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UNITED NATIONS  
ZAMBIA



# NEWS LETTER



**WORLD  
CHILDREN'S  
DAY** 20 November

**CELEBRATIONS**

# FOREWORD

from the  
**Resident  
Coordinator**



Welcome to our first newsletter in 2022. We have lined up several exciting stories for you such as our progress on the elaboration of the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework to guide UN support to Zambia from 2023-2027. We also shine a spotlight on the recently held National Youth Indaba, graced by the Republican President Mr Hakainde Hichilema, organised by the Government with support from the United Nations as part of efforts to develop a national youth engagement strategy.

Another highlight in this issue is the 2021 World Children's Day celebrations which brought together the Heads of State of Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and children from these four countries. Other stories include the Holocaust Remembrance Day, farmer support through purchase of commodities, and the fight against Gender Based Violence. Along the way, you will also find stories on UN support to ensuring improved maternal and newborn health outcomes through midwifery training as well as support to Comprehensive Sexuality Education. Related to gender equality and the empowerment of women, you will read about UN support to the customary land titling programme that is helping more women and youth own land. On the same theme, we feature a woman who has defied all odds and fought gender stereotypes by taking on a job that is seen as a preserve of men. Closely linked is a story of a former Gender Based Violence survivor who is making ends meet after engaging in a poultry business with UN support.

I have no doubt that you will find all the articles informative. We value your feedback so please let us know. Thank you for your continued interest in following our support to the Government and people of Zambia.

Thank you and happy reading.

**Dr. Coumba Mar Gadio**



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# UN ZAMBIA SUPPORTS GOVERNMENT IN HOSTING 2022 NATIONAL YOUTH INDABA



In commemoration of National Youth Day in Zambia, the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Arts held a National Youth Indaba through support from nine United Nations agencies and other partners to foster engagement between youth and the government on key policy issues affecting young people and their role in the successful development and implementation of the 8th National Development Plan, Vision 2030, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Indaba which was held from 10-11 March 2022 at Lusaka's Mulungushi International Conference Centre under theme 'Enhancing Youth Participation at all Levels of National Development', brought together 700 youth from all the 157 constituencies of Zambia provinces who on the second day

of the gathering to had the opportunity to engage with Zambia's President His Excellency Mr Hakainde Hichilema on issues of concern to them.

In addressing the youth at the closing the Indaba, President Hichilema urged youth to focus on more action and hard work.

"At a young age is when people underrate you, but that is the time you must achieve great things. And you cannot achieve much if you do not work hard," said Mr Hichilema. Speaking at the event, UN Resident Coordinator Dr. Coumba Mar Gadio reaffirmed the support of the United Nations to the Government of Zambia in the transformational



development impact for the SDGs acceleration. She commended government for gathering youth from various backgrounds to discuss their role in the transformation of the national priorities in the country. "Today's event is a great first step towards empowering the young people by listening to them. Youth importance to the development of Zambia cannot be overstated as they account for about 36% of the population and 55% of the national labor force," said Dr Gadio.

'Furthermore, it is important to formulate programmes and initiatives that recognize the diversity of youth groups to ensure that no youth is left behind, regardless of who they are and where they live to play an active role to help the country embark on inclusive and sustainable development paths," she added.

Minister of Youth, Sport and Arts, Elvis Nkandu encouraged the youth to take advantage of all

government interventions to empower themselves and their communities.

"While here the youth should develop a communicate highlighting the issues, what they would like the government to address which will be a blueprint of what will be put in policy, so that the policy speaks to the actual issues but the youth themselves," said Mr Nkandu.

Mr Nkandu also said that the COVID-19 pandemic had brought negative effects and increased people's vulnerability, particularly youth.

The Zambian Youth make up a significant proportion of the population and it is critical that employment opportunities and skills development and innovation are harnessed to lessen youth unemployment and underrepresentation by mainstreaming policies and youth empowerment initiatives that are key in transforming the economic and development spectrum of the country.



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# UN Convention on the Rights of the Child anniversary



## Presidents and children from four nations share a platform to discuss child rights



The 2021 celebrations for World Children's Day climaxed in a major sub-regional event on 20 November which brought together the Heads of State of Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and children from these four countries, at the point where their borders meet at Kazungula Bridge.

The recently inaugurated bridge served as the symbolic and physical meeting point as more than 100 children from the four countries came together with their Heads of State for a high-level discussion to listen and respond to children's contributions. The event reached a wide audience through live broadcasts on Zambian and Botswana television stations as well as internet streaming.

The event was organised by UNICEF offices in the four countries as part of World Children's Day, which is marked

every year on the anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Presidents, accompanied by their spouses, made several strong commitments, including setting up a sub-regional presidential platform on child rights. The President of Zambia, H.E. Hakainde Hichilema, committed to working directly with children to implement new policies, including from the early days of life, and collaborating with young people as colleagues to best create solutions for them. He also pledged to ensure the Children's Code Bill quickly passes into law to strengthen the domestication of the UNCRC.

Following the main event in the afternoon, the children and Heads of State walked on to the bridge, which following a countdown, was lit up in blue to show support for child rights. Children then enjoyed activities on the bridge including

roller-skating, sports and traditional games.

In the week leading up to the event, Zambia's National World Children's Day commemoration in Ndola and the provincial World Children's Day event in Livingstone also saw hundreds of children participating and the lighting up in blue of the Levy Mwanawasa Stadium and the Victoria Falls bridge respectively.

These events also formed part of UNICEF's 75th anniversary commemorations, which went on to include a TEDxYouth event in Lusaka, with talks from inspiring young people, and a major exhibition into the history of child development in Zambia at the Lusaka National Museum.



# UNHABITAT supports Land Certification in Chief Chamuka chieftom



UNHABITAT with financial support from the Global Land Tools Network (GLTN) and in partnership with a local Non-Governmental Organisation, People's Process on Housing and Poverty in Zambia (PPHPZ) and His Royal Highness Chief Chamuka have been working in Chief Chamuka's area in Chisamba District of Central province of Zambia since 2016 to improve land tenure security for all, especially the women and other vulnerable groups. These partners have been working on the 'Scaling Up Customary Land Certification Interventions' project that supports customary land rights documentation in the chieftom. So far, 27 of the 208 villages in the chieftom with a total of 1,722 customary land occupancy certificates have been reached with more than 10, 812 people benefiting.

On 17 December 2021, the official handover ceremony of 500 certificates of customary land occupancy was held at His Royal Highness chief Chamuka's palace in Chisamba district of Central Province.

Speaking at ceremony, District Commissioner for Chisamba who was the Guest of Honour, Mr Joel Mboyoma congratulated His Royal Highness Chief Chamuka on the issuance of 500 certificates of customary land occupancy out of the available 1,144. The remaining 644 certificates would be issued later.

Speaking at the same event, His Royal

Highness Chief Chamuka, thanked GLTN, PPHPZ and the UN in Zambia, through UNHABITAT, for support to his chieftom to improve land tenure security for all especially vulnerable groups. He noted that the application of the participatory Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM) to map and enumerate households had resulted in reduced boundary disputes between households and villages, less evictions, and disinheritances especially upon the death of a spouse.

"Information from documentation of land rights had facilitated improved decision making, particularly for vulnerable and marginalised groups



including women, youth and Persons with Disabilities. Now youths who have attained the age of 18 years are entitled to land and can obtain a customary land occupancy certificate," said Chief Chamuka.

And UN Resident Coordinator Dr. Coumba Mar Gadio said that access to secure land especially for women and youth was key to improving their living conditions as they can use the land to engage in livelihood activities without fear of evictions and hence greatly contribute to poverty reduction and social economic development. In a speech read by Planning and Resilience Specialist UNHABITAT Regional Office for Africa Mr. Alexander Chileshe, Dr Gadio said that the UN in Zambia would continue supporting the government, traditional leaders and other stakeholders to ensure equitable access and control to secure land for social economic development that will ultimately contribute to sustainable development, leaving no one behind.

In his remarks, Mr Nelson Nc'ube the Country Director for PPHPZ, said the participatory nature of STDM allowed for full involvement of the community and created a sense of ownership among the people.

"Communities are not just consulted but are part of the process at every stage, in particular, youths and women who form a cohort of local human resource team that has been the lifeblood of community participation, leading the process from the front thus resulting in Chamuka chieftdom becoming a learning centre for both state and non-state actors on pro-poor and inclusive land administration," said Mr N'cube.



# Safe water to scale up nutrition in Zambia

The SUN Phase II programme is helping to reduce stunting through improved WASH



"It does not matter how nutritious the food we give our children and grandchildren - if in the end they wash it down with contaminated water," said 69-year-old Monica Mumba of Shauli village in Zambia's Chinsali District. "I am so happy that is no longer the case because of this borehole that was rehabilitated."

In 2020, UNICEF rehabilitated nearly 100 boreholes in Chinsali and neighbouring Lsoka



districts, benefiting more than 20,000 people. This year, under the Scaling-Up Nutrition Phase II (SUN-II) programme, nearby Mpika District in Muchinga Province is being targeted with a similar intervention.

Monica Mumba is a grandmother and like many Zambians lives in an extended family set-up, with her children and grandchildren. Monica's family is one of those identified as a targeted 'SUN II household' because Monica's daughter is currently breastfeeding an infant.

The family had been reliant on an old water pump that only provided dirty water, which broke down over a year ago. In the company of her two grandsons (pictured below), Monica recalls the hardships they faced as a community.

"The borehole was giving up and the water was not suitable at all for drinking or cooking. The smell and taste were pungent," she says.

The water quality was enough to discourage some members of the community from using the borehole, opting instead to source unsafe water from nearby streams or unprotected wells. And yet, all the village were dependent in some way on the borehole. And when it broke the 650 residents of the community were left

with a walk of 5km to an old unprotected well.

Improved access to clean water is just one intervention in the SUN II programme, a multi-sectoral programme to improve nutrition in Zambia and end stunting. In Chinsali District, more than a third of



children (39 percent) are stunted, higher than the national average. The district is one of the 17 priority districts supported under the SUN II programme, a joint initiative implemented by UNICEF together with WFP, FAO and WHO.

Malita Nguni, a young woman from a neighbouring village, calls out to Monica, referring to her fondly as Ambuya (grandma) even though there is no actual blood relation between them.

"Remember how we had to go back to the old well when this borehole stopped working?" she says. "It was terrible to have to constantly quarrel with people over water. It's nice to have some peace

and quiet."

Malita shares her own recollection: "We were unable to maintain our vegetable gardens and children started suffering from malnutrition in the villages because of a lack of good food and clean water. The well which was some 5km away

was always busy; sometimes we opted to walk a few more metres ahead to the stream for water as there were no queues there."

The sound of her grandsons shuffling their feet and chomping on sugar cane draws Monica back to her present surroundings and she smiles warmly when their eyes meet.

"Water is life," says Monica. "We now have clean water to drink and cook with, and the hours we spent fetching water can now be spent on our gardens and in the field where we can actually make an income to feed our families and even send the little ones to school," she says. SUN II is a four-year initiative led by the United Nations in 17 districts in support of the Government of Zambia's First 1,000 Most Critical Days Programme Phase II. It is supported by the European Union, the Federal Republic of Germany through the KfW Development Bank, the Republic of Ireland, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and UK aid from the British people.





# UNHABITAT ZAMBIA hands over 1000 copies of the National Lands Policy to the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources



The United Nations in Zambia through the United Nations Human Settlements Programme in Zambia (UN-HABITAT) has provided financial and technical support to the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources in formulating the National Land Policy. As part of the support, on 1 November 2021, UN-Habitat handed over 1,000 copies of the final National Land Policy document to the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources.

Receiving the donation, the Permanent Secretary Ndashe Yumba said the National Land Policy was a broad framework that outlines how land shall be managed while the implementation plan will contain more details. He said there was need to put in place laws and regulations that will speak to the land Policy and ensure

that Zambians get the full benefits of owning land which is a key resource in the development of the country.

And handing over the Policy document, the UN-Habitat Acting National Technical Adviser Eng. Moonga Chilanga commended the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources for the innovative way in which they held the validation through written submissions when physical meetings could not be held due to the COVID-19 pandemic and eventually launched the National Land Policy in May 2021. He further encouraged the Ministry to finalize the draft Implementation plan and pledged to support the process with financial support from the Global Land Tools Network (GLTN).



# CHALLENGE GENDER STEREOTYPES

## Zambian women Autoclave Operators



**G**ender stereotypes have an adverse impact on the achievement of global sustainable development due to dominant conceptions of men and women, which may

triumph over their own individuality and human potentials, thus widening inequality gaps. Annie Nachula, 49-year-old, is a widower and mother who defies all stereotypes with her story to remind

us of the fact that gender should never be defined by strength or social construct characteristics.

Since the loss of her husband, Annie has been the breadwinner of her family. As do many other single mothers in Zambia, she struggled to make ends meet in a traditional, patriarchal society where age-old customs





play a role in dictating a woman's life. However, this tragic loss did not dent her spirit. With four children to take care of on her own, Annie was determined to change her family's fate. She took several menial jobs, such as an operating theatre cleaner and a porter at the Kapiri District Hospital in Central Zambia.

Unhappy with her previous jobs and determined to provide a stable life for her family, Annie signed up for an autoclave operator training organized by the Ministry of Health and funded by a UNDP Global Environmental Facility (GEF) project. Thanks to the training, Annie is now one of two women

working full time operating autoclaves, a job that requires knowledge and specialized skills that would traditionally be perceived as a male occupation.

"I had been taught that men are better at everything. But when I did the training, I realized that this was not the case. A woman can learn anything if she puts her mind to it," says Annie Nachula.

Despite the different challenges encountered during the training, Patricia Musonda, 46, also an autoclave operator who attended the same training as Annie, soon discovered that she and her colleague were just

as competent as men in acquiring the necessary skills to operate the autoclave equipment. The pair had no idea how operating autoclaves would completely change their lives and their views on how women can do work 'traditionally' reserved for men.

Nephat Banda, the Head of Kapiri District Hospital's Environmental Health Department, says he is delighted that women like Annie and Patricia have discovered hidden talents, resourcefulness and creativity and have proven that they can succeed at anything.

Traditional community practices have previously marginalized women, who represent about 51% of Zambia's population. This is more prevalent in rural areas and negatively affects their ability to play their part in sustainable development due to limitations. Activists in Zambia emphasize that gender restrictions are a significant cause of inequality that holds back economic and social progress and traps women and girls in poverty which ultimately limits their potential.

UNDP Zambia's Resident Representative Lionel Laurens highlights that, Zambian women are increasingly aware that they have immense potential to engage fully in society's economic, social, cultural, and political life. Mr Laurens is hopeful that effective laws and policies will reduce gender inequalities and promote more participation of women and the younger generation in leadership and decision-making processes.

"I am hopeful that the example set by women who challenge present norms and standards will change definitions of accepted boundaries of what are men's and women's jobs. The younger generation will increasingly dare to embrace careers which were previously perceived as very masculine or totally male-dominated."



# Zambia Observes Holocaust Remembrance Day



The United Nations in Zambia joined the global community in observing the 2022 International Day in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust through a virtual commemoration held in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Zambia and the Zambia Council of Jewry [Zambia Jewish Council] on 27 January. The event was held under the theme “Memory Dignity and Justice.” Participants included journalists, NGOs, teachers, members of United Nations school-based clubs from Mujala Secondary School (Livingstone) and Ibenga Girls Secondary School (Luanshya) and youth from Youth of United Nations (YUNA) clubs from the University of Zambia in Lusaka and Mulungushi University in Kabwe. A moment of silence was observed in memory of the victims of the Holocaust as well as to remember Mr. Simon Zukas, who until his death in 2021 was the Chairperson of the Zambia Council

of Jewry and a strong partner with the United Nations during past Holocaust commemorations in Zambia. In her opening remarks, UN Zambia Resident Coordinator Dr. Coumba Mar Gadio noted that the commemoration underscores the importance that the United Nations attaches to fighting anti-semitism and racism.

“The United Nations must always be at the forefront of the fight against anti-semitism and all other forms of religious bigotry and racism. Remembering the past is crucial to safeguarding the future. Silence in the face of hatred is complicity, she said.

And Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Stanley Kakubo, MP, who was represented by the ministry’s Permanent Secretary for Administration Chembo Mbula said that

the atrocities of the Holocaust must be remembered by all for the world to ensure that the evil act did not repeat itself in future.

“No nation should ever again fall into the dangers of hatred, bigotry, racism, and prejudice that characterised that era,” said Mr. Kakubo.

Representing the Jewish community in Zambia, Rabbi Shalomi Abutbul urged children and youth to learn about the Holocaust and its implications on the lives of people today. He also encouraged young people to shun prejudices as part of the fight against hate crimes. “Learn about the holocaust, read about it and understand what hatred among men can do to one another. You have to be proud of



who you are and where you come from. It will help you for the future. Never let anyone tell you that you are inferior because of your colour, religion, beliefs or background," said Rabbi Abutbul.

The program also featured the screening of a short documentary "Some Were Neighbours: Choice, Human Behaviour, and the Holocaust" that highlighted events prior to and during the Holocaust. As part of the event, UNESCO in Zambia moderated a highly participatory discussion and question and answer

session on prejudice, peace, holocaust denial, co-existence and fighting racism. The Holocaust relates to the killing of six million Jews and other groups of people in Europe by the Nazi regime and its supporters between 1939 and 1945 based on their race and other factors such as faith, disability and sexual orientation.

The Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme was established in 2005 by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 60/7, with a simple and stark aim: to remind the world of

the perspective that the Holocaust provides relevant to preventing future genocides. Over the years the Programme has established a global network of partners and developed versatile initiatives including educational resources, professional development programmes, a film series, panel discussions and exhibitions. In Zambia, the United Nations has through the United Nations Information Centre organised Holocaust commemorations since 2006.



**United Nations**

Department of Global Communications

**The Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme**



# WORLD PULSES DAY



## How WFP beans roll into Eswatini from Zambia



Ederbry Mweendo, Director of Cassia Agro Enterprises, outside her shop in Monze District, Zambia.

**“When I get a contract from WFP, I provide smallholder farmers with the seeds on credit,” says Ederbry Mweendo. “After they harvest, they pay me back for the seeds and sell me their surplus crops”.**

Mweendo heads Cassia Agro, one of the 13 aggregators and farmer cooperatives the World Food Programme works with in Zambia to procure cowpeas and beans for its programmes in the southern Africa region.

Last year, WFP committed to procure 1,151 metric tons of commodities through aggregators and farmer cooperatives, valued at almost US\$1 million.

Based in Monze district, Mweendo works with WFP to procure pulses from smallholder farmers and to supply airtight hermetic bags – a low-cost, post-harvest tech that reduces food losses of up to 40 percent in the country.

“It gives me peace and comfort to know that the food we are providing to WFP is supporting vulnerable people. It’s a privilege to support their programmes,” says Mweendo.

Food is procured from Mweendo under WFP’s global commodity management platform, which allows food to be purchased in advance of project requests. This reduces delivery lead times and helps aggregators and farmers to better plan their production.

“The airtight bags help smallholder farmers to store the crops perfectly until they sell their crops. They keep crops perfect even after years of storage,” says Mweendo.

Twaanabo Mwanza is one of the 2,700 smallholder farmers Mweendo buys from to sell to WFP. The 30-year-old grows orange maize, groundnuts, soybeans and cowpeas.

“Before I was introduced to Ederbry [Mweendo], I only used to grow a small amount of pulses. But she taught us about their benefits – they are nutritious, drought-resistant, cheaper to grow than maize, and sell for more,” says Twanabo.

“We smallholder farmers work hand-in-hand with Ederby. She provides us with seeds, airtight hermetic bags and a ready market. Usually, we would guess what to grow and search for markets. But now we are given seeds and sell our harvest back to her,” he says.





This year, WFP procured pulses from aggregators in Zambia to support operations in Angola and Eswatini.

In Eswatini, the beans were provided as part of WFP's emergency response in the Lubombo region, providing monthly food distributions to nearly 35,000 people who are struggling to put food on the table.



Lungelo and his sister Tengetile standing outside their house in Lubombo district

**Lungelo is one of the people that received beans from Zambia, as well as of rice and cooking oil.**

At the age of 15, he became the head of his household when his mother left their family in pursuit of a job. He had to drop out of school to care for his 78-year-old grandmother living with tuberculosis and his 13-year-old sister.

"There were days we would go to bed on empty stomachs to avoid asking for food from our neighbours," he says. Lungelo found a seasonal job at a local sugar factory, but this didn't cover all his family's needs. Now, the food he receives from WFP is helping him to support his family.

"With my seasonal job and the food from WFP, we can lead better, decent lives.... we received the beans just as we needed them," he says. "Now, I don't have to worry about my family going to bed hungry."

His sister, Tengetile, is a big fan of the beans. "I can't believe these beans come all the way from Zambia, it's so far. I will carry five beans to school to show my friends and maybe we can plant them during our science project on germination," she says.

"Our teacher told us that beans are body building food. I can get the same nutrients that can be found in meat. So even if I don't get to eat meat all the time, I will still be healthy," she adds.



# UN Zambia Develops Cooperation Framework



United Nations (UN) Zambia support to the Government and people of the Republic of Zambia is coordinated and structured through an agreed partnership signed between the Government and UN Zambia. From 2016 to 2022, support was provided through the Zambia-UN Sustainable Development Partnership Framework.

The Partnership Framework expires this year and will be succeeded by a successor framework called the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) which will run for the period 2023 - 2027. This document will be anchored in Zambia's development priorities and in line with the UN's Delivering as One

approach which mandates UN agencies to work together in a coherent, integrated and mutually reinforcing manner to strategize, plan and deliver the necessary support to the Government and people of Zambia.

The inclusive and consultative process of developing the UNSDCF has reached an advanced stage with the launch expected in April 2022. The process has seen the participation of all Resident and Non-Resident Agencies in Zambia under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator.

As a result, consultations have been made with different UN partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries (including the most vulnerable) to ensure the inclusion of different voices in shaping future UN support to the country.

This process was preceded by the Common Country Analysis or CCA which is meant to provide the UN with the evidence to support proposed programmes and interventions. The United Nations Country Analysis (CCA) explores and seeks to reflect and support transformational change that pertains to the agenda 2030, and guide how the UN can further that Agenda in the prevailing conditions of a given country. The CCA includes national-specific SDG baselines and helps track recent trends to characterize the pace of progress, project future trajectories where data allows, and identifies the SDGs as the primary scope of analysis and the performance tracking activity. The CCA is anchored on five pillars, namely People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace, Partnership which are at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Following completion and launch of the UNSDCF, the UN will embark of awareness creation of the framework among partners and the public in line with a robust communication strategy that will support stakeholder buy in and effective implementation. Other key parts steps include resource mobilization to ensure that adequate financial resources are available for implementation.





# Linking Comprehensive Sexuality Education with youth-friendly health services



Learners at Sefula secondary school, Mongu District, discussing teenage pregnancy as one of the CSE topics.

**A**dolescents, especially girls, face significant sexual and reproductive health challenges. In Western Province, like many provinces across the country, persistent barriers in access to adolescent-friendly health services continue to translate into high teenage pregnancy rates at 42%, which is the second highest adolescent pregnancy rate in Zambia, as well as high HIV prevalence affecting mainly young people at 15.4%.

In 2014, the Ministry of Education, with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and other development partners, facilitated the integration of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) into the national education curriculum for grades 5 to 12. Further, in December 2021, the Government of Zambia made a renewed

commitment to implement the East and Southern Africa (ESA) commitment on CSE and sexual reproductive health and rights. A joint field visit by the Government of Zambia, United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and United Nations to Sefula Community of Mongu District in October 2021, showcased how effective linkages of CSE with demand and uptake of adolescent



friendly sexual reproductive health and HIV services is key towards improved health and development outcomes for young people.

Sefula Secondary School has 48 teachers trained in CSE (32 female, 16 male), through the National Curriculum Development Center, with support from SAfAIDS. One of the key milestones attributed to CSE and increased awareness among communities is the reduction in incidences of teenage pregnancies, from 19 in 2019 to 4 in 2021.

An interaction with learners at the school showed how effective delivery of CSE in school provides essential knowledge and skills to enable young people lead healthy lives.

Taught under subjects of Biology, Civic Education, Home Economics, Integrated Science and Religious Education, the teachers are able to use interactive

and participatory methods to guide learners through discussions, team work and role plays. The lessons cover various thematic areas around adolescent pregnancy, including relationships, values and attitudes, culture, society and human rights, sexual behaviours, and sexual and reproductive health.

Sefula Health Centre demonstrated the effectiveness of the established referral system, from the classroom to adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health services offered at the center. For these linkages to be effective, the CSE programmes and ASRH services require a sustained enabling environment for behavioural change, which calls for strategic engagements at the community and societal levels.

At community level, traditional and community leaders often organise dialogues that aim to

address social norms and misconceptions that impede effective implementation of CSE programme, as well as provision and access to Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (ASRH) services in the community.

**“At home, many of us don't get the chance to learn about the important topics of menstruation, pregnancy, love and relationships. Through CSE lessons at our school, we are able to discuss with our teachers a lot of issues that concern us, such as puberty, sexual and Gender-Based Violence, values, human rights, health and well-being, and sexual and reproductive health,”** notes a learner at Sefula Secondary School.



# Reducing the harmful impacts of mercury-containing devices in Zambia's health system



Flashback on Nkhata's operation with the incinerator.

Isaiah Nkhata, 35, worked as an incinerator operator at a hospital in Zambia for over a year. One morning, Nkhata started choking and coughing up blood. It said it felt like his airways were collapsing. It did not occur to him at the time that this could be caused by inhaling gases from the chemicals he was burning. He was treated by his doctor for respiratory insufficiency.

For incinerator operators like Nkhata, father of two, there are not many options. He had to keep on working to put food on his table and pay for his children's education.

"The incinerator produced so much ash and smoke," he said. "I was covered in smoke and breathing in smoke all day. Besides, I also had to deal with cuts and needle-stick injuries regularly."

Things changed for Nkhata in 2019 when he became an 'autoclave'

operator. He is one of the 20 former incinerator operators trained under a five-year UNDP project to address the country's healthcare waste challenges. He learned how to operate an environmentally-friendly healthcare treatment technology called autoclaves that disinfect, neutralise or contain infectious medical waste. Implemented through Zambia's Ministry of Health, the project was co-funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and UNDP in partnership with WHO and Health Care Without Harm.

"Health care facilities are one of the main sources of mercury release into the atmosphere because of emissions from the incineration of medical waste. And as part of its environmental responsibility, the Government of the Republic of Zambia is taking steps to reduce and eliminate the use of mercury-containing devices," says Florence Mwale, a senior environmental health specialist in the Ministry of Health.

As part of this push, Mwale says the government has chosen available non-mercury alternatives and plans for stronger coordination between government agencies to improve mercury trade monitoring and boost education for businesses and communities on the dangers of mercury.

With funding from the GEF, health authorities in Zambia have begun recovering mercury-containing devices such as thermometers and BP machines from seven model health facilities, ensuring that the recovered toxic metals are not pushed back in the supply chain.

The overall objective of the initiative is to implement best environmental practices and introduce mercury-free medical devices which will reduce harmful releases from the health sector.

According to government figures, the 1,882 health facilities in Zambia generate up to 30 tons of infectious health care waste per day.

With Zambia now pushing to honour its commitment by phasing down the use of mercury-containing medical devices and products under the Minamata Convention, healthcare institutions in the country can significantly reduce the potential for mercury exposure for workers like Isaiah Nkhata, as well as patients and the environment.



# GBV SURVIVOR STARTS POULTRY BUSINESS AFTER RECEIVING START-UP KIT



**J**anet Banda of Lundazi District is one of the shining examples among 500 recipients of the start-up kit of ZMW2,000 empowerment fund under the Government of Republic of Zambia (GRZ) United Nations Joint programme on Gender Based Violence (GRZ-UNJP-GBV) Phase II Project.

Like many other GBV survivors, Ms. Banda was trained through the International Labor Organization (ILO) in December 2020 and subsequently empowered with a

start-up kit of ZMW2,000 in May 2021. A mother of two, Ms Banda got married in 2008. She is a victim of GBV as her former husband was abusive.

Ms. Banda narrates that her former husband used to abuse her physically by beating her and not providing any support at home.

"In 2010, my husband even married another woman. After going through a lot of abuse, I decided to leave him and went to stay with my uncle in 2011," she relates.

Ms. Banda said that she reported the abuse she was facing at the hands of her former husband to the Victim Support Unit (VSU) of the Zambia Police Service after which VSU officers counselled the couple. Her former husband promised to change, but he did not.

She says that she did not have enough capital to venture into a viable business but only had enough money to buy the hair blower.

"I was doing people's hair at home and was only able to manage to make ZMW200 monthly. The money was not enough to take care of my children. Problems continued to an extent where the first-born child was taken to be kept by my uncle because my husband could not provide for the children," she narrates.

Upon being identified by ILO, Ms Banda was included on the empowerment programme, a move which greatly transformed her life.

Ms. Banda explains that after receiving ZMW2,000, she started a poultry business with 50 chicks in June 2021. She adds that after she raised the capital to ZMW5,000, she bought 100 chicks and the capital was raised to ZMW9,000 in August 2021.

"I bought 200 chickens in September and I have started selling. I am expecting to make ZMW18,000 from sales. I have been able to expand my business and pay school fees for my children," she explains.

Ms. Banda relates that she is currently renting a poultry house but plans to build her own from the profits. She explains that the empowerment fund she





received had changed her standard of living as she was now financially independent.

The Government of the Republic of Zambia and five United Nations Agencies with support from Sweden and Ireland are currently implementing the GRZ-UNJP-GBV Phase II Project. The participating UN Agencies are International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The joint programme, which runs from 2019 to 2022, is a multi-partner programme designed to reduce the prevalence of GBV in Zambia. The programme builds on and consolidates the gains made in the GRZ-UN Joint Programme Phase I implemented from 2012 to 2017.

The ILO is responsible for the component on economic empowerment that is ensuring that GBV survivors, those at risk and communities are empowered to break the cycle of abuse.

# MIDWIFERY SCHOOLS SET THE STAGE FOR IMPROVED MATERNAL AND NEWBORN HEALTH OUTCOMES IN ZAMBIA



Michelle Simukayi, a 3rd year nursing and midwifery student at Lewanika College of Nursing and Midwifery in Western Province of Zambia, demonstrating the step-by-step processes for neonatal resuscitation.

In the last two decades, Zambia has made significant strides towards improving maternal and newborn health outcomes. The maternal mortality rate has dropped nearly 300 percent, from 729 deaths for every 100,000 live births in 2002 to 278 deaths for every 100,000 live births in 2018.

Ensuring the availability of skilled midwifery personnel has been critical in securing this achievement, with the number of births assisted by a skilled attendant increasing from 42 percent in 2002 to 80 percent in 2018. This underscores available evidence that when well-trained,



deployed in adequate numbers, and appropriately supported to provide better quality of care, midwives can avert approximately two-thirds of preventable maternal and newborn deaths.

Unfortunately, in many underserved communities with high maternal and neonatal deaths, significant gaps in availability of these essential health workers remains, including towards meeting the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended threshold of 4.2 midwives per 1,000 population.

Michelle Simukayi, a 3rd year student pursuing a Diploma in Nursing and Midwifery at Lewanika College of Nursing and Midwifery in Western Province of Zambia, shares her experience of learning and obtaining clinical skills at the School.

“Growing up in a remote village in Shibuyunji District of Central Province, I witnessed my grandmother who was a traditional birth attendant, assisting women and girls to deliver babies. She and many other traditional

birth attendants would perform these deliveries at home, using local herbs to try and address complications during delivery. Many mothers and newborns lost their lives, and this made me sad. I was determined to become a midwife, in order to save the lives of women and girls in remote rural areas” – says Michelle.

Alongside her full-time studies, Michelle provides life-saving information and deliver services to women, young people, and newborn babies at Lewanika General Hospital. She is aware of the diverse challenges faced by many nurses and midwives in the call of duty, especially those in remote rural facilities. Yet, she remains optimistic and looks forward to completing her studies and being posted in facilities where they can continue to save the lives of women, girls and newborns.

Lewanika College of Nursing and Midwifery was opened in 1970, offering an enrolled nursing programme. In 2016, with support from UNFPA, the Enrolled Nursing/Midwifery Programme was upgraded to Registered Nursing/

Midwifery Programme, with the aim of enhancing knowledge and skills in the management of maternal and neonatal health. In 2018, the College further introduced the Direct Entry Midwifery Programme, to increase the number of trained midwives across the country. With financial support from the Maternal Health Trust Fund (MHTF), UNFPA procured and delivered various training models for use in the skills lab, as well as textbooks and other ICT equipment for use by students at the school. UNFPA is also providing scholarships for in-service student midwives who are specifically serving within the Western Province. Since 2018, a total of 215 midwives supported by UNFPA have graduated from the school, and are currently serving within the Province, including in hard-to-reach communities.



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