

**SPEECH BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR WOMEN AFFAIRS,  
COMMUNITY, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES  
DEVELOPMENT, READ BY MR D. NYAKONDA AT THE AWARDS  
CEREMONY: SIMUKA-PHAKAMA 2018 GREEN ENTERPRIZE  
INNOVATION CHALLENGE - 15 MARCH 2019, ILO COUNTRY  
OFFICE FOR ZIMBABWE AND NAMIBIA**

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**The Ambassador of Sweden, Her Excellency, Sofia Calltorp**

**The Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare,  
Honorable S. Nzenza**

**ILO Country Officer Director, Ms Hopolang Phororo**

**Senior Government Officials here present**

**Captains of Industry and Commerce here present**

**Green enter*PRIZE* Innovation Challenge Winners here  
present**

**Invited Guest**

**Ladies and Gentleman**

I am very delighted to join you here today at this momentous Awards Ceremony: Simuka-Phakama 2018 Green Enterprise Innovation Challenge that celebrates and honors innovation and excellence in green enterprise development.

Let me start by applauding and commending the ILO Zimbabwe Country Office, the Swedish Embassy and their partners for making this Awards Ceremony possible and most importantly for laying the foundation and paving the way for the growth of green enterprises development in Zimbabwe through the implementation of Green Enterprise Development Project.

The inspiration and creativity of our award winners presents excitement and a beam of hope to our nation in the face of numerous socio-economic, environmental and climatic challenges. My warmest congratulations to the finalists, the runners up and the outstanding winners crowned here today.

As you might be aware, these awards we celebrate today were launched last year by Honorable Minister S.G.G Nyoni. ILO and their distinguished partners rolled out this innovative programme throughout the country. Since then, 250 SMES participated in the programme to win the awards. Of these, 90 applicants were short listed and provided with various business development services. Today's ceremony is a valid testament of ILO's immense commitment to promoting employment creation and green enterprises development in Zimbabwe as we have just witnessed 27 prizes being awarded to the outstanding SME applicants.

Ladies and Gentleman, the green economy has been identified as a breeding ground or nursery for environmental sustainability,

innovation, employment creation, and economic empowerment of previously marginalized groups including women and youth. Zimbabwe is endowed with great potential to promote green enterprises in the areas of waste collection, retailing and recycling; renewable energy, agriculture and agro-business. However, lack of supporting policy framework; access to information, seed capital support; innovative technology and provision of business development services has affected the growth and competitiveness of green enterprise development over the years.

Creating a conducive environment for the growth and development of green enterprises development is thus vital in strengthening the role of green enterprise development in providing sustainable solutions to environmental and socio-economic challenges of unemployment, pollution, climate change and energy inefficiencies.

It is against this background that the Government has partnered ILO Country Office for Zimbabwe and other development partners in addressing the supply side and demand side challenges facing the growth of green enterprise development in Zimbabwe. Today's ceremony is a demonstration of numerous holistic efforts being undertaken to create a conducive environment for green enterprises development in Zimbabwe. Through these integrated efforts, innovative green entrepreneurs whom we are celebrating and awarding today will

transform environmental, climatic and economic challenges into innovative products, services and processes.

Ladies and gentleman, our esteemed award winners and runners up for today's occasion have proved their amazing uniqueness and creativity through creating start-ups and business ventures in areas that are considered as waste, unsolvable and undesirable. In the words of the famous philosopher Ralph Waldo Emmerson, **"Do not go where the path may lead; go instead where there is no path and leave a trail"**, our winners have proved that it is possible to start new businesses from unique and unorthodox places and succeed. Hence forth, these start-ups will thus serve as a testament and beacons to the world and many unemployed youth and marginalized women in Zimbabwe that there are no challenges around us but abundant opportunities for income and employment creation.

My Ministry and ILO will continuously provide all the winners and runners up with all the relevant technical and business development services to promote the growth and competitiveness of your green enterprises.

Once, again congratulations to all the award winners and I wish you unrestricted and continued success in your endeavors.

I thank you