



WORKERS DAY PRESS STATEMENT 2025

Workers' Day – 1 May 2025

On this Workers' Day, the Zimbabwe Gender Commission joins the nation and the global community in honouring the contributions of all workers who continue to drive our country's growth and development. This day serves as a critical reminder of the need to uphold workers' rights, promote decent work, and address the systemic inequalities that continue to disadvantage women and other marginalized groups in the workforce.

The Constitution of Zimbabwe enshrines the principles of equality and non-discrimination, mandating equal opportunities for all, regardless of gender. Section 17 explicitly calls for gender balance in all spheres of life, including economic participation, leadership, and decision-making. Section 56 further emphasizes the right to equal treatment and protection under the law. Section 65 on labour rights guarantees every person the right to fair and safe labour practices and standards and to be paid a fair and reasonable wage.

Aligned with these constitutional provisions, the National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1) prioritizes gender equality and women's empowerment as critical pillars for sustainable development. NDS1 underscores the importance of creating inclusive economic opportunities, dismantling gender-based barriers, and promoting women's participation in leadership and decision-making roles across both public and private sectors.

Despite these policy commitments, women remain under-represented in key decision-making positions, in government (parliament, executive, judiciary), civil society, the private sector, media, churches. The Zimbabwe Gender Commission continues to call on all stakeholders to:

- Ensure equal opportunities for women and other marginalized groups in leadership and decision-making roles.
- Establish gender-balanced boards and promote women's inclusion at all levels of organizational leadership and governance as well as programming.
- Recognize and value care and domestic work, which remains disproportionately shouldered by women and girls.

Recognizing Care Work as Work

Care work - both paid and unpaid - forms the backbone of our society. It supports the well-being of individuals, families, and communities, while contributing significantly to our country's social and economic growth. However, care work is often undervalued, unrecognized, and insufficiently protected, leading to discrimination, exploitation, and precarious working conditions.

Recognizing care work as work is crucial because it:

1. **Values and Recognizes Contributions:**

- Acknowledges the essential role of care workers in sustaining health, education, and economic progress.
 - Addresses gender inequalities by promoting a more equitable distribution of care responsibilities among men and women.
- 2. Addresses the Needs of Care Workers:**
- Improves working conditions, including fair wages, social security coverage, and protections against exploitation.
 - Enhances professional development opportunities and ensures respect for care workers' contributions.
- 3. Creates a More Equitable and Sustainable Society:**
- Ensures better access to care services for all, while building a more resilient society capable of responding to future challenges such as demographic shifts and health crises.
 - Promotes policies aligned with the “3Rs” (Recognize, Reduce, Redistribute) and “5Rs” (Recognize, Reduce, Redistribute, Reward, Represent) frameworks to alleviate the burden of unpaid care work while ensuring decent work for paid care workers.

We urge all sectors - government, private institutions, and communities - acknowledge that care work is not solely a woman's responsibility but a collective one. Implementing gender-responsive care infrastructure, both at workplaces and in communities, will reduce the burden of care and allow women to fully participate in the economy while enjoying equal opportunities for growth and leadership.

As we commemorate Workers' Day, let us reaffirm our commitment to eliminating all forms of discrimination in the workplace, recognizing the vital contributions of all workers, and creating an environment where both women and men can thrive equally.

The Zimbabwe Gender Commission stands ready to continue working with government, the private sector, labour and civil society to ensure that gender equality is not only a constitutional aspiration but a lived reality for all Zimbabweans.

Together, we can build a just, inclusive, and equitable world of work.

For Gender Equality

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