

For immediate release: #VoiceandChoice Summits in Zimbabwe

Harare, 30 September 2020: Gender Links (GL) and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum hosted two mini #Voice and Choice summits in September.

From 27 to 28 September 2020 hosted the mini summit for entrepreneurs and beneficiaries of the Sunrise Campaign. Fourteen case studies were presented, with two winners and two runners up emerged. The highlight of the summit was a national trade-show that saw entrepreneurs showcase their wares. The Entrepreneurship Summit was certainly a new dawn in the Sunrise Campaign and Local Economic Development programmes in Zimbabwe. The Summit culminated to the launch of the national Women in Local Economic Development launch.



The Zimbabwe thematic Summit which ended in Harare on 30 September 2020, brought together 44 participants drawn from local government, civil society, media and faith-based organisations from all ten provinces of Zimbabwe, graced the occasion. 37 presenters showcased their best practices resulting in seven winners and six runners-up.

The summit, which took place in the context of the COVID19 pandemic, was a firm reminder that despite the challenges, Zimbabwe is resilient and always endeavours to soldier on in face of adversity. The summit drew attention to the importance of mainstreaming gender in different areas including Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), Climate Change, Gender Based Violence and Economic Justice. In particular it highlighted that Gender Based Violence has been on the increase during the COVID19 lockdown and that this needs to be addressed at the community level. It stressed the importance of ensuring that youths' concerns are integrated in the governance and development processes for the improvement of service delivery.

The Town Clerk of Chegutu Municipality Alex Mandigo representing the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works applauded Gender Links for their work with local authorities to mainstream gender. The ministry reiterated that Gender Links was their "partner of choice" regards gender mainstreaming at the local level.

Civil Society organizations also added their voice, Philemon Jazi the Country Director of Diakonia, said that "It is essential to give communities a voice and choice as the themes at this summit are critical for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals particularly SDG 5 on gender equality as well as the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development".

The summit was an opportunity to give inspiration to one another, learn and apply practical experiences to give voices and choices to marginalized groups so that they can benefit from equal and just service provision.

The Voice and choice Summit closed with a call for all partners including government, civil society and the media to help scale up lobbying and advocacy efforts to promote and protect SRHR, especially for youth and adolescents; and to be accountable for local service provision.

Gender Links Zimbabwe will be hosting the Institutional Centres of Excellence (COE) Summit on 14-15 October 2020. The Centres of Excellence programme anchors the gender mainstreaming programme at the local level supported by the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works. The COE summit will see 54 local authorities showcasing their institutional best practices. It also provides a platform for Gender Links and local authorities to monitor and evaluate progress of gender mainstreaming in service delivery at the local level and to take stock of how local authorities in Zimbabwe are mainstreaming gender in the midst of COVID19.

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Annex A: Zimbabwe Thematic Summit

Winners:

WINNER	RUNNER UP
#VoiceandChoice SRHR awards	
<u>Alfred Maruma</u> <u>Edinah Masiyiwa</u>	<u>Hamilton Gomba</u>
#VoiceandChoice GBV Award	
<u>Memory Tshuma</u>	<u>Francis Ndagumirwa</u>
#VoiceadChoice Youth Award	
<u>Trinity Maphosa</u>	<u>Natasha Zongoro</u>
#VoiceandChoice Media Award	
<u>Gibson Mhaka</u>	<u>Robin Muchetu</u>
#VoiceandChoice Economic Justice award	
<u>Elfa Machava</u>	<u>Sikhanyiso Sibanda</u>
#VoiceandChoice Climate Change award	
<u>Sithabile Matava</u>	<u>Nyemudzayi Chakauya</u>