



**Zimbabwe Election
Support Network**
Promoting Democratic
Elections In Zimbabwe

Press Statement

ZESN Celebrates International Women's Day 2025

08-March-2025- The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) joins the world in commemorating International Women's Day, a global occasion to honour the accomplishments and contributions of women across the globe. This year's theme, **"Accelerate Action: Advancing Gender Equality Now,"** calls for an urgent and decisive push towards achieving gender equality which emphasises the importance of accelerating efforts to overcome barriers that still limit the full participation of women in society, politics, and the economy.

As the nation celebrates women's progress, it is essential to recognise and address the areas where significant gaps remain. One such area is the decline in women's representation in the National Assembly during the 2023 Harmonised Elections from 14.4% in 2018 to 11%, a troubling setback in the shared pursuit of gender equality. This decline highlights the systemic and structural barriers and challenges women continue to face in political participation. Women's underrepresentation in decision-making bodies not only limits the diversity of ideas and solutions but also weakens the voice of women in shaping policies that directly impact their lives.

ZESN, therefore, calls for urgent action to create more opportunities for women in political spaces. To address this, it is essential that actions are accelerated to create an enabling environment for women to fully engage in electoral processes. This includes implementing gender-sensitive policies, such as gender quotas and measures to combat Violence Against Women in Elections (VAWIE), particularly cyber bullying, which has been exacerbated by the emergence of a plethora of social media platforms. Women must be able to run for office and participate in political discourse without facing violence, intimidation, or discrimination. Strengthening protections, promoting political literacy, and offering support for women's candidacies are all crucial steps towards achieving greater representation and inclusion.

The Network believes that beyond political representation, women's economic empowerment is vital for ensuring gender equality. Access to economic opportunities, skills training, and entrepreneurship is essential in creating a fair and thriving economy. Education remains one of the most powerful tools for women's empowerment. Hence it is vital to ensure that women are equipped with the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions, not only about their careers, health, and lives, but also about their rights and responsibilities as active citizens. Through effective civic education, women can

be empowered to understand their role in democratic processes, engage meaningfully in elections, and participate in shaping policies that affect their communities.

ZESN implores all stakeholders to ensure that women and girls have access to quality education and vocational training. This is essential for their empowerment and also critical for fostering a society where women can exercise their civic duties fully, including voting, running for office, and advocating for issues that affect them and their communities. Informed women are more likely to engage in civic activities, which strengthens democracy and promotes gender equality in decision-making processes.

The Network opines that advancing gender equality requires ongoing multi-stakeholder action to break down the barriers women and girls face in all aspects of life. This includes supporting them in leadership roles, ensuring access to quality education, and creating policies that prioritise their safety, health, and well-being. Stakeholders, government included must ensure that women and girls have the tools they need to succeed in all fields, whether in politics, business, sports, or the arts by providing them with access to the resources, networks, and opportunities that will allow them to thrive.

As Zimbabwe, celebrates International Women's Day, all stakeholders should reaffirm their commitment to **accelerating action** for gender equality and be steadfast in efforts to create a world where every woman and girl has the opportunity to achieve her full potential, free from violence, discrimination and limitation. #AccelerateAction//ENDS

PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE

FOR COMMENTS AND FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT

Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN)

+263 (242) 791443, 798193, 791803, 250736

info@zesn.net or zesn2011@zesn.net

or visit www.zesn.org.zw

Twitter: @ZESN1

Facebook: Zimbabwe-Election-Support-Network (ZESN)