. The result is often that the women resort to borrowing from loan sharks, locally known as ‘chimbado’ which charge high-interest rates of 20-30%, with a short return period of 3 to 6 weeks often increasing the financial burden on the traders.

Administrative challenges: The research also uncovered administrative challenges faced by the Cross Border Traders and the most significant issue was the high duty charges imposed on their goods coupled with a limit on the number of goods they can bring in under rebate which have the effect of reducing their profit margins and making cross-border trading less viable as a source of income.

Infrastructural challenges: There was a notable absence of bathrooms for cross boarder traders to freshen up during their long journeys. Safe houses were also viewed as crucial for providing temporary shelter and protection for vulnerable groups that cross the border, such as breastfeeding mothers and deportees. Dilapidated roads were noted to not only make travel more difficult and time-consuming but also pose a risk to the safety of the traders and their goods.

Transit challenges: The women complained about the numerous roadblocks on their transit routes. If one does not have adequate paperwork, they may be charged spot fines with/without receipts. It a tactic used for extortion and corruption. Conductors and bus drivers were implicated as they require every passenger to contribute towards the ‘fines’ charged at roadblocks by police and/or ZIMRA.

Knowledge gaps: The cross-border traders had little knowledge on the laws that regulate their trade, as well as specific details such as the requirements for obtaining permits, licenses, and rebates.

Human-wildlife conflict: It was also noted that communities in Chirundu and Kariba are located within a game reserve area and residents have reported high instances of human-wildlife conflict. Community members have reported attacks by various wildlife species, including baboons, lions and elephants posing a direct threat to the safety and well-being of the Cross Border Traders especially those who used alternative illegal routes to transport themselves or their goods.

SGBV: Female Cross Border Traders often finding themselves vulnerable to border officials who allegedly ask for sexual favours from local communities in exchange for allowing them to cross the border without any financial extortion. Truck drivers and smugglers were also identified as major perpetrators of sexual exploitation and abuse towards female Cross Border Traders. Some of the traders told of stories of women who had been raped by robbers when they used illegal ports of entry. It was difficult to report such cases to police because they had occurred during an illegal act. They feared that they would also be arrested for using undesignated ports of entry or they would be judged.

Preliminary reports on those visits have been compiled however the investigation is still ongoing and a consolidated report will be published once the investigative research is completed.

Mobile Legal One Stop Centres

- Six (6) Mobile Legal one stop centres were set up in 3 provinces during the 2023-year cycle. The statistical data for the outreach is as follows:

PROVINCE	DISTRICT	NO. of MALE	NO. of FEMALE	PWDs	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS
Manicaland	Chipinge	15	216	6	231
	Nyanga	18	198	9	216
Matabeleland South	Umzingwane	1	151	-	152
	Gwanda	6	84	-	90
Masvingo	Bikita	31	165	5	196
	Zaka	61	224	9	285
	Total	132	1038	29	1170

The goal of these mobile one stop centres was to:

- Increase awareness of the role of the Commission to communities
- Ensure enhanced access to justice for marginalized communities.
- Ensure provision of psychosocial support

These clinics were set up to assist vulnerable groups within societies who have no access to service provision. The initiative ensured that a majority of the critical service providers including VFU, Ministry of Health, National Prosecuting Authority, Civil Society Organisations such as ZWLA and Justice for children, social workers from the Department of Social Development as well as the Zimbabwe Gender Commission were all put together to assist communities. The rationale behind was bringing services to the people who cannot afford or access the services. It is anticipated that the one stop centres can be replicated in all 10 provinces to ensure access to justice and services for all.

The key outcomes of the one stop centres were:

- Strengthened multi sector referral at provincial/district level
- Awareness raising of laws and policies affecting communities particularly women and girls.

The key findings:

Cycle of multiple forms of violence: The multiple forms of violence identified through this outreach include child marriages, incest, gender-based violence and emotional violence which are usually fostered by poverty. In most of the areas visited, perpetrators who would have engaged in the practice of child marriage are sanitised by payment of lobola which leads to low reports of the illegal practice. That resulted in emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of the children.

Economic instability: Most of the men and women who were assisted indicated that they were suffering economically. Some of the men had migrated to neighbouring countries to seek employment opportunities which left women in charge of providing for their families on their own. Many women who went seeking legal advice wanted maintenance for their children from their fathers and which was a difficult and costly process for those who were now living in foreign countries. The traditional courts were also affected by the economic climate and in turn were charging high fees to hear matters from the community. This was out of the reach of most women leading to lack of access to justice.

Impediments from access to education: Girls did not have access to sanitary wear hence they were forced to skip school when they are menstruating. In Bikita most of the girls had dropped out of school because of non-payment of fees. They ended up entering early marriages to escape economic hardship. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education reported several parents and children asking about BEAM and how to be added to BEAM for school fees.

Strengthening of laws and policies: Some perpetrators of sexual abuse of minors were shielded from prosecution by the non-alignment of the constitution and section 70 of the criminal code.

Access to Documentation: It was noted that children who were left by their fathers who left the country, did not have birth certificates because the mothers did not have access to information that are able to collect birth certificates on their own. In other cases, the young mothers themselves did not have identification documents. In addition, because they are in remote areas, they did not have access to registry services. For instance, the child who was assisted after reporting sexual abuse did not have a birth certificate, which slows down administration of justice. For these cases to proceed the officials end up estimating ages which at times might not be accurate. The registrar general office was invited to be part of MOSC however there were challenges in them participating.

Lack of health services and safe reporting platforms: HIV testing, counselling and medical examinations had the highest services received by survivors and this is attributed to sexual violence cases that were not reported on time or not reported at all. Women were open to accessing family planning services and they indicated that their husbands spend long spans of time out of town at work or elsewhere.

Human Interest Stories from the MOSC?

A matter for interest was that of a child of 14 who reported that her grandmother was looking for men for her. After the probation officer further engaged the child, she was taken for medicals by the Commission and VFU and it was discovered that she was sexually abused. While investigations were being conducted the child was left in a place of safety. The Commission was unable to return for further monitoring because there was need for the provision of fuel (80litres) of fuel for DSD to provide further care for the child. There is need for fuel to be provided for the matter to be completed.

There was also a child in need of immediate health assistance as he was diagnosed with hydrocephalus. The stakeholders contributed so that the mother could go to Harare for treatment.

3.3. Legal Assistance

The legal and investigations unit assisted 1170 clients through the mobile one stop clinic initiative. The cases involved cases of domestic violence, land disputes, labour disputes, rape as well as sexual abuse and exploitation. Some of the cases were referred for criminal litigation while others received relevant services regarding their cases.

Legal help desks were set up at various public forums such as the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair, Zimbabwe Agricultural Show, Midlands Show, Victoria Falls Show, National Gender Forum, and other public education initiatives with the aim of offering free legal advice to the public on issues related to gender. A total of 7 adults visited the Legal and Investigations desk at the community dialogues hosted by the Public Education and Information unit in partnership with Marvel Act Youth Organization of Zimbabwe (MAYO) and the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development in 4 selected wards in Mutoko District, Mashonaland East Province.

3.4. Advisory Notes

The Commission also issued advisory notes on topical legal issues such as the gap in content of the law protecting children and young women from sexual abuse and the need for legal reform to address the gap left by expiry of the moratorium for adoption of the required law.

3.5. Other Achievements

3.5.1. ZGC Call Centre

The Department took over the Call Centre that was being used by the Gender Observatory during Elections. It became operational in September 2023 and has been of much assistance in gathering complaints from the Public although more publicity is needed for optimum utilisation. Toll free numbers are : 08004508 (TelOne); 0718222210 (NetOne); 08080644 (Econet).

3.5.2. ZGC Case management system

A case management system was developed, that records complaints and cases electronically on call for easy access, supervision, and efficiency. It helps with secure storage of data and record keeping.

3.6. CHALLENGES

Below are some of the challenges identified in the legal complaints handling and investigations unit during the period under review:

- i. The Zimbabwe Gender Commission Act [Chapter 10:31] section 17 provides for penalties and fine up to level 6. These fines and penalties are not deterrent enough especially when it comes to Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) cases. The Act also gives impression that ZGC has to gazette each case to be investigated and some respondents and their lawyers are taking advantage of that. Before ZGC can confirm that some barriers are systemic, there is need to investigate received complaints,

some of which are individual and therefore not necessarily structural.

- ii. Lack of adequate funds led to the shelving of several research and investigations that the department wanted to pursue. It also led to a failure to do follow-ups on cases that were identified during the mobile one stop centre access to justice program. More so, inadequate funds hampered rigorous visibility and marketing strategy of the newly installed call centre and case management system which are a key component for the work of the unit.
- iii. There is a lack of IT resources especially for field work. It hindered the efficiency of recording information and its transmission to relevant department or other stakeholders that are likely to be able to assist.
- iv. For investigative cases some of the challenges encountered included complainants developing cold feet and not wanting to pursue their cases.
- v. Lack of a decentralised legal and investigations system led to delays in dealing with cases. Although new staff were hired there were no resources to enable specialised training for the department and ensure true devolution in practice.

4. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

4.1. ZIMBABWE GENDER COMMISSION ESTABLISHMENT

ADDITIONAL COMMISSIONERS

Three Commissioners were appointed in November to fill in vacancies on the Board. The three are Commissioner Angelina Vere, legal expert and current Chief Executive Officer at Telecel Zimbabwe, Commissioner Jigu Katsande, Academic and Lecturer at Midlands State University; Commissioner Walter Tonderai Mufuka, a practising Legal Expert.

Appointment of the three ensured a full complement of the Zimbabwe Gender Commission, comprising five women and four men.



ZGC New Commissioners; Jigu Katsande, Walter T. Mufuka and Angeline Vere during the swearing in ceremony

STAFF

The Commission's establishment was reviewed upwards from forty-nine (49) posts to two hundred and twelve (212) posts. In the year 2023, Treasury concurred with the filling of seventy-eight (78). The number of staff continues to increase due to ongoing recruitment, and seventy-six (76) posts were filled. As of December 31, there was a staff complement of one hundred and eighteen (118), comprised of sixty-six (67) females and 51 males, with percentages of 56% and 44%, respectively. The remaining posts to be filled in the first quarter of 2024 are: 1 librarian and 1 Monitoring and Evaluation Officer.

Staff complement as of 31 December 2023 according to programmes of the Commission

Category	Programme 1: Governance and Administration	F		M		Programme 2: Gender Equality Promotion	F		M		Agency Total Personnel Requirements by Category	F		M	
Top Management	11	6	5	1		1	0	1	0	13	8	5			
Middle Management	8	2	6	7		4	3	1	0	16	7	9			
Operational and Support Staff	52	30	22	17		9	8	20	7	89	52	37			
TOTAL	71	38	33	25		14	11	22	7	118	67	51			

4.2. EXPENDITURE

The summary of expenditure as of 31 December 2023 according to programmes is as follows:

Programme 1 Governance and Administration

Sub programme 1: Commissioners and CEO'S Office

Expenditure item	Original Budget	Unallocated Reserve	Revised Budget	Expenditure	%
Compensation of employees	333,851,000	438,998,167	772,849,167	772,049,078	99
Non-Wage Expenditure (Goods and Services)	334,815,000	529,196,432	864,011,432	854,795,439	99
Acquisition of non-financial assets	564,000,000	382,784,000	946,784,000	711,889,422	75
Total	1,232,666,000	1,350,978,599	2,583,644,599	2,338,733,940	91

Sub programme 2: Finance, Administration, Human Resources, PMU, PR, Audit & M&E

Expenditure item	Original Budget	Unallocated Reserve	Revised Budget	Expenditure	%
Compensation of employees	137,942,000	567,363,487	705,305,487	705,305,393	99
Non-Wage Expenditure (Goods and Services)	447,213,000	1,094,363,141	1,541,576,141	1,523,786,014	99
Acquisition of non-financial assets	116,000,000	487,216,000	603,216,000	511,512,775	85
Total	701,155,000	2,148,942,628	2,850,097,628	2,740,604,181	94
Total Programme 1	1,933,821,000	3,499,921,227	5,433,742,227	5,079,338,121	96

Programme 2 Gender Equality Promotion

Sub programme 1: Research and Programming

Expenditure item	Original Budget	Unallocated Reserve	Revised Budget	Expenditure	%
Compensation of employees	111,289,000	149,286,105	260,575,105	260,375,099	99
Non-Wage Expenditure (Goods and Services)	384,692,000	613,763,923	998,455,923	995,307,395	99
Acquisition of non-financial assets	22,000,000	0	22,000,000	00	0
Total	517,981,000	763,050,028	1,281,031,028	1,255,682,494	98

Sub programme 2: Public education and information

Expenditure item	Original Budget	Unallocated Reserve	Revised Budget	Expenditure	%
Compensation of employees	111,289,000	45,323,689	156,612,689	156,312,645	99
Non-Wage Expenditure (Goods and Services)	383,372,000	413,902,272	797,274,272	796,206,698	99
Acquisition of non-financial assets	22,000,000	0	22,000,000	000	0

Total	516,661,000	459,225,961	975,886,961	952,519,343	98
Total Programme 2	1,034,642,000	1,222,275,989	2,256,917,989	2,208,201,837	98

Programme 3 Legal and Investigation Services

Expenditure item	Original Budget	Unallocated Reserve	Revised Budget	Expenditure	%
Compensation of employees	111,289,000	66,712,889	178,001,889	178,001,886	100
Non-Wage Expenditure (Goods and Services)	379,908,000	457,560,232	837,468,232	828,449,955	99
Acquisition of non-financial assets	26,000,000	0	26,000,000	5,107,880	20
Total Programme 3	517,197,000	524,273,121	1,041,470,121	1,011,559,721	97
Grand Total	3,485,666,000	5,246,470,337	8,732,130,337	8,299,099,678	95

The Commission was allocated an original budget of **ZWL\$3,485,660,000** and **ZWL\$5,246,470,337** from Unallocated Reserve giving a total of revised budget of **ZWL\$8,732,130,337**. A total expenditure of **ZWL\$8,299,099,678** was recorded for the period under review (January to December 2023) and this constitute **95%** of the entire revised budget. **24%** of recorded expenditure went towards Employment costs whilst **57%** went towards Non-Wage Expenditure (Operational Expenditure). **14%** expenditure was recorded under Financial and Non-Financial Assets (CAPEX).

4.3. ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTING STANDARDS (IPSAS)

The Commission produced and submitted to Treasury an implementation strategy that spells out how the organization will go about its business in terms of IPSAS implementation. The IPSAS project committee was also appointed to spearhead the implementation process. The Commission is one of the institutions expected to produce transitional IPSAS-based accrual financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2023, together with the traditional cash-based financial statements. Full migration to IPSAS is set for December 31, 2025.

4.4. REGIONAL OFFICE SPACE

In pursuance of Cabinet approval on Devolution and Decentralisation, the Commission decentralised to five provinces.

Having finalised the recruitment of staff for regional offices, the offices were operationalised with offices, equipment and furniture to make them fully functional.

Masvingo Regional staff have since moved into the identified office space.

The office in Mashonaland West was secured but has yet to be occupied. Office space is yet to be secured for the Midlands Regional, Manicaland and Bulawayo.

5) PROCUREMENT

The annual procurement plan for 2023 was submitted to PRAZ as per sections 22 and 23 of the PPDPA Act. Subsequently, the procurement license was duly granted by the Authority to the Commission to conduct procurement. All mandatory procurement returns for the year 2023 were sent to the Authority as per regulation and duly acknowledged.

Seven contracts for asset acquisition valued at USD 3,166,452.70 were concluded during the period under review. These contracts comprised the following equipment: Isuzu vehicles, minibuses (30 seats), institutional buildings, laptops and desktops, mobile phones, furniture, and printers.

PRAZ introduced an electronic public procurement system for all procuring entities, with effect from January 2024. This entails that all procurements, including the entire tendering process, shall be done online through this newly introduced EGP system.

The Commission is anxious about the possibility of a volatile economic operating environment at the beginning of 2024, as evidenced by the rapid increases in the exchange rate. This presents challenges on the execution of procurement requests as all our procurements are conducted using local currency.

Equipment for staff valued at USD 227,202.00 was procured in December, comprising 85 swivel chairs, 67 visitors' chairs, 24 upright metal filing cabinets, 89 desks, 26 desktops, 30 printers, 12 laptops, and 19 cell phone handsets. The following procurements were also done during the fourth quarter: various procurements pertaining to the National Gender Forum, servicing of vehicles, catering services for teas and lunches for meetings, fuel, and the procurement of ICT accessories for the networking of additional staff offices.

5.1. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Commission conducted the Strategic Planning Workshop in Masvingo from October 16 to October 20, 2023. The workshop sought to extend the strategic plan for the period ending 2023 for the Zimbabwe Gender Commission to 2025, in line with NDS 1. Furthermore, the Commission inducted all staff members, and International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) awareness training was conducted, as were two (2) IT system validation workshops and the Smart Africa conference.

5.2. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

With the increase in uptake of ICT initiatives, the Commission increased the need for such services with the initial issue of assisting in the procurement of mobile gadgets, desktops, and printers for ease of work. The section also worked hand in hand with sponsors to develop the case management system, which is now operational, and install the call centre at the head office, which is also now operational.

5.3. CHALLENGES

- The price and exchange rate volatility made it difficult for the Commission to make meaningful purchases.
- Delays in the release of funds by Treasury further compound the challenges in procurement.
- We are also facing delays in concluding procurement processes as a result of the due diligence exercises, which take time.
- Office space remains a challenge for the Commission, which is coupled with high rental costs.
- Lack of funds for us to conduct necessary workshops and trainings for ZGC staff members.
- Most staff members are incapacitated; they do not have the necessary tools of trade to conduct their day-to-day duties, tasks, and responsibilities.
- Delays from the PSC in terms of releasing members who will be transferring from other ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) to join the Commission.

6) PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Commission established a Public Relations Unit in the second half of the year. Working under programme 1, on Governance and Administration, the unit began by mapping key stakeholders of the Commission, establishing and maintaining relationships in the context of increasing the visibility of the work of ZGC, in line with its mandate. While the Commission had already covered a lot of ground in terms of promoting gender equality and ensuring awareness of its work through programme activities and public awareness and education efforts, its visibility was enhanced by the establishment of a team committed to engaging and interfacing with various stakeholders in the public, private and non-state actors across various sectors.

Through deliberate public engagement efforts, the Commission successfully ensured media engagement in a timely manner, responding to media enquiries, as well as initiating some engagements. Internally, engagement with staff included establishment of an internal newsletter as part of motivating staff to appreciate the multi-level contribution to the overall mandate of the Commission.

Stakeholder engagement also included ensuring support to all departments of the Commission, guided by the function of ensuring image building, providing insight into the Commission's work, and enhancing advocacy efforts through multi-level partner engagements.

Use of print, broadcast and digital media was enhanced during the period. Production of monthly media monitoring reports enabled the Commission to reflect on the nature and depth of issues covered by the media. The reports also contributed to informing advocacy issues, and in some instances, provided leads to cases requiring investigation, in addition to submitted complaints. The media monitoring reports also contributed to keeping the Commission abreast with key gender issues across the country.

Establishment of the unit enabled the Commission to segregate event management duties from programming activities for all departments, in addition to improving the Commission's archiving and digital footprint.

Highlights of activities that contributed to increased visibility include:

Press statements: These were produced on calendar days as well as on special occasions. They were published in mainstream media as well as on the Commission's website and social media handles.

Exhibitions, Networking and Visibility: the role of the Public Relations Unit was image-management by guiding the setting up of the exhibition stands, including coordinating the roles by all staff during the period. Promotional materials inclusive of short videos were generated for screening at the stand. The Commission also participated in partner events and shared this on all social media platforms. Some of the events were commemorations by WAG@40; WUA; MISA; and RMT. The Commission also held courtesy meetings with SNV Zimbabwe, Khaya Cement and Zimbabwe Council of Churches to enhance appreciation of their gender programmes and initiatives.

Media appearances and engagements: the Commission actively participated in several media engagements, either as interviewees or generators of news, across the broad spectrum of the media and communication sector. Virtually all media houses in Zimbabwe solicited news stories from the Commission wherein guidance on appropriate responses, particularly in relation to possible investigations were provided. A total of 80 radio publicity programmes on Classic 263, Breeze FM, Yam, Diamond FM, Hevoi FM, Nyaminanyi FM, Star FM and Radio Zimbabwe, and 19 TV Programs were broadcast, during the year under review.

Partnerships: a significant number of partnerships were established, inclusive of: Zimbabwe Association of Community Radio Stations (ZACRAS); Parliament; Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC); Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN); Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MWACSMED); Women's University Africa (WUA); Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA); Road Motor Transportation(RMT); Catholic University in Zimbabwe (CUZ); National Handling Services (NHS) and City of Harare (CoH). During the 16 Days the commission partnered with Musasa and hosted a 16-day event which included a march, and the event was successful as we managed to sweep away gender-based violence. The Commission partnered with UNDP in developing social media posts during the 16 Days Commemorations, while the Sunday Mail contributed by providing space to popularise the work of the Commission.

Social media presence: By the end of the period, the Commission had robust social media platforms as illustrated below:

- Twitter (X) - 1,490 Following and 7,953 Followers
- Facebook - 1,800 followers
- Instagram - 833 followers
- LinkedIn - 93 followers

7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Commission successfully established a standalone Monitoring and Evaluation (M and E) unit to serve both internal and external purposes. The set up of the unit was in line with Government's thrust of mainstreaming monitoring and evaluation in all programmes and systems aimed at assessing progress, effectiveness, impact and utility of interventions and activities being implemented. The launch of the M and E Policy¹ by the Government of Zimbabwe in October 2015 is clear testimony to the level of importance it attaches to M and E issues. Meanwhile, the National M and E Policy has been a benchmark guiding monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes, and projects in the country.

Monitoring and Evaluation has become an integral component of organizations both in the public and private sector, hence the role of the M and E unit within the Commission, which includes provision of:

- i. **Technical Support:** The M and E unit provides technical support on monitoring and evaluation methodologies, data collection techniques, and analysis.
- ii. **Gender Equality Indicators:** Development and monitoring of gender equality indicators that track progress towards gender-related goals and targets. These indicators provide a standardized framework for assessing the Commission's impact and measuring gender equality outcomes.
- iii. **Performance Monitoring:** The M and E unit shall monitor the performance and progress of the Commission's activities. This involves tracking the implementation of programs, assessing the achievement of targets and milestones, and identifying any challenges or bottlenecks that need to be addressed.
- iv. **Monitoring and Evaluation Reports:** Prepare quarterly monitoring reports that track the progress and implementation of the Commission's programs, initiatives, and policies. These reports provide evidence-based insights on the outcomes and results achieved, as well as recommendations for future improvements.
- v. **Policy and Program Development:** Provide input support on policy and program development within the Commission. Through rigorous analysis and evaluation, the unit identifies areas of improvement and informs the design of new interventions to better address gender-related issues.

Major Achievements

Since inception of the unit, the Commission facilitated the conduct of the two critical surveys which feeds into the Governments' Performance Evaluation Framework. Further, the initiatives established critical baseline information that shall be used for future assessment and reflections. Activities pursued during the half year period in operation include the following:

a) Client Satisfaction Survey

Embracing use of client satisfaction surveys within organisations has principally become inevitable due to their efficacy in gathering feedback on pertinent issues with regards to services offered and delivery. Subsequently, given the nature and wholeness of the Commission's work which cuts across all societal facets which places it to serve a population with heterogeneous needs and for it to be alive and responsive to such, it attaches great importance on feedback received from experiences on service utilisation.

Hence, acknowledging the need to understand and gauge service delivery, the Commission administered a client feedback survey instrument. The survey obtained in-depth insights on key attributes and provided an engagement platform that exposed some gaps through permeation of information while fostered pathways for improvement. The client satisfaction survey findings were based on analysis of respondents' feedback on key attributes namely: quality and timeliness of service delivery, satisfaction levels, attitudes and behaviour as well as availability of information on ZGC products. Further, the analysis was in congruent with the objectives of the survey that sought to:

- Assess client's satisfaction on service delivery and provision.
- Understand clients' needs, priorities and identify gaps faced by clients in accessing Commission's services.
- Proffer recommendations to ensure the Commission discharge its services in line with the client service charter and expectations.

The findings revealed a predisposition of high level of satisfaction amongst the diverse clientele base with regards to services offered by the Commission and its subsequent delivery which is further illustrated in the chart below.

¹ -zimbabwe-launches-the-national-monitoring-and-evaluation-policy, <https://www.zes.org.zw/index.php/site-map>



Findings on client satisfaction survey, ZGC 2023

However, one of the key recommendations made from the findings speaks on the need for the Commission to make readily available IEC materials in official vernacular language to cater for all levels of clients as well as enhance its public awareness initiatives in the spirit of promoting its visibility and presence across the country and hard to reach places.

b) Employee Satisfaction Survey

The Commission acknowledges that the success of any organization depends on its workforce motivation, commitment, and performance. Further, it appreciates the relevance and power of employee surveys in influencing organizational growth. Therefore, it makes efforts to understand employee needs, insights, and experiences as there are critical in building positive energy and shaping a conducive working environment. To that effect, it administered the employee survey to assess overall levels of satisfaction of the staff at work as they discharge their duties in fulfilment of the Commission’s mandate. The survey made incisive attempts to probe and analyse employee satisfaction levels through reflection on pertinent employee issues broadly focusing on dimensions such as organizational culture, job satisfaction, communication, decision making processes, remuneration, career growth and employee wellness amongst others.

The findings revealed that over 85% of the employees were generally satisfied and content with their jobs including the working environment which they alluded to be conducive and provided various opportunities to flourish. Furthermore, the employees were alive to the Commission’s mandate and strategic objectives. Evidence from the survey shows that there were limited career and development opportunities within the Commission rather most of the employees relied on skills previously obtained prior joining the institution or somewhere else as 75% of the respondents alluded to that. However, resentments were noted in compensation and benefits which they regarded did not measure up to their expectations given the challenging macro-economic environment. Analysis of the findings are illustrated in the infographic below.



Findings on Employee satisfaction survey, ZGC 2023

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 RECOMMENDATIONS TO PARLIAMENT

- Enactment of the Gender Equality Act to operationalise gender equality provisions in the Constitution.
- Amendment of the Electoral Act to provide for the following;
- Empowerment of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission with powers to disqualify party lists from political parties who do not comply with gender equality provisions in the Constitution.
- Regulation and registration of political parties
- Adoption of full Proportional Representation as a sole Electoral System
- Amendment of the Political Parties Finance Act to provide a framework that encourages participation of women in politics through rewarding parties that provide financial support to female candidates.
- Review of nomination fees to integrate vulnerable groups such as women, youth and persons with disabilities.
- Ensure effective implementation of gender responsive budgeting by demanding accountability on budget performance.
- Ratification and domestication of ILO Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment in the workplace
- Enactment of Sexual Harassment Act to criminalize sexual harassment.
- Domesticate the SADC Model Law on ending child marriages.

8.2 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE

- Amendment of the Zimbabwe Gender Commission Act to provide for stiffer and deterrent penalties of the SGBV cases; to enable the fining of organisations that hinder investigations; and to provide for penalties to organisations that do not comply with gender equality provisions in the Constitution.
- Enactment of Zimbabwe Gender Commission Regulations with provisions that allow the Commission to approach courts for interdicts against employers who dismiss workers for reporting allegations of sexual harassment or any other gender-based discrimination.
- Accelerate alignment of laws to the Constitution on children's rights and gender equality.
- Review and implement the National Action Plan on ending Child Marriages.
- Establish strategies for the regulation of activities of Faith Based Organisations to eradicate harmful practices.
- Prioritize increased budget allocation for Commission's programmes and procurement of office building and vehicles for decentralized offices.
- Provide concurrence to fill vacant posts to enable the Commission's full representation in all the 10 Provinces.

8.3 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE JUDICIARY

- The Judiciary to give punitive and deterrent jail sentences to perpetrators of all forms of gender-based violence.

CONCLUSION

The Commission successfully carried out its mandate, albeit in the context of a harsh operating environment wherein budgets were eroded by the unstable exchange rates. As an elections year, most country and operational focus was on elections. The much-awaited appointment of three Commissioners to fill long-standing vacancies complemented increased efficiency in technical issues, alongside the beefing up and expansion of different units. The concurrence by Treasury for ZGC to decentralize also provided the much-needed impetus to be truly national, which visibility will enable Zimbabweans to access and enjoy the constitutionally guaranteed services provided by ZGC. It is envisaged that 2024 will herald more opportunities for the review of laws, customs, and practices to be in line with the Constitution and move towards a more just and equal society.

ZGC IN PICTURES 2023 MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS

National Gender Forum in Bindura



2023 Harmonised Elections highlights



The Zimbabwe Gender Commission conducted an investigative research on the systemic gender issues in border towns: Chirundu, Kariba, Nyamapanda



Zimbabwe Gender Commission engages Parliamentarians at the new Parliament building, discussing strategies to combat Gender-Based Violence (GBV)



Commissioner S. Mauye addresses delegates at the close out meeting for the Spotlight Initiative



Zimbabwe Gender Commission participated at the Ministry's national launch of the 16 days of activism against Gender-Based Violence held in Hauna, Mutasa District, Manicaland Province



Welcome sworn-in Commissioners



Welcome new staff to be deployed in the new ZGC Regional offices – induction at Head Office



Commissioner Angeline Vere giving welcome remarks at the SADC Webinar organized by Oxfam & SADC PF on ending child marriages



Commissioner Dr. N. M. Nyangulu represented the Zimbabwe Gender Commission at the farewell event for the outgoing Rozaria Memorial Trust CEO, Dr. Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, in Murehwa following her elevation to UN-Women Deputy Executive Director.



2023 Exhibitions: ZITF, ZAS and Victoria Falls



2023 Exhibitions: ZITF, ZAS and Victoria Falls

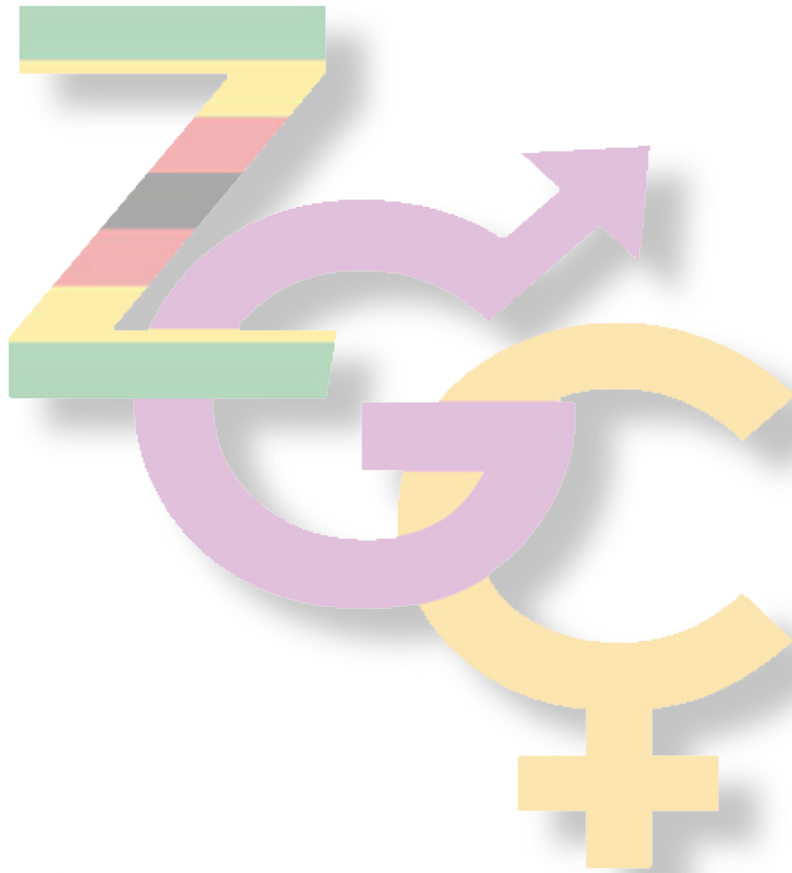



2023 Exhibitions: ZITF, ZAS and Victoria Falls





Launch of the National Enquiry on Child Marriage, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Young Girls including Girls with Disabilities








 No. 89 Kwame Nkrumah Avenue 1st Floor Pax House, Harare

 +263 024 2701101 / +263 24 2250296/+26329 880557

 Email: info@zgc.co.zw

 Email: complaints@zgc.co.zw

 Whatsapp: 0719554465

 www.zgc.co.zw