
NYARADZAYI GUMBONZVANDA, General Secretary of the World YWCA

Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, is Zimbabwean. She is a trained human rights lawyer with extensive experience in conflict resolution and mediation. For some twenty years, she has been working on issues of women and children's human rights, with a special focus on crisis countries. Active in the women's movement, she has more specifically focused on issues of violence against women, peace with justice, property rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights and HIV and AIDS.

In 2007, Ms. Gumbonzvanda became General Secretary of the World YWCA, a global network of women and young women leading social and economic change in 125 countries. This appointment followed over 10 years experience with the United Nations, where she served as Regional Director for the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in Eastern and Horn Africa, covering 13 countries. She was previously a human rights officer with UNICEF in Liberia and Zimbabwe, and had also served as interim coordinator for the Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association during its formative stage and in the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs in Zimbabwe as a law officer.

Since joining the World YWCA, Ms. Gumbonzvanda's core focus has been on three main areas: (1) championing young women's leadership through regional dialogues, support to women's programmes, internships, as well as strategic partnerships (2) advancing peace with justice and addressing violence against women by making the YWCA a leader in community response to crises and conflict; (3) supporting movement building of the YWCA and the movement's engagement in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

Notable recent achievements include work on the integration of gender equality issues in the peace processes for the Sudan, Somalia and Northern Uganda and a lead role in the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region that resulted in the adoption of the Protocol on Sexual and Gender Based Violence as well as property rights for returnees. Ms. Gumbonzvanda was involved in the development of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on Women's Rights in Africa. Having also worked for many years on issues of gender and HIV and AIDS, she was a resource person for the International Women's Summit on HIV and AIDS hosted by the World YWCA in 2007.

Ms. Gumbonzvanda continues to be active in a number of organizations, committees and conferences, including: Board member of Save the Children, UK; chair of the Governance and Board Development Committee of Action Aid International; Member of the UN Civil Society Advisory Committee in UN Security Council Resolution 1325; Member of the Africa Women Leaders on Sexual and Reproductive Health; Co-leader of the World YWCA delegation to the Beijing plus 15 review (New York 2010), the UN

Commission on the Status of Women (2008 -2010) and the International AIDS Conferences (2008/2010): Co-Convenor of the Religious Leaders Summit on HIV and AIDS (Netherlands 2010). In addition, she played a leading role in the Women Leaders Solidarity Visits to Sudan (2004-2009), DRC (2009) and Zimbabwe (2010)

Ms. Gumbonzvanda has a Master's degree in Private Law with specialisation in Constitutional Property Law from the University of South Africa and completed post-graduate work on conflict resolution at Uppsala University, Sweden. She is active within the women's rights movement and is a member of such organisations as Women in Law and Development in Africa, Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association and the World Conference on Religion and Peace. She serves on the Advisory Board for the African Centre for Women, Information and Communications Technology. She recently founded the Rozaria Memorial Trust (RMT), a charity organisation established in honour of her late mother, a role model in her community in Murewa, Zimbabwe.

In recognition of her approach to empowerment of women in communities, Ms. Gumbonzvanda has been awarded life membership status by the Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organisation, a grassroots organisation with over 4 million members.

Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda is widely published and enjoys poetry. She is married and has two children.

About the World YWCA

The World YWCA is a global network of women and young women leading social and economic change in 125 countries. It advocates for peace, justice, human rights and care of the environment, and has been at the forefront of raising the status of women for over a century. The World YWCA develops women's leadership to find local solutions to the global inequalities women face.

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