

Welcome remarks by Ambassador G R Takawira
CUTS - Pre-CSW63 Regional Civil Society Strategy

Meeting

4 March 2019

PS Ministry of Gender

- Honourable Minister *Dr Auxillia Panga*
- Centre Coordinator for CUTS International,
Zambia Ms Chenai Mukumba
- Distinguished Participants

It is a great honour for me, on behalf of the Embassy of Zimbabwe, in Zambia, to have been invited to give brief remarks to the **Pre-CSW63 Regional Civil Society Strategy Meeting**.

bv
I am humbled for this opportunity to add my voice to yours, our regional champions in women's advocacy.

Allow me, therefore to congratulate you for pooling together your ideas and your experiences as women's organisations, under the theme "**Amplifying the voices of women in the informal sector on social protection**" for the Southern African region.

I am hopeful that you will make positive impact, as you represent us in the region, at the sixty-third session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in March 2019.

The four countries that you represent here are all members of the SADC..... and COMESA, in the case of Zimbabwe and Malawi. Both the SADC and COMESA have embraced industrialisation and continental free trade, as vehicles for economic growth and development. The theme for your group highlights two critical areas of i) **informal sector** and ii) **social protection**. It is my belief that both these two; informal sector and social protection will be re-shaped, fundamentally, by both industrialisation and CFTA.

I hope that in your various women's advocacy groups you have started questioning; How will be the informal sectors impacted by industrialisation and free trade.

Industrialisation and continent wide free trade will present new sets of opportunities and challenges in

both the formal and informal sectors. Specific to the informal sector ~~trade~~ one could consider cross border activities, which have contributed significantly to intra-regional trade among our four countries ~~represented~~ here; Zambia, Namibia, Malawi, Botswana and Zimbabwe.

What therefore should we begin to advocate for ensuring ~~the~~ economic and social protection of women?

As well one would question politically motivated disturbances, such as in Zimbabwe recently, which resulted in a number of small to medium scale enterprise units being vandalized and looted. How many of our women were affected?

As well what collective voice can the CSO's in the region can be amplified not just against political violence, but against sanctions? How do economic sanctions restrict economic space for women, thereby sentencing many of our young ladies, to selling their bodies for a living?

Climate change also has its own set of dynamics, which directly impact women, what do we do?

I am confident that in your meeting today, you will stretch each other's imaginations for a stronger and secure African woman in the informal sector.

I am also positive that you will come out of this meeting with a common and "amplified" voice for the women in this region. For indeed the problems faced by women in all our countries, are similar and thus, solutions should be amplified.

It is said that: ***A problem shared is a problem halved.*** Undoubtedly this was the ethos shared by the great leaders in our region, such as Dr Kenneth Kaunda when for instance, Zambia housed five liberation movements, all at the same time, to help free its sister neighbouring countries from the bondages of colonialism.

Thank you once again Ms Mukumba and CUTS International, Lusaka for inviting me