

## INTERNATIONAL

## OUT OF THE KITCHEN. INTO POWER

## Zimbabwean women staking claim

By Grace Kwinjeh  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

HARARE, Zimbabwe - Increasingly, Zimbabwean women are moving out of the kitchen and into parliament, board rooms and other realms where power resides, sources report.

Some say the surge isn't enough.

The recently launched Women in Politics and Decision Making project, sponsored by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), is partly responsible for the upswing in women power-brokers.

"We want to work with women from all levels of society and to also assist those who are already in power so that they articulate for women's concerns in parliament and push for laws," said Evelyn Zinanga, UNDP's national program officer for women.

This week, UNDP announced a \$36 million initiative to promote good governance in developing countries and to facilitate women's participation in governance at all levels.

The project will include research, training and awareness raising, according to Dumisani Mashigaidze, the coordinator of the Women in Politics and Decision Making Project in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwean women, who comprise half of the population of more than 11 million, have been informal leaders in many institutions for years, yet they remained largely invisible in formal and higher echelons of decision-making in society.

Women's gains in the national assembly have been attributed to the work by women's

rights organizations, which have called for an affirmative action policy from the government and the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party.

President Robert Mugabe has told journalists that a certain "quota" for jobs in government had been set aside for women.

"Women have been marginalized and we agreed that we should give them a quota for jobs. We have not come up with a percentage in the Central Committee (of the ruling party), but I want them to be given 25 percent," Mugabe said after officiating the swearing in of five women politicians to ministerial positions in a recent Cabinet reshuffle.

The first target for the UNDP-sponsored Women in Politics project is the Rural District Council elections to be held in October.

Field workers have already started to find out from communities in the 57 rural districts why few women are in the rural councils and other decision-making posts; why women do not vote for other women; what support mechanisms need to be in place and what information is needed.

Shuvai Mahofa, a parliamentarian and the recently-appointed deputy minister for National Affairs, Employment Creation and Cooperatives, said that challenging men's views of who should lead is a major struggle.

"If we sit back and think these men will give us power on a plate, then we are wrong. They will not," said Olivia Muchena, a member of parliament and Zimbabwe's deputy minister of Agriculture. "Look at our position 16 years after independence. We are still invisible."

## Ambassador: Africa, answer own problems

By Tansa Musa  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

YAOUNDE, Cameroon—Africa continues to look elsewhere for solutions to its problems, but the answers are right on its doorstep, said a group of experts who gathered recently in Cameroon to discuss the refugee crisis gripping the continent.

"The people of Africa must find their own solutions," said Carlton Karpeh, Liberia's ambassador to Cameroon. "But we cannot find any solutions if we do not summon the courage to admit the real cause of the problem."

Africa's refugee crisis stems from post-colonial power struggles. When countries became independent, new governments sparked civil unrest whenever their power was threatened, Karpeh said.

Not only do African leaders create the problems, they then turn to the international community to take care of and feed their own people when their lives are disrupted, Karpeh said.

Echoing Karpeh's sentiments, Gervais Mendo Ze, director general of Cameroon Radio and Television, said African leaders have failed to grasp the reality of the changing times and to deal with their own self-imposed problems.

Solomon Nfor Gwei, chair of the National Commission for Human Rights and

Freedom in Cameroon, said the absence of democracy in most African countries and a lack of respect for human rights are reasons for the continent's slate of armed conflicts.

Ahmed Rhazaoui, the United Nations Development Program resident representative in Cameroon, said that analysts must not lose sight of

Africa's poverty problem.

Figures from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees show that more than 20 million Africans have been forcibly displaced from their homes. Five million have fled to other countries, and approximately 16 million are internally displaced within their own countries.

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS SHORTS

## UN WANTS TO MAINTAIN 2,000-PLUS TROOPS ON ANGOLA

UNITED NATIONS, New York (PANA) - UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has recommended a postponement of the current withdrawal of UN troops from Angola in view of the prevailing situation in the country. In a report to the security council he said that he planned to retain about 2,650 military personnel in the country until the end of October. The scheduled withdrawal of the military units is part of the transformation of the UN Angolan Verification Mission (UNAVEM) to the UN Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA). Annan explained that his action was necessitated by the "prevailing precarious situation" in Angola, where a peace process aimed at ending the country's decades old civil war has been unraveling. The security council has blamed the former rebel group, Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), for the teetering peace process, called the Lusaka Protocol. UNITA has delayed implementing its obligations under the protocol, including the demilitarization of its units and the restoration of state administration throughout the country. Annan expressed confidence that the council would "take all necessary steps."

## ZIMBABWE URGES SADC TO STRIVE FOR PEACE

HARARE, Zimbabwe (PANA) - Zimbabwe is urging Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries to strive for peace and stability, in order to achieve economic prosperity. The country's foreign minister, Stan Mudenge, told a one-day meeting of the SADC's organ on politics, defense and security in Harare, that this could only be achieved if the 12 nations in the grouping remained united. "The (SADC organ's) objectives are vital for the well-being of our people and to ensure the flourishing of peace, security and stability in our region and the conditions for economic development among our countries and peoples," he said. The operation of the SADC organ and adoption of a protocol on peace, security and conflict resolution, he said, were part of the process to deepen the bonds of brotherhood and enhance the sense of togetherness in Southern Africa. "It has been said by the Europeans that the formation of the European Union has made inter-state war unthinkable in Western Europe because the enmeshment of their economies and other interests would make it a losing proposition for all," Mudenge said. "That is what we too must aim at in this region."

## TRADE BETWEEN ZIMBABWE, KOREA GROWING FAST

HARARE, Zimbabwe (PANA) - Trade between Zimbabwe and South Korea this year is expected to exceed 495 million zimdollars (\$45 million U.S.) compared to last year's 330 million zimdollars (\$30 million U.S.), South Korean Ambassador to Zimbabwe Hwang Kyu-Jung said. "I am confident that Korean investment in Zimbabwe will grow steadily in the near future as the friendly relations between our two countries continue to be developed and strengthened," Hwang said at celebrations to mark South Korea's national day in Harare. Zimbabwean Foreign Minister Stan Mudenge said that Zimbabwe wanted more South Korean companies to invest in the manufacturing sector, particularly in electronics, textiles and telecommunications. In a speech read on his behalf, Mudenge said Seoul had given Zimbabwe manpower training in areas of trade promotion, exploitation of mineral resources and agriculture development. "In addition, the Korean government has offered, through the Economic Development Cooperation Fund, to assist Zimbabwe's industrial and economic development through extension of soft loans in the spirit of south-south cooperation," he said.

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