

10 -14 May 2021



Women's quota deemed as tokenistic by women

Women's Institute for Leadership Development (WILD) conducted an engagement where women gave a review of the quota system as stipulated in Clause 11 of Constitution Amendment Number 2. The engagement was attended by 35 women representing politics, the media, business, tertiary students and those from the community.

Prisca Dube, a lawyer from Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) read Section 124 of the Constitution to get a better understanding of the women's quota. "The Zimbabwean Parliament consists of 270 seats, of which 210

are voted for and the remaining 60 seats are for women who are appointed through Proportional Representation."

One representative expressed concern over the women's quota, stating how there is hardly an instance where gender imbalances are being addressed.

"This is merely a numbers game as there is a possibility for incompetent women to be placed in certain positions so as to maximize the number of women in Parliament. It is visually appealing, yet fails to deal with the matter of according 50/50 representation in leadership positions."

Another participant present for the engagement alluded to the manner that the Clause tends to be tokenistic in nature.

"This is a tokenistic initiative that will grant power to women who would not have earned it otherwise. We don't want a culture in which power is handed to women; instead, it must be earned. Women who ought to qualify to be in Parliament are those with the capacity to make useful debates on motions that are moved at National Assembly. We are in need of leaders who are selected based on merit and not due to the gender they represent."



Dube added that in light of the enacted Constitutional Amendment Bill No 2, there is need for women to pursue strategic mechanisms for making the most out of it. She further added that women have a role that requires them to stand in solidarity in the fight for women's rights.

She implored for women under Proportional Representation to do more so as to ensure they engage with other women.

Cowdray Park to resume water meter installation

The Bulawayo City Council (BCC) last week resolved to resume installing water meters at Cowdray Park Hlalani Kuhle to the outcry of hundreds of residents who described the development as an infringement to their right to water, especially after the 2020 decision by Council to cut off water from communal taps as a measure to encourage residents to contribute to water connection.

The area has 11 276 households in need of both water and sewer and residents were previously required to initially pay US\$128 for connection of water before the figure was lowered to US\$85 due to the low intake from residents who argued that the amount was unaffordable. According to a notice from the Council, residents will now be required to pay about \$42 for both water and sewer connection.

Residents say the move may help BCC to generate revenue but a majority of them will be left with no water as they cannot afford to pay the required amount and the area has few functional boreholes.

Karen Mlotshwa, a resident from Cowdray Park said the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions left her with no means of survival as she cannot afford the US\$42 that Council is



Picture Credit: cite.org.zw

demanding for the reconnection.

“We understand that the Council needs to raise money but honestly cutting off water from communal taps was a bad idea. From then we have been spending most of our productive time looking for water from alternative sources meaning we do not even have time to make ends meet,” she says.

“Our income keeps worsening and I do not know how we are going to raise the money to ensure that we access water and sewer services. Many of us rely on selling wares and the lockdown crippled us financially, we cannot even afford to put it on the table,” said the 39-year-old vendor.

Mlotshwa called on the social welfare department to consider assisting some households who fail to raise the required money.

Mlotshwa highlighted that the suburb is awash with tenants who have no legal power to do paper work for connections. Failure to reconnect water from citizens is

likely to leave many families exposed to COVID-19 and other deadly water borne diseases like cholera.

“This area has people with disabilities who have no means to eke a living, so I know the situation is dire for them.

We cannot live without water and now that communal taps have been disconnected, we are finding ourselves with a ticking health time bomb.”

Residents have over the years presented the Bulawayo City Council with a headache as the Hlalani Khule area still has no sewer or water reticulation system since 2006.

Statistics from the Council show that 450 households have since applied for the connections while the remaining households have been unable to apply due to the unaffordable cost.



Commuters stand in long queues at Intemba Road in Bulawayo

Residents call for increased reliability of ZUPCO buses

The monopoly that Zimbabwe United Passenger Company (ZUPCO) continues to enjoy in Zimbabwe has stripped persons with disabilities all the dignity they had as its buses are unsafe, unreliable and not user friendly.

This emerged from conversations following a meeting by Bulawayo's Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) which comprise Women's Institute for Leadership Development, Habakkuk, Bulawayo Progressive Residents Association, Bulawayo Vendors and Traders Association, Transparency International Zimbabwe and Public Policy Research Institute of Zimbabwe, to discuss a way forward after Government banned commuter omnibuses from offering public transport.

Initially the Government reintroduced ZUPCO buses after the outbreak of COVID-19 last year in March as a measure to avert new

infections after imposing travel restrictions. The decision also grounded privately operated buses and kombis.

Sukulwenkosi Mhlanga who represents young people with disabilities said for people who use crushes, drop off points in the Central Business District make it difficult for PWDs to navigate the city.

"The distance we walk from fifth Avenue to our work place is too long considering that we cannot walk as fast as other people. Bus conductors do not understand Sign language so chances of us missing our bus stops on our way home are very high. I once met an old visually impaired woman crying after she was dropped off five kilometers away from her bus stop because no one cared to communicate when she reached her drop off point," she adds.

Mhlanga said there is need to ensure that ZUPCO buses offer

quality services to PWDs who are also not able to withstand the congestion found in many pick-up points.

"We cannot easily get information on routes because our Government did not consult us when they were introducing these buses. There are no help desks for us to make inquiries, and payments when accessing public transport and it is no secret that we are too poor to afford alternative transport," she added. says none of them can access ZUPCO buses as they have no rails or systems in place to help the visually impaired.

She said despite the ZUPCO policy stating that PWDs must always be offered preferential service, the reality on the ground paints a different picture.

"ZUPCO buses were not made with people with disabilities in mind because for starters they are not accessible by people on

wheelchairs. It breaks my heart all the time to see grown and respectable men being lifted into the bus in a dehumanizing manner. Honestly this strips us of all the dignity and none of the ZUPCO staff can communicate using the official Sign Language which means the deaf community have been banned from public transport,” said Mhlanga.

She also said ZUPCO should consider engaging with PWDs so that they are catered for in the public transport sector.

ZUPCO charges range from \$30 ZWL and \$50 ZWL onwards depending on the route and the recent ban on private kombis has resulted in winding queues and commotion when people are boarding, exposing them to the deadly COVID-19 virus and other dangers.

Despite being the official public transporter, ZUPCO has limited buses which often forces members of the public to wait for hours before they access transport to and from work.

High FDI will require macroeconomic stability – Deputy Governor

Deputy Governor at the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) Dr



Deputy Governor of the RBZ - Dr Khuphukile Mlambo
(Picture Credit: Chronicle Zw)

Khuphukile Mlambo on Wednesday highlighted that Zimbabwe has high FDI potential although it is negatively affected by episodes of macroeconomic instability, policy inconsistency, exchange rate risk, and low investor confidence relating to property rights protection.

Dr Mlambo said this during a guest lecture which was organized by Women’s Institute for Leadership Development (WILD) in partnership with the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Lupane State University. The lecture was held under the theme: “Unlocking Investment Opportunities in Emerging Markets and Developing Economies.”

Dr Mlambo noted that government related political risks send negative signals to potential investors and this often leads to investors’ decision to delay investment, postpone or cancel altogether. “The best way to entice investors as a country is to ensure there is greater macro-economic stability with characteristics such as low and stable inflation, exchange rate stability, sustained fiscal reforms

and reduced debt overhang, said Dr Mlambo. In attendance were Masters Students from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, heads of department, the media as well as women who are in the informal sector.

Dr Mlambo cited that Foreign Direct Investment has contributed to the growth of the economy, poverty reduction, created employment opportunities, it is non debt creating and has positive spill-over effects on the economy. In his presentation, Dr Mlambo stated that in China, FDI contributed to about 0.4 percentage points to annual GDP growth in the 1990s. According to the National Bureau Statistics of the People’s Republic of China, 2016, the poverty rate dropped from 49.8 percent to below 5 percent.

The slowdown in FDI inflows was also affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the years 2019 and 2020, where a 38 percent decline was experienced.

Dr Mlambo highlighted that globally, between 2017 – 2019 FDI inflows amounted to \$2.1 trillion, although the bulk of the recipients included Asian countries, with China dominating the inflows. In Africa, FDI remains low averaging to \$50.8 billion per year. Dr Mlambo noted that COVID-19 has also affected FDI inflows to Africa with a total of \$45 billion in 2019 against a total of \$51 billion in 2018.

Dr Mlambo cited that reducing inflation and maintaining the exchange rate on a durable and sustained basis remains key to creating a conducive environment for investment as it will guarantee preservation of value of investors.



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Gwanda Gender focal persons trained on gender mainstreaming

On Thursday, Women’s Institute for Leadership Development facilitated a training for Gwanda Municipality departmental Gender Focal persons in order to build their capacity on gender mainstreaming.

Facilitating the training, Marilyn Nyoni defined gender mainstreaming as the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies and programmes, in all areas and at all levels.

“Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, expressions and identities of girls, women, boys, men, and gender

diverse people while sex refers to a set of biological attributes in humans.

It is primarily associated with physical and physiological features including chromosomes, gene expression, hormone levels and function, and reproductive/sexual anatomy,” said Nyoni.

Participants were taught on the importance of gender mainstreaming considering that it is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and social spheres, such that inequality between men and women

is not perpetuated.

Facilitating the same training, Siphosiso Maphosa highlighted the different International legislations and legal Frameworks that speak into gender equality and equity in Zimbabwe which include the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1991, the Beijing Declaration on the Platform for Action(1995), The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and also guided by SDGs.

