

**Press Statement by the Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC)  
Commemorating Workers Day 2026**

The Zimbabwe Gender Commission joins the nation and the global community in honouring the contributions of all workers, the men and women who drive our country's growth and development. This day is a reminder to uphold workers' rights, promote decent work, and address systemic inequalities that continue to disadvantage women and other marginalised groups who form the backbone of our workforce.

The Commission commends Government efforts under the National Development Strategy 2 (NDS2), which prioritises job creation, industrial growth, and private-sector-led development. Key frameworks including the National Gender Policy (2025), the National Employment Policy (2026–2030), and the National Formalisation Strategy (2026–2030) demonstrate commitment to fair labour standards, social protection, and integrating workers in the informal into the formal economy. These efforts are anchored in the Constitution of Zimbabwe, particularly Sections 14 and 65, which guarantee the right to work, fair labour practices, and equal remuneration for work of equal value.

As we commemorate this day, the Commission emphasises the central role women play in Zimbabwe's economy, especially in the informal and rural economy. The informal economy contributes 64.1% of economic activity, generating an estimated US\$14.2 billion annually, with women dominating in trading, agriculture, and micro-enterprises. In the rural economy, women are the primary drivers of agricultural production at 70% of the labour. However, they own only 10% of the land and about 23% of cattle, reflecting structural inequalities in access to productive resources. Expanding women's access to, control over land ownership of land coupled with enhanced access to finance, inputs, and markets is essential for improving productivity, food security, and economic growth.

The Commission further highlights the burden of unpaid care work, which remains the invisible foundation of the economy. Women spend an average of 25.9 hours per week on unpaid care work compared to 6.1 hours for men. This limits their participation in formal employment and economic opportunities, yet remains largely unrecognised in national economic policy in practice. Addressing unpaid care work is essential to achieving gender equality.

ZGC has been inundated with complaints of work-based sexual harassment. While the Labour Amendment Act has criminalised sexual harassment this needs to be unpacked and enforced in practice.

As we commemorate this year's celebrations, the Zimbabwe Gender Commission calls for: equal access to land and other productive resources; accelerating formalisation of the informal economy with a gender lens; recognising, reducing, and redistributing unpaid care work through legislation and investment in care infrastructure; strengthening enforcement of workers rights including ensuring workplaces free from violence and harassment in line with ILO Convention 190; and investing in education and skills development for women and girls.

ZGC further urges the Government of Zimbabwe to develop and enact a comprehensive Unpaid Care and Domestic Work Policy/Act that formally recognises, values, and protects the critical contribution of unpaid care and domestic work to the economy and society.

The Zimbabwe Gender Commission reaffirms its commitment to advancing gender equality and safeguarding workers' rights. Women in Zimbabwe are not merely participants in the economy but are part of its core foundation alongside men. Recognising their contributions, ensuring equitable access to opportunities and decision making are essential for inclusive growth. As we commemorate Workers' Day 2026, let us build an economy that values all work, uplifts all workers, and leaves no woman or girl behind.

**For Gender Equality**

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