



# Progress for women's participation in politics

September 2012

## Women in Politics Support Unit

### Quota System Increases Number of Women in Parliament—By Tsitsi Mhlanga

#### Women in Key Positions in Parliament:

- Deputy Speaker of Parliament—Mabel Chinomona
- President of Senate - Edna Madzongwe

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With the marriage of reserved seats and a proportional representation, zebra listed system in Senate, 122 women were sworn into Parliament on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 2013. Of these 60 women were members of parliament whose mandate in the next 5 years will be to represent the interests of women of Zimbabwe in the legislature and in the Provincial councils. This is a big increase on the 57 women that were sworn in to Parliament in 2008.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development is an instrument that has not only been signed but ratified by the Government of Zimbabwe. The provision of 60 reserved seats in the Constitution was in line with implementation and domestication of the Protocol which calls for 50/50 representation of women in public office by 2015. The protocol provides for the use of affirmative action in order to achieve gender parity in different areas by 2015. Precedent for this has been set in Uganda where "women's access to politics is primarily through a system of special reserved seats." As a result since 2001 at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the Ugandan Parliament has been women.

Although the seats and other constitutional provisions have come a bit late for Zimbabwe to meet the 2015 deadline, representation of women has increased from 18% to 34%. The number of women in Parliament has increased by 114% due to the provisions that were lobbied for by women in the Constitutional Reform Process.

Political parties continue to be the main stumbling block in increasing women's representation. They failed to ensure that as prescribed by the new Constitution of Zimbabwe sufficient women candidates were forwarded in the constituency seats to

ensure that the National Assembly reached gender parity. In fact the numbers of directly elected women representing constituencies decreased from 34 in 2008 to 25 in 2013. As much as women had seats reserved seats, this was supposed to increase the space for women in Parliament and not limit their access to the 60 seats alone.

Political parties continue to remain spaces in which the men primarily influence and make decisions. As such there is a need for women in all the political parties to set out clear criteria for candidature for the reserved seats for 2018. This to ensure that the seats are not hijacked to fulfill other agendas.

A lot of work will need to be done to ensure that these women's mandate is understood clearly. It needs to be understood primarily by the citizens of Zimbabwe, within political parties and within Parliament. These 60 women have constituencies; their constituents at Provincial level are the women of that province.

Women's economic status in Zimbabwe provides a huge barrier towards their access to public office. The creation of reserved seats of women increased women's to access Parliament while limiting the economic burden that campaigning in the first past the post constituency system brings with it. Paired with this, the seats will provide a grooming ground for women in which they can prove their ability as women leaders to the electorate. In this way creating by 2023 a pool of 120 women who are willing and able

to contest in the first past system and have a clear documented history of ability and will to work and deliver. They become the best tool in popularizing the participation of women in public office.

The 60 seats as was also intended have ensured that political parties were able to put forward, as well as retain, women who have a documented history of pushing women's rights issues in various ways. These women will be able to articulate and push for the needs of women in the spaces that Parliament of Zimbabwe influences. Oppah Muchinguri, Priscilla Mshiharabwi-Mushonga, and Thokozani Khupe are example of such women who have clear documented histories of pushing for women's access to their rights in different areas over the years and are members of parliament under the reserved seats. It is women like these who will effectively be able to use the increased space for women in Parliament to lobby for state delivery of services to women across the country.

The 60 female MPs who represent the women across the provinces of this country, with appropriate support, have the opportunity to influence the political landscape of this country. Ensuring that politics delivers a development agenda that has women at its center to communities across the country; whilst forever proving that women political actors can and will ensure that real development will take place at community level.



## Current Number of Women in Parliament

Parliament of Zimbabwe is made up of two houses, The National Assembly and the Senate.

There are 270 members of the National Assembly. The total number of women in the National Assembly is 85. Of these 60 are women who were elected via the Proportional representation women's quota.

There are 80 Senators. Of these 37 are women.

Women make up almost 35% of the 8th Parliament of Zimbabwe as compared to the 18% that made up the 7th Parliament of Zimbabwe.

Again as with the 7th Parliament of Zimbabwe, women have been elected as the Deputy Speaker of Parliament and as the President of Senate.

## Some interesting observations from voting day



**"Some political parties held primary elections to select women to put on the list, while others did not. There is need for some kind of selection of the 60." Lucia Matibenga**



**"The new constitution reserves seats for women and we want to take that opportunity to improve their welfare," Monica Mutsvanga**



**"The woman who came into Parliament through the reserved seats stands for a space created to bring in women due to challenges they face in accessing resources" Priscilla Misihairabwi-Mushonga**

As with many civil society organisations WiPSU also had a small team out observing elections. Women in Politics Support Unit accredited 12 people as local observers who observed. In trying to fulfill its mandate the organisation saw it fit to ensure that in a limited way it was able to observe the elections and gauge the participation of women in the elections.

While other observer missions were largely guided by the SADC principles and guidelines governing democratic elections or following guidelines for African Union electoral observation and monitoring missions; WiPSU's focus was specifically looking at the gender sensitivity of the entire process.

Some of the key findings of that exercise were as follows; By 430pm on the 30<sup>th</sup> of July 2013 two polling stations visited in Harare Central had not yet received hard copies of the voters roll. In all polling stations that observers visited on polling day there were no electronic versions of the voters roll available.

- At all polling stations voting began promptly or soon after 7am and all polling stations closed promptly at 7pm. In 4 of the polling stations a woman was the first to vote. Whilst the first women in the remaining 6 stations voted between 4 minutes 43 minutes after the polling station was opened. It was observed the throughout the day people were taking between 1 minute and 5 minutes to be served.
- At 7am when polling stations opened there was on average 49

women waiting in the queues. The highest number of women recorded at 7am was at Haig Park Polling station where of the 500 people in the queue 235 were women. The lowest number was recorded at Davaar Farm where 12 women were among the 20 people in the queue at 7am on voting day.

- In general women with visible disabilities and women who were visibly pregnant were allowed to go to the front of the queues. However this was not the same for women who were breastfeeding as they are not covered by the act. It must also be noted that women with small children were observed at all polling stations with one or two fathers with young children also observed.
- The highest number of assisted voters was observed at the polling station Warren Park Primary School 3B, Ward 15, Warren Park Constituency where 21 voters were assisted. Of these 16 were women. On average at the other polling stations the percentage of women assisted voters ranged from 27% to 90%.
- Of the voters who were turned away from voting the major reason for doing so was not appearing on the voters roll. However those who did not appear on the roll but were in possession of registration slips were generally allowed to vote. The highest number of people turned away was recorded at the polling station at Football Ground near Shawasha hostels Tent A, Ward 4, Mbare Constituency. There were 157 voters turned away in total of which 22 were women. The percentage of

women who were turned away ranged from 40% to 86% of the total number turned away.

- ZEC should be commended for ensuring that it gathered gender disaggregated data for the first time in the 2013 harmonized elections. However a month after the Election date gender disaggregated data is still not available. Critical information still outstanding is the gender disaggregation of the local government results and the gender disaggregation of voters.

In general the elections were peaceful with all those who appeared on the voters roll or who were in possession of registration slips being able to vote before the 7pm deadline. This may be contributed to the efficiency of the ZEC officials and the many polling stations available for voters to vote at. Voting day itself did not pose any serious hurdles towards women's participation. However we must note that this analysis does not look at the challenges that women faced in registration and in standing as candidates.

**Names of the 122 Women in the 8th Parliament Of****NATIONAL ASSEMBLY****Constituency Seats**

Dorcas Sibanda  
Tabitha Khumalo  
Anele Ndebele  
Irene Zindi  
Joyce Mujuru  
Margaret Matienga  
Jesse Majome  
Roselyn Nkomo  
Sarah Mahoka  
Berta Chikwama  
Aqualinah Katsande  
Mandi Chimene  
Biata Nyamupinga  
Nyasha Chikwinya  
Tabeth Kanengoni  
Petronella Kadonye  
Mabel Chinomona  
Dorothy Mhangami  
Melania Mahiya  
Miriam Makweya  
Chiratidzo Mabuwa  
Sithembile Gumbo  
Sithembiso Nyoni  
Metrine Madau  
Paurine Mpariwa

**60 WOMEN'S SEATS**

Sipambekile Damasane  
Alice Ndlovu  
Rossy Mpofu  
Nomathemba Ndlovu  
Sipho Dube  
Priscilla Misihairabwi-Mushonga  
Sikhanyisiwe Mpofu  
Mail Mpofu  
Molly Mnkandla  
Lwazi Sibanda  
Ruth Labode  
Sibusisiwe Budha  
Thokozani Khupe  
Jane Nicola Watson  
Gladys Mathe  
Dorothy Mathe Ndlovu

Jasmine Toffa  
Eunice Nomthandazo Moyo  
Anastancia Ndlovu  
Tariro Mtingwende  
Philina Zhou  
Tionei Melody Dziva  
Emma Muzondiwa  
Teti Banda  
Sabbina Thembani  
Sabina Mangwende  
Miriam Chikukwa  
Evelyn Masaiti Muzungu  
Josephine Value Chitembwe  
Ronja Bunjira  
Oppah Muchinguri  
Esther Chikuni  
Annastazia Nyahwo  
Lucia Chitura  
Fanny Chirisa  
Joyce Makonya  
Getrude Chibagu  
Dorothy Apronia Kadungure  
Elizabeth Shongedza  
Dorothy Mashonganyika  
Tsitsi Gezi  
Bacilia Majaya  
Mabel Matirangano Nkatazo  
Getrude Hungwa  
Mabel Kaundikiza  
Lilian Zemura  
Roseline Roseweater  
Muchaneta Muchenje  
Goodlucky Kwaramba  
Nomsa Jenifer Mlanga  
Christina Nyere  
Constance Tsomondo  
Joan Tsogorani  
Consilia Chinanzvavana  
Anna Rungani  
Yeukai Simbanegavi  
Monica Chigudu  
Angeline Chipato Memory  
Munochinzwa  
Judith Muzhavazhe

Annah Shiri  
Agnes Sibanda  
Siphiwe Ncube  
Angeline Masuku  
Tholakile Khumalo  
Cleveria Chizema  
Tsitsi Jadagu  
Sekai Holland  
Rorana Muchiwa  
Monica Mutsvangwa  
Judith Mawire  
Keresencia Chabuka  
Alice Chimbudzi  
Jenia Manyeruke  
Monica Mavhunga  
Martha Muronzi  
Olivia Muchena  
Rosemary Goto  
Address Mtiirira  
Jane Chifamba  
Edna Madzongwe  
Virginia Muchenje  
Violet Moeketsi  
Otilia Muhlawa  
Shuvai Mahofa  
Frirai Ethel Mabhugu  
Alphina Juba  
Rosemary Nyathi  
Thokozile Mathuthu  
Medelina Bhebhe  
Tambudzai Mohadi  
Alma Mkhebu  
Sithembille Mlotshwa  
Joyce Ndhlovu  
Tsitsi Muzonda  
Flora Buka  
Lillian Timveos



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### Women's Qualitative and Quantitative Participation in Politics



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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.

## Women Participated in the 2013 Elections—WiPSU activities in pictures



Launch of the "Vote for a Woman" Campaign in June 2013



Meet the Candidates meeting in July 2013



Celebrating the participation of women as candidates in September 2013