

**REPORT**  
**SADC experts mission visit to Zimbabwe**

**Country: Zimbabwe**

**Dates: 26-28 June 2019**



SADC experts pose for a picture with Hivos Staff

Photo: Tapiwa Zvaraya

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## Executive summary

This is a report on the SADC experts visit on sharing experiences on the quota systems. The visit took place from 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> of June 2019. The visit was commissioned by the Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC) in partnership with UNWOMEN, Hivos and Gender Links.

The visit entailed a visit by the SADC experts Rethabile Pholo (Lesotho), Tania Diolle (Mauritius) to the ZGC for a mission debrief on day one. On the day two, the experts' team was joined by the remaining members of the team Eunice Ipinge (Namibia) and Colleen Lowe-Morna (South Africa) for meetings with the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small to Medium Enterprise Development and the two main political parties, the Movement for Democratic Change Alliance and Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front. The third day ended with a workshop engaging civil society and other stakeholders on the quota

The workshop was attended by 59 participants, 46 women and 13 men, see **Annex B** for a detailed participants list. The workshop programme is attached as **Annex A**.

## Objectives of the experts visit

The objectives of the experts' visits were as follows:

- To share experiences of electoral systems and gender quotas in the SADC region.
- To examine possible options for Zimbabwe to increase women's representation and participation at both national and local level.
- To identify opportunities for legislative and policy reform well ahead of the 2023 elections.
- To offer ongoing technical backstopping and support as needed.

## Process and Activities

The experts visit programme was characterised by visits to the Zimbabwe Gender Commission, Visits to the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small to Medium Enterprise Development and the 2 main political parties in Zimbabwe. The visit ended with a stakeholders workshop attended by individuals from various civil society organizations and government departments to discuss the imminent possibilities for quotas at the local and national level.

## Day 1: Visit to the Zimbabwe Gender Commission

On Wednesday 26 June 2019, part of the team members of the SADC experts team (Rethabile Pholo and Tania Diolle), Priscilla Maposa, Gender Links Zimbabwe Country Manager and Tapiwa Zvaraya, Gender Links Zimbabwe monitoring and evaluation officer visited the ZGC for a mission debrief with the Commissioners and Secretariat. The ZGC is one of five independent commissions whose mandate as stipulated by the Constitution is to:

- Monitor issues concerning gender equality and to ensure gender equality as provided for in the Constitution.
- Investigate possible violations of rights relating to gender equality.
- Receive and consider complaints from the public and to take such action in regard to the complaints as it considers appropriate.



SADC Experts Rethabile Pholo & Tania Diolle (Extreme right) pose for a picture with ZGC staff (extreme left) and Priscilla Maposa GLZ Country Manager Photo: Tapiwa Zvaraya

- Conduct research into issues relating to gender and social justice and to recommend changes to laws and practices which lead to discrimination based on gender.
- Advise public and private institutions on steps to be taken to ensure gender equality.
- Recommend affirmative action programmes to achieve gender equality.
- Recommend prosecution for criminal violations of rights relating to gender.
- Secure appropriate redress where rights relating to gender have been violated; and
- Do everything necessary to promote gender equality.

Tambudzayi Madzimure, the Hivos project manager for the Women Empowered for Leadership (WE4L) explained that Hivos was working in the same field and was pleased to have contributed to the visit. She explained that it was her hope that this visit would map a way for a methodology that will enhance the participation and representation of women in the next elections and beyond.

The visit saw the experts sharing electoral processes and experiences in their respective countries for the benefit of the Gender Commissioners.

## **Day 2: Visit to ministry of gender and political parties**

Day two started off with a courtesy call to the Ministry of Women Affairs, Small to Medium Enterprise Development where the team met with the Honorable Minister Sithembiso Nyoni and the Permanent Secretary, Rudo Chitiga. The purpose of the visit was to explain the mission visit as well as share the regional and country experiences on quotas. In return the minister explained the role the Ministry is taking towards advancing gender equality.

In the afternoon the team visited the two main political parties i.e. Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the Movement for Democratic Change Alliance (MDC Alliance). Discussions centred on the strategies that the political parties have put in place towards the advancement of 50/50. During the visits, the SADC experts and representatives from the Gender Commission took the opportunity to take stock of the representation of women in the respective party structures.

## **Day 3: 50-50 workshop**

The day saw the ZGC convening a workshop for stakeholders to discuss the opportunities for policy and legal reform ahead of the 2023 election. The chairperson of the Gender Commission, Margaret Mukahanana gave the welcome remarks. She stated that the commission had engaged the experts so that they could share their experiences so as to help Zimbabwe to map a way forward vis-à-vis the issue of quotas. It was her hope that the stakeholder meeting would contribute towards the formulation of a methodology that will guarantee gender equality in the next election and beyond.



Eunice Ipinge discussing Namibia's electoral processes and experiences Photo: Tapiwa Zvaraya

## Remarks from the UNWOMEN

Delphine Serumaga, the UNWOMEN country representative in her remarks congratulated the ZGC for inviting experts from the region to help with the mapping of a strategy that will enable women to participate in politics and decision making at the national and local levels. She highlighted that while the nation had instituted a national quota for women there were still structural and administrative barriers deterring women from participating. These include:

- Patriarchal norms and standards.
- Abuse of women who try to pursue political office.
- Unfavourable electoral systems like the First Past The Post (FPTP) system that perpetuate the dominance of a one-party system.

Serumaga reiterated the need for political commitment and political will for equality to be reached in the representation of women in political decision making.

## Presentation on Regional electoral experiences

Gender Links CEO, Colleen Lowe-Morna talked about the regional experiences on the 50/50 and the introduction of quotas. Lowe-Morna stated that Zimbabwe had the comparative advantage of the 2013 Constitution as a guiding framework for instituting the quota, unlike countries like Mauritius who had no such Constitutional Provisions. Lowe-Morna buttressed on Serumaga's views on the barriers to participation. Drawing statistics on the various electoral systems in SADC it was noted that the First Past the Post system tended to yield very low representation of women at 13% while those countries who adopted the proportional representation (PR) and mixed systems had slightly more women in political decision making at 38% and 34% respectively. While all these systems were being used somewhat differently, there was no perfect system as they all had their advantages and disadvantages.



Gender Links CEO Colleen Lowe-Morna presents on the regional experiences on the quota  
Photo: Tapiwa Zvaraya

In the same vein Tania Diolle, Rethabile Pholo and Eunice Ipinge gave examples of the electoral systems and processes in Mauritius, Lesotho and Namibia.

Observations for Zimbabwe were that the FPTP with no quotas has not worked. At the same time a mixed system with PR seats for women only (current quota at national) is not necessarily the best, there's need to guard against more of the same and extending this to local. In addition a total shift to PR is unlikely  
Better to avoid reserved seats.

Recommendations for consideration came two fold i.e. for national assembly and local government as follows:

<b>National</b>	<b>Local</b>
Go for mixed system. Zimbabwe already has one to build on.	Mixed system may not work
50% candidate quota for PR and FPTP seats	50% candidate quota

Guaranteed results in PR, improved results FPTP	Concerted advocacy campaign with political parties, general public
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A plenary discussion ensued as participants were given the opportunity to comment on the proposals suggested. Erica Jones, Principal Director in the Ministry of Local Government Public Works and National Housing had reservations about having a quota at the local level. Her argument was that this would inflate the local authorities' bill. It was prudent that as a nation we take that into consideration.

Professor Lovemore Madhuku commented that there were historical incidences like our constitution that as a nation Zimbabwe can build on. It was prudent for Zimbabweans to take into consideration those and also build from what was already in place.



Professor Lovemore Madhuku making a contribution  
Photo: Tapiwa Zvaraya

### **Remarks from the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission**

On behalf of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), Commissioner Netsai Mushonga reiterated the need for electoral reforms particularly law that governed political parties to adhere to the 50/50. Zimbabwe needs to ensure that legislation is put in place for the Electoral bill before the next elections in 2023.

### **Conclusion**

The ZGC, Commissioner Mauye thanked everyone in attendance, urging them that the learning experiences were well articulated and would help Zimbabwe in its quest to achieve equality. The ZGC will continue to hold targeted consultations with all stakeholders so that they can come up with a framework that promotes equality in decision making bodies in Zimbabwe.

## ANNEXES

### ANNEX A: PROGRAMME

#### **Gender and Elections** **SADC Expert Mission to Zimbabwe** Harare, 28<sup>th</sup> June 2019

#### Objectives

- To share experiences of electoral systems and gender quotas in the SADC region.
- To examine possible options for Zimbabwe to increase women's representation and participation at both national and local level.
- To identify opportunities for legislative and policy reform well ahead of the 2023 elections.
- To offer ongoing technical backstopping and support as needed.

#### Programme

Time	Session	
08:30	Arrival and registration	Zimbabwe Gender Commission
09:00	Welcome Remarks	Ms Margaret Mukahanana, Chairperson, Zimbabwe Gender Commission
09:15	UN Women Statement	Ms Delphine Serumaga, Country Representative, UN Women
09:45	Presentations from SADC experts: Regional Lesotho Mauritius Namibia	Moderator: Gender Commission
11:00	Coffee break	
11:30	Plenary Discussion	
12:30	Remarks	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission
13.00	Closing remarks	Zimbabwe Gender Commission
13:15	Lunch	

## ANNEX B: PARTICIPANT LIST

## DAILY REGISTRATION FORM

## GENDER LINKS ZIMBABWE 2018

<b>Event:</b>	ZIMBABWE SADC EXPERTS MISSION VISIT 50-50 WORKSHOP
<b>Date:</b>	26-28 JUNE 2019
<b>Venue:</b>	ZGC & CROWNE PLAZA

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## **PARTICIPANTS LIST**

### **Attendance by sex**

<b>Female</b>	46	71.8%
<b>Male</b>	13	28.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>