*Shinga Mushandi Shinga!! Amandla!! Viva Women of Africa and Middle East Viva!!*

Happy International Women’s Day!!

Solidarity greetings to you all comrades, in the trade union movements.

I am Fozert Mugabe, the Deputy General Secretary of ZCATWU in Zimbabwe and the BWI Regional Women Committee Chairperson for Africa and the Middle East Region.

Today, we celebrate International Women’s Day, a global day set aside to celebrate the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. However, this year’s commemoration is centered on remembering women who have been affected by gender-based violence.

Gender equality is not a personal and political preference, but it is a fundamental human right obligation.

While there is evidence to show that gender-based violence plagues both women and men, there is overwhelming evidence to show that women bear the shorter end of the stick as it relates to the existing gender norms, poverty gender inequalities in the world of work.. Gender-based violence has a lasting effect on its victims and can stunt their psychological, emotional, and physical health and development.

BWI has recognized this fact and has, throughout the years, adopted policies, put in place procedures, and worked tirelessly to raise awareness of the plight of abused women in Africa and the Middle East. This year, we celebrate International Women’s Day by encouraging all affiliates and their countries to ratify the International Labour Organization’s Violence and Harassment Convention (known as C190). It is very disturbing to note that many countries in our region have not yet ratified this very important convention, which we hope will reduce and stop gender-based violence.

Today, we encourage our affiliates to continue raising their voices and continue advocating for women’s rights to security, dignity, and the right not to be physically, mentally, or emotionally harmed. We emphasize the importance and value of women workers and demand governments to recognize this and act hastily to eradicate gender-based violence at work. We remember the victims and vow to keep fighting until every country ratifies C190 and until we achieve a gender-equal future!

I wish you a successful women’s day.

Thank you.