



THE COMMEMORATION OF THE 2022 INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY UNDER THE THEME- GENDER EQUALITY TODAY FOR A SUSTAINABLE TOMORROW

PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday 8th March, 2022

Every year on 8th March, women around the world celebrate this special day as an appreciation and recognition of their strength, resilience and endless potential. This year's theme **"Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow"** is particularly special in that it recognises the role and contributions of women and girls in driving an inclusive and sustainable development agenda in the face of evolving climate change risks, adaptation and mitigation responses. **This year's theme has come at a time when Zambia is grappling with the effects of climate change through loss of property and livelihoods leading to increased widespread poverty and vulnerability.**

Although climate change affects everyone, **women and girls have a unique relationship with the environment as it provides a source of livelihood, food security and income through agriculture, artisanal mining, fishing, as well as exploitation of forest and non-forest products.** Globally, women are increasingly being recognized as more vulnerable to climate change impacts than men, as they constitute the majority of the world's poor. In the case of Zambia, women constitute **over 60% of small-scale farmers at production level** therefore their vulnerability to impacts of climate change is more pronounced.

In the face of climate change, women are also at **heightened risk of health-related challenges due to compromised water and sanitation as water resources are heavily impacted during drought and flooding**. Furthermore, they bear the impact of environmental, economic and social shocks, as they are more dependent on natural resources to support their livelihoods at household and community level. Thus, when climate related risks are rampant, women's livelihoods are negatively impacted, marginalising them further and impeding their participation and decision-making abilities in the overall development agenda.

As the global climate crisis advances, **women and girls have a huge role to play in steering the discussion and providing a voice as equal players and change-makers in the development of adaptation and mitigation strategies**. Also, women are early adopters of new agricultural techniques and make key decisions about energy and waste management. Therefore, enhancing gender equality in addressing climate change risks is a critical pillar for building inclusive and gender-responsive policies for a sustainable future that recognises the unique challenges and opportunities women have in spearheading climate action. Climate action cannot be successful without the full inclusion of every section of society, especially those at the centre of climate related vulnerabilities.

Women, in particular, **rural women are active participants of sustainable natural resource management through community-based initiatives, putting them at the centre of climate action**. Recognizing this role is essential for fostering climate justice and a sustainable future for all.

As we celebrate women on this day, the Policy Monitoring and Research Centre underscores the need to **strengthen gender-mainstreaming strategies across all Government policies and programs in order to achieve a just and equitable society that responds to global problems and offers sustainable climate change solutions to build resilience for greater environmental and economic development**. In addition, there is need to step up action for the implementation of policies that prevent against discrimination, gender stereotypes, social norms that limit women's voice, gender-based violence, harassment, and the unequal distribution of care responsibilities in an effort to transform society into one that offers equal opportunities for all through financial inclusion and the promotion of women and girls in Green and Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) industries that are responsive to the current and future climate risks.

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