In her message she said that, ‘International Women's Day is a universal celebration for social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women and a call to gender parity acceleration process.’

The day provides an opportunity for ZWB and women empowerment movement to emphasize that communities play have a role in promoting gender equality.

From grassroots level to international spaces people are commemorating this day and engaging in various activities that strengthen their commitment to equality and awareness raising.

Mrs Mhlanga highlighted that gender balance is not only a women’s issue, it’s an economic issue.

ZWB advocates for inclusive mind-sets, behaviours and tangible action because the rise of women is not about the fall of men, but to complement each others efforts for the-growth of Zimbabwe’s economy.

She also shared ZWB’s vision and why it is important to join us as members, be it individuals, groups or institutions.

In her closing remarks, she encouraged everyone that as we commemorate let us not forget our fellow women in Manicaland who have been affected by Cyclone IDAI, lives have been lost, infrastructure and livelihoods destroyed. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims.

The International Women’s Day Commemoration was a success and an eye opener as it facilitated a platform for women empowerment through the introduction of the #BalanceForBetter in all sectors of production.
The Grassroots Women’s Network (GWN) which includes Zimbabwe Women’s Bureau (ZWB), Jekesa Pfungwa Vulingondo (JPV) and Self Help Development Foundation (SHDF), hosted the National Convention on the 7th March 2019 at Cresta Lodge Msasa, Harare.

The purpose convention was to facilitate a national platform for rural women to present their demands to policy makers and an opportunity for the network to cooperate with partners such as WLSA, Legal Resource Foundation (LRF) who are constitutional law experts to produce a position paper that will be shared with the key stakeholders.

The event was attended by rural women from Zhombe, Goromonzi and Gweru, chiefs, key stakeholders including District Administrators, councilors, CSO’s, Commissioners, development partners and government ministries.

Grace Kuvengurwa gave a background of the Grassroots Women’s Network and the program “Strengthening Citizen Participation and Democracy in Zimbabwe”.

The program sought to strengthen democracy and citizen participation by through strengthening initiatives that enhance the leadership potential of women living in the rural areas at all levels.

Rural women constitute the largest percentage of people in Zimbabwe, and yet they remain marginalised in decision making processes, economic development and empowerment.

Most women have the capacity to assume leadership but what lack is the relevant supporting institutional and legal frameworks. The district representatives articulated issues affecting them such as the economic crisis manifesting itself in cash shortages, currency crisis, shortages of basic commodities, corruption, high unemployment among other factors, and lack of confidence to challenge the oppressive system.

Mrs Christine Chideme acting Director for Community Development in the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprise Development read the speech on behalf of Minister Sithembiso Nyoni, she said that government have taken a leading role in harnessing potential and skills participation in value chains of the key value economic sectors such as Agriculture, Tourism, trade and Mining.

She urged women to take advantage of RBZ initiatives such as the Women’s Micro Finance Bank for affordable project funds, establish Internal Savings and Lending Schemes (ISALs) and transformation into Savings and Credit Co-operative societies (SACCOs) which address access to financial institutions without collateral and avoid high interest rates charged by commercial banks.

The Ministries appreciated the work done by GWN that promote the empowerment of women.

Zimbabwe can only succeed in turning around its waning economic fortunes if women are afforded the opportunity to actively participate in creating sustainable solutions and the Ministry is dedicated to promoting women’s full participation in the economy at all levels.

In closing Ms Ronika Mumbire director of Zimbabwe Women’s Bureau (ZWB) urged stakeholders to actively engage women living in the rural areas and take heed of the recommendations made. She also emphasized that traditional leaders need to include women in decision making and also abide to the constitution.
The discussion was very fruitful as it produced a light for the community. Mr Java was pleased with what ZWB was doing for the community and also promised to work with our groups.

Mr Java and ZWB visited 6 groups in ward 3 Odzi Commercial at Shamu Shopping Centre to meet the groups which were interested in the loans.

We facilitated a dialogue platform for the community as people met him in person and asked him so many questions for clarification on who qualifies for a loan.

The terms and conditions were further explained by Mr Java and he encouraged the people to use money for investment hence development of the community.

Application forms were given to all the groups which were interested. ZWB officers helped the groups to fill in the application forms process and submitted them to Mr Java correctly done. It only took 2 days for the group members to receive their loan accounts and the swipe card processed which is linked to their mobile phones. ZWB in partnership with

My name is Joyce Mananzva, 49 years old and I reside in Gweru, Senge Ward 5. I own a retail business selling a wide variety of goods and a food café just outside specialising in fresh chips.

I met the facilitators Sekai Chimbudzi and Jessinah Makore in 2015 who introduced me to Zimbabwe Women’s Bureau (ZWB) they thought my group the ISAL concept.

After receiving my share, I decided to invest in tomatoes that was my first business adventure. The facilitators kept on encouraging the group members to continue with ISALs. I expanded my enterprises in 2018 from a table to rent a shop in Senge where I have been operating till now.

Life has really changed for me, I have managed to employ two female youths a shopkeeper and a cook as my contribution towards women empowerment.

In addition, I have also adopted 3 orphans who are still in school whom I provide for. ZWB has played a great role in the development of my business because they taught me business skills such as record keeping, costing, stock management and pricing.

Today I am cascading the knowledge to my workers so that they can be able to run the businesses efficiently.

My ambition is to get a bigger space and establish a supermarket, I have approached the ward councillor so that he can allocate me land.

“Zimbabwe Women’s Bureau (ZWB) is building our capacity as women with knowledge and skills for sustainable business enterprises today now I am a businesswoman”
Joyce Mananzva
My name is Colletta Muziri. I am 70 years old. I have 8 children and am a widow. I live in Rusike, Ward 18. In 2015, ZWB’s ward facilitator Rachel Munemo visited me and told me about the Enterprise and Business Development Programme (EBDP) and I developed interest to be involved in it.

The EBDP emphasised on the importance of conserving soil which is an important resource in agricultural production. Rachel invited an AGRITEX officer who trained us as a group. Myself and another group member adopted the concept and are practicing CA since then.

Some have not adopted it as they say it’s hectic and time consuming but I tell them that CA plot has to be prepared on time. I start to prepare my field for maize production in July of every year whilst the land still has some moisture. I use compost manure to enrich the soil. My compost comprises of layer waste, tree leaves and rotten fruits, grass, and waste from food stuffs that can decompose and decay.

I only use ammonium nitrate when my plants have reached the knee height for cobbing. Conservation farming ensures value for money in that I only buy top dressing as basal fertiliser would have been replaced by the manure that I put.

The size of my field is 0.4 hectares and I got 1 and half tonnes of maize in the last season and this year I am expecting to yield the same tonnage or even more.

Apart from CA ZWB’s ward facilitator trained us on Savings for Investment and ISALs. Throughout my life I did not have a culture of saving. I would sell eggs and crops from my field and would not even save a cent.

I joined an ISAL group in 2015 and to date I am a member of 6 ISAL groups as I am not saving enough from 1 group. I am contributing a total of $80 in the 6 groups that I am in. The money that I borrow from the savings groups help me to buy feed for my layers as I have 30 layers that I am rearing.

I managed to apply and get a loan from Virl Microfinance as the money I was getting from the ISAL was not enough for me to buy a cow, named Mukando.

I managed to pay off the loan from Virl Microfinance with the returns from ISALs. Meanwhile I’m still doing layers and sell almost a crate every day at $1 for 4.

I was also trained in Business Development from which I grasped the concept of record keeping.

I did not keep records at all for my field and the egg business. The ISAL groups I belong to have records and they are kept by a secretary.

The ward facilitator trained us also on pricing and costing. Last year I received training on Start and Improve your Business and how to develop a business plan.

I am very grateful to ZWB, especially Rachel because she did not segregate me as I am of age now but she takes her time to teach us how to grow our businesses.
THE EDITOR

Welcome readers to the ZWB newsletter edition. I am pleased to share with you our first quarter newsletter. Here you will find articles on the different and interesting ways ZWB is empowering women through its mission and vision. In these past few months we have seen an increased focus and impact on social and economic rights of women.

Happy reading and we welcome your ideas.

Zimbabwe Women’s Bureau is a membership based organisation that was formed in 1978 with the thrust of empowering women socially and economically. ZWB operates in nationwide and has presence in 10 provinces of Zimbabwe. Below are major areas of focus for ZWB are:

- Agriculture & Food Security
- Entrepreneurship Development
- Research, Lobby & Advocacy
- Information Dissemination
- GBV
- HIV/AIDS
- SRHR Issues

ZWB Training Centre is open for hire to individuals, companies and organisations to host activities and events at affordable rates.

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Zimbabwe Women's Bureau (ZWB) Membership

Would you like to be part of Zimbabwe Women’s Bureau and enjoy lots of benefits like market linkages and access to financing? Join our membership.

ZWB Membership Categories:

- Individual members: $5 per year
- Group Members: $2 per member & $5 for group the whole year
- Institutions & community based organisations: $50 per year

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