



## **EFF STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL DAY OF WOMEN IN DIPLOMACY**

Saturday, 24 June 2023

On this significant occasion of International Day of Women in Diplomacy, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) celebrates the immense contributions and invaluable role of women in shaping diplomacy and global affairs.

According to a United Nation report on women in leadership, nations that boast higher representation of women in legislative roles demonstrate a remarkable trend of reduced expenditure on defence, and increased investment in social welfare.

Within the rich tapestry of our African heritage, women occupied prominent leadership roles throughout the continent and fought to protect their empires through diplomacy, negotiation, and warfare.

We honour the legacies of remarkable figures such as Yaa Asantewa of the Ashanti Empire who fought the British, Queen Nzinga of the Mbundu people who held off the Portuguese, and Nehanda, who spearheaded the first Chimurenga in what is now modern-day Zimbabwe.

Additionally, we proudly acknowledge the enduring reign of the Balobedu monarchy, led by a lineage of revered rain queens. One of the few remaining African cultures that still has women leading cultural ceremonies, negotiating lobola processes, and maintaining the place of their monarchy post-democracy.

Their contributions to our history and culture serve as a testament to the strength and leadership of women in Africa, which was erased through colonisation. We now fight against patriarchal African cultures that are the direct result of colonialism.

In the realm of contemporary times, five African nations rank among the top 20 countries worldwide for women's parliamentary representation. Moreover, our continent boasts a distinguished roster of accomplished women who have held the esteemed position of president.

While women have played critical roles in diplomacy for the longest times, their contributions are undermined and they remain underrepresented in strategic political leadership positions and subsequently, diplomatic leadership.

Even where at least fifty percent gender representation exists, women are not occupying strategic positions. Patriarchy throws crumbs every now and then in an attempt to sanitise the struggle for gender equality and in this case, crumbs of representation.

Furthermore, patriarchy throws these very same representation crumbs in every discussion related to the low occupancy of women in strategic leadership positions. Such gaslighting is done with the full knowledge that the practice of patriarchy is not gendered.

Discrimination, gender bias, unequal opportunities, and systemic barriers persist, denying women the recognition and opportunities they deserve in all aspects of society, not just the political space.

Our struggle to end patriarchy continues. We are resolute in our commitment to achieve gender equality in our lifetime.

**ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS**

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