



In partnership with



POLICY BRIEF:

CLIMATE JUSTICE:

**ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS
AND TRANSFORMATIVE
ACTION**



INTRODUCTION

Green Governance Zimbabwe Trust is a youth-based Civil Society Organisation working in Zimbabwe to promote sustainable environmental management. It serves as a hub for information, providing an outlet and platform for debate and discussion for communities, policymakers, and other interested stakeholders on environmental issues. To further its environmental protection agenda, GGZ is implementing a Climate Justice Project that seeks to support and unite participatory local climate movements driven by women, youths, and indigenous peoples. This includes the development of responsive, broad-based, informative, and mixed media communications products to support campaigns and target urban, semi-urban, and rural communities to inspire climate action in both mining-impacted communities and among mining powerbrokers and economic elites to Inform Policy and Advocacy on Climate Change Action in Zimbabwe. The purpose of this policy brief Climate Justice: Environmental Rights and Transformative Climate Action is to raise awareness and inform advocacy on key issues relating to environmental rights and transformative climate action in Zimbabwe. Target stakeholders include National Assembly, policymakers, journalists, employers, and Climate Change Activists



WHY ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS AND TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION IN ZIMBABWE

Based on wider stakeholder consultation, there are several reasons why there is need for environmental rights and transformative action in Zimbabwe:

Biodiversity and Ecosystem Conservation: Zimbabwe is home to diverse ecosystems, including national parks, forests, wetlands, and savannas, which harbour unique and endangered species. Protecting these ecosystems and preserving biodiversity is crucial for maintaining ecological balance, supporting local livelihoods, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of natural resources.

Climate Change Impacts: Zimbabwe, like many other countries, is experiencing the impacts of climate change, including increased frequency and intensity of droughts, erratic rainfall patterns, and rising temperatures. These changes have significant implications for agriculture, water resources, food security, and human health. Environmental rights and transformative action are essential for building resilience to climate change, mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, and adapting to the changing climate.

Land and Resource Management: Zimbabwe faces challenges related to land degradation, deforestation, unsustainable agricultural practices, and illegal resource extraction including mining activities. Environmental rights and transformative action can help promote sustainable land and resource management practices, ensuring the responsible use of natural resources and safeguarding the rights of local communities who depend on these resources for their livelihoods.

Pollution and Waste Management: Industrial activities, mining operations, and improper waste disposal contribute to environmental pollution in Zimbabwe. Air pollution, water contamination, and improper waste management pose risks to human health and ecosystems. Environmental rights and transformative action are needed to address pollution issues, strengthen environmental regulations, and promote sustainable practices in industries and waste management systems.

Socioeconomic Development: Environmental sustainability is closely linked to socioeconomic development. Integrating environmental considerations into development planning can lead to more sustainable and inclusive growth. Transformative action that promotes sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, eco-tourism, and green jobs can create employment opportunities, reduce poverty, and improve the overall well-being of the population.

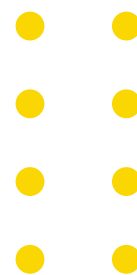
Indigenous Rights and Traditional Knowledge: Zimbabwe has a rich cultural heritage, including indigenous communities with deep knowledge and practices related to sustainable resource management. Recognizing and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and integrating their traditional knowledge into environmental decision-making processes is crucial for preserving biodiversity, maintaining ecosystem services, and promoting social equity.

International Commitments: Zimbabwe is a signatory to various international environmental agreements, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the Paris Agreement. Upholding environmental rights and taking transformative action is essential to fulfilling these international commitments and collaborating with the global community in addressing environmental challenges.

In summary, environmental rights and transformative action in Zimbabwe are crucial for biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation and mitigation, sustainable land and resource management, pollution control, socioeconomic development, recognition of indigenous rights, and fulfilling international commitments. These efforts are essential for ensuring a sustainable and prosperous future for the country and its people.



CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS: A GLOBAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL PERSPECTIVE



There are a plethora of causes leading to climate change and environmental problems resulting from massive land degradation subsequent from mining activities, deforestation in search for fossil fuel and energy solutions such as charcoal to power industrial activities, as well as the need for agronomic processes (e.g., curing tobacco in Zimbabwe), including the need to export timber as an economic activity and the human need for land expansion (human settlement). The Forestry Commission of Zimbabwe estimates that about 90% of tobacco producers depend on fuelwood for curing, contributing to 18% deforestation in Zimbabwe. Additionally, between 1990 and 2010, Zimbabwe lost almost 20% of its forest cover, 300,000ha of forest are being disrupted through agricultural activities, timber or fuelwood (EMA, 2023). The urban sprawl into wetlands has to a greater extent affected hydrological dynamics of reservoirs, thus worsening the impact of climate change. This has exacerbated the impacts of climate change leading to the loss of biodiversity, increased veld fires, soil erosion, water and air pollution due to among other factors high emissions of hydrocarbons from industrial plants and cars resulting from the lack of proper regulation to limit the amount of carbon emissions from the fuel used. Other climate change impacts have resulted in the shift in agroecological regions, increasing flooding, rising of temperature and prolonged droughts that have led to the loss of wildlife, crops and livestock (community livelihoods).

Zimbabwe like many other agriculturally based countries has been most affected as the country has in the past 20 years grappled with complex agricultural stagnation and food insecurity since rainfed agricultural value chains which contribute 35% to the formal and informal economy have been a direct result of climate change that has stemmed in induced droughts and floods from cyclones and hurricanes, consequential in macroeconomic instability. According to the Women's Forum(2022), the biggest challenge to climate change is that it has a disproportionate impact on women, girls and youth, amplifying existing gender inequalities and posing unique threats to their livelihoods, health, and safety due to the following rights issues; i) Women depend more on natural resources but have less access to them ii) In Zimbabwe and other developing countries, women bear a disproportionate responsibility for securing food, water, and fuel iii) Agriculture is the most important employment sector for women in low- and lower-middle-income countries, and iv) Drought and flood events puts more pressure on women and youth to secure income and resources for their families often resulting in increase in girls' school dropouts and abuse (e.g., sexual, labour, emotional). Climate change is a threat multiplier as it escalates social, political, and economic tensions in fragile countries such as Zimbabwe with women, girls and youth facing increased vulnerabilities to all forms of gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence, human trafficking, child marriage, and other forms of violence (UN Women, 2023). Despite the efforts in reducing climate change and the succeeding environmental impacts, various challenges have been noted that have stalled the efforts and these include poor coordination of transboundary water resources and river basins and upland catchments in an effort to increase the volume and sustainability of flow rates for such rivers as the Zambezi, Save and Limpopo rivers which are important water sources for hydropower generation, irrigation as well as fish farming. Challenges at the global level have resulted in limited attention on climate justice matters by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Group of Seven (G7) Countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, as well as the European Union) made up rich countries resulting in their non commitment to fund losses and damages affecting the least developed countries of the world.





EFFECTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS RESULTING FROM ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION/PROBLEMS.

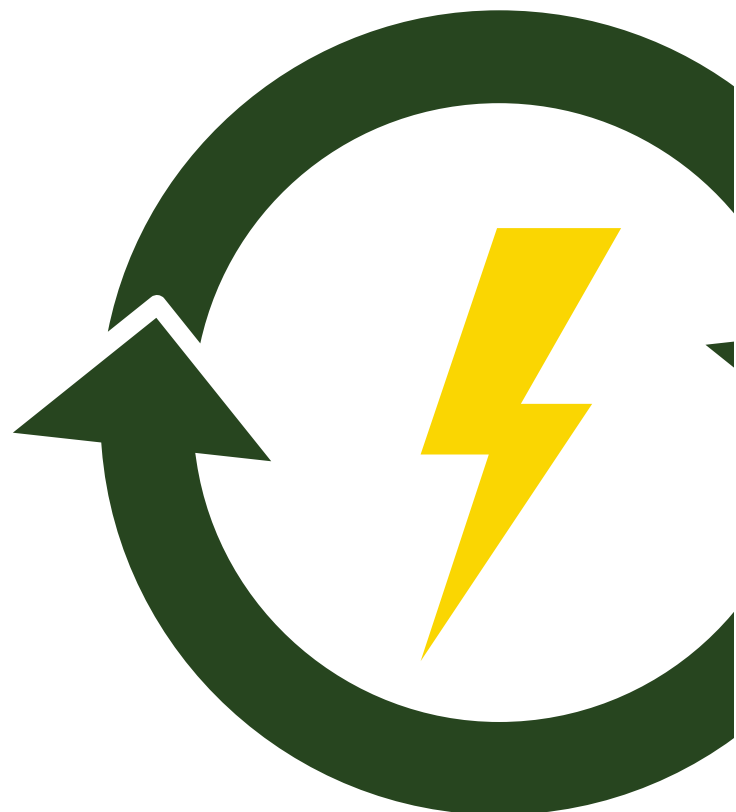
Climate Change has consequential effects to human rights because of its direct bearing on rights to life, quality health, food security, water and sanitation:

Rights to life – Food and Nutrition Security is the key to guaranteeing the right to life of the African population and take agriculture as the primary source of livelihood. Climate change driven destabilization of agriculture and food security undermines “Right to Life” of the African population in agriculture directly and indirectly.

Health – high temperatures have continued to cause a health challenge to the aged population and those with preexisting conditions. Further to this, floods are ravaging populations and swelling diseases which ratchets up mortalities, morbidities as well as public health care expenditures triggering inflation because of limited fiscal space to cope with emergencies.

Food – For 70% of the population directly relying on dryland farming for food and livelihood security, drought, floods, spreading of debilitating livestock diseases due to climate change directly undermines food supplies of family, trigger rising domestic food prices and increase dependency on dehumanizing experience of getting registered and being made to queue for food aid packages for long hours. Food insecurity widen the risk of women and girls being forced to trade sex for food from government and food aid organizations. This has led to undignified processes and procedures shaming the poor and the hungry.

Water and sanitation – Climate change induced floods and droughts have both caused damages to urban water supply and sanitation systems. Zimbabwe’s urban water supply system has become broken and inadequate because of reduced flows into reservoirs, and reduced flows have resulted in erratic hydropower supply essential for optimal pumping of water and flow of sanitation system. According to USAID (2020), if medium or high population growth projections are realized, the reduction in water availability means that by 2080 Zimbabwe could fall into the United Nations absolute water scarcity category. Climate change has increased the cost of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) goal number 6, 14 and 15 on “water security and sanitation” for Zimbabwe’ Rural communities that are increasingly facing seasonal water shortages forcing them to walk long distances to fetch water at shallow wells.



INSTITUTIONALISATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS AT LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS IN ZIMBABWE

Name of Institution	Function
Environmental Management Agency (EMA)	EMA is the primary environmental legislation in Zimbabwe, replaced the Natural Resources Act. The Act provides for the right to an environment that is not harmful to health, access to environmental information as well as environmental protection through implementation of the environment policy.
Ministry of Environment Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry,	To manage, conserve and promote the sustainable use of natural resources and facilitate delivery of high-quality tourism products that to the economic development of Zimbabwe.
Parks and Wildlife	Through the Parks and Wildlife Act of 1975, the Parks and Wildlife Management facilitate protection, management, and administration of the wildlife of Zimbabwe through a network of protected areas, conservancies, and trans-frontier parks to curb national and international wildlife crime, promote tourism and preserve the shared heritage.
Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Resettlement	Responsible for formulating and overseeing different laws to do with farmland allocation and management and utilization laws, water rights and catchment management and wetland preservations, general agricultural and livestock production and climate-smart adaptation and mitigation through agriculture and rural resettlement.
Rural District Councils	Through the RDC Act (29:13), which is the main act for rural local governments, are responsible for the improvement of service delivery in various communities They are supposed to provides low-cost, efficient services to communities, to promote public participation in government as a means of enabling and encouraging people to exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens, and to regulate the behaviour of individuals and organizations in areas under their jurisdiction.
Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP)	To maintain law and order, protect and secure the lives and property of the people and to institute dynamic policing practices that engender effective prevention, investigation and detection of crime.
Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA)	ZINWA falls under the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Resettlement. Its authority is derived from the ZINWA Chapter 20:24, with a role to deliver quality water sustainably to all communities including making strategic water infrastructure for human and economic development.
Forestry Commission	The Forestry Commission was created in 1954 through the Forest Act (Cap 19:05) and the Communal Land Forest Produce Act (Cap 19:04) for regulating forest utilization in Zimbabwe through awareness, enforcement of legislation, trainings, research
Traditional Leaders	Traditional leaders play a pivotal role in the allocation and management of communal land for residential, forestry, waterways, agricultural, and grazing purposes in the village under their jurisdiction. Generally, the Traditional Leaders Act requires traditional leaders to control over-cultivation, overgrazing, and the indiscriminate destruction of flora and fauna to promote environmental conservation measures
Local Committees at ward and district level	They are responsible for making representations and recommendations on local government issues in their respective districts/wards, communicating between the government actors and the community through the ward level community representatives (traditional, formal, informal) and holding the government and local authorities accountable for the fulfilment of their duties
Mines and Mineral Act	The Mines and Mineral Act is the principal act (Chapter 21:05) that regulates the mining industry in Zimbabwe. It provides for the acquisition of mining rights, except where otherwise provided under any title deed to land granted prior to 1961. However, there have been calls for a new Mines and Mining Act to be enacted to end chaos in the mining sector which include environmental rights threats.

TRANSFORMATIVE CLIMATE ACTION, POLICY SUPPORT AND REMEDIAL ACTION

The policy brief amplifies some remedial action towards mitigation and adaptation that should be implemented to circumvent the effects of climate change and negative environmental impacts both at the global and national level. The government is encouraged to strategically harness the use of renewable energy sources at domestic and industrial level through the adoption of wind, solar, hydroelectric power. In order to achieve this there is need to invest in research towards the alternative sources of renewable energy. Resulting from the consequences of extensive agriculture and land expansion for habitation, forest management through afforestation and reforestation initiatives are a panacea towards reducing the impacts of carbon emissions. In addition, the adoption of climate friendly agricultural practices such as agroecological as well as the use of natural fertilisers and chemical as pesticides remains imperative. In addition, it is important to raise awareness and educate communities on the impact of climate justice and the need to transition towards the use of renewable energy. There is need to include the climate change agenda in school curricula for school and university going children while community training and media campaigns continue in communities.

It should be noted that at the global level, governments both from the north and the south are making efforts to fund climate change adaptation and mitigation programmes especially targeted at least developed countries that are still using fossil fuel for energy through initiatives such as the Conference of Parties (COP). The Conference of Parties (COP) plays a crucial role in advancing environmental rights and transformative action through international cooperation and decision-making where representatives from participating countries come together to discuss and negotiate solutions to global environmental challenges. The role of COP in environmental rights and transformative action can be understood in the context of major environmental conventions such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Despite Zimbabwe's poor resourcing, it has made positive strides to mitigate and adapt to climate change. At the policy influencing level, the government has put in place the Zimbabwe's National Climate Change Response Strategy, National Agriculture Investment Plan, (NAP) National Adaptation Plan, National Agricultural Policy Framework, (NAPF), the National Determined Contributions (NDC) and the National Climate Change Response Strategy (NCCRS). The policies are important when fully comprehended by communities and policy makers that adaptation measures such as smart agriculture – Pfumvudza, and irrigation farming are indeed necessary to cope with climate shocks. The Pfumvudza concept has been largely recognised as a climate-proofing agricultural concept in Zimbabwe which emphasises on the use of conservation farming techniques to guarantee food self-sufficiency and also ensure environmental preservation (ZimVac, 2022). However, both Pfumvudza and irrigation initiatives are not sufficient to insulate the country against increasing frequency of El Nino droughts and La Nina flood disasters that are costing the country billions of dollars in lost income, property destruction and loss of life and hence the need to take a holistic approach to address environmental rights. For example, between 1991 and 2016, Zimbabwe experienced six moderate-to-severe droughts, with four linked to El Niño events which affected agricultural production and productivity for dryland crops (USAID, 2020).

Carbon Credit Trading (CCT) is a lived reality and the Government of Zimbabwe through Ministry of Environment Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry, is putting in place legislation to institutionalize the marketing of carbon credits based on protected forests, national parks and game reserves, nature conservancies and permaculture plantations. However, the backdrop has been the corruption associated with some private domestic and international carbon credit entrepreneurs who are benefitting from all the proceeds from global selling of carbon credit on communal forests and national parks without sharing equitably with communities. For example, the Mongabay (2021) study by researchers from 31 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America found that most of the tropical forested countries looking to benefit from carbon markets still need to define community carbon rights. It also found that if carbon markets are implemented without meaningful inclusion of affected communities, they could worsen risks, including increasing land grabs and efforts to capture associated rents, and increasing threats of human rights violations, criminalization, and conflicts.

It is imperious to note that on the realms of adaptation, the Government of Zimbabwe is investing in irrigation infrastructure, with the focus of turning most of the 10,000 water bodies into irrigation farms in an effort to ensure food security. This initiative has however been hampered by the failure to raise enough capital finance from a diminishing fiscal budget in the absence of significant access to global climate funds. Unfortunately for the transport sector, there has not been much programming to reduce carbon emissions from increasing vehicle population except collection of toll gate fees, and carbon tax which is going into the Treasury but not being ringfenced for any climate change work.

It is important to note that the Zimbabwe government of recently introduced new rules in carbon credits and stipulated that it will be entitled to 30% of the revenue generated from carbon credits, with the remaining 70% going to the developers of the projects (Boomberg, 2023). The World Bank further reported that revenue from carbon taxes and emissions trading systems (ETS) have reached a record high of about USD95billion. However, despite this positive development, the biggest concern is that carbon credits may not be benefiting vulnerable countries and communities as expected which calls for the need for climate action.

CLIMATE JUSTICE POLICIES AT GLOBAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL

Global Level:	Policy Focus
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)	The UNFCCC is a multilateral treaty focusing on combating climate change through adaptation and mitigation efforts directed at controlling the emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs) that cause global warming. It was established in 1994, and has near-universal membership with 198 countries that have ratified the Convention called Parties to the Convention, including Zimbabwe
The Kyoto Protocol	An international treaty adopted in 1997 and effected in 2005. It aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by committing industrialized countries and economies in transition to limit and reduce greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions in accordance with agreed individual targets based on the principles and provisions of the UNFCCC.
The Paris Climate Agreement	The PCA is an international treaty on climate change adopted by 196 Parties (including Zimbabwe) at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) and entered into force in 2016. The focus is to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. The Paris Agreement works on a five-year cycle of increasingly ambitious climate action carried out by countries
National Level:	Policy Focus
Zimbabwe National Environmental Policy and Strategic Document	Enacted in 2002 and provides a framework for sustainable development by integrating social, economic, and environmental relationships. It aims to conserve biodiversity, maintain the natural resource base, and preserve the broad spectrum of biological diversity to sustain the long-term ability of natural resources to meet the basic needs of people, enhance food security, reduce poverty, and improve the standard of living of Zimbabweans through long-term economic growth and the creation of employment
Climate Policy (2016),	This policy was developed to provide a framework for Zimbabwe's response to climate change. It is guided by the principles of being demand-driven, country-driven, aligned with national laws and international obligations, and mainstreamed into policy and legal frameworks as well as development planning. The policy aims to promote sustainable development, reduce vulnerability to climate change impacts, and enhance adaptive capacity
National Climate Change Response Strategy (2013),	This strategy provides a framework for a comprehensive and strategic approach on aspects of adaptation, mitigation, technology, financing, public education, and awareness. It aims to promote sustainable development, reduce vulnerability to climate change impacts, and enhance adaptive capacity.
National Adaptation Plan,	The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process was established under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to enable developing countries to identify medium- and long-term adaptation needs and develop and implement strategies and programs to address those needs. Zimbabwe has submitted its NAPs to the UNFCCC
The Long-term Greenhouse Gas Emissions Strategies (2020-2050),	This strategy aims to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Zimbabwe has developed its Long-term Low Greenhouse Gas Emission Development Strategy (2020-2050) which seeks to enhance Zimbabwe's resilience to the impacts of climate change while mainstreaming climate change in all socioeconomic sectors underpinning the economy
the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).	Zimbabwe submitted its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) in 2015 which became the country's first-generation Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in 2017 when it ratified the Paris Agreement. In line with the Paris Agreement to revise the NDCs every five years, Zimbabwe presented its revised NDC in 2021 which represents a fair and ambitious 7% increase in emission reduction from 33% in the first NDC to 40% in the revised NDC. The revised NDC also includes waste, industrial processes and product use; agriculture, forestry, and other land-use sectors

National Level:	Policy Focus
Forestry Act	The Forestry Commission was created in 1954 through the Forest Act (Cap 19:05) and the Communal Land Forest Produce Act (Cap 19:04) for regulating forest utilization in Zimbabwe through awareness, enforcement of legislation, trainings, research
EMA Act	The Environmental Management Act provides for the sustainable management of natural resources, the prevention of pollution and environmental degradation, and the preparation of a National Environmental Plan
Land Commission Act SI116 Of 2012	Enacted in 2017, provides for the Zimbabwe Land Commission established by section 296 of the Constitution. It also provides for the acquisition of State land and the disposal of State land, settlement of persons on, and the alienation of, agricultural land, control of the subdivision and lease of land for farming or other purposes, limiting the number of pieces of land that may be owned by any person and the sizes of such land. The act also repeals the Agricultural Land Settlement Act [Chapter 20:01] and the Rural Land Act [Chapter 20:18] to amend the Land Acquisition Act [Chapter 20:10]; and to provide for matters connected with or incidental to the foregoing
Traditional leaders Act	Traditional Leaders Act requires traditional leaders to control over-cultivation, overgrazing, and the indiscriminate destruction of flora and fauna to promote environmental conservation measures
RDC laws,	This act was enacted in 1998 and provides for the appointment of village heads, headmen, and chiefs. It also provides for the establishment of a Council of Chiefs and village, ward, and provincial assemblies and to define their functions. The act also provides for the issue of village registration certificates and settlement permits
Mines and Minerals Act	This act was enacted in 1961 and consolidates and amends the law relating to mines and minerals. It vests dominium in and the right of searching and mining for all minerals, mineral oils, and natural gases in the President subject to this act. The act also provides for the acquisition of mining rights
Water Act,	The Water Act provides for the development and utilization of the country's water resources. It also establishes catchment councils and sub-catchment councils, grants permits for the use of water, controls the use of water when it is in short supply, and provides for the acquisition of servitudes in respect of water. The Act also provides for the protection of the environment and the prevention and control of water pollution, approval of combined water schemes,
Seed Act,	The Seeds Act regulates the registration, production, sale, importation, exportation, testing, certification, inspection of seed, and other matters connected with seed. The Act requires farmers to register their seed varieties, which limits the free exchange of seeds and restricts the development of new seed varieties by local farmers
Parks and Wildlife Act	The act was enacted in 1975 and aims to provide for the establishment of national parks, botanical reserves, botanical gardens, sanctuaries, safari areas, and recreational parks. It also makes provisions for the preservation, conservation, propagation or control of the wildlife, fish and plants of Zimbabwe and the protection of her natural landscape and scenery
Pollution and Prevention Act,	Provides for the prevention and control of air pollution and the establishment of an Air Pollution Advisory Board
Biodiversity Conservation Act	Makes provision for the preservation, conservation, propagation, or control of wildlife, fish, and plants in Zimbabwe and the protection of natural landscape and scenery
Natural Resource Act,	Makes provision for the conservation and improvement of natural resources in Zimbabwe, including the establishment of a Natural Resources Board and the construction of works on communal land for the conservation of natural resources

As summarised above, it is very commendable that Zimbabwe has several environmental laws that address climate change and environmental rights. The Environmental Management Act (Chapter 20:27) provides for the establishment of the National Environmental Council, the Environmental Management Agency, Environment Management Board, the Standards and Enforcement Committee, and the Environment Fund (EMA, 2023). Additionally, it provides for the formulation of environmental quality standards and environmental plans, environmental impact assessments, and the control of pollution. However, numeral gaps are notable in practice and in some policy provisions. According to a report by the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2020) and EMA (2023), Zimbabwe is still grappling with deforestation, over-exploitation of natural resources, climate change, soil erosion, land degradation, biodiversity loss, and air and water pollution. The National Climate Change Response Strategy provides a framework for a comprehensive and strategic approach on aspects of adaptation, mitigation, technology, financing, public education, and awareness. However, there is still need to strengthen climate and disaster risk management policies and reinforcing compliance. Whereas the Zimbabwe's legal instruments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) seek to address the global climate change problem, there is need to further define the rights and access of indigenous peoples and local communities, over carbon credits in their customary lands and territories. If these rights are not meaningfully recognized, the viability of nature-based solutions will significantly be threatened.

Therefore, the various laws and regulations are important in the country's efforts to adapt and mitigate climate change and environmental impacts. However, what remains crucial is ensuring for their funding, implementation, and adherence. Harmonisation of policies also remains key especially that the country has make laws that are not speaking into each other. Furthermore, there is need to align and update old policies and consequently the effective implementation of these policies will need the setting up of an environmental court that will address all environmental legal issues and, in the process, address concerns on the selective application of environmental laws by duty bearers, local authorities, traditional leaders, government and the judiciary. In summary, environmental laws in Zimbabwe are crucial for the conservation of biodiversity, sustainable land and resource management, pollution control, climate change mitigation and adaptation, public participation, environmental justice, and international cooperation. These laws provide a legal framework to address environmental challenges, promote sustainable development, and protect the rights of present and future generations.



RECOMMENDATIONS TO REINFORCE ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS AND TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION:

- Creation of domestic climate change adaptation fund with a full-time secretariat to manage funding and monitoring of outcomes
- reporting on all climate change adaptation/mitigation projects that different line Ministries and private sector players and communities will be implementing with funding from Climate Change Adaptation Funds. This inter-Ministerial Agency should be in the Office of the President and Cabinet's Policy Monitoring and Implementation Division.
- Decentralizing the climate change discourse to Provinces, Districts and Wards to ensure a robust climate justice response strategy with buy-in of the intended beneficiaries including indigenous people, women and youths. Institute a carbon crediting policy to reduce the impacts of climate change.
- Urgent transformation of food systems by investing in locally led food-land-climate nexus adaptation solutions in smallholder agriculture and natural resources governance and management.
- Strengthening community-based movements and supporting them to organize, mobilize, and lead campaigns and advocacy work on climate justice.
- Enhance the capacity and independence of environmental regulatory bodies to enforce environmental laws and regulations effectively. This includes setting an environmental court to address environmental legal disputes and providing with adequate resources, training, and authority to monitor compliance and taking enforcement actions against violators.

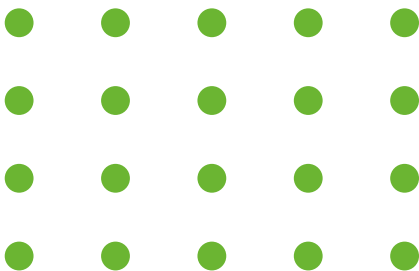
- Implement comprehensive land use planning strategies that prioritize environmental sustainability. This involves identifying ecologically sensitive areas, protecting critical habitats, and promoting sustainable practices in sectors such as agriculture, mining, and urban development.
- Review and update existing environmental laws to harmonise, align with international standards and ensure comprehensive protection of environmental rights.
- Encourage active public participation in environmental decision-making processes. This can be done through public consultations, public hearings, and involving affected communities and groups, civil society organizations, and indigenous peoples in policy development and implementation.
- Promote environmental education at all levels of the education system to raise awareness about environmental issues, sustainable practices, and the importance of environmental rights. This can include integrating environmental concepts into the Zimbabwe education curriculum and organizing awareness campaigns.
- Promotion of community-based natural resource management initiatives that empower local communities to actively participate in conservation efforts. This can include providing training, technical support, and incentives for sustainable resource use and livelihood development.
- Ensure equitable access to environmental justice by establishing mechanisms to address environmental grievances, including effective remedies for those affected by environmental harm. This can include establishing specialized environmental courts or tribunals and providing legal aid services for environmental cases.
- Develop and implement strategies to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and enhance resilience to climate change. This includes promoting renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable agriculture practices, and climate-smart infrastructure development.
- Collaborate with international organizations, neighbouring countries, and the global community to share best practices, access technical expertise, and mobilize financial resources for environmental conservation and sustainable development initiatives.
- Establishing a robust system for environmental monitoring and reporting to track progress, identify environmental risks, and inform decision-making. This includes investing in monitoring infrastructure, data collection, and analysis, and making the information accessible to the public.

It is important to note that these recommendations are general in nature and should be adapted to the specific context and needs of Zimbabwe. Implementation will require political will, stakeholder engagement, and long-term commitment to achieving environmental sustainability and protecting environmental rights.

CONCLUSION

Environmental rights and transformative action provide a framework to numerous environmental challenges and create positive change. By recognizing and protecting environmental rights, Zimbabwe can ensure that its citizens have the right to a healthy and ecologically balanced environment. This includes the right to clean air, water, and food, as well as the right to participate in environmental decision-making processes. Upholding these rights fosters social equity, empowers communities, and promotes environmental justice.

In conclusion, environmental rights and transformative action are vital for Zimbabwe's sustainable development, biodiversity conservation, climate change resilience, and the well-being of its people. Moreover, collaboration and partnerships among stakeholders, including government, civil society organizations, communities, and the private sector, are crucial for driving transformative action and ensuring the success of environmental initiatives. By working together, sharing knowledge and resources, and promoting dialogue, Zimbabwe can achieve greater environmental sustainability and resilience. By upholding environmental rights, implementing transformative action, and fostering collaboration, Zimbabwe can build a greener, more inclusive, and prosperous future for generations to come.



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