

US women of influence in

NANCY SIAME

Lusaka

A DELEGATION of 20 American women of influence is in the country to develop business linkages with Zambian women and to help those who need empowerment.

And Vice-President Inonge Wina says Government is working towards addressing the many challenges which rural girls face to enable them to remain in school and be able to contribute to the economic growth of the country.

The women, most of whom work towards women and girls empowerment and human rights advocates, paid a courtesy call on Mrs Wina at her office yesterday.

Gloria Steinem, a world leader and

defender of women rights, said she has noted the spirit of entrepreneurship in most Zambian women, which is encouraging.

Ms Steinem said Mrs Wina is an inspiration to women across the globe.

“Your leadership has been a great inspiration....as women, we are very proud of you,” she said.

And Cherrie Briggs, who is the host and owns a lodge in the lower Zambezi, said she is using her connections to bring travellers to come and explore other opportunities which would have an impact on the local people.

“I believe in private enterprises supporting communities to make them independent,” she added.

And Mrs Wina said rural girls usually face challenges to remain in

school but government is doing its best to ensure that they remain in school.

“Government is building schools close to villages as well as engaging traditional leaders to advocate against early marriages as they have great influence on their people,” she said.

She said poverty in rural areas also makes parents marry off their girls and this usually turns out to be a cycle.

Mrs Wina, however, expressed happiness that most women are now looking for ways to empower themselves and become self-sustainable.

“It is encouraging to see that even women in markets are determined to enhance their businessesyour presence here is timely and we are very grateful,” she said.