

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN 'S ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT AND PEACE BUILDING

13-15 APRIL 2011

MINISTRY OF WOMEN AFFAIRS, GENDER and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

in collaboration with

THE ORGAN FOR NATIONAL HEALING, RECONCILIATION & INTERGRATION

and

THE WOMEN'S COALITION OF ZIMBABWE

HARARE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTER

ZIMBABWE

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Executive Summary

The Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development in collaboration with the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI), the Ministry of Regional Integration and International Cooperation and the Women's Coalition representing the civil society partners co-hosted a 3 day international conference for women under the theme, "Women's Economic and Political Empowerment and Peace Building". The conference brought together women from over ten African countries, as well as Zimbabwean women from various sectors. This conference was a follow up to a High Level Dialogue delegation of eight eminent African women led by Mary Robinson former Prime Minister of Ireland and Chairperson of the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

The conference had two overall objectives viz;

- To create an enabling environment that will increase women's empowerment in the political, economic and social spheres in an effort to achieve Millennium Development Goal 1 "eradication of extreme hunger and poverty and Millennium Development Goal 3 on "gender equality and empowerment of women" which is key to achieving the other Millennium Development Goals.
- Provide a platform for regional sharing of experiences and best practices on women's empowerment.

The objectives and the theme of the conference dovetailed into the broad scope of Millennium Development Goals, so that while the conference theme had three distinct focus areas, women's economic empowerment, political empowerment and peace building; in reality these focus areas were interlinked hence the conference sought to address all three issues as inter-related rather than as separate issues. In the introductory remarks by the Minister of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development and the United Nations Resident Coordinator, the issue of the interdependence of the conference focus areas was highlighted as critical towards appreciating that the Millennium Development Goals could not be achieved independently of each other.

In the expert presentations the emphasis was on the interdependence of the three areas, and how it would be difficult to completely address one area without taking into account the other two. The expert presentations also addressed some of the key issues affecting women's empowerment in the economy and politics as well as limiting the role of women in peace building. In the areas of economic empowerment, which was identified as central to the empowerment of women, the key challenges related to lack of information, capacity and skills. A key issue was also the fact that where there is no political stability, as in conflict areas, women's economic empowerment became compromised hence peace building is critical for women to attain economic empowerment.

The expert presentations on peace building and political empowerment also highlighted some of the key issues that limit women's participation in peace building processes as well as the participation of women in political leadership and decision making, such as culture and tradition which have failed to evolve to locate women outside of the home. Further the fact that there are very few women in decision making was also noted as a challenge, since men are unlikely to facilitate or open up spaces for women to take leadership and decision making positions both in politics or peace building. All the expert presentations

proposed quota systems or affirmative action in various forms to enable women to attain economic and political empowerment. The conference participants also had occasion to discuss the focus areas of the conference and further articulate some of the challenges women face in the three focus area in groups and in plenary.

During the conference, African Union Women's Decade – Zimbabwe Chapter was launched by Her Excellency Hon. Joice Mujuru. Participants also had the opportunity to visit various sites, where Zimbabwean women are undertaking economic empowerment projects, ranging from poultry farming to mining. The foreign participants were particularly inspired to learn that despite the economic and political challenges prevailing in Zimbabwe, women were still able and committed to attaining economic empowerment.

The major output of the conference was an action plan with proposals to enhance women's economic and political empowerment and their role in peace building. Among some of the proposed actions and strategies, were the following;

- i. Women need to lobby for constitutional proposals for the creation of quota systems/affirmative action to enhance women's participation in decision making both at national level through the constitution, legislation and policies as well as at political party level. At political party level, this would also entail actively lobbying political parties to create enabling environments for women to participate in intra party democratic processes in order to increase the number of women in leadership in decision making at various levels within the political parties to ensure that there would be a larger number of women to participate at national level when elections and other elective processes came about.
- ii. In terms of economic empowerment, increased participation of women in economic policy formulation was encouraged. In particular this would entail increasing women's knowledge of economic frameworks as many women did not know how best to access the economic sphere. In addition, there was a recommendation to audit the various economic frameworks for compliance with gender equality provisions, since the economic sector is largely male dominated.
- iii. Women need to lobby for the domestication of international and regional frameworks that protect and prevent violations against women and promote the participation of women in peace building. This recommendation was in light of the fact that there are several regional and international frameworks that exist to protect and prevent violence against women, to which Zimbabwe is a signatory to, which could be used to prevent violence against women as well as enhance women's participation in peace building processes. The conference also recommended that the work of the Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration should also create local level peace structures, so that communities develop their own mechanisms for preventing and protecting women from all forms of violence in their communities.

The conference ended with many of the international experts pledging solidarity to the cause of gender equality in Zimbabwe; and with commitments of support to the various gender equality initiatives that the Government of Zimbabwe would wish to pursue as well as pledges to continue supporting current collaborations between the people of Zimbabwe and the various international institutions such as the

United Nations, the African Union and International IDEA. The gender ministers present at the conference also expressed support for the people of Zimbabwe during the ongoing processes of democratization and they committed to taking the message of Zimbabwe's positive development and growth to their countries as well as to the international media.

Section One

Background to the Conference

The Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development in collaboration with the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI), the Ministry of Regional Integration and International Cooperation and the Women's Coalition representing the civil society partners co-hosted a 3 day international conference for women. This conference deliberated on Women's Economic, Political Empowerment and Peace building. Delegates were drawn from Congo Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Delegates from AU Gender Ministers, members of the United Nations, civil society organizations, political parties, Zimbabwe government ministries and members of the security forces participated in this conference.

The Conference was a follow up to the visit by a high level delegation of eminent African Women led by Mary Robinson which took place in April 2010. This delegation's visit was to promote solidarity with women of Zimbabwe and dialogue on women's empowerment in the political social, economic and peace building arena. The visit inspired the collaborating partners to hold a follow up conference in which experiences and lessons learnt on enhancing women's participation in political, economic and peace issues would be shared with women from other African countries that are promoting these.

The specific conference objectives were to;

- Afford African women an opportunity to share their achievements, challenges and potential in women's socio-economic and political empowerment.
- Strengthen women's economic empowerment and their participation in economic policy formulation in the context of the AU Decade on Women's empowerment.
- Create an enabling environment that enhances representation and participation of women in politics and decision making through enabling electoral processes
- Enhance women's participation in National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration processes in Zimbabwe
- Showcase Zimbabwe women in the areas of economic, political and social empowerment.
- Launch the implementation of the AU Women's Decade in Zimbabwe. Develop guidelines for collaboration between ministries of Gender/National Machineries and civil society.

Participants

The conference brought together women from Zimbabwe and the Africa region. Among the participants were the following key groups and individuals;

- The hosting cabinet ministers and several of their cabinet minister colleagues
- The United Nations Women's Division responsible for Africa, Mrs Letty Chiwara
- The Head of the African Union Gender Directorate, Mrs Litha Musiyimi-Ogana
- The United Nations Resident Representative, Mr. Alain Noudehou and the UNDP Country Director Ms. Christine Umutoni
- International IDEA representative, Ms. Rumbidzai Kandawasvika-Nhundu
- Representatives the UN in New York and the ILO in Geneva
- Ministers of Gender and their advisors from; Congo- Brazzaville, Egypt, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania ,Uganda
- Gender experts from GIMAC, International IDEA and various international and African organizations
- The Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe led by Mrs Emilia Muchawa
- Members of Parliament from both the lower and upper houses; including the Parliamentary Women's Caucus representatives
- Zimbabwean women in business, the security sector, civil society, health sector, education, various government departments and the political parties.

The full list of participants is attached at the end of the report as an Annex.

Funding

Financial support for the conference came from the following sources;

- The Government of Zimbabwe
- United Nations Country team in Zimbabwe
- International IDEA
- Private Sector – BancABC, Barclays Bank of Zimbabwe Limited, , Mbada Diamonds, MMCZ and POSB among others

DAY ONE

Section Two

Opening Ceremony, Context Setting and Presentation of Technical Papers

Director of Ceremonies: Dr. Sylvia J. Utete-Masango

Chairperson: Hon. Minister Sekai Holland: Co-Minister for the Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration

Hon. Holland took the floor to acknowledge her co-hosts of the international conference viz. Hon. Minister Dr. Olivia Muchena: the Minister for Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development, Hon. Minister Priscilla Misihairabwi-Mushonga: Minister for Regional Integration and International Cooperation and the Chairperson of the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe Mrs Emilia Muchawa. In introducing Hon. Minister Dr. Muchena, to make the official welcome remarks, Hon. Holland recognized Hon. Dr. Muchena as an outstanding scholar and her contributions to gender equality and peace in Zimbabwe. Hon. Minister Holland also informed the conference that the slogan and symbols for peace now associated with the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation & Integration were in fact inspired by Hon. Dr. Muchena, who had coined the slogan "***Peace begins with me, peace begins with you and peace begins with us***" in 2009.

Welcome Remarks by Hon. Minister Dr. Olivia Muchena

Hon. Dr. Olivia Muchena started her remarks by welcoming all the delegates at the conference. She then proceeded to make special mention of her co-hosts of the conference, the Director of Ceremonies, the special delegates at the conference such as the United Nations Resident Coordinator, all the foreign ministers present, the AU Gender Director and the UN Women Africa Division Chief. Hon. Dr. Muchena also acknowledged fellow cabinet ministers, her deputy minister, members of the Upper and Lower Houses of the Parliament of Zimbabwe, members of diplomatic corps and members of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus.

Hon. Dr. Muchena stated that the conference had initially been designed for Zimbabweans alone. However, the co-hosts had decided to include regional stakeholders to enhance the process, since there were many countries on the continent who had experienced what Zimbabwe is currently undergoing; and could therefore provide useful lessons learnt. She pointed out that for that reason, the Zimbabwean delegation had varied representation from the women's organizations, women in mining, health and in the security sector and indeed across the landscape of women from Zimbabwean so that there would be much learning for Zimbabwean women from their African sisters. Hon. Dr. Muchena also noted that while there were women representing the women's wings of political parties at the conference, their numbers within the political parties was minimal. Hon. Dr. Muchena singled this group out, and stated that she believed that any agenda to empower women must include women from the political parties, because it is difficult to achieve any empowerment for women outside of political processes.

Hon. Dr. Muchena highlighted that the conference was a follow up to the High Level Dialogue, held in April 2010, comprising of 8 eminent African women and led by Mary Robinson. She noted that during

that High Level Dialogue, it had been agreed that Zimbabwean women would host a conference to share women's experiences on the three key themes of the conference, viz. economic and political empowerment and peace building. Hon. Dr. Muchena noted that the recommendation for the conference was premised on the need for Zimbabwean women draw on the experiences of their African sisters to ensure Zimbabwean women's contributions to the current constitutional process increased as well as enhanced Zimbabwean women's roles in national healing and peace building and their participation in the economy.

Hon. Dr. Muchena stated the conference had two overall objectives viz.;

- To create an enabling environment that will increase women's empowerment in the political, economic and social spheres in an effort to achieve MDG Goal 1 "eradication of extreme hunger and poverty and MDG goal 3 on "gender equality and empowerment of women" which is key to achieving other MDGs.
- Provide a platform for regional sharing of experiences and best practices on women's empowerment.

Hon. Dr. Muchena concluded her remarks by encouraging the conference to produce tangible outputs which will influence policy formulation in Zimbabwe, in particular the constitutional reform process, as well as indigenization and economic empowerment programmes. She also stated that she hoped that the women of Zimbabwe, led by the Organ on National healing, could begin to propose and create clear and concrete processes for national healing that are inclusive of women. Hon. Dr. Muchena encouraged the conference to produce specific and tangible deliverables that would give women power for voice and choice, a phrase she said she had borrowed from Dr. Asfour, also present at the conference.

Hon. Holland then introduced the United Nations Resident Coordinator, Mr. Alain Noudehou. Hon. Holland noted that Zimbabwe had been fortunate in that all the United Nations Resident Representatives sent to the country, had been very cooperative. She noted that this had made working with the international agencies easy.

Welcome Remarks by Mr. Alain Noudehou – U.N. Resident Coordinator

Mr. Noudehou expressed his privilege and honor at being among such distinguished African women and having the opportunity to participate in the proceedings. He reiterated the sentiments expressed by Dr. Muchena viz. that the conference had come at an opportune time when the country is in the process of coming up with a new constitution. Mr. Noudehou applauded Zimbabwe's commitment to women's rights as evidenced by Zimbabwe' leading the way in acceding to most of the international and regional frameworks for enhancing women's rights from CEDAW to the SADC Gender Protocol, and stated that he believed that Zimbabwe had indeed become a best practice model for other African states.

Mr. Noudehou however noted that while significant progress has been made in promoting women's rights at international and regional level in terms of conventions and frameworks for gender equality, there continued to be a huge gap between law, and policy and their implementation to the detriment of gender equality and the political and economic empowerment of women. Mr. Noudehou acknowledged

that the conference was timely, given women and girls marginalization in the economy, even though women sustained the country during the worst years of Zimbabwe's economic crisis. He further noted that despite the various challenges prevailing in the areas of gender equality and women's rights, the convening of this conference by the co-hosts was a demonstration of commitment to empowering women. He cited the timeliness of the conference for both the UN and the Government of Zimbabwe as they were both committed to enhancing gender equality. Mr. Noudehou also stated that it was this commitment to gender equality that had led to the UN creating UN Women to ensure consolidated and systematic promotion of gender equality and women's rights the world over. He concluded by stating that he hoped that the conference would tap into the potential of Zimbabwean women yet untapped for more focused and energized women's empowerment across all the three themes.

Hon. Minister Holland concluded the opening ceremony by thanking both Hon. Dr. Muchena and Mr. Noudehou for their welcoming remarks. She then presented the Chairperson of the next session, another of her co-hosts for the conference Hon. Minister Priscilla Misihaarabwi-Mushonga.

PLENARY PRESENTATION OF EXPERT/TECHNICAL PAPERS

Chairperson: Hon. Minister Priscilla Misihaarabwi-Mushonga; Minister for Regional Integration and International Cooperation

Hon. Misihaarabwi-Mushonga started the session by explaining that the technical/expert papers to be presented in the plenary would form the basis for the working group discussions later in the day. She stated that there would be three working groups working on the conference themes of economic, political empowerment and peace building and that the experts present had each prepared a technical paper on the subject.

Hon. Misihaarabwi-Mushonga noted that in their introductory biographies, all the three experts had been very modest, in identifying who they were and she proceeded to share her knowledge of all of them as follows;

- **Dr. Amany Asfour**– Current President of the Africa Alliance for Women's Empowerment, the Chair of the COMESA Women's Business Council and a passionate women's economic empowerment advocate.
- **Ms. Elizabeth Lwanga** – Immediate past UN Resident Coordinator in Zimbabwe and one of the initiators of this conference, one of the organizers of the April 2010 High Level Dialogue and an expert on Peace Building.
- **Ms. Rumbidzai Kandawasvika- Kandawasvika-Nhundu** – International IDEA Senior Governance Programme Officer, gender and women's political empowerment activist.

Dr. Amany Asfour– Economic Empowerment

Dr. Asfour expressed gratitude for being asked to speak at the forum and highlighted the importance of such platforms and opportunities in facilitating women's empowerment as they enabled women to share experiences and knowledge that will enable them to make a difference. Dr. Asfour emphasized that importance of women's voice in attainment of the MDGs, stating that, only when women's voices are heard, as women make up more than half of the continent's population would Africa truly achieve development. Dr. Asfour noted that while everyone knew all the eight MDGs, she was of the opinion that MDG 3 was the most important because it refers to empowerment of women since no meaningful development can take place without the participation of half of the world's population. She highlighted that although Africa is the richest continent, in terms of human and natural resource, she remained the poorest continent because of lack of investment in the productive human resources, science and technology, research and developing the competitiveness of products on markets.

Dr Asfour gave definitions of power and empowerment in setting the context for women's economic empowerment. She highlighted that since power is the capacity to act and implement hence the empowerment of women was about women harnessing their capacity to ensure that they exert their influence in the economy, politics and other national processes for development. Dr Asfour gave pointers on how to achieve women empowerment such as through how children are raised in the family, education, access to financial resources, technical assistance, entrepreneurial promotion, use of technology and advocacy. She noted that important for economic empowerment was also the concept of women entrepreneurship. Dr Asfour explained that the three main pillars of women entrepreneurship as an enabling environment, capacity building and access to financial resources.

Dr Asfour noted that in order for women to become economically empowered, they needed to run sustainable enterprises. She gave the key elements of a sustainable enterprise as;

- Technical viability
- Market stability
- Financial viability
- Management systems
- Infrastructural facilities
- Policy support
- Environmental sustainability

Dr. Asfour gave examples of some of the key obstacles to women's economic empowerment such as; lack of information, capacity and skills among others.

Dr. Asfour showed the linkages between the themes of the conference by highlighting how conflict in the region is as a result of a struggle to control resources and therefore peace building is key to economic empowerment of women in Africa. She stated that for this reason, women's participation in peace building is critical to the process of economically empowering women. Dr. Asfour noted that cross border traders and women in conflict zones are two special target groups that are central to the pursuit

of women's economic empowerment in the African context. She noted that these two groups were most vulnerable and in coming up with ideas for economic empowerment it was critical to consider questions of how best women cross border traders could navigate the rules and regulations of the Regional Economic Blocs in plying their trade, in particular in post conflict situations. Dr. Asfour emphasized the need for discussions on how women in conflict and post conflict situations could economically rebuild their lives in order to fully participate in their countries. She concluded her remarks by stating that economic empowerment is important for women because it provides them with financial independence that gives them choice and an amplified voice.

Ms. E. Lwanga – Peace Building

Ms. Lwanga began her remarks by stating that because the conference themes are interlinked and overlap, economic empowerment was actually what the conference was about because all empowerment efforts are meaningless if women do not have economic empowerment. She however noted that economic empowerment cannot take place without peace, and thus it was important to understand their interdependence. Ms. Lwanga noted that the role of women in peace processes is critical for their economic and political empowerment. She also said that it was critical for women to be continuously engaged in understanding the prevailing frameworks and opportunities for peace building to enhance their participation in this critical area.

Ms. Lwanga stated that peace building was still a major issue for Africa as evidenced by the various conflicts. She stated that it was important to realize that peace was not merely the absence of war, but rather about tolerance, acceptance and respect. Ms. Lwanga mentioned some of the key frameworks setting out the parameters for implementing peace building viz. CEDAW, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, UN General Resolution 1325, Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, the Protocol to the ACHPR and MDG 3. In addition to these international frameworks, there were also regional mechanisms in place such as African Union Policy on Post – Conflict Reconstruction and Development, SADC, IGAD and ECOWAS Gender Equality Policies, the IGAD and ECOWAS Policies on Women in Peace building and Early Warning Mechanisms. She noted that all these frameworks focus on women being at the center of peace building and conflict transformation and that they provide strategies and activities that could be implemented through various strategies, such as national action plans on conflict transformation and peace building.

Ms. Lwanga noted that although all these frameworks for women's participation in peace building and conflict transformation existed, very little progress had in reality been achieved in the actual participation of women in the formal peace processes such as the drafting of peace agreements. She noted that there were indeed examples of women playing critical roles in peace building such as the Liberian MANO River Union of women, but their participation was on the margins of the processes. She noted that this was as a result of the fact that the formal political institutions normally spearheading peace processes tend to perpetuate exclusionary practices and attitudes that exacerbate the unequal representation of women in decision making therefore leaving women out of the formal peace processes. Ms. Lwanga also noted that in addition to these structural challenges to women's participation in peace processes, there was also the question of financial resources which hindered the participation of women and their ability to maintain their participation in peace negotiations. Ms. Lwanga also made reference to various studies on the enhancement of the participation of women in peace building and how several frameworks had been created in response to these both at the regional and international level.

Ms. Lwanga informed delegates that frameworks for increasing women's participation in peace building have been created at UN, AU and SADC levels, and concluded by stating that one of the key frameworks which needed to be demystified for women is Resolution 1325/2000. Ms. Lwanga noted that Resolution 1325/2000 was really just about the participation of women in ending conflict and protecting women in times of conflict. She highlighted that the key three areas addressed by Resolution 1325/2000 were participation of women in peace building, prevention of violence against women in conflict and dealing with impunity and the protection of women from violence and abuse in times of conflict. Ms. Lwanga said that the clarification was necessary as Resolution 1325/2000 had been misconstrued in most cases, as being only about war, when in fact Resolution 1325/200 is aimed at conflict situations which may or may not be war situations. Ms. Lwanga concluded her remarks by encouraging the increase in the number of women participating in peace processes at all levels.

After Ms. Lwanga's presentation, the Chairperson of the session endorsed Ms. Lwanga's presentation by noting that in the processes leading to the Global Political Agreement, there had only been one woman in the formal negotiation process. She further reiterated that as that one woman, at the last meeting of the Principals to and the Facilitators of the GPA, she had again been the only woman in those critical discussions. The Chairperson noted that she believed that the formal peace processes in Zimbabwe could benefit from the presence and participation of more women.

Ms. R. Kandawasvika-Nhundu: Political Empowerment

Ms. Kandawasvika-Nhundu began her presentation by noting that in the last three decades, there had been an increased awareness on the need to enhance women's participation in politics and decision making. She however pointed out that despite this; awareness had not translated into increased numbers of women in politics and decision making. She noted that the major challenge remained the disconnection between the political commitments and rhetoric and the lack of implementation of the relevant strategies at the national level of the commitments. Ms. Kandawasvika-Nhundu observed that the reality of women's political empowerment remained bleak; with women in decision making all over the world making up less than 20% of MPs and only 15 women globally being head of states or government. Ms. Kandawasvika-Nhundu observed at this rate, the anticipated goal of 50% representation of women in politics and decision making to achieve gender parity would not be possible before 2047!

Ms. Kandawasvika-Nhundu stated that while equal rights for men and women to vote and stand for elective office exist in law in most countries, however these rights do not exist in practice, hence the practical situation of women in terms of decision making did not reflect these progressive policies. Ms. Kandawasvika-Nhundu noted that this was a result of the formal and informal barriers that women face in seeking political decision making and power positions. She highlighted some of these barriers as institutional, cultural, structural and religious. She also noted that traditional attitudes to gender equality in most societies remained the greatest barrier to women's participation in politics and decision making.

Ms. Kandawasvika-Nhundu pointed out that while there is no ideal environment to jumpstart women's political empowerment, there are certain conditions which could facilitate the process of women's political participation and make it easier. She stated that it was her hope that the conference consider or explore those conditions that facilitate women's political empowerment. Ms. Kandawasvika-Nhundu noted that while an enabling legal framework is important for women's political empowerment,

legislation on its own is not adequate. Ms Kandawasvika-Nhundu observed that while the legal framework is not the panacea to women's political empowerment, it however remained a basis for opening up space for women's political participation. She also noted that other informal issues such as culture, religion and societal limitations which affect the implementation and administration of the law also needed to be addressed.

Ms Kandawasvika-Nhundu shared examples of other countries where the legal framework had become a basis for women's political empowerment such as Rwanda, where the constitution provides for women's empowerment in elections and the Tanzania constitution which provides for quotas for women.

Ms Kandawasvika Nhundu stated that most electoral systems remained one of the major challenges for women's political empowerment. She said that electoral systems to a large extent determine the outcome in terms of participation for women. Ms Kandawasvika-Nhundu pointed out that the "First past the post" electoral system did not work for women, as it was premised on a level playing political field, which was not the case in many countries. She however observed that the electoral system on its own, as with enabling legislation could not yield the requisite results with regards for women's political empowerment. She advised that it was therefore critical to consider each country's context to consider how best to design an electoral system that facilitates women's political empowerment.

Ms Kandawasvika-Nhundu also pointed out that another challenge for women's political empowerment was the political parties. She stated that political parties remained the gatekeepers that limit and/or discourage women from participating in elective politics. She said that this was because political parties determine the nomination, selection and identification of contesting candidates. Ms Kandawasvika-Nhundu stated there was therefore need to interrogate intra party democracy processes and policies for gender sensitivity; from constitutions, manifestos and policy documents. She also stated that the intra party democratic processes were the area where the most bottlenecks were created for women's ascension in elective politics. Ms Kandawasvika-Nhundu reiterated the need to create measures that are context sensitive, to address the intra and inter party democratic processes that create bottlenecks and limit the political participation of women.

Ms Kandawasvika-Nhundu then proposed some measures that could enhance the participation of women in political parties, since women cannot participate in political decision making in a vacuum and need the political parties as bases. The measures she proposed included encouraging women in the political parties' leadership committing to transforming political party processes to create opportunities for women's political participation. Ms Kandawasvika-Nhundu encouraged the women in political leadership to endeavor to transform political parties to enhance the participation of women in political decision making.

Ms Kandawasvika-Nhundu stated a second measure for women's political empowerment, of which she declared herself a strong advocate was electoral quotas. Ms Kandawasvika-Nhundu confirmed that while quotas were controversial, about 50 countries worldwide, employed electoral quotas; at various levels, from political parties to the national constitution. Ms Kandawasvika-Nhundu stated that even though quotas were controversial, they were justifiable because society is generally not gender fair; and thus quotas provide an opportunity to accelerate the increase of women in elective positions by addressing the limitations and barriers that women face as a result of history and other injustices of the past. She further advised that there was a study that revealed that there was not a single country which had achieved 30% women's representation in Parliament without some form of a quota.

Ms Kandawasvika-Nhundu noted that in addition to quotas, another conduit for enhancing women's political empowerment could be the women's wings in political parties. Ms Kandawasvika-Nhundu observed that it was important to transform women's wings from the hospitality departments of their political parties to becoming training platforms for women to seek elective political office. Ms Kandawasvika-Nhundu suggested that women's wings in political parties should transform into platforms with real power and authority to bring women in their political parties' leadership and in decision making both as a direct result of intra party democratic processes to policies and frameworks enhancing women's participation in leadership.

Ms Kandawasvika-Nhundu concluded her remarks by stating that in the current constitutional reform process, Zimbabwean women should, wherever possible lobby for electoral quotas. She further also urged women and women's organizations not to view men as obstacles to women's political

empowerment. Rather she urged that men be engaged to cultivate their support for women's leadership both as a means to create successful alliances and to avoid backlash. Ms Kandawasvika-Nhundu however cautioned that in involving and engaging with men, it should always be made clear that the women's rights and gender equality agenda would not be compromised.

After Ms. Kandawasvika-Nhundu's presentation, the Chairperson of the session raised some of the key issues arising from all three presentations, and in particular the linkage or interdependence of the three themes. She commented on the relevance of these three issues to the constitution making process that is currently underway in Zimbabwe.

Thematic Working Groups: Economic Empowerment, Political Empowerment and Peace Building

After the presentation of the technical papers, the conference was broken into three working groups, based on the conference themes. The Moderators for each working group were;

Ms. Letty Chiwara: UN Women –Political Empowerment

Ms. Elizabeth Lwanga: Peace Expert – Peace Building

Hon. Misihairabwi-Mushonga – Economic Empowerment

Each working group was assigned guiding questions aimed at addressing the conference objects and expected outputs.

Section Three: LAUNCH OF THE AFRICA UNION WOMEN'S DECADE –

ZIMBABWE CHAPTER: GRASSROOTS APPROACH TO GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT - MEIKLES HOTEL, HARARE

Director of Ceremonies: Dr. S.J. Utete-Masango

The Zimbabwe Chapter of the AU Women's Decade was launched at a banquet co-hosted by the Vice President of the Republic of Zimbabwe Her Excellency Hon. Joice Mujuru and the Deputy Prime Minister Hon. Thokozani Khupe at the Meikles Hotel in Harare on the evening of the 13th of April 2011. Among the dignitaries were the three cabinet Ministers co-hosting the International Conference on Women's Economic and Political Empowerment and Peace Building, Honorable Members of Parliament of Zimbabwe from both the lower and upper house, and Female Chiefs viz. Chief Mathe and Chief Chimukoko, AU Gender Ministers, UN and AU representatives. The launch was held on the evening of the 1st day of the International Conference on Women's Economic and Political Empowerment.

Acknowledgements and Introductions -Honorable Minister Dr. Olivia Muchena

Dr. Muchena observed introductory protocols and introduced all the foreign dignitaries. She elaborated that delegates at the launch as well as the foreign dignitaries mentioned in her introductions were participating in the International Conference on Women's Economic and Political Empowerment and Peace Building. The international conference was being co-hosted by her ministry, the Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration, the Ministry of Regional Integration and International Cooperation and the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCOZ).

The International Conference on Women

Hon. Muchena proceeded to share the background to the International Conference, on whose sidelines the Launch of the AU Women's Decade was being held. She stated that the conference was a follow up to the High Level Dialogue that had been hosted by the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development and the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe in 2010. This dialogue had been led by the Hon. Mary Robinson former Premier of Ireland and former Chair of the UN Human Rights Commission. The Minister noted that the High Level Dialogue had created the impetus for the current conference as several issues had been raised relating to the position of Zimbabwean women in society and in particular in the current political and economic dispensation.

Hon. Muchena advised the co-hosts of the AU Women's Decade Launch- Zimbabwe Chapter, that the International Conference had already started with indications that it would be very fruitful for Zimbabwean women. She noted that the Conference had been graced by experts on the key themes of the conference viz. women's economic empowerment, women's political empowerment and the role of women in peace building and conflict transformation. The Hon. Minister recognized their special contributions and what she referred to as power-house of ideas from the experts who had given the background papers on each theme, i.e. Dr. Asfour on Economic Empowerment for women, Ms. Kandawasvika-Nhundu on Women's Political Empowerment and Ms Elizabeth Lwanga on Women and Peace Building and Conflict transformation. The Minister also shared a brief background on each of the experts highlighting their professional expertise on the subjects they had presented on. The Minister applauded Dr. Asfour for coming up with a slogan for women's economic empowerment i.e. "Power for Choice and Voice", which the Minister proposed be taken on as the slogan for the Conference.

The Minister proceeded to share the Conference objectives for the benefit of the co-hosts of the Banquet to Launch the AU Women's Decade – Zimbabwe Chapter. She stated that the main objective of the Conference was to share experiences and learn from each other. She noted that in this particular conference Zimbabwean women would gain more than those from the region, given current developments in the country and she indicated that Zimbabwe would come out with actionable plans from the conference deliberations.

The Minister observed that although the Conference objectives generally spoke to learning and sharing, it was very clear that Zimbabwe was going to learn selfishly as she was of the opinion that Zimbabwe was going to learn more from the region than the other countries. The Minister also noted that the Conference participants were from a broad based audience representing women from all walks of life in Zimbabwe. This was to ensure that the ideas coming from the conference would reach as many women as possible. The Minister also observed the presence of the women's wings representatives from the three political parties represented in Parliament who were participating in the Conference and hoped that they would benefit from the deliberations of the Conference.

The Minister mentioned that women from the uniformed forces were also attending the Conference, and recognized the special contributions of the women in the uniformed forces who had participated in peace keeping missions in the region. She made special mention of Supt. Nduna and Deputy Commissioner Muture who had both served in Kosovo, South Sudan and Darfur. She finally recognized the representatives of the various women's organizations who were present at the Conference and at the Banquet.

Deputy Prime Minister Hon. Thokozani Khupe

Hon. Minister Muchena invited the Deputy Prime Minister Hon. T. Khupe to give the welcome remarks for the evening. The Minister applauded the Deputy Prime Minister for her appointment as Kama Vice President, in recognition of her work in the area of maternal mortality and women's health.

The Deputy Prime Minister welcomed all guests present, particularly the foreign delegates. She proceeded to applaud the AU for declaring the AU Women's Decade. The Deputy Prime Minister noted that over the years, both within the United Nations and African Union systems, several instruments had been put in place for women's emancipation and empowerment. She highlighted that the launch was coming 35 years after CEDAW, 15 years since the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995, 10 years since the MDGs in 2000, 10 years from the African Women's Rights Protocol. She stated that despite all these provisions, women were still not accessing their rights and freedoms, and that it seemed that women's rights were regarded as requests, rather than rights which women should demand. She encouraged women not to ask for their rights, but to demand them at all levels. The Deputy Prime Minister observed that despite women constituting 52 % of the continent's population, working ten times more than men and producing half of the world's food, women still earned only 10% of the world's income and owned only 1% of the wealth in Africa.

The Deputy Prime Minister observed that in politics, women made up the majority of voters, and basically brought people to power, but they were not allowed to lead because society doesn't regard them as "qualified" to lead. Men were not asked to bring their qualification credentials to the table as it were but women are continually asked if they are qualified. She noted that laws and policies in some countries made it difficult for women to participate in decision making and policy formulation processes such as budget making. The Deputy Prime Minister observed that where women had been given the opportunity to lead, they did so effectively and she gave the example of the leadership being exhibited

by the women of Liberia led by Her Excellency Mme. Johnson-Sirleaf. She also informed the meeting that in Zimbabwe the women ministers were delivering effectively on their mandates. The Deputy Prime Minister said this was a result of the fact that women are visionaries and listen to advice. The Deputy Prime Minister defined women as managers, advisors, visionaries and nation builders.

The Deputy Prime Minister however bemoaned the fact that despite all these critical roles that women have and play in society, women still die in childbirth. She stated that in Zimbabwe, at least eight women die daily in child birth. She expressed concern at the fact that not enough was being done to make motherhood safe, even though motherhood perpetuated the nation's population and should be considered a national duty. She called upon national leaders to recognize the strategic and multi-dimensional role of women in society. In concluding, the Deputy Prime Minister urged women to move in unity of purpose across the political divide on matters that concern women; and concluded her welcome remarks by thanking the gender ministers from the various countries who were present.

After the Deputy Prime Minister's welcome remarks, the Director of Ceremonies presented the AU Director for Gender Mrs. Litha Musiyimi-Ogana, who has been at the helm of the AU Women's Decade.

AU Gender Desk Mrs Litha Musiyimi-Ogana

Mrs Musiyimi-Ogana took to the floor and extended special greetings from the AU Secretary General Dr J. Ping to the Vice President and the Government of Zimbabwe and thanked them for inviting her to the momentous occasion. She stated that she was very happy to be in Harare to launch the Zimbabwe Chapter of the AU Women's Decade, given that she had seen the Vice President and her delegation at the official launch of the Decade in Nairobi in October 2010. She stated that she was honored to be a part of the Zimbabwe launch.

Mrs Musiyimi-Ogana proceeded to share the main purpose of the AU Women's Decade, which is to advance gender equality through acceleration of the Dakar Declaration, among several other African gender equality frameworks using the "bottom-up" approach. She stated that the AU Women's Decade would focus on ten themes viz.; "fighting poverty and promoting economic empowerment of women entrepreneurship; agriculture and food security; health, maternal mortality and HIV and AIDS; education, science and technology; environment, climate change and sustainable development; peace, security and violence against women and girls; governance and legal protection; finance and gender budgeting; women and decision making and mentoring youth."

She noted that the AU remained a global champion for gender equality through various initiatives and the AU Women's Decade was one such initiative. Mrs Musiyimi-Ogana informed the meeting that the AU had put in place a framework for gender equality at an institutional level, through the following;

- Constitutional framework of the AU through Section 4a of the Constitutive Act
- The legal framework inter alia, the African Women's Protocol
- The reporting framework, such as the one used to monitor implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality by member states
- The policy framework of the AU such as the Gender Policy which has eight commitments.
- The African Women's Fund launched by the Heads of State

- The Platform for Action for the Women's Decade.
- Series of roundtables held at regional, global, sub-regional and national level

Mrs Musiyimi-Ogana noted that the Banjul meeting was quick to deal with the creation of a programme of action for the Decade, as it showed the commitment of African governments to gender equality. She noted that the AU Women's Decade programme is owned by African women and their governments. She stated that the AU Gender Ministers, at the AU meeting had agreed that at the national level, each country would set up national committees on the ten focus themes for the Decade to ensure full implementation. She advised that an African Fund had therefore, been put in place to ensure implementation of those priorities as identified. She advised that the Fund was intended, during the Decade to support over 530 projects. Mrs Musiyimi-Ogana advised that the Commission would call for proposals from all member states for various projects. She then advised that she would personally hand the current call for proposals over to the Vice President at the end of her remarks.

In terms of the institutional and governance mechanism for the Decade, Mrs Musiyimi-Ogana stated that there were national, regional and continental level committees to monitor implementation. At the political level, the Decade would be led by a committee of Gender Ministers, with each country having its turn to serve. Mrs Musiyimi-Ogana advised that in terms of processes, at national level, once a call for proposals is made, the national committee must meet to vet and rank the various proposals before forwarding them to the AU Gender Directorate. She advised that in the case of the current year, this process must be complete before the 15th of May 2011 and that the theme for 2011 was Health, Maternal Mortality and HIV and AIDS. Mrs Musiyimi-Ogana advised that the process of the Decade would also be supported by different development partners.

In concluding her remarks, Mrs Musiyimi-Ogana congratulated Zimbabwean women and the Vice President of the Zimbabwe Chapter of the Launch of the AU Women's Decade. She pointed out that the AU Gender Directorate was following those member countries that had launched the Decade at national level, with a view to providing ongoing support. She then presented the following documents to the Vice President;

- CD on the AU Women's Decade Roadmap
- Document detailing the African Women's Fund
- The AU Women's Decade Flyer
- The Compendium of African Women Professionals for appointment to be Special Representatives/Envoys
- The AU Women's Decade Call for Proposal for 2011

Hon. Minister Muchena then took to the floor to thank Mrs Musiyimi-Ogana and to also acknowledge the presence of her Deputy Minister, Hon. J. Majome, representatives of the Youth Empowerment Trust and the Director of the Young Women's Leaders Initiative Miss Rumbidzai Mudzamiri.

The Minister then introduced the Vice President, as a woman of fortitude and courage. She stated that the Vice President had proved her mettle both on the battlefield and in education, which she pursued from independence gaining her high school qualifications, to the current stage where she is studying for a PHD. She also shared that the Vice President was a woman of many roles as a mother, wife and

grandmother but who continued to excel in political leadership. The Minister informed the meeting that the Vice President was passionate about the economic empowerment of women hence her PHD thesis was focusing on empowerment which gives the family dignity.

Vice President Hon. Joice Mujuru

The Vice President took to the floor and welcomed all the delegates to the banquet, the International Conference and the launch of the AU Women's Decade. The Vice President noted that the launch of the AU Women's Decade in Zimbabwe, was coming on the heels of the regional launch that was held in October 2010 in Nairobi; as well as a follow up to the High Level Dialogue that was held in Harare in April of 2010 which focused on the same themes as the International Conference.

The Vice President lauded the thematic areas of the AU Women's Decade and cautioned that in setting out the strategic plan for implementing the Decade in Zimbabwe, it was important to involve men as equal partners to ensure that the process is inclusive. The Vice President noted that all the political parties had already achieved the 30% quota and that since women constituted 50% of the country's population the focus on their economic and political empowerment was not misplaced. The Vice President advised that there can be no development without women and therefore the logical process of development required that women be empowered. She noted that it was important to empower women in order to improve the quality of life at household level.

The Vice President noted that in implementing the Decade, Zimbabwe would prioritize the thematic areas that most suited the needs of Zimbabwe rather than what the donors and development partners prioritized. She emphasized the need to identify projects that improve the lives of women and designing of targets that will enable the evaluation of projects on annual basis. She informed the meeting that she had started in conjunction with some communities, a project called "Unhu Kumhuri/ Ubuntu Emulini" to empower rural families. She stated that this project was premised on agro-based development for rural areas, so as to improve their disposable incomes, through projects such as poultry and market gardening.

The Vice President said that she hoped that the International Conference would be a forum for African women to fulfill the aim of the AU Women's Decade. She called upon African countries to conduct periodic reviews to keep the Decade on track.

The Vice President stated that she hoped that the field visits that the International Conference Delegates would undertake would provide delegates with forums for frank discussions and sharing on the Decade agenda. She also stated that she hoped that similar conferences would be held in other African countries so that African countries could learn from each other in this phase, and encouraged the continued engagement on the continent to exchange ideas, skills and knowledge to enable the refining of programmes that tackle gender issues.

The Vice President ended her remarks by thanking the expert panelists who had given the background papers on the conference themes, for agreeing to share their knowledge and experience. She urged all the conference participants to regard the conference as a learning platform and learn as much as possible.

The Vice President acknowledged and thanked the support of development and cooperating partners for their support in gender equality. The Vice President reiterated that the AU Women's Decade is not just about governments ensuring gender equality, but was so that everyone in Africa takes on the issues. She urged the business sector to get involved at national level as development partners.

The Vice President wished all the delegates fruitful deliberations at the conference and proceeded to officially launch the Zimbabwe Chapter of the AU Women's Decade.

Conclusion

Hon. Muchena formally acknowledged all the participants and cooperating partners.

Hon. Holland gave the final thanks to all delegates and applauded the GPA which had brought about the inclusive government and peace in the last two years; and proceeded to present gifts to foreign delegates.

The evening ended with dinner and some music.

DAY TWO

Director of Ceremonies: Dr Sylvia J Utete- Masango

Section Four – Report back from Thematic Working Groups

Political Empowerment- presented by Hon. Dorothy Mhangami MP(Gokwe East)

The group's discussions centered on interrogating why there were fewer women than in politics and decision making positions. The group noted that some of the limitations to women's participation include financial incapacity, lack of information and skills and general inability to work together. The group shared experiences from the various countries present and the group learnt that other countries have legislative frameworks that support women's involvement in decision making processes. In addition to quota systems and "women only" constituencies; women also contested in general constituencies with men thereby increasing the number of women in decision making positions.

The group noted that political parties are a key space in which women's participation in decision making can be advanced or stifled. Sexual harassment and the use of women by men seeking political power were identified as some of the challenges that women face in political parties. Women's participation in political processes was likened to "trying to get into a polluted stream", since politics has traditionally been labeled "dirty". In this regard women politicians were encouraged to continuously interrogate their behavior in political parties and assess whether their practice of politics was any different to that of the men. In this regard the group discussed how women could have a different way of doing politics, that was neither abusive of those in lower nor a perpetuation of keeping political leadership as the preserve of the few. The group also encouraged women to develop gender sensitive ways of campaigning and seeking political office that both affirmed women and encouraged the participation of women as more than just voters.

In the case of Zimbabwe, the group noted that the current constitution making process provides an opportunity for gender equity. Zimbabwean women were encouraged to promote women's electoral literacy and to ensure that young women's voices are heard through the constitution making process. The men in the group acknowledged the need for political education for women and that women in decision making positions should change the status quo where women are the majority (of the population) without authority. The group also noted that although political party manifestos contained

clauses on gender equality, the implementation is seldom followed up. The Rapporteur presented six recommendations or action points that were drawn from the group's discussions viz;

Way forward

- i. There is need for all stakeholders that are interested in gender equality to take advantage of the commitment from UN to change the social status of women.
- ii. In the case of Zimbabwe, the constitution making process should be used to ensure that gender equity is enshrined in the constitution.
- iii. Women and other progressive persons and institutions should promote a culture in which political parties constitutions and manifestos allow for women participation.
- iv. Women should work together towards increasing the quantity and quality of women in decision making positions.
- v. The participation of young women in political processes should be encouraged and supported.
- vi. CSO need to continue supporting women's empowerment initiatives through the provision of technical skills and information.

Economic Empowerment – Ms Dumisani Mashingaidze

The group members learnt that while women's economic empower was taking place in most countries, there was need to redefine economic empowerment and ensure that the existing frameworks for women's economic empowerment do in fact give women a voice and choice in economic matters. The group proposed that economic empowerment frameworks and mechanisms should be holistic and include aspects of finance, skills, technology and enabling laws. The group noted that it was important for women to understand the role of the various Regional Economic Committees [RECs] and the associated agreements and how these facilitate women's economic empowerment. The group observed that women were not taking advantage of the various RECs in particular in terms of how women could get involved in their programmes and activities.

The group discussed the potential benefits of quotas for women's economic empowerment through laws and policies for example labour and land acts that are gender sensitive. The group also discussed the importance of credit financing for women and youths for women's economic empowerment. Related to this issue was the fact that sometimes women are forced to access very expensive finance, so that in some instances, women find themselves in situations that are worse from the original positions. The group further noted that former women offenders were further stigmatized after serving by not being able to access resources to be economically empowered or just being included in economic empowerment, post their incarceration.

There was also a robust discussion on women cross border traders; from how cross border trading could be enhanced to meaningfully contribute to the economy to how cross border trade could be built upon so that it economically empowers women was raised. These issues were against a discussion of how women in cross border trading are forced to transact within the formal and informal sectors, thereby compromising profit and sustainability of their business. Strategies such as trade fairs organized for women were proposed to address these concerns. Another key issue noted by the group was access to markets and how women could retain and expand those markets, in particular agricultural markets. These issues were raised in the context of growing women's entrepreneurship to contribute to the economy through taxes thereby earning women voice in key economic decision making.

The group also addressed some of the key challenges for women's economic empowerment in the context of Zimbabwe, in particular the fact that women are not actively participating or visible in key economic forums. The group also noted that certain international policies were also directly affecting women's economic empowerment such as the Zimbabwe Democracy and Recovery Act which inhibit women's access to certain export markets and their benefiting from various international initiatives such as AGOA. The group then made the following proposals;

Way forward

- i. There is need to redefine economic empowerment and ensure that economic empowerment frameworks give women a voice and a choice; which economic empowerment frameworks must be holistic in terms of finance, skills, technology and the laws.
- ii. The role of the RECs needs to be understood in the context of women's economic empowerment. Further women need to be able to make the RECs work for them. Finally women need to be able to integrate themselves into the existing RECs frameworks and programmes.
- iii. There must be recognition that there are resources available that can be employed for policy development e.g. the work of ILO, UNDP and World Bank, therefore no need to reinvent the wheel.
- iv. There is need to build a data bank of resources available for women's economic empowerment both at national and international level.
- v. Women need to create synergies with men in the economic sector.
- vi. There is need for relevant data to enable proper monitoring and evaluation women's economic empowerment initiatives

Peace Building- Mrs. Thembi Nyoni

The group benefited from sharing experiences from the ongoing Zimbabwe programme of the Organ for National Healing and Integration as well as from other countries such as Rwanda, Namibia and Kenya who were present. Key emerging issues from the discussion were that Peace building is everyone's business i.e. at family, community and national level. It was noted that in Zimbabwe there are a number of existing institutions (traditional leadership, faith based entities, children, youths, women and men) that deal with peace building at various levels from the local to the national.

The group learnt that the GPA sets in motion commitments and processes that are aimed at peace Building in particular Section 7 which provides the mandate for the Organ on National Healing Reconciliation and Integration. The group also learnt that GPA also provides for the Constitution making process which is a major precondition for Peace and conflict transformation in Zimbabwe and that the implementation of the constitutional making provisions had in fact brought some progress in the peace building processes for the country. The group noted that the ONHRI and Ministry of Women's Affairs Gender and Community Development have collaborated in the creation of national and international dialogues on Peace Building led by women, and this international conference was one such initiative.

The group also heard how other countries had dealt with conflict transformation and peace initiatives such as Namibia, Rwanda and Kenya. The group noted how there was a general perception that peacekeeping at national level is the responsibility of security forces alone, when in fact everyone should play a role, the group also observed that despite there being laws against Gender Based Violence in most African countries, these did not in any way influence peace in the communities. The Country

Director of UNDP Christine Umutoni shared the Rwandan experiences wherein she said “If Rwanda can recover from the worst genocide on the African continent, there is hope for other nations”. The group noted the fact that notwithstanding that Zimbabwe is a multi religious nation; it is not an exaggeration that it is a Christian country and to that end all efforts at peace building and national reconciliation should take into cognizance the fundamental Christian principle of not shedding blood. The group then made several recommendations for enhancing peace initiatives in Zimbabwe as follows;

Way Forward

- i. Raise awareness of women on all protocols and provisions for peace building and their empowerment
- ii. Women to lobby and advocate for the use of existing regional and international frameworks and protocols
- iii. Zimbabwe needs to capitalize on the existing laws and provisions that promote peace (GPA GBV act) and thereby create legal environment which promotes peace
- iv. Women should advance the peace agenda by building solidarity on common causes that transcend partisan interests
- v. There must be consolidation of ongoing initiatives on peace building through national dialogues, documentation and continuous learning, which processes must be adequately resourced
- vi. There is need to domesticate and implement peace building and conflict transformation frameworks that Zimbabwe is signatory to
- vii. Women need to have significant leadership roles in peace building processes

Briefing on the Field Visits

The conference delegates spent the rest of the afternoon on field visits to different field projects. The visits were aimed at providing delegates with an opportunity for sharing experiences, especially Zimbabwean women’s experiences of economic empowerment. Visits were to be made to a mining, pottery, poultry and carpentry business ventures in and outside Harare. A visit to the Zimbabwe Constitution Parliamentary Select Committee – COPAC was also one of the activities.

DAY THREE

Director of Ceremonies: Dr Sylvia J Utete- Masango

Section Five: Reports from the Field Visits

Hon. Zenab : Visit to Mazowe - Gold Mine

Hon Zenab reported the visit inspired her to go back home and work on development within the mining sector, including encouraging and enhancing the participation of women in mining as she had witnessed. The group reported that the mine they visited was being run as a family business led by a woman and her four adult children. The group had learnt that the children of the family had all left home to enhance their knowledge and skills, and had all returned to work on the mine. Some of them were engineers who had professionalized the operations of the mine. The group learnt that not only did the mine employ 40 workers as an entity, but it also supported small scale women miners from the area, with services to test the authenticity of their ore. In addition, the mine was giving back to its community, by supporting the construction of a primary school in the local area. The group was advised that the gold produced at the mine is sold to Fidelity Printers the technical arm of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe.

Director of Gender in the Ministry of Gender and Child Welfare in Namibia: Visit to the Parliamentary Select Committee on Constitution Making

The representative noted that the visit had been undersubscribed, as very few delegates participated in that event. The group had met with Parliamentary Constitutional Select Committee [COPAC] and learnt about its function. The group was informed the data gathered in the outreach process for the new constitution was now being consolidated for analysis in the thematic committees. The group was also advised of the processes that COPAC had employed in collecting data around the country. COPAC also shared that it was hopeful that the constitutional process would be an opportunity for gender inequality to be addressed as all the outreach meetings had shown that communities were now ready for gender equality in decision making and political representation. During the visit, women from Rwanda, Kenya and Namibia shared their experiences of constitution making. A good practice that was shared from Kenya included the appointment of a Constitutional Review Committee which checked that the provisions of the Constitution were followed to the letter.

Helen Ngwerume: Visit to African Trends Pottery Business

Ms. Ngwerume reported on the visit to the pottery business in Chisipite run by a Mrs J.M. Kanyangarara. The group had learnt that the business had started as a hobby in a garage in 1994, but had now grown into a medium enterprise that employed more than 10 people. The group had the opportunity to observe pottery being made including how the ingredients are mixed. The group learnt that one of the greatest challenges for the business was its reliance on electricity. The group was advised that because pottery production consumes lots of electricity, the business tended to work more at night than during the day, since the area experienced more consistent power supplies during the day. The group was also advised that since the pottery produced at the business was handmade and exclusive, it was considered luxury items and therefore there was a limited market for the finished product.

Honorable Lekomba Congo-Brazzaville: Visit to Poultry Farm

The group visited a poultry farm that owned by Mrs Nhapi 60 km from Harare. The group learnt that the project was started in 1995 with only 100 chickens but had now grown to breeding batches of 30 000 chickens during each six week cycle. The group observed that the employees worked meticulously and diligently. The group also noted that the poultry farm employed several young people from a surrounding village, which showed that the business was also serving the surrounding community. While most of the group members were inspired by what they saw on the farm, they were also conscious of the fact that the type and magnitude of business being undertaken required substantial start up finance and that this type of business may not be within the reach of rural women. The business inspired local chicken farmers, while the foreign delegates raised issues of how the farmer could make use of new information technologies such as the World Wide Web, to share her successes for others in the region to learn from her.

Mrs Makaita Munengami : Visit to Carpentry SME Glenview Area 8

Mrs Munengami reported the group's experience of their tour of the area. The group reported that the visit was an eye opener to the work that is being promoted by the Ministry of Small to Medium Enterprises. The furniture being produced at all the working spaces was of high quality and many of the carpenters had started exporting their finished furniture. The business venture that was visited by the group started 5 years ago. Although the production units were performing well, they worked under appalling conditions, which included limited working space, lack of appropriate storage facilities and limited marketing opportunities.

Section Six: SOLIDARITY MESSAGES

Solidarity messages were presented from most of the gender ministers from the various countries present at the conference, as well as from the AU, UN, international and national civil society organizations. Most of the messages congratulated Zimbabwe on hosting the conference successfully as a sign of its commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women. All the speakers urged the women of Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwe government to ensure that the conference should be considered a first step towards effective women's empowerment. The speakers also pledged to continue to work with the Zimbabwe government and the women of Zimbabwe towards attainment of gender equality and women's economic, political empowerment and enhancing women's roles in peace building.

Mrs Litha Musiyimi-Ogana

Mrs Litha Musiyimi-Ogana began her remarks by thanking the conference delegates, the President of Zimbabwe, the Government and people of Zimbabwe, Ministry of Women's Affairs and Community Development, Ministry of Regional Integration and International Cooperation and Organ on National Healing and Reconciliation and Integration for the fruitful engaging journey that allowed the sharing of expertise and experience. She congratulated the nation on launching of the AU Decade for Women and urged the country to remember the commitments and remain true to them. She noted that while it is commendable that Zimbabwe has ratified international and regional instruments, she urged the country to domesticate the instruments. She said that she looked forward to Zimbabwe acceding to the Peer Review Mechanism to further consolidate its commitment to the African frameworks.

Minister from Malawi

The Representative from Malawi thanked the conference organizers for a fruitful platform for shared experiences that encouraged and inspired women from the region to aim for the best in terms of gender justice issues. She encouraged all the delegates both foreign and local, to be inspired to "do it for themselves" and ended her remarks by stating that "Yes we [women] can".

Hon. Angelica Muharukwa – Minister from Namibia

The Namibian representative saluted the women of Africa in their efforts for political and economic empowerment and participation in peace building. She further congratulated the women of Zimbabwe on the launch of the AU women's decade. She emphasized the role the media can play in rebranding the country and encouraged them to do as such; and in particular to highlight the successes of Zimbabwe since the formation of the inclusive government, a picture which she said the world did not have, because the media was not showing. She concluded her remarks by applauding Zimbabwean women for their obvious unity in all issues of empowerment.

Minister from Uganda: Hon. N. Rukiya

The Uganda representative highlighted that the conference had come at an opportune time, when the country was going through a constitutional reform process. She noted that this was a critical and defining moment for Zimbabwean women, and she hoped that the unity displayed at this conference would therefore be reflected in the women's demands in the constitution; since the constitution is the supreme law of the land and defines how the government would deal with gender equality. She further applauded the fact that there was representation of women in the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Constitution [COPAC]. She however cautioned women to be vigilant and ensure that women were not only on the committee but that they also contribute effectively to this key national process.

Hon. Zenab - Minister from Sudan

Minister Zenab expressed gratitude to Zimbabwe for the invitation to the conference. She stated that this reflected the goodwill shown to Sudan by Zimbabwe and she was certain that this invitation would enhance relations between the two nations. The Minister concluded by urging Zimbabwean women to

ensure that they committed to enhancing gender equality and women's empowerment both in Zimbabwe and in supporting the gender equality agenda for other women in Africa.

Minister from Congo-Brazzaville – Hon. Jean Francoise

The Minister began her remarks by thanking the hosting ministers for inviting her to the conference. She expressed the gratitude at the solidarity between Zimbabwe and Congo-Brazzaville and hoped that this conference would benefit all the delegates as there had been much learning and sharing. The Minister urged women in leadership to prop up other women to increase their numbers in decision making. She concluded her remarks by appreciating the cordial relations and solidarity between her country and Zimbabwe.

Kelvin Hazangwi – Padare/Enkhundleni Men's Forum

Mr. Hazangwi from Padare stated that his organization had taken time to listen to women's experiences and identified priorities for collaboration with women and women's organizations. As Padare he committed to encouraging change of attitudes among men and to challenge the oppression of women. He further committed to speaking out against the oppression of women and providing positive role models that challenge the negative conceptions of masculinity to advance the cause for women

Section Seven: Closing Plenary and Way Forward

Chairperson of the Session: Hon. Dr. Muchena

The Chairperson introduced the Vice President Her Excellency the Hon. J. Mujuru to the conference delegates. She introduced all the special representatives present and informed the Vice President that the conference had both been practical and engaging. She noted ministers from other African countries present had been grateful for this learning platform and they all expressed solidarity with the people of Zimbabwe.

Dr. Muchena also shared the major output of the conference, which was an action plan with proposals to enhance women's economic and political empowerment and their role in peace building. She highlighted the following three key recommendations from the conference;

- iv. Lobby for constitutional proposals for the creation of quota systems/affirmative action to enhance women's participation in decision making
- v. Increased participation of women in economic policy formulation
- vi. Domestication of international and regional frameworks that protect and prevent violations against women and promote the participation of women in peace building

These recommendations had possible actors and strategies for implementation. The full action plan is attached in Section Eight as Annex A.

Dr. Muchena then introduced some of the international delegates to give solidarity messages viz;

Dr. Thelma Awori – Gender is My Agenda

Dr. Awori thanked Ministers Holland and Muchena for opening way for GIMAC to send a solidarity team to Zimbabwe in 2010. She stated that GIMAC felt that the mission had been received warmly and that GIMAC was committed to ensuring that the recommendations of that 2010 mission were implemented. She expressed gratitude to the government of Zimbabwe for that opportunity and stated that in her view, that initial mission and current conference symbolized the opening up of Zimbabwe to women in Africa.

Mrs Letty Chiwara – UN Women

UN Women expressed support to the women of Zimbabwe in their endeavor to empower themselves economically, politically and be engaged in peace building processes. She noted that Africa is a minefield of knowledge and skills and in whatever programs UN WOMEN would engages in, UN Women would ensure that these knowledge and skills would be harnessed to enhance gender equality in the country and on the continent.

Ms. Kandawasvika- Nhundu – International IDEA

Mrs. Kandawasvika- Nhundu of International IDEA expressed solidarity with the women of Zimbabwe on the basis of what the country's women have prioritized, especially in the area of political empowerment. As International IDEA she said they would continue to support the women's agenda and respond to context specific needs without being prescriptive. Ms Kandawasvika-Nhundu concluded her remarks by stating that International IDEA would continue to work with the Ministry of Women Affairs on women's political empowerment.

Jennet Kem – UNDP: New York

Ms. Kem stressed the richness of the country in terms of human, material and natural resources, and the importance of employing these to change the negative image of the country. She also encouraged the government to create a gender responsive policy environment. She observed that the negative image of Zimbabwe had still not been repaired and hoped that the stakeholders present at the meeting would work towards rectifying this. She concluded her remarks by stating that the UN family would be happy to continue working with Zimbabwe to support its gender equality agenda.

Women's Parliamentary Caucus

The representative of the women's caucus expressed gratitude to all the visitors for their solidarity and the sharing of experiences. She stated that Zimbabwean women had learnt a lot and hoped that the information from the conference would rally with women to greater heights with women's agenda, economically, politically and in all spheres.

Hon. Zenab - Sudan

The Minister expressed her gratitude for the invitation to the conference and extended her greetings to the President and the Vice President. She stated that she was very happy to see the progressive things women in Zimbabwe were doing and hoped that Zimbabwean women would visit Sudan to learn and share experiences with their counterparts there.

The Chairperson of the sessions Hon. Dr. Muchena then invited Her Excellency the Vice President Hon. J. Mujuru to officially close the conference.

Her Excellency the Vice President Hon. J. Mujuru

The Vice President began her remarks by thanking all the delegates for their hard work at the conference. She noted that the fact that women from all over the country and the region, had come to the conference, was symbolic of their commitment to the cause of gender equality. She applauded those women from organizations that were not women's organizations noting that their presence at the conference was an indication of the number of institutions that were becoming gender sensitive.

The Vice President stated that the government's permitting this conference to proceed was indicative of the government of Zimbabwe's commitment to gender equality. She stated that Zimbabwe has always been committed to gender equality and would therefore continue to support Gender Equality programmes.

The Vice President noted that the conference's success would be judged on the success that can be attributed to the actionable outcomes of this conference. She stated that after this conference it would be important for participants to implement the recommendations of the conference in the most suitable manner for their context to enhance women's empowerment. The Vice President urged women and participations to seek to influence their environment based on the outcomes from conference. The Vice President however stressed the need for the gender equality agenda to be driven by what women want, rather than be led by aid agencies or donors.

The Vice President noted that culture and ignorance remain the major challenges to achieving Gender Equality; hence this conference was important to ensure that gender equality will be achieved. She observed that the AU has identified 10 areas that need to be addressed to achieve gender equality. She urged women from Africa to appreciate that Africa needs to build on positives and comparative advantages rather than negatives in the African context to achieve gender equality; such as the numerical advantage of women on the continent. The Vice President also encouraged women to take advantage of men of quality who will support women in the gender equality agenda.

The Vice President noted that women in the private and public sectors in positions of authority needed to also ensure that they do away with "queen bee syndrome" and support their female counterparts and to ensure gender equality. She also bemoaned the continued crisis of the "pull her down" syndrome and said instead women should celebrate each other's success, rather than delay each other's successes.

The Vice President encouraged women to input into the policy formulation, especially the women policy makers, [MPs] to ensure that all policy integrates gender equality in and therefore ensure gender sensitive frameworks for development. The Vice President urged African women urged to shift the gender equality discourse from abstract to practical. She stated that it was important to address gender equality in practical situations such as the income generation projects that women undertake so that women as leaders work towards reducing and ultimately ending poverty

The Vice President concluded her remarks by urging all the participants to go back and sharing the knowledge and information from this conference. She urged Africa to be proud of its own African experts, and to ensure that Africa develops a culture of using its own local expertise at local level, since the international community seemed to be making more use of Africa's experts than Africa herself. She also encouraged women to lobby for gender sensitive budgets in order to promote gender equality at all levels, which requires resources.

The Vice President encouraged foreign delegates to remember Zimbabwe is under sanctions for taking back land and its natural resources. She noted that sanctions burden was being borne by women, even though they have affected the country at many levels. She therefore urged the foreign delegates, to take this message back to their countries to increase the call for the end of sanctions against Zimbabwe.

The Director of Ceremonies thanked delegates to the conference, the hosting ministers, all the MPs, and the staff from the Ministry of Women Affairs and Community Development.

Hon. Dr. Muchena then took the floor to express her gratitude to the media for the excellent coverage of the conference. She finally expressed her immense gratitude to the Director of Ceremonies Dr. Utete-Masango for pulling off a successful conference.

Section Eight: Appendices

APPENDIX A: CONFERENCE ACTION PLAN

International Conference on Women's Economic and Political Empowerment and Peace Building

Action Points – Way Forward

Peace Building Working Group

ACTION	ACTORS	STRATEGIES
Domestication of international and regional frameworks that protect and prevent violations against women and promote the participation of women in peace building	Min. of Women Affairs ONHRI Women's organizations UN systems Traditional leaders Churches Civil Society Women's Coalition NANGO ONHRI Partnerships Grassroots based National Networks Relevant Government Ministries and Agencies	1. Strengthen capacity of the ONHRI 2. Build political will to prevent violations against women in private and public spheres 3. Develop infrastructure for peace from local to national level 4. Educate women and girls and distribute to them the Global Political Agreement document to empower all to make their inputs into the Peace building processes 5. Simplify and disseminate international, regional, national laws and regulations that protect and prevent violations against women

Peace Building Working Group

ACTIONS	ACTORS	STRATEGIES
Enhance women's participation in national peace building processes	Min. of Women Affairs ONHRI Women's organizations UN systems Traditional leaders Churches Civil Society Women's Coalition NANGO ONHRI Partnerships Grassroots based National Networks Relevant Government Ministries and Agencies	1. Training of women from all sectors in conflict transformation and mediation 2. Create regular platforms for women to engage on issues of conflict transformation and peace building in all areas of the country 3. Create forums for women who have been on peace building mission to share their experiences with other women at various levels 4. Engage the Girl Child, girl child focused organizations to sensitize these on processes of peace building arrived at with their inclusion

Peace Building Working Group

ACTIONS	ACTORS	STRATEGIES
Women to advance the peace agenda	Min. of Women Affairs ONHRI Women's organizations UN systems Traditional leaders Churches Civil Society Women's Coalition NANGO ONHRI Partnerships Grassroots based National Networks Relevant Government Ministries and Agencies	1. Build solidarity on common causes that transcend partisan interests 2. Create women's networks for women's networks on peace at all levels 3. Encourage women in leadership to mainstream conflict sensitive programmes in their work 4. Increase the visibility of women's leadership in peace building and conflict transformation

Peace Building Working Group

ACTORS	ACTIONS	STRATEGIES
Increase awareness of existing laws and policy frameworks that promote peace	Min. of Women Affairs ONHRI Women's organizations UN systems Traditional leaders Churches Civil Society Women's Coalition NANGO ONHRI Partnerships Grassroots based National Networks Relevant Government Ministries and Agencies	1. Disseminate information on the provisions of Article 18 of the GPA 2. Increase awareness on the Domestic Violence Act among all service providers 3. Provide information to women living with disabilities on the appropriate and existing legislation

Peace Building Working Group

ACTIONS	ACTORS	STRATEGIES
Strengthen ongoing initiatives on peace building	Min. of Women Affairs ONHRI Women's organizations UN systems Traditional leaders Churches Civil Society Women's Coalition NANGO ONHRI Partnerships Grassroots based National Networks Relevant Government Ministries and Agencies	1. Promote national dialogues at all level, with particular emphasis on participation of women 2. Develop and disseminate national standard and framework for national healing that includes all stakeholders, in particular women

Peace Building Working Group

ACTIONS	ACTORS	STRATEGIES
Build local body of knowledge on peace building and conflict transformation	Min. of Women Affairs ONHRI Women's organizations UN systems Traditional leaders Churches Civil Society Women's Coalition NANGO ONHRI Partnerships Grassroots based National Networks Relevant Government Ministries and Agencies	1. Support university programmes on peace building and conflict transformation 2. Document and disseminate local best practices of peace building and conflict transformation 3. Develop local mechanisms for conflict identification, management and prevention 4. Document traditional methods and practices for peace and conflict transformation 5. Consolidate adoption of the Arts and Cultural Expressions for Peace Building at all levels

Peace Building Working Group

ACTIONS	ACTORS	STRATEGIES
Mainstream conflict sensitive planning across all sectors	Min. of Women Affairs ONHRI Women's organizations UN systems Traditional leaders Churches Civil Society Women's Coalition NANGO ONHRI Partnerships Grassroots based National Networks Relevant Government Ministries and Agencies	1. Identify entry points for conflict sensitive planning in all sectors 2. Develop tools for conflict sensitive planning 3. Train planners in all sectors on conflict sensitive planning.

Political Empowerment Group

ACTIONS	ACTORS	STRATEGIES
Lobby for Constitutional proposals for creation of quota systems/affirmative action to enhance women's participation in decision making	Women Affairs Ministry Women's Wings in political parties Women's organizations Women's Parliamentary Caucus COPAC UN System Cooperating partners – e.g. International IDEA	1. Creation of enabling legislative framework e.g. •Party Constitutions and Manifestos •National Constitution •Gender Equality Act [e.g. RSA/Rwanda] 2. Electoral provisions e.g. Uganda/Rwanda 3. Modalities for representation of women's seats in Parliament. Seats would be competed for. 4. Engage men to promote women's leadership

Political Empowerment Group

ACTIONS	ACTORS	STRATEGIES
Promote women's involvement in politics and strengthen their participation in decision making in political parties	Women Affairs Ministry Women's Wings in political parties Women's organizations Women's Parliamentary Caucus UN System International IDEA	1. Publicize and implement political party constitutions, policies and manifesto provisions that promote women's participation such as affirmative action and/or quotas 2. Sensitization of political parties on gender equality and women's leadership 3. Support the capacity of political parties to implement gender sensitive measures, mechanisms and practices in intra party democracy processes 4. Propose amendments to the Political [Finance] Parties Act to provide structures, procedures and processes that are conducive to women's participation 5. Design political education programmes for women which take account women in rural areas 6. Provide facilities that enable full participation of women with disabilities in politics and decision making

Political Empowerment Group

ACTIONS	ACTORS	STRATEGIES
Coaching and mentoring of women in Parliament	Women Affairs Ministry Women's Wings in political parties Women's organizations Women's Parliamentary Caucus UN System	On-going training and coaching programmes that are both individual and group. Personalized training included. •Technical skills •Access to information •Communications support- e.g. how to work with the media •Understanding policy making •Understanding responsibility to represent women Training to take into account the special needs of women with disabilities

Political Empowerment Group

ACTIONS	ACTORS	STRATEGIES
Educate and mentor young women	Women's Affairs Ministry CZI/ ZNCC UN Women Women's organizations UN System Young Women's organizations	1. Design and implement education and sensitization programmes to capacitate young women for public leadership 2. Build capacity of young women for constructive and public and political engagement - On-going training and coaching programmes • Technical skills • Life Skills • Access to information • Understanding governance

Political Empowerment Group

ACTIONS	ACTORS	STRATEGIES
Reduce Gender Based Violence	Women Affairs Ministry Ministry of Justice Women's organizations UN System	1. Increase awareness gender based violence 2. Engage with men and youth on unacceptability of GBV 3. Promote application of support mechanisms for survivors of GBV

Political Empowerment Group

ACTIONS	ACTORS	STRATEGIES
Grooming Women's Leadership	Women's organizations UN Systems Women Affairs Ministry Political parties	1. Provide technical skills and information for women aspiring to and in leadership positions 2. Training on gender equality and women's leadership

Economic Empowerment Group

ACTIONS	ACTORS	STRATEGIES
Increased participation of women in economic policy formulation	Women Affairs Ministry Min of SMEs Min of Finance Min of Economic Planning Women in Business Ministry of Trade and Commerce	1. Gender audit of current economic policies and frameworks 2. Dissemination of economic empowerment regulations and policies to women and in particular women in the informal sector and rural areas 3. Create platform for women and women's associations to engage with policy makers regarding formulation economic and empowerment regulations 4. Lobby international financial institutions and donors for policies that are pro poor and enable the economic empowerment of women

Economic Empowerment Group

ACTIONS	ACTORS	STRATEGIES
Increase women's participation in business forums and institutions	CZI and ZNCC Bankers Association of Zimbabwe Women Affairs Ministry Women in Business Women's organizations JCI Ministry of SMEs Min. Finance Min. of Economic Planning Min of Trade and Commerce UN Systems	1. Demystify business forums and institutions 2. Encourage women to join and participate in business forums and institutions 3. Encourage to formation of women business forums that establish functional linkages with existing business forums and institutions 4. Encourage women with disability to join and participate in formal business forums and institutions 5. Encourage development of special financial schemes for women.

Economic Empowerment Group

ACTIONS	ACTORS	STRATEGIES
Increase business linkages between SMEs and large enterprises	Women Affairs Ministry Women in Business Women's organizations Ministry of SMEs Zimtrade UN Systems	1. Encourage participation by women in SMEs and informal sector in national, regional and international trade fairs 2. Organize trade fairs and other forums that market women's enterprises 3. Increase women's economic literacy

Economic Empowerment Group

ACTIONS	ACTORS	STRATEGIES
Disseminate business and trade information to women	Women Affairs Ministry Women in Business Min. Trade and Commerce Min. Economic Planning Min. of Finance Ministry of Regional Integration and International Cooperation Zimtrade Women's organizations Min. of SMEs	1. Setting up "one-stop" business resource centres throughout the country that; • Disseminate information on markets, regional economic institutions and regulations that is accessible to all women in particular women with all types of disabilities • Create data bases of organizations providing business information, financial and technical support services 2. Disseminate information on trade agreements and operations of RECs for to women

Economic Empowerment Group

ACTIONS	ACTORS	STRATEGIES
Raise awareness on climate change and its impact on business	Women Affairs Ministry Women in Business Min. Trade and Commerce Min. Economic Planning Min. Environment Min. Science and Technology Environmental Management Agency Women's organizations Min. of SMEs	1. Develop programmes to educate women on climate change 2. Create platforms for women to engage with government and other institutions working to manage climate change