

2026 ZIMBABWE INDEPENDENCE DAY PRESS STATEMENT

Celebrating Zimbabwe at 46: Sustaining Gender Equality Gains for Unity and Development Towards Vision 2030

The Zimbabwe Gender Commission joins the nation in commemorating the 46th Independence Anniversary of the Republic of Zimbabwe under the theme: “*Zim@46 — Unity and Development Towards Vision 2030.*” This historic milestone offers an opportunity to reflect on the country’s journey, celebrate national achievements, and reaffirm our collective commitment to building an inclusive, equitable, and prosperous Zimbabwe for all.

Over the past 46 years, Zimbabwe has made notable strides in advancing gender equality, anchored in the progressive provisions of the 2013 Constitution, which guarantees equality, non-discrimination, and the full participation of women and men in all spheres of life. The Commission acknowledges the Government’s commitment to gender mainstreaming through laws, policies, institutions and programmes that promote the empowerment of women and girls, while increasingly recognising the importance of engaging men and boys in achieving sustainable gender equality.

Gender equality remains central to national unity and socio-economic development. A society that promotes fairness, inclusion, and equal opportunity fosters social cohesion, strengthens democratic governance, and unlocks the full potential of its people. As Zimbabwe advances towards Vision 2030, gender equality is not only a constitutional imperative but also a strategic driver of economic growth, poverty reduction, and sustainable development in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 5 on gender equality. The Commission further notes that gender equality is a cross-cutting priority within the National Development Strategy 2, which seeks to accelerate inclusive growth, social protection, and human capital development. Ensuring that gender considerations are fully integrated into NDS2 implementation will be critical to achieving equitable and sustainable national development outcomes.

The Commission takes pride in its contribution to shaping national discourse and policy through evidence-based research and advocacy. Notably, the National Inquiry into Child Marriages brought critical attention to the prevalence, causes, and consequences of early marriages, informing interventions to protect the rights of girls and promote their education, health, and well-being. Such initiatives demonstrate the importance of a dedicated institution focused on addressing gender-specific challenges and providing targeted recommendations.

While celebrating progress, the Commission calls for renewed efforts to consolidate gender gains. Persistent challenges remain, including gender-based violence, unequal economic opportunities, limited representation of women in decision-making, and socio-cultural norms that perpetuate inequality. These issues require sustained, coordinated, and well-resourced interventions.

In this regard, the Commission makes the following recommendations:

- 1. Enhance Investment in Gender Equality Programmes:**
Increase funding and support for initiatives addressing gender-based violence, women’s economic empowerment, and social protection, in alignment with NDS2 priorities.
- 2. Promote Inclusive Participation:**
Strengthen mechanisms to increase women’s and youth participation in leadership, governance, and economic development.
- 3. Deepen Community Engagement:**
Expand gender awareness programmes at grassroots level to address misconceptions and promote inclusive dialogue involving both women and men.

Zimbabwe has demonstrated its commitment to regional and international frameworks, including the Southern African Development Community gender agenda and key global instruments on women's rights. The establishment of the Zimbabwe Gender Commission itself stands as a testament to this commitment and to the nation's resolve to address historical imbalances and systemic barriers affecting women and girls.

As we celebrate 46 years of independence, let us reaffirm that gender equality is not a peripheral issue, it is not optional, but a peremptory, mandatory cornerstone of unity, peace, and development. A gender-equal Zimbabwe is a stronger, more resilient, and more prosperous nation.

For Gender Equality,

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