



WiPSU Update

December 2013

Women in Politics Support Unit

Women Parliamentarians Speak

One of the important roles of Parliamentarians is to pass relevant and new legislation. They do this by debating in parliament and flagging the issues that are relevant for their constituencies. This is what some of the women in Parliament have had to say in the last month;

"Hon. members, our task is to debate and urgently amend the laws that govern health care. While debating these issues, we should not forget to support any measures that will be brought before us which are aimed at improving the conditions of service for our health workers, the civil service and our security forces." Hon Thembanani on the Motion on the Presidential Speech

"I want to specifically mention the 'White Gold,' cotton prices that have been poorly priced and the farmers have been left with nothing to take home. The majority of those who suffer from this problem are women. The producer price for cotton should be adjusted or else the people will be discouraged from engaging in active and meaningful agriculture to boost the economy. The new Government should put in place policies which address the issue of infrastructure rehabilitation. The access road between Mhondoro - Mamina, Turf - Kadoma, Chakari and Sanyati is bad. Kadoma - Sanyati road is very bad. Mr. Speaker Sir, rehabilitation of these roads should be a priority." Hon Sogorani on the Motion on the Presidential Speech

"Mr. Speaker Sir, we all know the effects of power cuts; power cuts are mainly felt by the women and young girls. I am trying to imagine what could happen if a woman was in labour and there is a power cut in that labour ward. I think we really need to take issues of energy seriously because it affects women adversely." Hon. Anastancia Ndhlovu on the Motion on the Inquiry into the power sector in Zimbabwe

When the issue of equal representation in parliament is put on the table the debate always shifts to discussions of quality versus quantity. The debate being that men are able to better represent citizens in Parliament and that even the women who are in parliament are not playing their representative role. However if we look at the statistics generated by the Research and Advocacy Unit (What happened in Parliament? An analysis of the participation of MPs 2012 to 2013), women speak in Parliament more than the men do. In the 7th Parliament of Zimbabwe 15% of the men in Senate did not speak at all compared to 10% of women. In the House of Assembly only 20% of the women did not speak at all as compared to 26% of men.

When we look at the issues that the women are raising in parliament, as highlighted above, there are two things that are clear. Firstly women are and have been raising issues in Parliament debates, more so than their male counterparts. Secondly the issues that they are raising are gendered in their nature while also raising pertinent issues that will affect, and benefit all the citizens of Zimbabwe.

Interesting article to read:

Does the dominance of women in Rwanda's parliament signify real change?

<http://www.issafrica.org/iss-today/does-the-dominance-of-women-in-rwandas-parliament-signify-real-change>

ISS Today 12 November 2013

Inside this issue:

16 Day of Activism
Against Gender
Based Violence 2

Women in Politics
Support Unit Con-
stituency Effec-
tiveness Program 2

Gendered nature of
media coverage 3

16 Day of Activism Against Gender Based Violence

Participation of women in decision making should extend to multilateral and intergovernmental processes as well. Read http://www.mrfcj.org/pdf/2013-06-07_The-Full-View.pdf which highlights the benefits of women's increased leadership, participation and representation in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

While we have moved to 16-365 Days of Activism Against Gender based Violence we still set aside the time every year to particularly amplify the debate and discussions on the levels of gender based violence being experienced in Zimbabwe. Under the Theme of "From Peace in the Home, to Peace in the world," WiPSU commemorated the 16 days in various ways. As a member of the GBV Prevention Network WiPSU has engaged in discussions and awareness in Gokwe Mapfungautsi. We also joined our sister organisation Musasa and the Ministry of Women's Affairs Gender and Community Development in launching a national campaign against rape and sexual violence under the theme, '**Restoring hope and dignity to survivors of rape and sexual violence**', which took place on the 28th of November 2013 at Harare Gardens. To round off our 16 days activities we will be in Masvingo Rural District council again engaging in discussions and raising awareness on the gender based violence in Zimbabwe

Women in Politics Support Unit Constituency Effectiveness Program

The *Constituency Effectiveness Programme* (CEP) centres around working with women at the constituency level (in rural and urban areas) by supporting the establishment of constituency consultative forums (CCFs) for MPs and ward consultative forums (WCFs) for Councillors made up of women from their constituencies and the women officials.

In 2013 WiPSU has worked in the following areas under this programme;

- Masvingo Ward 12
- Binga Ward 24
- Mutoko
- Harare West
- Gokwe Mapfungautsi

The most recent of these areas to be visited was Gokwe Mapfungautsi. Please go to <http://soundcloud.com/women-in-politics> to hear about the experiences of WiPSU programme officer Mazvie Madzivadze when they visited the constituency recently.



Women Members of Parliament at a Capacity Building Workshop in Kadoma



Women in Politics Support Unit

196 Samora Machel Avenue
Easitea
Harare
Zimbabwe

Phone: +263 772 141 747/8
Fax: +263 4 782124
E-mail: wipsuadmin@gmail.com

Women's Qualitative and Quantitative Participation in Politics



Facebook : wipsuzimbabwe

Twitter: @wipsuzim

Women in Politics Support Unit (WiPSU) is a registered non-governmental organisation, established in 2001 with the aim of increasing women's qualitative and quantitative participation in politics at all stages in governance. The focus is on providing support to women in parliament and local government in Zimbabwe so that they may participate meaningfully and effectively and be able to make decisions that represent other women. WiPSU's vision is a society in which women exercise and enjoy their human rights and participate as equals in all political processes with full citizenship rights. The organisation has embarked on the 50/50 representation campaign as stated in the SADC protocol on gender and development. The organisation exists to strengthen democracy and governance practices through the effective participation of women in political office and as political constituents. WiPSU is also an apolitical organisation which has no barriers over political lines and serves women leaders across political divides. It has been able to foster inter-party synergy on women's issues and the gender agenda.

The gendered nature of media headlines : "Mujuru has presidency in her handbag" - Nehanda Radio (2 December 2013)



The clever play on words draws attention to the fact that the Vice President is female as an important part of the story