

## **PRESS STATEMENT BY THE ZIMBABWE GENDER COMMISSION**

Commemoration of the International Day of Older Persons 1 October 2025

The Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC) joins the global community in commemorating the International Day of Older Persons (IDOP) under the 2025 United Nations theme: Older Persons Driving Local and Global Action: Our Aspirations, Our Well-Being, and Our Rights. This theme recognizes older persons as active drivers of change, not passive recipients of care. It emphasizes their aspirations, well-being, and rights while promoting inclusive, intergenerational, and age-friendly societies.

As Zimbabwe, we must acknowledge that older persons are our senior citizens, the custodians of our cultural heritage, role models, mentors, and reservoirs of wisdom. Yet, they often bear the greatest burden of unpaid care work caring for sick family members, children orphaned by disease, and those left behind by parents in the diaspora. Despite these immense contributions, older persons, particularly older women, are too often unrecognized, unsupported, and excluded from policy priorities.

**Importantly, the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013), Section 82, explicitly guarantees the rights of older persons, affirming their entitlement to:**

- Reasonable care and assistance from their families and the State;
- Health care and medical assistance appropriate to their age; and
- Participation in the life of the community, protecting them from neglect, abuse, or exploitation.

The Commission reiterates that no one should be left behind in advancing human rights, care, and support systems. Protecting the rights of both caregivers and care recipients is fundamental to achieving effective care strategies. These strategies must:

- Recognize and value the diverse contributions of caregivers, from unpaid family members to professional service providers, including those offering palliative, rehabilitative, and long-term care.
- Go beyond medical interventions to adopt a life-course approach that respects individual culture, social networks, life history, and identity.
- Ensure that older persons have control and choice in decisions concerning their care.
- Promote equitable, person-centered, and rights-based care systems through coordinated efforts by governments, civil society, communities, households, and the private sector.

The Zimbabwe Gender Commission calls upon Government ministries, Parliament, local authorities, civil society, faith-based organizations, the private sector, and communities to:

- Prioritize the implementation of Section 82 of the Constitution through policies that guarantee social protection, access to healthcare, and financial support for older persons.
- Recognize and reduce the burden of unpaid care work carried by older persons, especially women, by investing in accessible community-based support systems.
- Create platforms for older persons to actively participate in national and local decision-making processes.
- Build age-friendly and inclusive communities that respect, support, and celebrate the contributions of older persons.

On this International Day of Older Persons, we celebrate the resilience, contributions, and wisdom of Zimbabwe's older citizens. They are the backbone of our families and communities. Supporting them is not charity it is our culture, it is justice, respect, and a recognition of their invaluable role in shaping a society where everyone can age with dignity.

**For Gender Equality,**

For media inquiries and further information, please contact For more information, contact Chief Executive Officer Virginia Muwanigwa 0712899543/ 0772327955