



UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE

## STATEMENT FROM PROFESSOR DR. PAUL MAPFUMO, THE VICE CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE

# International Women's Day

THEME: GIVE TO GAIN



**Professor dr. Paul Mapfumo**

**Question:** *To build a truly equitable and sustainably developed world, what mentorship do women need and what knowledge are you prepared to give to gain it?*

As we commemorate the International Women's Day 2026, the University of Zimbabwe joins the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) network in celebrating the invaluable contributions, leadership, and resilience of women within our institutions, across Africa, and beyond. Our mission to pursue excellence in the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge for the benefit of society is deeply intertwined with the empowerment of women, a priority shared across RUFORUM universities.

The theme "Give to Gain" resonates strongly with RUFORUM's values of collaboration, mentorship, and inclusive growth. To build a truly equitable and sustainably developed continent, women need

mentorship that is intentional, structured, inclusive, and transformative. At the University of Zimbabwe, we have made significant strides in this regard through our Women-in-Leadership programmes, gender-sensitive policies, and targeted initiatives that align with RUFORUM's vision of nurturing women leaders in academia, research, and entrepreneurship.

Our Faculties, including Social and Behavioural Sciences, Law, Business Management Sciences and Economics and Science, have been at the forefront of promoting women's empowerment, addressing issues affecting women in Zimbabwe and the region through research and advocacy. We have also established scholarships and mentorship programmes to support women in STEM fields, where they remain under-represented, thereby contributing to RUFORUM's continental agenda of advancing science and innovation.

At the University of Zimbabwe, we recognise and acknowledge that having women leaders is part of nation-building, their strengths, focus and resilience remains unparalleled if we want to effectively accelerate industrialisation, strengthen governance, enhance research excellence, and secure sustainable prosperity for Africa. They are proactive in nature, do not hesitate to seek opportunities, and are at the forefront in embracing challenges. The University of Zimbabwe, remains committed to providing platforms for women to develop their skills and leadership capabilities. As Vice Chancellor, I stand ready to share knowledge and experience in support of women leaders across RUFORUM institutions and the community at large, amplifying their voices and fostering excellence.

The University of Zimbabwe joins RUFORUM to nurture a culture of mentorship, collaboration, and mutual support, thus ensuring that women thrive, contribute meaningfully, and drive inclusive and sustainable development across Africa.

## Happy Women's Day!!

*University of Zimbabwe: Educating to Change Lives*

uzcommunications@admin.uz.ac.zw University of Zimbabwe - uofzfb University of Zimbabwe Official www.uz.ac.zw

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