

# *Zimbabwe: Country WID Profile*

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## 1. General status of women and government policy on WID/gender

### 1-1. General conditions

Zimbabwe, a landlocked nation in Southern Africa, achieved independence in 1980, the most recent in the Sub-Saharan region. The government chose a socialist path endeavoring to meld with whites. On the other hand, the government has made an effort to expand education, public sanitation, medical care and water supply services that many blacks could not enjoy in colonial times by placing an emphasis on rectifying disparities between whites and blacks. The country is blessed with abundant mineral and agricultural resources. Consequently, among Sub-Saharan nations, it is the most productive in the manufacturing industry and social infrastructure, and is second only to South Africa.

However, Zimbabwe's economy was stagnant from the mid 1980s due to a decrease in demand in the manufacturing and industrial sectors, a surplus of imports, growing foreign debt and a shortage of government's revenue. At the beginning of the 1990s, the government transformed its socialist ideology to a free economy and decided to introduce an economic structural adjustment program. However, in addition to a drought that has been called the worst in this century, agricultural output fell 27.5% (Government of Zimbabwe, 1995). As a result, since the early 1990s, the livelihoods of people have worsened due to an increase in living expenses rising commodity prices and a reduction in government expenditure. Even at the present time, malnutrition has increased due to a sudden rise in food prices. To relieve weaker groups such as women, children and low-income households affected by the negative effects of structural adjustment, the government is providing subsidies for educational and medical work or vocational training through the Social Dimension of Adjustment of Program (SDA) and the Social Development Fund (SDF).

Following independence, remarkable improvements in the maternal mortality rate and infant mortality rate can be observed due to the rapid expansion of education and health programs, such that the enrollment rate of men and women in primary education is now equal. Furthermore, the adult literacy rate also has improved due to dissemination efforts. However, expenditures in the social sector were cut back in the structural adjustment program of the early 1990s, which has had a negative effect on women's lives. For example, lower female enrollment rates and higher maternal mortality are becoming more and more apparent. Serious drought since 1990 has worsened the situation.

More than 90% of women engage in production activities, including agriculture, so that women display an important role in the economy (SARDC, 1997). However, due to the structural adjustment program the number of civil servants were reduced and employment opportunities decreased.

Consequently, many women are forced to work in the informal sector. In such a manner, women are described as socially disadvantaged and are being negatively affected. Widows and separated women can barely earn enough to survive. Consequently, some enter the sex industry to supplement income earned in the informal sector.

## 1-2. Cultural and social background

Generally speaking, Zimbabwe is a patrilineal society. Therefore a woman takes her husband's name after marriage. Since men maintain families in such a manner, there is a strong preference toward boys. Thus, girls are more disadvantaged than boys when it comes to nutrition or educational opportunities.

Since revision of the Civil Code in 1982, women are permitted to inherit the property of husbands or fathers and to marry by one's own will without obtaining permission of her father or brother. Due to this, legal discrimination against women concerning marriage, divorce and the right of inheritance has been gradually disappearing. However, the fact remains that customary laws still strongly control people's lives, particularly in rural areas. As a matter of customary law, a woman is treated as a minor throughout her life and belongs to her husband. Since few women are aware of the rights guaranteed by the statute law, a dual system comprised of the statute law and customary law continues to exist.

## 1-3. Government policy in the fields of WID/gender

### ◆ General situation

Although Zimbabwe ratified the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1991, domestic laws have not improved in line with the Convention. In the Constitution, all types of inequality are prohibited. However, the Constitution does not mention gender-based inequality. Thus there are insufficient provisions to promote the improvement of women's conditions. In the National Program of Action for Women, the government prioritizes health, education, socioeconomic environment, economic empowerment and political empowerment. Therefore, the following 8 points are to be promoted: (i) intensification of an institutional framework to improve women's status by strengthening national machinery (ii) increase in the number of women in decision-making organs by introducing affirmative action, (iii) strengthening of female organizations, (iv) creation of an environment for the economic empowerment for women, (v)

development of gender indicators for the purpose of monitoring the negative effects of an economic structural adjustment program, (vi) development of rational technologies for the purpose of improvements in domestic fuels and environmental conservation closely related to women, (vii) promotion of financing for small-scale female business and (viii) increase in the number of female civil servants.

◆ National machinery

Name	1) Department on Gender Affairs, President's Office, 1997 2) Department of Women's Affairs, Ministry of National Affairs, Employment Creation and Cooperatives, 1993
Function	1) Policy-making, implementation, and monitoring/evaluation of gender matters 2) Policy-making, implementation, and coordination of the promotion of women's participation in all development processes.

Since the Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs was recognized as national machinery in 1981, the ministry has reviewed competent ministries such as the Ministry of National Affairs, the Ministry of Employment Creation and Cooperatives. As the national machinery, ministry titles with the word "women" took charge of women's issues and developed activities by incorporating women at the grass-roots level. However, the Women in Development Unit of the Ministry of National Affairs, Employment Creation and Cooperatives began to take on responsibilities, so the activity scale was greatly reduced. This is why personnel expenses were cut with the introduction of the structural adjustment program. After that, the said ministry and the Department of Women's Affairs were assigned a rank, and in 1997 the Department of Gender Affairs was established by the Minister of State and the President's Office as the organ responsible for dealing with gender issues after the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing.

In order for each governmental authority to incorporate consideration of gender into policies, since 1994 focal points have been set up in responsible departments of each governmental organ. In order to reflect the gender consideration in the formulation and implementation of policies, a secretary or higher ranking level should be posted. However, the fact is an assistant secretary or lower-level organ takes charge in some cases. The Women in Development Unit plans to achieve satisfactory results by setting a goal over a period of between 5 to 10 years and by taking steps to achieve the goal in a concentrated manner.

◆ Major WID/Gender-related Activities Undertaken by other Ministries

Ministry of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of Affirmative Action as concerns school attendance of girls (relaxing of strict entrance requirements for girls, etc.)</li> <li>• Provision of scholarships to girls from poor families that have excellent academic potential</li> <li>• Promotion of a curriculum that treats boys and girls equally</li> <li>• Elimination of textbook items that reinforce gender stereotypes</li> <li>• Establishment of a scholarship fund for girls aspiring to go on to higher education</li> </ul>
Ministry of National Affairs, Employment Creation and Cooperatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low-interest financing for women as a means of promoting small- and medium-sized enterprises</li> <li>• Provision of technical training for women in fields having high marketability</li> <li>• Provision of functional literacy education</li> <li>• Readjustment of the legal system so that women have improved access to production resources</li> <li>• Improvement of the male/female ratio at the decision-making level in both the public and private sectors to 50-50 by the year 2000.</li> </ul>

## 2-1. Education

- 1 ) Although school attendance rates for both boys and girls is 100% at the primary education level, disparities between boys and girls appear at the secondary school level and above.
- 2 ) Because of the decision to place a tuition on primary education as part of restructuring, it is feared that school attendance rates for girls (which had temporarily risen to nearly the same level as that of boys) will start to fall again.
- 3 ) There is a strong tendency among girls to avoid science and technology courses, and this is seen as an obstacle to women's participation in the labor market as well as to improvement of their social status.

### ◆ General situation

The adult literacy rate in 1995 was 79.1% for women and 90.4% for men, much higher than the average of Sub-Saharan nations (54.9%). Primary education lasts for a period of 7 years and begins at age 6. 5-year secondary education begins from 13 years of age. Since independence, the government has enthusiastically promoted expansion in educational services for African inhabitants by providing free primary education. As a result, total enrollment in primary education reached 100%. The total enrollment rates in secondary and higher education increased from 7% and 1% in 1992 to 47% and 6% in 1992 respectively (JICA, 1996). The total number of teachers in 1996 was 63,178 in primary education and 28,245 in secondary education. Of those, 28,101 and 10,215 teachers in primary and secondary education respectively were women. 18,901 trainees became teachers in 1997, 9449 of whom, nearly half, were women (SCBE, 1988).

### ◆ Influence of the structural adjustment program on educational policies

Since 1992 with the introduction of the structural adjustment program, primary school education became charged. Although the budget for education is regarded as the most important matter in complication of the budget, the actual allotment for education was reduced. Due to the structural adjustment program, except for cases where the monthly income of the parents is less than \$400, education fees were introduced (SCBE, 1998). As a result, 237,700 students dropped out in 1997 (SCBE, 1998).

Since the dropout rate among girls was higher than that of boys, the rate in the 7th grade increased from 20.93% in 1984 to 34.12% in 1993. The rates are higher both among girls and boys as the amount of education increases. For example, the rates for the 7th grade are higher than those rates

between the 2nd and 6th grades. In the 1st grade, the rate was 9.07% in 1984. However, it rose to 12.5% in 1993 (SCEE, 1998).

◆ Primary, secondary and higher education

In the process of promoting a policy to expand education after independence, the gender gap in education has been greatly reduced. As a result, the total enrollment rate of both boys and girls exceeded 100%, so the rates for students who entered the 1st grade and went on to the 7th grade were 74.5% in boys and 73.1% in girls. 251 million students attended primary education of which girls accounted for 49% (SCEE, 1998). Due to the influence of the structural adjustment program, a drop in the completion rate in primary school can be observed for both boys and girls. However, the drop in females was greater. Consequently, the gender gap began to appear again in primary education once males and females reached the same level (Table 2).

Since gender disparity began to appear in secondary education, the total enrollment rate for secondary education among boys is 49%; whereas, the rate of girls is 39% (UNESCO, 1998). Of students who entered the 1st year of secondary education, the rate of students who went on the 4th grade were 73.4% for boys but 63.5% for girls, so a gender gap exists (Government of Zimbabwe, 1995). In such a manner, as a background to the fact that a gender gap appears from secondary education, the passive attitudes of parents and society concerning girls' education, burden of domestic chores shouldered by girls, early marriage and pregnancy can be listed. Households with economic difficulty sending all children to school cannot help giving up schooling for girls. As a result, of people with no schooling experience at all, three fifths (3/5) are women (SCEE, 1998).

The rate of completion of natural science courses at university was 10% in 1990. This rate is slightly lower than 1991 at 11%. The female-to-male ratio of teachers at the University of Zimbabwe decreased over the past three years from 12% to 10% in 1993 (SCEE, 1998). When observing the enrollment rates of girls in higher education, the rate was 27% at the University of Zimbabwe; whereas the rate was only 15% at the National University of Science and Technology. Furthermore, at technical schools girls accounted for 27%. However, enrollment concentrated on subjects such as textiles, secretary, librarian, and information. Accordingly, very few girls who specialize in the fields of natural science and engineering such as architecture, civil engineering, computers, automobiles and machinery. As a result, women concentrate on a few job classifications deemed to be female occupations, such as nurses and librarians, and therefore, the number of technical jobs available is very limited.

◆ Informal education

After independence, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture implemented the Adult Literacy and Mass Education in 1983. Furthermore, the Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs in those days provided adult literacy education mainly in rural areas during which a total of 350,000 persons attended literacy classes until 1985. More than three fourths (3/4) were women (Government of Zimbabwe, 1995). Due to such efforts, the female illiteracy rate is reported to have improved to 45%. In 1983 the rate was 60% (MOH & CW, 1994). Since then, literacy classes have contributed to improving the literacy rate by incorporating functional literacy. However, financial shortages due to the recent structural adjustment program have hit the classroom, so preparation of teaching materials is being hindered. In addition, continuous participation by beneficiaries has become difficult due to economic destitution resulting from structural adjustment and drought.

◆ Vocational and technical training education

Girls only accounted for 1% of students who attended vocational training institutions. The reason why there are so few students is that class subjects at vocational training schools focus on natural science and engineering-related fields. Since few girls specialize in science and technology fields, female employment in technical fields is extremely low. Accordingly, this has become a cause for women being concentrated in low-paying job classifications on the labor market.

Chart 1 -- Major Education Indicators

Indicator	Total	Girls/Women	Boys/Men
Adult literacy rate, 1995 (%)	85.1	79.1	90.4
Primary school attendance rate, 1992 (%)	119	117	120
Secondary school attendance rate, 1992 (%)	47	41	53
Number of persons per 10,000 people that attend an institution of higher education, 1992	588	320	860
Percentage of national budget allotted to education (%)	19.4		

source : Report on Human Development 1996; UNESCO, 1995



Chart 2 – Primary School Completion Rate  
For Girls (%)

Years Enrolled	Girls	Boys	Total
1985-1991	78.3	78.8	78.6
1986-1992	73.1	74.5	73.8
1987-1993	70.4	72.8	71.9

source : Government of Zimbabwe, 1995

Chart 3 – Advancement to the Next School Level by Gender (%)

Level	Advancement Rate		
	Girls	Boys	Total
Percentage of students entering primary education that continue to the final year of primary education	73.1	74.5	73.8
Percentage of final-year primary education students that advance to secondary education	64.4	73.3	68.9
Percentage of students entering secondary education that continue to the 4 <sup>th</sup> year of secondary education	63.5	73.0	68.5
Percentage of 4 <sup>th</sup> -year secondary education students that advance to the 5 <sup>th</sup> year of secondary education	4.9	6.6	5.9

source : Government of Zimbabwe, 1995

Chart 4 – Percentage of Girls at Each Education Level (%)

Primary Education	Lower Secondary Education	Upper Secondary Education	Teachers' Training School	Technical School	University
50.2	40.0	29.0	46.0	27.0	26.0

source : Government of Zimbabwe, 1995

## 2-2. Health

- 1) Due to rising costs for medical examinations of expectant mothers, maternal mortality rates, which had been improving, have begun to worsen again.
- 2) The population growth rate remains high at 3.1%, and effective population control measures are required.
- 3) Approximately 20% of Zimbabwe's adult population is estimated to be infected with HIV. It is feared that HIV/AIDS is having a serious effect on the country's socio-economy.

### ◆ General situation

After independence in 1980, low-income groups were eligible to receive free medical care in the governmental hospitals, and since then, health and medical conditions, especially preventive medical services, have improved remarkably. Furthermore, the number of persons involved in medical care services has sharply increased. The dissemination of clean water accounted to approximately 80% in rural areas; whereas, it amounted to nearly 100% in urban areas (SARDC, 1997). However, medical institutions strongly tend to concentrate in urban centers, so a shortage of facilities has not yet been addressed in rural areas where the incidence rate of malaria is higher. In urban areas, more than 80% of persons have access to health and medical facilities within 4 km from their residences; whereas, the rate is only 50% in rural areas (Government Zimbabwe, 1995). Many problems concerning sanitation conditions still remain in rural areas.

Although health and medical-related indicators are better than the average of Sub-Saharan nations, except for caloric intake, the health budget was cut due to financial reform introduced in the structural adjustment program. Therefore, the burden of beneficiaries is being requested even in health services. As a result, the number of users of services has decreased. So it is feared that medical standards will drop. Furthermore, lower salaries than neighboring countries has created a large-scale outflow of doctors, which has contributed to lower quality in medical services. And recently, a rapid increase in the number of HIV cases has become a serious concern.

### ◆ Family planning

Although the aim of family planning was to establish appropriate distance between successive childbirths in order to improve maternal and child health, since 1985 the priority has shifted to programs that place an emphasis on control of an increase in the population by decreasing the size of families. In the process, contraceptive methods such as *デボプロベラ* and IUDs, which are more

effective than oral contraceptives, are now recommended. However, the total specific fertility rate still remains high at 3.1. Consequently, the dissemination of a family planning program has become an important issue. 48% of married women use some kinds of contraceptive appliances (SCEE, 1988). Since the rates of women are 33% for oral contraceptives, 6% for traditional methods, 3% for injections, 2% for female sterilization, 2% for condoms and 1% for other methods, 52% of women did not use contraceptive appliances (SCEE, 1998).

Although men have not been subject to family planning program up to the present, since mutual understanding between both men and women is indispensable in implementing a family planning program and reducing the desirable number of children, the government has begun a campaign of the male participation in family planning through the Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council. These measures are expected to contribute to the dissemination of family planning and a reduction in the total specific fertility rate.

#### ◆ Child and maternal health

The Maternal and Child Health Unit of the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare is taking the initiative in women's health issues and is implementing (i) a national program for children, (ii) control of epidemic diseases, (iii) health education, (iv) maternal health, (v) nutrition and (vi) rehabilitation.

The maternal mortality rate is 570 (per 100,000 live births), substantially lower than the average of Sub-Saharan nations (929 per 100,000 live births) (UNICEF, 1997). The primary cause of maternal mortality in rural areas is hemorrhaging; whereas, it is eclampsia (puerperal convulsions) in urban areas. Other causes include artificial abortion and septicemia. Due to an increase in the burden of beneficiaries attributed to the structural adjustment program, and a three-time increase in fees for maternal examinations in 1992 (SARDC, 1997), pregnant women who used to visit health clinics at the early stage of pregnancy are now waiting until the latter stage of pregnancy for late prenatal examinations. This trend is generating an increasing number of complications during pregnancy. Due to these causes, a deterioration in the maternal mortality rate was reported (Table 3). Nearly 40% of childbirths are performed by traditional midwives, and such midwives have an important role for women who do not have access to health and medical facilities or women who cannot afford health and medical care institutions. Taking into account such matters, since the mid-1980s the government has provided training for traditional birth attendants. Furthermore, the number of HIV-positive pregnant women has increased, from 8 to 12% in the mid-1990s (SCEE, 1998).

Since independence, the infant mortality rate improved to 50 (per 1,000 live births), a drop by half. Therefore, the rate is considerably lower than the average for Sub-Sahara countries (92 per 1,000 live births) (UNICEF, 1996). The malnutrition rate among children is the lowest of African nations (JICA, 1996). However, it is confirmed that the number of children administered vaccinations decreased between 1988 and 1994 due to an increase in the burden of beneficiaries resulting from the structural adjustment program. Accordingly, deterioration in infant and child health is anticipated.

#### ◆ AIDS

WHO issued a warning that there was a possibility that nearly 6 million people could be infected with HIV in Zimbabwe, a nation of 10 million (JICA, 1996). In 1995 there were 7,447 male and 5,835 female AIDS cases (SCEE, 1998). The infant mortality and under-five mortality rates, that were once improving, are now worsening due to an increase in AIDS cases. Consequently, the prevalence of AIDS is having a serious influence. It is reported that HIV-positive adults accounted to nearly 30% in some areas (SARDC, 1997). When observing infected persons by age-group, adult males between 30 to 39 years of age were the highest; whereas, adult females between 20 to 29 years of age were the highest female group (SARCE, 1997). This is why young women have sexual relationships with middle-aged men in order to making a living. The total female rate of infected persons was 42% (SARCE, 1997). Since women are generally entrusted to take care of sick family members, the prevalence of AIDS has increased the burden on women. In addition, a regional medical care program has also becomes a source for pressing hard upon women.

Chart 1 – Major Health Care Indicators

Population, 1995 (persons)	11,300,000	Vaccination rates for 1-year-olds (%)	
Population growth rate 1980 - 95 (%)	3.1	tuberculosis	95
Percentage of persons under 16 years of age 1995年 (%)	50	triple vaccine	80
		polio	80
Average life expectancy at birth, 1993 (women)	54	measles	74
		(men)	52
Crude birth rate, 1995	38	Maternal mortality rate (per 10,000 births)	570
Crude birth rate, 1995	13	Percentage of assisted births, 1990-96 (%)	69
Infant mortality rate, 1995 (per 1000 births)	50	Total fertility rate, 1995	4.8

Mortality rate for children under 5 years of age, 1995 (per 1000 births)	74	Extension of birth control, 1990-96 (%)	48
Percentage of babies born underweight, 1990-94 (%)	14	Percentage of national budget allotted to health care, 1989 (%)	7.6
Percentage of underweight babies suffering from (semi-critical) malnutrition (%)	16		

source : UNICEF, 1996, World Bank, 1995

Chart 2 - Major Causes of Maternal Mortality (%)

Rural Sector		Urban Sector	
loss of blood	24.8	eclampsia	26.2
abortion	15.2	abortion	23.0
septicemia	13.3	septicemia	14.8
eclampsia	4.8	loss of blood	9.8

source : MOH&CW, 1994

Chart 3 - Maternal Mortality Rate 1990-1995 (%)

Year	No. of births	No. of deaths	percentage
1990	211,472	175	82.75
1991	20,5990	256	124.28
1992	210,436	265	125.93
1993	221,567	332	149.84
1994	259,462	405	156.09
1995	282,425	363	128.53
1996	275,575	524	190.15

source : Zimbabwe Demographic Health survey 1994, CSO

Chart 4 - Vaccination Rates for Infants less than Two Years of Age by Gender (%)

	1988		1994	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Tuberculosis	97.7	97.8	96.1	95.3
Triple vaccine	93.2	91.5	87.5	82.6
Polio	92.1	92.4	86.6	84.1
Measles	93.6	91.9	86.3	86.3
All of the above	86.8	84.8	80.9	79.2

source : CSO

Chart 5 - HIV Patients by Age and Gender

Age	Women	Men	Gender unknown	Total	Percentage by age (%)
0~4	504	573	9	1,086	13.4
5~14	34	26	0	60	0.7
15~19	150	32	0	182	2.2
20~29	1,243	1,023	4	2,270	27.7
30~39	936	1,554	2	2,492	30.9
40~49	221	702	1	1,024	12.8
50~59	96	300	0	396	4.9
60~	25	118	1	144	1.8
unknown	192	302	32	526	6.4
Total	3,501	4,630	49	8,180	100.0

Source : SARDC, 1997

### 2-3. Agriculture, forestry and fisheries

- 1) Despite the fact that women make up the majority of rural populations, many of them who work in agriculture are involved in subsistence farming.
- 2) Reports indicate that the workload of women and children has been increasing due to the effect stagnating agricultural production has had on family economics.
- 3) Although women play an important role in agricultural production, such problems as limitations on access to land and financing for women mean that there are many obstacles to improvement of production.
- 4) Firewood has become more difficult to obtain because of deforestation. As a result, the workload of women, whose duties include firewood collection, are increasing.

#### ◆ General situation

The agricultural rate in overall GDP has declined in recent years and was 15% in 1994 (JICA, 1996). The leading agricultural sector includes various products such as tobacco, corn, cotton, wheat, coffee and tea. Agricultural products were sharply reduced due to drought in 1992, the worst in this century, which resulted in a food crisis. Drought also occurred in 1995. Therefore, a shortage of rain has a major affect on production.

#### ◆ Agriculture

Although the ratio of the agricultural sector in GDP has declined, two thirds (2/3) of the labor force is engaged in agriculture (UNDP, 1996). Therefore, women accounted for over half of the agricultural population. Since many women who engage in agriculture are self-sufficient, in general self-sufficient food production is shouldered by Zimbabwean women. The majority of women involved in the production of cash crops are temporary seasonal workers. While agricultural production is stagnant, farmers try to utilize land to supplement the decrease in agricultural income. However, the majority of households are having difficulty achieving sufficient production. Under such circumstances, an increase in the labor among women and children has been reported. Furthermore, in many cases, it is difficult for women to introduce new technologies that lead to a reduction in labor due to high expense.

Women often have decision-making powers over weeding and harvesting, which demonstrates that women do take on responsibilities during these operations. However, men overwhelmingly have decision-making rights in rearing beef cattle. In addition, incomes from sale of agricultural products

are generally managed by men.

#### ◆ Land tenure

In Zimbabwe, in order to address disparities in land ownership left over from colonial times, after independence, a land reform and immigration program was promoted. In land policies publicly announced in 1990, the Acquisition Act was promulgated in 1992 aimed at the ideal distribution of 162,000 households in an 8,300,000-hectare area of land. When deemed necessary for administrative reasons, the government declared the expropriation of the relevant land and then paid landowners local prices established by the Compensation Commission. The government established the Commission of Inquiry into Appropriate Agricultural Land Tenure Systems to address problems of land ownership. However, the Commission did not mention gender-based problems in their report. Concerning issues of women and land tenure, the Women and Land Lobby Group was created as a federation of several organizations and specialists. The group is lobbying for the 2nd phase of the land reform and redistribution program to be implemented this year. For instance, the group has appealed to set up a female rate of beneficiaries as target migrants.

#### ◆ Accessibility to small-scale loans

The number of women who are able to provide security for loans is limited. In addition, a married woman must obtain the signature of her husband, so women face many obstacles obtaining financing. According to the survey conducted in Bulawayo Province, the female rate of users financed by the public financing institutions accounted for 23% (MOH & CW, 1994). Furthermore, of financing provided by the government-owned Small Enterprise Development Corporation (SEDCO), women only accounted for 11.2% (Government of Zimbabwe, 1995). A rural financing program designed exclusively for rural women introduced in Mashonaland West province by the Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs is available; however, information concerning the number of users is unclear. Although the government is providing credit guarantees and special financing for training small-scale business, women are not very aware of such measures and so they are not being extensively utilized.

#### ◆ Forestry

The leading fuel in Zimbabwe is wood. However, in recent years there has been a reduction in forests, so it has become difficult to secure wood for fuel in some provinces and consequently the burden of labor has increased among women in charge of collecting wood. In addition, due the high cost and



limited utilization, ovens have not been disseminated due to their low calorific power. There are extensive areas of rain forest in Zimbabwe, which are gradually decreasing due to an expansion in agricultural land, infrastructure development (such as dams and roads) and overgrazing. Consequently, the government is endeavoring to protect forests by carrying out planting activities primarily for forestry corporations. The female rate of total forestry extension personnel is approximately 12%, so an increase in female personnel is expected considering the importance of women related to forest resources (SCEE, 1996).

Women accounted for nearly 30% of total extension personnel in forestry. Forestry corporations regard women to be necessary to disseminating activities. Accordingly, they are cooperating with the Women's Club Association, the Women's Bureau in Zimbabwe and women's action groups (SCEB, 1998).

Chart 1 – Persons Receiving Financing from the Small Enterprise Development Corporation ( SEDCO) by Gender

Year	Total Recipients	Women Recipients	Percentage of Women Recipients (%)
1985/86	78	5	6.4
1986/87	115	16	13.9
1987/88	184	17	9.2
1988/89	267	29	10.9
1989/90	188	21	11.2

source : Government of Zimbabwe, 1995

Chart 2 – Breakdown of Forestry Extension Personnel by Gender (1994)

Duty	Women	Men	Total	Percentage of Women (%)
Supervisor	1	2	3	33.3
Expert	2	4	6	33.3
Provincial extension worker	0	7	7	0.0
Extension worker	7	56	63	11.1
Total	10	69	79	12.7

source : Government of Zimbabwe, 1995

#### 2-4. Economic activities

- 1) Women account for only 17% of laborers in the formal sector
- 2) Due to the restructuring program, which is reducing the number of public servants, etc., there are fewer employment opportunities in general. It will be difficult to break this trend as women are not considered to be important wage earners.
- 3) Women account for 71% of small business owners, however most of these businesses show very little profit.

##### ◆ General situation

Although the real GDP growth rates has continued to increase 3.0% annually over the past decade since dependency in 1980, in spite of transition as a result of successive droughts (JICA, 1996), at the beginning of the 1990s, negative growth was reported due to the influence of severe drought in 1992 and a slump of the manufacturing industry. However, since 1992, the growth rate began to recover supported by favorable weather and good conditions in mining production. Under the policies for the industrialization of import substitution promoted in the late 1990s, the industrial and manufacturing sectors have grown. As a result, Zimbabwe has become one of the most developed countries in Sub-Sahara. The industrial and manufacturing sectors accounted for 36% (1994) in GEP (JICA, 1996).

Although leading fields in the manufacturing sector are metals, foods, chemical and petroleum products, the textile and food industries are facing a severe crisis due to foreign competition resulted from free trade and a slump in domestic markets attributed to bad business conditions and inflation. The leading sources of foreign currency are mining production, such as gold and nickel. Since 1994, the government acknowledged "Zimbabweization" of the economy to be priority by increasing black capital ownership. An increase in employment in the formal sector is consistently below an increase in the population growth. In addition, since absolute employment is also decreasing, employment conditions remain severe.

##### ◆ Participation in labor

Since 68% of the labor force population is engaged in agriculture, employees in the industrial and manufacturing sectors only accounted to 8% (UNDP, 1996). The female rate of the adult labor population was 45%; however, the majority is involved in the informal sector. When observing the constitution of labor force by gender, self-employed women accounted for 35%, exceeding the rate of

wage earners or non-paid family employees; whereas, male wage earners amounted to 56%. In Zimbabwe, although equal labor and wages and tie off for child bearing are recognized, the number of people who enjoy such provisions is limited to women engaged in the formal sector, such as civil servants in urban areas.

#### ◆ Employed labor

After independence, due to promotion of affirmative action (positive steps to rectify discrimination against women by imposing duties on enterprises to employ women at a certain ratio), an initiative of the Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs, the female workforce has achieved an average annual growth rate 2% higher than that of males (1.62%) (Government of Zimbabwe, 1995), the actual number of women is still much lower than men. Women only accounted for 17% of workers in the formal sector (SARDC, 1997). The majority of job classifications employing women are unskilled or semi-skilled labor such as clerical work, nurses or teachers. Furthermore, the rate of temporarily employment or part-time workers that are not subject to protection of the Labor Code stipulating maternal leave or working conditions is also high. Although the unemployment rate in Zimbabwe was 37.2% in 1990, the rate increased to 44% in 1993 (JICA, 1996). Due to the influence of the structural adjustment program, the number of governmental agencies and employment of civil servants is being reduced. This has had a negative effect on overall employment. However, women are not regarded to be income earners and are therefore more likely to be affected by a reduction in personnel. According to a survey implemented by USAID, the employment of women in the formal sector increased favorably to nearly 230,000 persons. However, it dropped to 20,600 persons in 1992 (SARDC, 1997).

Causes for the hindrance of female participation in labor include low female enrollment rate at vocational schools and a high dropout rate from senior high schools. Furthermore, few women study in technical fields such as engineering and computers, so few go on to such fields.

#### ◆ Informal sector

After independence, employment growth fell significantly, and persons engaged in the informal sector increased. Consequently, it is estimated that this sector absorbed 27% of the labor force population. Furthermore, the number of women involved in the informal sector has increased due to bad business conditions and the influence of a reduction in personnel in recent years. There are nearly 800,000 micro enterprises in Zimbabwe, with an estimated 1.2 million workers (Government of Zimbabwe, 1995). However, the female rate of managers in such enterprises increased from 67% in 1991 to 71%

in 1993 (SARDC, 1997). In addition, women considering expanding their business scale have appeared. However, they need to obtain knowledge on business management. Furthermore, since opportunities for women for the provision of business funds are more limited than those of men, an expansion in business scale is not easy. Although incomes obtained by women in the informal sector are indispensable to family households, women tend to concentrate on occupations of low profitability, such as crochet work, sewing, retailing and beauty saloons. The government is considering employment creation and industrial promotion by supporting micro enterprises, and it plans to provide aid through the Social Development Fund (SDF) or the Zimbabwe Development Bank.

In order to receive payment of medical or educational expenses through the Social Dimensions Adjustment Program (SDA), established for the purpose redressing people negatively affected by the structural adjustment program, a certificate of wages is necessary. Therefore, women engaged in the informal sector cannot utilize such a system.

◆ Vocational training

The Zimbabwe Women Finance Trust is providing opportunities for training on financial management for new businesswomen. This NGO organization aims at improving women's abilities through financing and management training. The majority of loans offered are for women of small-scale businesses and the one-time financing amount is between \$4 and \$20,000 US. In order to improve the repayment rate, loans are provided to individuals through a group system. If an individual does not repay the loan, the group is jointly responsible (SCEE, 1998). The Small Enterprises Development Corporation evaluates business or establishes management courses for women who receive financing.

Chart 1 – Labor Indicators (%)

Percentage of women in the national adult workforce, 1990	45	
Share of wages earned, 1993	Women: 37.5	Men: 62.5
Employment by industry 1990	agriculture: 68% manufacturing: 8% service: 24	

source : Human Development Report, 1996