

April - June 2022



UNITED NATIONS
ZAMBIA



NEWS LETTER



FOREWORD

from the Resident Coordinator



On behalf of the UN Country Team, I welcome you to our newsletter covering the period April – June 2022. I am excited that you have continued following our work as we respond to the development priorities of the Government and people of Zambia.

As you might be aware, 2022 marks the end of the GRZ-UN Zambia Sustainable Development Partnership Framework, the means through which we have provided support to Zambia since 2016. We have, as a result, been busy preparing the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), in partnership with the Government and other stakeholders. The UNSDCF or Cooperation Framework, which you will read about, will define our support to Zambia's development for the next phase - 2023-2027.

The UNSDCF has been developed through an inclusive and consultative approach, having started last year with the Common Country Analysis (CCA), which is an impartial, collective, and independent analysis that helped us to determine our priorities for the next programming cycle to support Zambia.

In this issue we also feature some of our work on climate change, social protection, refugees and other persons of concern, education, food systems and agriculture as well as COVID-19 and other health issues. Other articles showcase our work on youth and disability inclusion, girls and women's empowerment, and media freedom.

Happy reading and note that we welcome your feedback.

I look forward to sharing our next issue soon.

Beatrice Mutali
UN Resident Coordinator

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Beatrice Musimbi Mutali is the new UN Resident Coordinator in Zambia



Ms Mutali with President Hichilema

On 27 June, the new UN Resident Coordinator in Zambia, Ms. Beatrice Mutali presented her letters of credence to Zambia's President His Excellency Mr. Hakainde Hichilema with a commendation to the country for fostering peace.

"I wish to commend you, the Government and people of Zambia maintaining political stability in the country and playing a sustained role in promoting peace in the Southern African region.

President Hichilema took the opportunity to call on the United Nations to help ensure peace and security across the world.

"The UN system partially was created post-second world war to address these issues [peace and security], to bring about stability, peace and freedoms," he said.

He also pledged government's commitment to ensuring law and order in the country.

On 8 May, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres appointed Beatrice Mutali of Kenya and the United Kingdom as the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Zambia, with the approval of the host government.

Ms. Beatrice Mutali brings more than 25 years of private and public sector experience within the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights, covering Middle- and Low-Income countries, and a combination of development and humanitarian contexts.

Prior to her appointment as UN Resident Coordinator, she served as United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Deputy Regional Director for East and Southern Africa, UNFPA's Representative to South Africa

and Country Director for Botswana and Eswatini, and UNFPA's Deputy Regional Director for West and Central Africa. In all these positions, she has led successful strategy development and implementation, policy engagement, resource mobilization, programme management, and has built strong partnerships.

Prior to joining the UN system in 2014, Ms. Mutali held several leadership roles within the area of Family Planning, HIV/AIDS and Sexual and Reproductive Health from organizations such as Merck/MSD, the International HIV/AIDS Alliance, the International Planned Parenthood Federation and Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

Ms. Beatrice Mutali holds a master's degree and a bachelor's degree in Economics from Kurukshetra University, India.



Ms Mutali presents her letters of credence to Zambia's President Mr Hakainde Hichilema



Stakeholders Meet to Validate the UN Zambia Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for 2023-2027

On 9 June 2022, representatives from Zambian Government ministries and other stakeholders that included Civil Society, quasi-government institutions, academia, private sector, people living with disabilities and youth organisations convened in Lusaka under the auspices of the Ministry of Finance and National Planning and the United Nations in Zambia to validate the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for support to Zambia for the period 2023-2027. In total, about 200 people participated in this hybrid event.

The UNSDCF or Cooperation Framework is a UN programming document that will guide support by the UN in Zambia over the next five years in line with Zambia's development priorities as contained in the 8th National Development Plan. It is a product of a highly inclusive, consultative process with a wide range of stakeholders under the leadership of the Ministry of Finance and National Planning. The process included engagements on the Common Country Analysis (CCA), which is an impartial, collective and independent analysis that helped the UN to determine its priorities for the next programming cycle.

Speaking at the validation workshop, Ministry of Finance and National Planning Permanent Secretary for Monitoring and Evaluation, Mr. Trevor Kaunda underscored the importance of the Cooperation Framework in helping Zambia meet its development priorities.

And speaking on behalf of the UN system in Zambia, Mr. Lionel Laurens, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative, called for partnerships in implementation of the Cooperation Framework.

"Implementation of the Cooperation Framework during the next five years is key in contributing to the desired positive impact and transformational changes. There is a need for strong collaboration, reinvigorated partnerships and joint efforts for fruitful synergies from all key stakeholders if the Cooperation Framework is to achieve its intended objectives," said Mr. Laurens.

A similar consultative meeting was on 7 June held with Cooperating Partners who shared their perspectives and expectations on UN support from 2023-2027. Input from participants will be used to finalise the Cooperation Framework and thus ensure that it addresses major national priorities and contribute significantly towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Agenda 2030. The Cooperation Framework is expected to be launched shortly.



Emergency cash transfers supporting vulnerable households managing mental health in Zambia

Kester Mushabati was diagnosed with a psychosocial disability in 2005. Her husband deserted her and left her with their four children when her illness deteriorated. She returned to her mother's village in Kazungula District and conceived three more children. At 76 years of age, Kester's mother takes care of her daughter, Kester's seven children, and a host of other children and grandchildren. The family survives through farming though the recent harvest was spoiled when elephants destroyed much of the crop.

Things were not always like this. Before Kester was diagnosed with the disability, she was the pillar of her mother's life. But when her illness intensified, Kester would go missing for days, and stop eating.

With the support from the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, Kester was enrolled in the Social Cash Transfer programme. Then with the COVID-19 pandemic, Kester also benefitted from the COVID-19 Emergency Cash Transfer (C-ECT) with a total sum of 2,400 Zambian kwacha.

To respond to socio-economic impacts of the pandemic, the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services with technical support from UN agencies (UNICEF, UNDP, ILO, WFP) has been implementing the C-ECT programme to support over 200,000 households in 25 districts in Zambia.

"Most of the money is used to buy food and other basic items for Kester and her children," says Flanel. "The support from the Social Welfare team and partners really helps ease the burden."

The COVID-19 social economic impacts have been felt nationwide. The C-ECT programme was launched to address these challenges and help families avoid negative coping mechanisms such as removing children from school, selling property or reducing on the number of meals.

"It's not easy to contain her when she is going through the episodes," says Flanel Zwanga, Kester's mother.

"She will leave home anytime and sometimes may not come back. Taking care of a person with a psychosocial disability is not easy."



Kester with her seven children and grandchild in Kazungula District, Zambia

Kester's two oldest children completed Grade 12 and obtained good results. However, they cannot proceed to tertiary education due to financial constraints. Her oldest son got two distinctions and two merits but opted to venture into a curio business to support his grandmother.

Mental health remains an issue that raises a lot of discussion and uncertainty in Zambia. Many cases are understood locally as being linked to witchcraft and superstition.

The C-ECT provides stabilisation support to affected families and helps reduce deprivation and combat stigmatisation. This is much needed relief while initiatives to

strengthen mental health services at local level remain minimal.

Working closely with the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services and the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities, UNICEF and other implementation partners prioritised persons with disabilities as beneficiaries of the COVID-19 ECT programme, as they are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 amidst other existing inequalities.

The UN programme is financially supported by the European Union, the governments of Germany (through the KfW development bank), Ireland, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom.



How Food Based Guidelines are Helping Zambia Tackle Malnutrition

The world's first dietary guidelines were published by Walter Atwater at the Wesleyan University in Connecticut in 1890. The advice given in the guidelines was to eat moderately and avoid excessive intake of sugary and starchy foods. Food science and the science of human physiology have advanced considerably since then. Much more is now known about the complex biochemical composition of food and how the human body processes it. This has enabled issues such as malnutrition, obesity and allergies, problems that afflict large proportions of the world's population, to be targeted via dietary guidelines. Science has also revealed the effects that diet has on major diseases such as diabetes and has spurred the development of very specific medicines to treat specific ailments.

The advances in food science have been incorporated into various programmes on a global scale to improve dietary choices and raise awareness of the effects that poor diets have on heart health, gut health and a range of conditions that reduce the human life span and quality of life. Nevertheless, despite the growing body of knowledge on what constitutes a healthy diet, there is no one-size-fits-all when it comes to recommending an optimal diet.

There are huge cultural differences associated with eating and food availability in terms of type and quantity, and the genetic components of human metabolism mean that even identical twins have different ideal nutritional requirements. Also, attitudes to food and eating can be firmly set, making them difficult to change even when proposed changes to diet are beneficial. Additionally, what a person eats are not only determined by that person's knowledge, food preparation skills and personal preferences, but also by their food environment and the availability and accessibility of foods.

Developing National Food-Based Dietary Guidelines

A favoured means for countries to promote a healthy diet is to develop national Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDGs). The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) website includes nearly one hundred FBDGs published by national governments from all regions of the world. There are, however, countries that have not yet produced guidelines. For decades, FAO has been helping many of these countries to do so, redoubling efforts during the Decade of Action on Nutrition.

Zambia is one example of where FAO has been assisting the Zambian Ministry of Agriculture to produce dietary guidelines through a fully inclusive process, involving all stakeholders from the planning stage to field testing and evaluation.

The technical working group comprised experts from 21 organizations covering diverse sectors. A key step in the early stages of the process involved carrying out a comprehensive situation analysis and evidence review. This covered topics such as risk factors and problems associated with diet; food consumption patterns; review of policies and programmes related to food and nutrition; review of behaviours and food-related habits; review of other related behaviours; food environment and settings; the media; and some aspects of food sustainability. The review also looked at evidence on the relationship between diet and lifestyle and nutrition and health outcomes. The resulting report was technically validated during a workshop held in 2018, which included additional stakeholder organizations.

A Zambian team attended an FAO training workshop in Tanzania in 2018 where it learned the basics of applying diet modelling. They developed a diet model



that included six food groups: cereals and tubers; fruits; meat, fish and eggs; pulses, nuts and seeds; vegetables; and a discretionary choices group that contained honey. The initial food basket contained 23 items selected by the multi-sectoral technical working group based on Zambian consumption patterns, availability, cultural acceptability, nutritional composition, and bodily requirements. This was expanded to 30 items following input derived from a World Food Programme (WFP) project. The composition of the food basket considered carbohydrate, protein and fat content as well as micronutrient content, particularly for iron and calcium. The cost of the diet and food availability were also considered, to make the suggested changes to diet



realistic and affordable. By using evidence-based selection criteria, it was possible to outline a national diet that could tackle some of the major health problems currently faced by many Zambians.

Food amounts recommendations on the plate

The final food group breakdown of the proposed diet can be represented by a chart, the food graphic, which is a visual representation of a plate of food for Zambia. It is recommended that the overall diet contain the various food groups in the proportions indicated to provide optimal nutrition for a typical Zambian individual, but quantities are not prescriptive, they represent guidelines.

In December 2021, the FBDGs were finalized and launched by the Government of Zambia. The aim is not only to reduce undernutrition in the country, particularly that among children, but also to prevent and reduce the risk of NCDs, while meeting nutrient and energy requirements.

Problems associated with a poor diet in Zambia represent a major public health challenge, not only in terms of undernutrition but also in terms of obesity, cancer and cardiovascular disease.

It is anticipated that the recommendations made to the general public, and the additional recommendations made to those with special nutritional needs, including under five-year-olds, adolescent girls and pregnant and lactating women, will improve the overall health of the Zambian population.

However, this work was careful to point out that improved health does not solely rely on improved eating habits, as outlined in the FBDGs, but also incorporates elements of lifestyle, including physical exercise, food hygiene and personal hygiene. As the technical document indicates, "Public policy makers, programme developers, civil society organizations, the private sector, and the general population have a role in promoting and implementing the guidelines in order to reduce the prevalence of malnutrition in Zambia." Science has shown that a healthy body promotes good mental health and an incidental result of developing FBDGs for Zambia and other countries could be improvement in mental as well as in physical health.

The Zambian FBDGs demonstrate the importance of using the best available scientific knowledge in the field of nutrition and associated disciplines to address the most important nutritional challenges at country level while taking local agrifood systems into account. As knowledge of the

elements that contribute to healthy eating evolves, so do national dietary guidelines.

The University of Zambia's Dr Chiza Kumwenda said, "Up until November 2021, Zambia lacked harmonized food and nutrition guidance. There were high levels of malnutrition and rising levels of overweight and obesity as well as diet-related non-communicable diseases.

The Zambian FBDGs cut across the demographic divide, responding to the food and nutrition information relevant to both rural and urban communities. Essentially, every Zambian from infant to adult owns the FBDGs. Zambians now have an 'encyclopedia' of healthy eating and lifestyles that promotes good health for all. This has resulted in immediate and long-term benefits to the country.

The development process has contributed to capacity building among Zambians and provided a platform for interaction among professions from several sectors. The FBDGs currently represent teaching reference materials at tertiary level. The immediate and long-term benefits of the Zambia FBDGs will be seen in the national nutrition landscape, which will continuously improve if we maintain the momentum recorded during the implementation phase."

With a little help, refugee regains productive life in Zambia's Mantapala settlement

Refugees fleeing their homes because of conflict are often forced to abandon their belongings and livelihoods.

Kaulu Mututu, 35, is a refugee who was forced to flee his home in Pweto, South-Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), as a result of inter-ethnic clashes between security forces and armed militia groups. With his wife and three children, he arrived exhausted and traumatized in Zambia's Mantapala settlement in 2018, not knowing what the future held for them.

Back home, Kaulu had a reasonably comfortable life as a farmer and carpenter. However, in Mantapala, as days grew into weeks and with nothing to do, he quickly

became depressed. He did not have the necessary tools to continue his craft and importantly, to earn an income.

As a result, he lost confidence in his ability to support his family.

"It was quite difficult for me to provide for my family because I did not have the resources to re-establish my business," Kaulu recalls.

Kaulu's predicament, like that of many refugees, underscores commitment by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to establishing long-term solutions to help people of concern get back on their feet as quickly as possible and live with dignity.

Amongst other refugees, UNHCR working with its social assistance partner, Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), identified Kaulu as struggling to support his family. The monthly cash grant of approximately \$47 was insufficient to cover his family's basic needs.

In 2018, UNHCR and the NCA launched a short-term construction project to build toilets and showers in the settlement. The programme solicited casual labourers from Mantapala settlement and Kaulu was fortunate to be one of them.

"I used the \$50 I was paid for working on the construction project as start-up capital to set up my carpentry business," said Kaulu.



Although Kaulu purchased a hammer, a wood-plane, and a saw, they were insufficient to get the business off the ground.

When another UNHCR livelihoods partner Caritas Czech Republic (CCR) established the Improve-Your-Business project to support growing enterprises with a one-off grant of \$200, Kaulu qualified as a recipient.

"I started making beds, tables, and display cabinets with raw materials sourced from government-licensed timber merchants," he says. "I am happy that today my business has picked-up because of the support."

With this small scale project, he bought more tools to better equip his carpentry business.

"I started making beds, tables, and display cabinets with raw materials sourced from government-licensed timber merchants," he says. "I am happy that today my business has picked-up because of the support."

Although Kaulu's furniture-making business began with a modest number of customers from the refugees and host community, he still faced problems that slowed its growth.

The COVID-19 pandemic impeded transportation and regular manufacturing of goods. Rising commodity prices also had a detrimental effect on the business. Many people in the settlement lost income and job opportunities, making it difficult for customers to buy the furniture Kaulu produced.

Kaulu was given \$230 by CCR and UNHCR as part of a new initiative to assist over 700 growing entrepreneurs to get through COVID-19 generated obstacles. The help was to prevent businesses such as Kaulu's from collapsing.

"Caritas Czech Republic in coordination with UNHCR designed the livelihoods recovery intervention to assist emerging entrepreneurs to overcome the impact of COVID-19 on their businesses.

"Refugees qualifying for this assistance are encouraged to diversify their enterprises to reduce the negative impact that the pandemic may have on their businesses," said UNHCR Representative Pierrine Aylara.

Kaulu bought an egg incubator, a solar panel, and three indigenous breeds of chickens to start poultry farming.



Kaulu working at his Carpentry shop in Mantapala settlement

"I came to realise that I cannot focus on carpentry alone," says Kaulu, believing that if one of his ventures failed, the other would be productive enough to sustain his family.

In addition to financial assistance, the Zambian government, through the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS), provided free capacity-building training in business skills, record-keeping, and financial literacy, to refugees and local business owners in Nchelenge, the district in which Mantapala settlement is established .

"This really helped me make sure that my businesses are run knowledgeably," he says. "I now feel complete as a business owner."

Kaulu's enterprises have grown significantly over the months, and he has hired a refugee and Zambian worker to help operate his businesses.

"I am excited to work with Kaulu," says Lubelwe Kataya, the Zambian worker at Kaulu's carpentry workshop.

"Not only am I earning enough money to feed my family but I am learning carpentry and I look forward to a day when I will be able to start my own furniture-making business too," he says.

Kaulu's presence in Mantapala settlement is valued by refugees and the local community. He is considered a role model to many.

He now owns a two-hectare farm growing maize and rearing poultry. He bought the farm in 2021 using the savings from his businesses. He has also built a brick house.

"His initiatives have helped many people in the settlement and local community," says Headman Nsemiwe. "Refugees and local community members and even those from Nchelenge town order and buy his products."

In giving back, Kaulu teaches young refugees and their local peers carpentry and poultry farming.

"I want to share the skills I've learned so that they can also become productive and self-sufficient without having to rely solely on government and other humanitarian help."

"I am grateful for the help I have received from UNHCR and its partner Caritas to help me back on my feet. Without it, I don't know where I'd be today."



Zambia Launches African Women Leadership Network

Over 300 Zambian women joined the books of African history, as their witnessed the official launch the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) – Zambia Chapter.

In their strides for gender equality, over 300 Zambian women joined the books of African history, as their witnessed the official launch the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) – Zambia Chapter, at a momentous occasion held on 30 March 2022 in Lusaka.

The event brought together women from all works of life, including women politicians, civil servants, entrepreneurs, civil society, women living with disabilities, rural women, and young girls with one common agenda of creating a platform that enhances the leadership of women in the transformation of Africa, with a focus on governance and political participation, peace and security, finance and women's entrepreneurship, youth leadership, agriculture, and social mobilization.

Speaking during the launch, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Zambia, Dr Coumba Mar Gadio underscored the commitment of the UN in Zambia on women empowerment.

"As the UN System in Zambia, we continually strive for action to lift the status of women and girls. The national ownership and commitment of the Zambia AWLN chapter will be crucial towards more concerted and tangible action if we are to see the change we want," Dr Gadio said.

"The UN system in Zambia pledges and reaffirms its unwavering support to the Government of the Republic Zambia, towards the empowerment of women and girls. We would like to suggest to the Government of the Republic of Zambia to consider ratification of some conventions and treaties aimed at advancing gender equality such as Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security and Convention 190 on harassment and violence in the world of work," she added.



Vice President Mutale Nalumango and then UNRC Dr Coumba Mar Gadio with members of the diplomatic corps at the AWLN launch

Giving her keynote and launch speech, Her Honour the Vice President of the Republic of Zambia, Mrs. WK Mutale Nalumango called on women to network to share ideas and enhance their leadership opportunities. She said that the government was commitment to ensuring gender equality and the participation of women in leadership.

"The 29th Chapter brings renewed hope and momentum in advocating for enhanced strategic actions for women's leadership roles across all sectors including women at grassroot levels," Mrs Nalumango said.

Other speakers at the hybrid launch included former President of Liberia and Patron of AWLN Ellen Johnson Sirleaf who congratulated Zambia for joining the AWLN movement and efforts to enhance the leadership of women. Others were UN Deputy Secretary-General Dr. Amina Mohammed who noted that AWLN would support progress on Sustainable Development Goal number 5 on gender equality by ending all forms of discrimination, violence and any harmful practices against women and girls in the public and private spheres.

And Zambia's First Lady of Zambia Mutinta Hichilema noted that Zambia had made significant progress in strengthening women leadership roles across all sectors from politics and peace building to social and private sectors. She reaffirmed her commitment to the empowerment of women.

"As your partner, I reaffirm my commitment to support the implementation of the African Women Leadership Network Zambia chapter, a groundbreaking movement that will enhance the leadership of women and girls towards the Africa and Zambia we want....The future is indeed brighter when

women and girls and present at every table where decisions are made," said Mrs. Hichilema.

The launch also had presentations from the following: UNFPA Deputy Regional Director Beatrice Mutali, Special UN Representative in the Horn of Africa Hanna Tetteh, Deputy Executive Director for UN Women Anita Bhatia, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Africa Ahunna Eziakonwa, AU Special Envoy on Women Bineta Diop and Non-Governmental Organisations Coordinating Council Board Chairperson Mary Mulenga. Others were Zambian parliamentarians Hon. Princess Kasune MP and Hon. Twambo Mutinta MP, and UN Women Special Representative to the AU and ECA and for the establishment of the national chapters, Awa Ndiaye Seck.

AWLN was launched at the UN Headquarters in New York in June 2017, under the auspices of the African Union Commission and the United Nations through the Office of the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security and UN Women. Five years after it was established, the network comprises over 500 African women across generations and sectors.

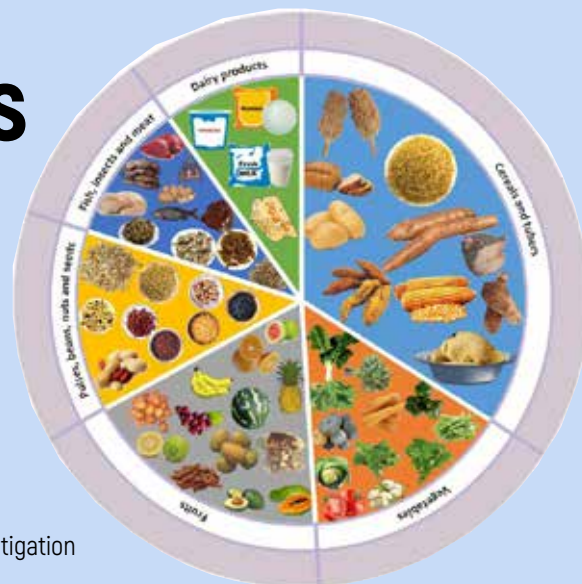
The AWLN Zambia Chapter brings new momentum in calling for more visible and strategic action, with deliberate targeting to reach women leaders across all sectors, including women leaders at the grassroots level. Women's participation and leadership is an essential prerequisite for poverty alleviation and tackling gender inequality.

AWLN is a ground-breaking movement of African women leaders who aim to enhance the leadership of women in the transformation of Africa, in line with Africa Agenda 2063 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



Zambia Food Systems Profile:

Catalyzing the sustainable and inclusive transformation of food systems



Results of a major assessment of the agrifood system show that Zambia has made positive strides in enhancing its food system, as indicated by the following:

- Improving trends in the nutritional status of children under five years old since 2000/2001 and decreasing prevalence of undernourishment between 2009 and 2018.
- Continued increase in agricultural production, driven by land expansion, adoption of improved seed varieties and sustainable land preparation methods.
- Attainment and maintainance of the status of net surplus producer and exporter of maize in the Southern Africa region, with a positive agricultural trade balance.
- Continued rise in the production of oilseed crops like soybeans, groundnuts and sunflower in response to the growing demand for stock feed in the country and in the region.

The following challenges remain in ensuring sustainable food systems in the country:

- Agriculture makes a low and declining contribution to GDP (3 percent in 2019, down from 9 percent in 2010).
- Rural poverty is persistently high, with the most recent estimate at 76.6 percent in 2015.
- Agricultural production diversification remains low, due to continued maize-centric policies.
- High malnutrition levels, particularly among children, with 35 percent of them being stunted.
- Territorial and socio-economic inequities between urban and rural regions in terms of infrastructure and provision of basic services, and also based on gender.
- High deforestation rates, mostly driven by agricultural land expansion, charcoal production and timber extraction, threaten biodiversity and compromise

the country's climate change mitigation potential.

- Heavy reliance on rainfed agricultural production makes the food system increasingly vulnerable to climate shocks.

To make its food systems more sustainable, Zambia could consider formulating and implementing policies to do the following:

- Promote agricultural diversification away from maize, to include other crops and food commodities.
- Encourage consumption of healthy foods and improve availability of nutrition information and education.
- Improve the provision of basic services and infrastructure, particularly in rural areas.
- Offer incentives for rural investment in agricultural production and value addition, such as processing.
- Promote adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices to build resilience in food production.

The assessment was part of a joint initiative launched by the European Union (EU), the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the French Research Centre for Agricultural Development, (CIRAD), in cooperation with governments. Its purpose was to identify key constraints and entry points for innovative policy and investment solutions to make agrifood systems more sustainable and inclusive.

Commenting on the Food Systems Assessment, FAO Zambia Country Representative Suze Percy Filippini reaffirmed FAO's commitment to supporting the transformation to more efficient, resilient and sustainable food systems.

"FAO remains committed to fighting hunger and malnutrition and supporting the transformation to more efficient, resilient

and sustainable agrifood systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, leaving no one behind."

Current Agrifood systems are unable to fulfill their purpose of providing nutritious and healthy food for all and contributing to enhanced livelihood opportunities in an environmentally sustainable way. They are being challenged by several factors, including changing diets, technology, urbanization and climate change. There may be enough food to potentially feed everyone - preventing the dual health burdens of malnutrition and obesity, however, the economic and territorial imbalances are such that agrifood systems do not generate fair economic returns for all actors, particularly for small-scale producers, triggering an endless cycle of precariousness and poverty. They need transforming if we are to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Using a holistic approach, the assessment gathered a wide range of agrifood system actors in Zambia through a consultative process during which they shared views on key issues and challenges and analyzed potential solutions that resulted in the development of the Zambia country profile, that serves as a basis to prioritize interventions in key areas of the agrifood system.

Find the Zambia country profile at the links below to learn about Zambia's agrifood systems:

<https://www.fao.org/3/cb4848en/cb4848en.pdf>

<https://www.fao.org/support-to-investment/our-work/projects/fsa2021/en/>



Improved household nutrition through community cooking demonstrations and food preservation



A colorful spread of locally grown foods at the cooking demonstration

When you meet the Mpezeni Women's Group for the first time, you need to have your dancing shoes on. Make sure you have plenty of energy, as they welcome every visitor enthusiastically with song and dance. This musical routine is part of their delivery of nutrition information through cooking demonstrations to community gatherings.

"We take pride in sharing knowledge about nutrition and teaching both men and women as caregivers on how they can be deliberate about preparing meals that have something from each food group," says women's group chairperson Tomaida Ziwa.

Based in the Nsingo Ward of Chipata District, in the scenic and hilly Eastern province of Zambia, the Mpezeni Women's Group has been functional for over 20 years and now includes men as part of its membership because of increasing male involvement in childcare.

Comprised of 25 members, the group promotes the preservation and consumption of diversified, nutritious food through

cooking demonstrations. Their aim is to ensure that healthy and nutritious cooking is practised in homes – primarily homes with pregnant and breastfeeding women and children under 2 years. In addition, the group also teaches caregivers such as fathers, grandmothers, and siblings to promote nutritional wellbeing of not only the child and mother but the entire household.

A colourful display of food showcases the best of locally grown food and captures three essential food groups to help reduce malnutrition and stunting. These are energy-giving foods such as corn, body building foods that include soy and meat and protective foods represented by the assorted spread of leafy green vegetables.

"It is encouraging to see how many women have been keen to learn and utilize the knowledge about nutrition in their homes. There has been tremendous improvement in the physical appearance of our children ever since we started cooking demonstrations because we are promoting the use of food that is readily available locally," says Monica Tembo, a longstanding member of the group.

Cooking demonstration sessions are just some of the many activities taking place under the Scaling up Nutrition Phase 2 (SUN II) programme, with the aim to advance healthy feeding practices in communities. The Mpezeni Women's Group has utilized the training and inputs received, such as orange maize seed, to demonstrate food preparation and promote food preservation to increase the availability, access, quality, and safety of nutritious foods in the homes of their neighbours and community members.

"When our families are healthy, it frees us up to go about our business and be productive. We don't have to stay home looking after sickly children," says group member Hellen Jere. "We are free to attend trainings and use the skills acquired to tend to our fields and manage our harvest better so that we can sell our products to also contribute to household income."

The SUN II programme ensures good coordination at the community level between line ministries, district nutrition offices, health workers, traditional leaders, community volunteers, and nutrition support groups such as the Mpezeni group. They all play a significant role in ensuring community action towards improving the nutritional status of children under 2 years is achieved.

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.



Members of Mpezeni Women's group after attending a cooking demonstration



Door-to-door Polio Vaccination Campaign: An easy and faster way to reach every child



Following the confirmed outbreak of wild poliovirus in a three-year-old child in Lilongwe, Malawi with onset of paralysis and another case detected in Tete province of Mozambique, Zambia, through the Ministry of Health participated in the multi-country synchronised polio outbreak preparedness and response campaign to prevent any significant resurgence of polio within the country and mitigate the risk of cross-border and international transmission.

Easy access to the vaccine

So far, two rounds of polio Supplementary Immunization Activities (SIAs) have been implemented - in March and April 2022. The frontline polio vaccinators, normally a team of three have been going door-to-door meeting mothers, fathers and guardians and giving polio vaccines to the eligible children - under five years of age.

Amidst her busy schedule of harvesting her crop and nurturing her children, Grace

Mumena, a 27-year-old mother of two, was eager to get her 9-month-old son vaccinated against the poliovirus.

"I set aside a day in the six-day campaign period to wait for the health personnel and community volunteers doing the door-to-door polio vaccination to visit my house and give a chance to my baby to be vaccinated," she said.

The nearest health facility, Njelamani Rural Health Centre, is about 50 kilometers away. This means, like many mothers in her community of Masaiti district in Ndola, she must walk quite a long distance and spend a lot of time to access health services for her family.

"I am very happy that the health personnel decided to conduct a door-to-door immunization campaign. My child was easily and quickly vaccinated and now I can spend the rest of my time harvesting my crops with a peace of mind knowing my child is safe from polio," she added.

Using the Bi-valent Oral Polio Vaccine (bOPV) and the door-to-door vaccination campaign exercise, more than 4 million children under the age of 5 years have been vaccinated in the second round, in all the 116 districts of the country - a huge milestone for Zambia, awaiting the start of the third round.

Raising awareness

To ensure that every eligible child is reached, the campaigns were accompanied by awareness activities. A network of over 4,000 community-based volunteers and mobilizers were engaged to disseminate essential messages and information about polio to sensitize parents and encourage them to have their children vaccinated.

"As a health community volunteer, I help with educating mothers and caregivers on

the importance of vaccinating their children during such immunization campaigns," says Victor Chilongo. "The significance in the awareness building campaign is for us to inform parents that vaccines are safe. Children's lives are saved and their future secured, just by two little drops. After all, no parent wants to see their children ill or paralyzed," he emphasized.

Every child has the right to a healthy and disease-free life. It is the responsibility of every parent to ensure the wellbeing of their children. Health care facilities and givers should also ensure the availability and easy access of vaccination services and good healthcare to help prevent disease outbreaks and ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and community members.

"I do realize the importance of vaccinating my children. I could not forgive myself if I had to lose or see any of them get paralyzed because I failed to have them vaccinated and protected from a disease that I am well informed about," said Grace.

Polio is an infectious viral disease, which mainly affects young children under the age of five. One can get the poliovirus through eating food or drinking water that is contaminated with faecal matter from a person who carries the poliovirus.

Since the detection of the WPV case in Malawi and Mozambique, World Health Organization in Zambia has facilitated and enhanced the implementation of surveillance activities for polio through Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) and Environmental Surveillance, and along with the GPEI partnership will support health authorities in implementing the third round of the polio campaign.



Innovation Helps Zambian Women and Youth Bounce Back in Cross-Border Trade

...UNDP Accelerator Labs & Africa Borderlands Centre are harnessing innovative solutions to put border communities in Zambia in a stronger position to navigate the COVID-19 crisis & stay in business.

Lillian Masiye, an informal female cross border trader, was in dire straits. After sales at her duvets stall plummeted, she applied for a loan from a bank to keep her business going. She was unable to access funding because she did not have a fixed salary or own any property that the bank requires as collateral.

"It was emotionally disturbing," she sighs, with her smile temporarily giving way to a frown.

Lillian had a somewhat flourishing business – importing and selling duvets and kitchenware in Zambia's tourist capital, Livingstone, a hub for visitors to the Victoria Falls, bordering with Zimbabwe – before the COVID-19 pandemic struck.

Her business took a massive hit when the tourism sector was hard-hit by restrictions imposed by the government in response to the pandemic. It prevented her from crossing the borders into neighbouring countries – Zimbabwe, South Africa and Botswana – where she sourced her goods.

The COVID-19 certification fees of 1,000 Zambian Kwacha (US\$55) charged at the borders also increased the cost of doing business for Lillian and many informal cross-border traders, mainly women and youths whose start-up capital, usually drawn from household resources, is very low.

To keep their businesses operating during COVID-19, the women pooled their funds, using middlemen or runners to buy and

deliver their goods. "But there is a lot of risks with such arrangements, and it is twice as expensive," Lillian said.

Livelihoods at Risk

More than 70 percent of informal cross border traders in Zambia are women who rely heavily on small-scale cross border trade for their livelihoods. The COVID-19 crisis has disproportionately affected these women by making it far more complex for them to make ends meet.

With a maroon colourful 'chitenge' (wrapper) tied around her waist, Lillian remembers redirecting her business capital to covering family needs when the pandemic put cross-border trade on hold.

Delays at border crossings due to a lack of cross-border information exchange between border agencies and cumbersome transit regimes are some of the barriers making it difficult for informal traders, particularly women, to do business across borders. Photos: UNDP/Moses Zangar, Jr.

The 27-years-old single mother, with a child and three dependents to put through school, makes only a small profit which is barely enough to meet the basic needs for her and her dependents.

When borders were closed due to COVID-19, tourism and trading livelihoods were immediately affected resulting in loss of income for informal cross border traders. Moreover, the nature of their trade render

them unable to secure loans to manage their business operations, putting their livelihoods at risk.

Stacked Against All Odds

In patriarchal societies like Zambia, when a woman from a marginalised community wants to start or grow her own business, the odds of securing a business loan from a traditional financial institution are heavily stacked against her.

This affects women like Lillian, who was unable to take out a loan for her business because, as a woman, she could not provide administrative papers such as proof of property ownership and income demanded by mainstream banks.

Building Resilience Through Innovation

In a surprising turn of events, Lillian has bounced back, thanks to her entrepreneurial spirit and the Africa Borderlands Centre Innovation Challenge project funded by UNDP and led by its UNDP Accelerator Labs which is helping border communities in Zambia overcome the double hit from COVID-19 and climate change while staying in business.

Lillian is among the 75 beneficiaries – mostly women and youths – who were initially trained in digital and financial literacy as well as basic entrepreneurial and group savings management practices through the far-reaching and innovative project.



The Innovation Challenge project was made possible with initial pooled funding of more than US\$250,000 from the Africa Borderlands Centre (ABC), an initiative led by UNDP to conduct research, policy analysis and programming dedicated to Africa's borderlands and from UNDP Accelerator Labs in Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The ABC aims to improve the wellbeing of communities living along the borders by working with borderlands influencers and leaders to co-create 'innovation challenges', aimed at transforming security, economic and environmental vulnerabilities in the borderlands into opportunities for inclusive development.

The Accelerator Labs are part of a global UNDP initiative that responds to the widespread recognition that business-as-usual will not take us to the world we want in 2030. It will take new solutions that are locally relevant and locally driven, that can be adapted, sustained, and replicated to address these complex needs. The Accelerator Labs create actionable intelligence and test solutions with national partners.

Working through the Cross Border Traders Associations in Livingstone and Victoria Falls Town in Zambia and Zimbabwe respectively, UNDP Accelerator Labs in both countries in 2021, began discussions with local innovators - the "local problem solvers" to

find innovative ways to ensure business continuity for the traders.

Two start-ups stepped in with innovative solutions to address the twin challenges that small-scale cross border traders face.

VillageSavers, a Zambian start-up, created a digital app that helps traders manage their savings digitally through a Self-Help Saving Groups (SHGs) initiative, while providing digital and financial literacy training to help their businesses grow, boosting their incomes so they could pay for schooling and medical bills. As it accelerates its activities, the ABC-funded project also intends to help informal cross border traders buy and sell their goods online without crossing the borders, using the VillageSavers App.

Thumeza, a Zimbabwean logistics start-up, facilitates the movement of goods for traders across borders, using a digital transporter tracking system. This aims to address the challenge the traders face due to travel restrictions and required COVID-19 certifications for every travel across the borderlines.

"Widening access to finance for informal cross border traders into vibrant micro-entrepreneurial activities has a significant potential not only to help reduce poverty but contribute to food security and drive a stronger recovery from COVID-19," says Lionel Laurens, the UNDP Resident Representative in Zambia.

Laurens said UNDP's goal is to work with local actors to find sustainable solutions to the barriers against informal cross border trading, mainly through the expansion of livelihoods opportunities to women and youths for a self-sustaining future, ensuring that "nobody gets left behind."

Lillian, Michelo and 73 other beneficiaries were without a doubt among the most vulnerable members of their communities. Having benefited from digital and financial literacy training and the group savings and tools to keep their businesses growing, they are now in a stronger position to navigate the COVID-19 crisis and stay in business.

"The aim is to increase access to financial products through digital loan management and real time tracking of savings and income, the co-creation of a virtual marketplace and the safe delivery of goods across borders," says Salome Nakazwe, Head of Solutions Mapping at UNDP Accelerator Lab Zambia.

The project is just one example of many innovative approaches taken by UNDP through its Accelerated Labs to help identify local solutions developed at grassroots levels to solve local development challenges in rural Zambia, where poverty stubbornly stands at 78 percent, directly affecting women and adolescent girls who are particularly vulnerable due to lower human capital accumulation, according to World Bank data.



With money in her hands, Lillian Masiye can put food on her table and care for her children



Saving for change in Zambia: an early start matters



Purity adds her K50 saving for the month

Purity Makomero meets with other members of her savings group in the shelter of a local church in the heart of the community of Mulenga in north-western Zambia. The Tukwantakane (meaning 'working together as one') group meets every month. At 15, she is the youngest member of the group.

"I would like to buy more than just nice clothes and food. I would like to buy something bigger, like a bicycle," says Purity, "even if it's second-hand, which I can use to go to school for many years. That way, I can finish my education and become a nurse."

The savings group Purity belongs to is also a Nutrition Support Group, serving the dual purpose of financial inclusion and promoting good nutrition under the Scaling Up Nutrition Phase 2 (SUN II) programme.

Hunger and malnutrition constitute real and present risks in Zambia, with stunting at 35 per cent nationally. The SUN II programme targets vulnerable groups including pregnant and lactating women, children under 2 years of age, and adolescents like Purity with multiple interventions to reduce the drivers of stunting. All women from 15-49 years old are eligible to join savings groups like the one Purity's.

Women make up more than 70 per cent of the agricultural labour force in Zambia and play a critical role in enhancing food security and nutrition, as they are usually primary caregivers. In most places, like Solwezi District, with a high prevalence of undernourishment and a stunting rate of 25.8 per cent, women farmers have significantly less access to land, information, finance, and agricultural inputs. This is where savings groups help break the cycle of malnutrition and stunting – by providing easy access to low-interest loans, and thereby empowering women both economically and socially. In Solwezi District, where Tukwantakane is located, 193 Saving



for Change groups have been formed and 66 of these groups are currently saving.

Purity says she got the inspiration to become a nurse after the first meeting of her group. A lesson on 'What is Good Nutrition?' was taught before they began saving. She says she has been pleasantly surprised at the skills and knowledge she has received as a participant.

"It might not seem like a big deal to some people to save a 50 kwacha (\$3), but it makes me proud to know that I am saving for a good cause. It's for my own future. I am learning how to be responsible with finances no matter how little and that you can never be too young to save," says Purity.

The Tukwantakane Savings Group, formed in January 2022, has a membership of 25 breastfeeding mothers, pregnant women and adolescent girls. Most of the women and girls who were not saving before they joined the savings group became members for similar reasons: the perceived importance and benefits of the groups themselves, to save money, to learn how to grow their money, to improve their lives and to lessen food insecurity. The first meeting involved establishing the rules of the group; thereafter, they declared their monthly savings and each member was eligible to receive a loan.

At least half of the members took loans to buy and re-sell food and other items. Others mentioned using loan money for farming or gardening inputs, food, medicine, and education costs. Each member commits

to save at least 50 kwacha per month and the savings cycle runs for 9 months, after which they will share out the money based on savings and interest accrued from loan repayments.

As she places her money into a blue bowl, she declares openly what the breakdown of her savings is this month: "I was very shy, but the group is helping me feel more confident to speak in front of people because we have to declare loudly how much we are repaying and saving."

This month, 8thgrader Purity saves another K50, bringing her total savings to K100. An additional K5 goes towards the group's social fund. Each time a member makes a deposit, a small portion is allocated to the social fund. Social funds can be accessed by members to cover emergency expenses such as funerals or medical costs.

Coming from a cultural environment that often teaches that children must be seen and not heard, Purity finds it empowering to belong to a group where her voice matters, and her aspirational ideas for empowerment of vulnerable women and girls can be shared.

"I feel lucky to that I am learning how to create a savings plan at a young age, and I look forward to developing other skills like becoming a promoter of good nutrition like some of the other members who have received that training," Purity says. Her single mother trades in tomatoes and other agricultural produce, like many of the

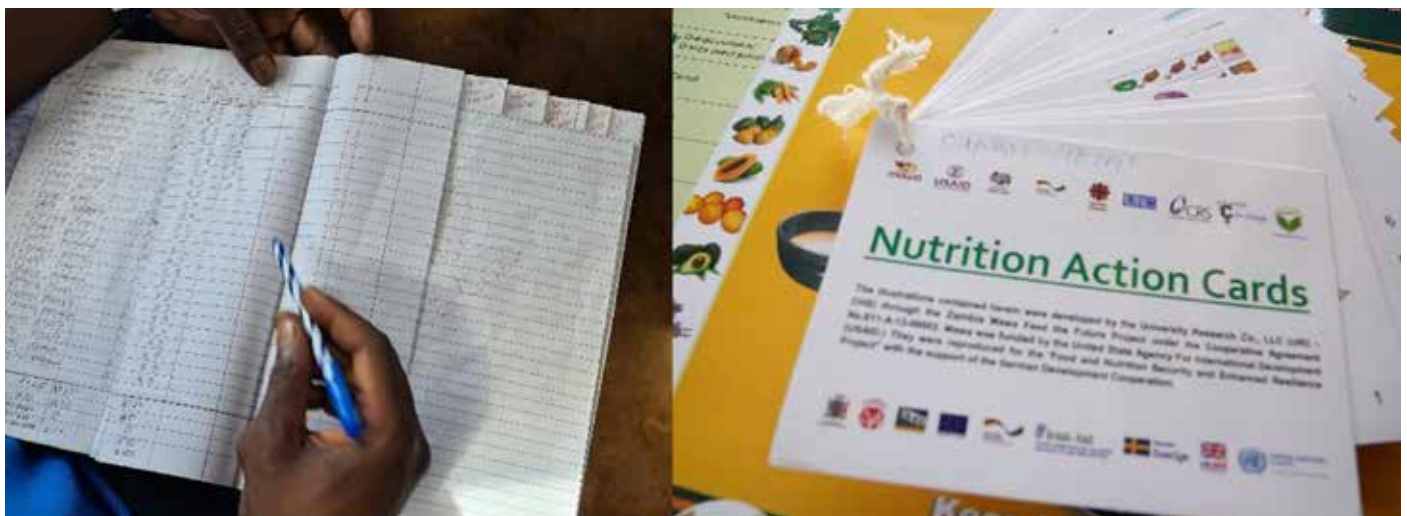
women in Tukwantakane, and belongs to a savings group of her own.

As a Nutrition Support Group, Tukwantakane savings group also promotes good maternal, infant, and young child feeding practices to its members by providing them with nutrition information. The right messages help inform the members to make choices with their savings, such as diversifying their diets through the crops they choose to invest in for consumption or as cash crops.

With seven months of saving left to go, Purity is hopeful of three things – that she will buy a bicycle in the very near future, that she will become a community champion promoting good nutrition, and that focusing on her education will unlock the potential in her to become a nurse.

The Government, with technical support from the World Food Programme, Care and iDE, through SUN II, has so far trained over 1,400 animators in Saving for Change, who have sensitized over 9,000 community members of whom 86 per cent are women. There are currently 502 Saving for Change groups.,

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.



Tukwantakane's ledger book and Social Behavior change materials used to deliver lessons



Zambia poised to strengthen Lake Tanganyika small pelagics fisheries



Supporting fisheries and aquaculture value chain development

FISH4ACP, an innovative programme investing in fisheries and aquaculture value chain development in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, was launched in Zambia on 12 April 2022 to help make its small pelagics sector stronger and more sustainable in a bid to bring better food, reduce poverty and preserve Lake Tanganyika's aquatic resources. The initiative supports value chain development to improve food security, reduce poverty and safeguard aquatic life.

With an estimated yearly production of 11,000 tonnes, small pelagics like sprat sardine, or kapenta as they are locally known, make up some 30 per cent of capture fisheries production in Zambia. Almost half of the jobs in Zambia's fishing industry are in the small pelagics sector, a share that is even higher for women and youth. Overfishing and post-harvest losses, however, hamper growth and sustainability in the country's fisheries sector.

"Zambia is a major producer of small pelagics, a sector that provides a lot of jobs and a healthy meal to many people in our country. However, innovative solutions are needed to make the small pelagics sector more productive and sustainable," said Dr. Anna Songolo, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock.

Zambia is one of 12 countries covered by FISH4ACP, a global initiative led by the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) with funding from the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) aimed at making fisheries and aquaculture value chains in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific more sustainable.

"In supporting innovative solutions to make the kapenta value chain more productive and sustainable, FISH4ACP will contribute to tackling constraints to the sector in Lake Tanganyika, such as overfishing and low profitability," said Matthias Reusing of the EU Delegation to Zambia. "We are confident that FISH4ACP will unlock potential for sustainable fisheries in Zambia and foster sustainable food production," he added.

"What's innovative about FISH4ACP is the approach of looking at sustainable development from the economic, social and environmental angle," said Suze Percy Filippini, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Representative in Zambia. "In Zambia, this can bring significant benefits to small-scale fishers, processors and traders, contribute to economic growth and help tackle some constraints to more productive and sustainable Lake Tanganyika fishing."

A two-day discussion was organised in Mbala with some 40 stakeholders of the Lake Tanganyika kapenta value chain in Zambia from the private and public sector. FISH4ACP aims to involve stakeholders from the start to ensure that its work is well grounded in the realities of small pelagics fisheries and responds to the needs of the value chain actors.

"Stakeholder involvement is key to deliver meaningful results to the livelihoods of the communities that we support," said Masiliso Phiri, FISH4ACP's National Professional Officer in Zambia, adding: "FISH4ACP demonstrates how FAO is transforming food systems in the countries that we serve by achieving the four betters: better production, better nutrition, better environment, better life."

She explained that FISH4ACP will start activities with an in-depth analysis of the small pelagics value chain to help actors better understand it and to plan the road ahead towards a more productive and sustainable sector. At the same time, she added, the initiative will explore opportunities for cooperation with Tanzania, where FISH4ACP is also supporting development of the small pelagics value chain.



Fulfilling the potential of adolescent girls in Zambia



Hellen Kunda, is a grade 12 pupil at Ibolelo Secondary School in Serenje District

According to the Zambia Demographic Health Survey (ZDHS 2018), nearly 30 percent of adolescent girls in Zambia become pregnant by the age of 18. This high rate of teenage pregnancy remains a significant concern and poses major development challenges. When adolescent girls fall pregnant, they drop out of school, which reduces the opportunities to actualize their full potential and entangles them in a perpetual cycle of poverty and inequality.

However, through access to Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) coupled with the re-entry policy implemented in the Zambian education system, many adolescent girls can now reclaim their potential and dignity.

Hellen Kunda, is a grade 12 pupil at Ibolelo Secondary School in Serenje District. She fell pregnant at the age of 17 while she was in Grade 10 and immediately dropped out of school. She was at the brink of forfeiting her potential and future like many other

girls. However, through interaction with her friends who attended a school CSE club, she had access to information on the re-entry policy and was supported to return to school. Hellen, is now in her final secondary school grade and aspires to become a medical doctor.

Ibolelo Secondary School is a public secondary school classified as a rural education institution. Many learners live in the outskirts of the district, often covering long distances to get to school every day, while others are forced to rent small houses in the school vicinity where they fend for themselves. As a result, many learners often engage in informal work to earn money for food and rent, while female learners become vulnerable to transactional sex resulting in unplanned pregnancies and Sexually Transmitted Infections. Furthermore, due to stigma, many learners who either become pregnant or infected with HIV often drop out of school.

With funding support from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) through its implementing partner SAfAIDS has supported the Ibolelo Secondary School to enhance the delivery of CSE. In 2020, the programme supported two teachers at the school to participate in CSE trainings, who in turn cascaded the orientation to all the teachers in the school.

Through this support, the school is now making significant strides to link CSE with demand and uptake of Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) and HIV services among learners, thus preventing unplanned pregnancies, child marriage and HIV infections. Key progress has been made. Notably, in 2020, 13 teenage pregnancies were recorded, among which three learners returned to school after delivery. In 2021, the number of teenage learners who fell pregnant reduced significantly to five, among which four learners returned to school after delivery.



UN Zambia Joins Government and Media in Observing World Press Freedom Day

Every year, media practitioners commemorate the World Press Freedom Day (WPF), to honour the freedom of the media and journalism across the world.

World Press Freedom Day is a day of support for media freedoms and also a day of remembrance for those journalists who lost their lives on duty.

This year, the United Nations System in Zambia joined media practitioners and other stakeholders in the country to observe World Press Freedom Day under the theme "Journalism Under Surveillance", drawn from the global theme "Journalism Under Digital Siege". The theme underlined the impact of the digital era on freedom of expression, the safety of journalists, access to information and privacy. It also provided an opportunity to seek solutions and responses to the new digital threats facing journalism with all concerned stakeholders, such as policymakers, journalists, media representatives, activists, cybersecurity managers and legal experts.

As part of the commemorations of the WPF in Zambia, the WPF Local Organizing Committee organised the National Media Indaba on 4 May 2022 at the Mulungushi International Conference Centre in Lusaka. Zambia's President H.E Mr. Hakainde Hichilema was the Guest of Honor.

The Republican President emphasized the vital role of the media as the fourth estate and reaffirmed his government's commitment to enacting an the Access to Information law as well as protect and honour media freedom in Zambia.

Mr. Hichilema called on the media to desist from reporting non-factual stories and encouraged them to take time to research and ensure that their stories were not biased but based on the truth. He further encouraged the media to take the role of peace building seriously and ensure that their coverage did not contain hate speech and potential to divide people across tribal lines.

Representing the UN System in Zambia, UN Resident Coordinator a.i. Lionel Laurens

said that media freedom and access to information help to empower people and enable them gain control over their own lives, enhance transparency, accountability, and informed public participation in governance. He observed that this cannot be possible without accurate, fair and unbiased information from the media to facilitate communication among citizens and between them and their leaders.

Quoting the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, Mr. Laurens said, "Without freedom of the press, there are no real democratic societies. Without freedom of the press, there is no freedom. He explained that the UN regarded the media as critical in enhancing democracy and promoting the rule of law and attainment of Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions in line with Sustainable Development Goal 16. He reminded the gathering that while digital technology had democratized access to information, it had also created serious challenges.

He further said that the huge increase in online information had also led to a rise in misinformation and disinformation that threatened development objectives and aspirations, noting that online misinformation could endanger peace and security, slow down development and hamper collective problem solving.

"Let us, together, counter the harmful use of digital media and misinformation through robust initiatives to verify the information that citizens receive," he said.

Mr Laurens cited the Verified Campaign (<https://shareverified.com>) as a global initiative of the United Nations, which in collaboration with Purpose, was aimed at equipping people with the skills to identify and combat misinformation, promote the sharing of verified messages and fact-checked information on key issues such as COVID-19 and other crises.

He noted that in Zambia, the UN is in partnership with various partners implementing the iVerify platform to strengthen national capacity to identify and document cases of disinformation,



Zambian journalists march as part of World Press Freedom Day commemorations

misinformation and hate speech, analyse and fact-check information, as well as activate remedial responses through counter-messaging or regulatory decisions.

And in a statement delivered on her behalf by National Commission for UNESCO Senior Programme Officer in Zambia Dr Samson Kantini, UNESCO Director General Ms Audrey Azoulay, noted that journalists played a vital role in providing accurate information, which I vital in times or crises. She said that the digital era had put media workers and their sources at greater risk of being targeted, harassed and attacked.

Speaking at the same event, Media Liaison Committee Chairperson, Enock Ngoma highlighted poor salaries/wages, legal reforms, lack of incentives, failure by government to support media institutions, lack of open spaces for media to air the grievances, politicians sitting on media boards instead of trained journalists, as some of the reasons why the media in Zambia seemed to be under performing.

May 3 was proclaimed World Press Freedom Day by the UN General Assembly in 1993 following a Recommendation adopted at the twenty-sixth session of UNESCO's General Conference in 1991. It serves as an occasion to inform citizens of violations of press freedom - a reminder that in dozens of countries around the world, publications are censored, fined, suspended and closed down, while journalists, editors and publishers are harassed, attacked, detained and even murdered. It is a date to encourage and develop initiatives in favour of press freedom and to assess the state of press freedom worldwide.



Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM) training in Livingstone

UNHABITAT with continued financial support from the Global Land Tools Network (GLTN) and partnership with other stakeholders has continued to support selected local authorities in improving land tenure security of selected informal settlements through the issuance of occupancy licenses in line with the Urban and Regional Planning (URP), Act 2015. The support includes capacity building of targeted councils in the development of a land information system using the Q-GIS

Social Tenure domain Model (STDM) to facilitate efficient issuance of occupancy Licenses.

In March 2022, UNHABITAT conducted the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM) training for the Livingstone City Council. The STDM is a participatory land administration tool developed by the Global Land Tools Network (GLTN) to systematically document people-to-land relationships along the 'continuum of land rights'.



UNHABITAT Zambia Acting National Technical Advisor, Moonga Chilanga hands over a desktop computer to Town Clerk for Livingstone City

During the training, UN-Habitat also officially handed over a high specifications desktop computer to Livingstone City Council Town Clerk, Ms. Getrude Chibiliti, that will be used to develop a stand-alone database. Once established, the system is designed to be fully deployed with all departments able to access the database.

In Rural Central Province, Innovations in Family Planning Target Underserved Communities



Jacqueline Kalunga, a community based distributor demonstrating how the family planning video card works

With support from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom, and in partnership with Marie Stopes, UNFPA in Zambia has invested in the use of animated "video cards" to enhance information sharing and increase demand for family planning in underserved rural communities of Central Province.

The animated video cards were designed as an interactive, user-friendly tool for use by health workers, outreach teams and community-based distributors to facilitate stimulating conversations about family planning at the community and inter-personal level.

The cards which are lightweight, portable units use rechargeable batteries, hence

convenient for use in remote rural areas with limited access to power sources.

Jacqueline Kalunga, a community based distributor in Serenje District of Central Province, shares how the use of the animated video cards expanded her capacities to deliver family planning information and services in her village:

The video card has boosted my confidence and motivation to reach out to more people in my village. I am able to provide quality, accurate and consistent information on sexual and reproductive health and family planning, resulting in increased demand for services. Before I began using the video cards in my village, I would reach an average of 5 clients every week. Today, this number has increased to more than 15 clients every week, owing to increased interest and engaging conversations generated through the video cards. To ensure no one is left behind, the video cards also feature sign-language subtitles for persons with disability"

As part of UNFPA's support to the Government of the Republic of Zambia, the country office continues to invest in innovative strategies to reach the furthest behind first, towards ending unmet need for family planning in Zambia. In 2021, a total of 80,000 additional users of modern contraceptives were reached with support from UNFPA and other donors and partners.



A supportive family helps overcome disability barriers in Zambia



Elias, his mother and sister at the homestead

Elias Mubita remembers the night as a young man when he went to sleep at work and woke up unable to see.

As a young builder in Zambia's Choma district he had shown talent and quickly built up a good pool of clients, got married and with his wife began raising their two children. One evening he had just finished building the walls and laying the roof for one of his clients and was planning to start plastering the following day. One morning, he woke up ready to continue a building project from where he and his team had left off the previous day. To his surprise, he could not see anything apart from a cloudy mist. He tried everything but it just got worse. The doctors prescribed some medication, but nothing changed over the coming days. Elias became visually impaired.

"When I became blind, things started getting tough for me," says Elias. "I had to start learning how to get around and do things without eyesight. At first it was really depressing. My wife of many years deserted me, and I found staying alone very difficult as my children were also very young. I had to make the most difficult decision which was to move back into my mother's house. I am grateful that my mother and siblings welcomed me with willing hands."

Through the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS) and the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ZAPD), Elias was able to connect to other people with different disabilities.

"Soon, I learned how to navigate my way around the house and later the community. I continued building small structures with the help of my brother and other people I would hire. I opened a small shop that is run by my sister and it has been doing very well. My mother is growing old and to reciprocate her support, I have been able to improve mum's house by installing water and electricity. I have also been able to buy several household goods such as a fridge, and a television set."

Elias has shown determination to overcome whatever challenges life has thrown at him.

"As a hobby, I joined a team of runners and participated in the Zambia Paralympics Games held in Lusaka and came out the best in the 100-metre race. I won a trophy and some money that I invested in duck rearing which is another business that has kept me going."

Elias is one of the beneficiaries of Zambia's flagship Social Cash Transfer

(SCT) programme, and during the COVID-19 pandemic, he has also become a beneficiary of the COVID-19 Emergency Cash Transfer (ECT) programme as well.

To respond to socio-economic impacts of the pandemic, MCDSS with technical support from UN agencies (UNICEF, UNDP, ILO, WFP) has been implementing the C-ECT programme to support over 200,000 households in 25 districts in Zambia.

The COVID-19 social economic impacts have been felt worldwide. The C-ECT programme was launched to address these challenges and help families avoid negative coping mechanisms such as removing children from school, selling property or reducing on the number of meals.

"The support through the regular social cash transfers has been helpful", he says. "The additional lump sum of ZMW2400 I received through the COVID-19 ECT made it possible for me to start building a shop right by my mother's house."

"Disability is not by choice and can be very depressing but when you have people around who are willing to support you, it becomes very easy to adapt and live a happy life. Support coming from different donors is also very helpful as sources of income for myself are very limited due to my disability. My dream is to one day have a big shop in my area where people can get most of the day-to-day groceries. The COVID-19 funds I received has allowed me and my family to start investing in this dream. Thank you."

The Zambia National Disability Survey of 2015 estimated prevalence of disability to be 10.9 per cent among adults (18+ years) and 4.4 per cent among children (2-17 years). Persons with disabilities in Zambia continue to face barriers that prevent them from enjoying their full civil, political, economic and social rights mainly due to ignorance and prejudice on disability in communities.

Working closely with the MDCSS and ZAPD, UNICEF and other implementation partners prioritised persons with disabilities as beneficiaries of the COVID-19 ECT programme, given they are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 amidst other already existing inequalities. The UN programme is financially supported by the European Union, the governments of Germany (through the KfW development bank), Ireland, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom.



Joint SDG Fund Supports National Planning and Budgeting in Zambia

As part of the SDG funded Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) Joint Programme, UNDP provided critical support towards the implementation of the Planning and Budgeting Act No.1 of 2020, whose aim is to provide for an integrated national planning and budgeting process by strengthening accountability, oversight and participation mechanisms.

In doing so, UNDP partnered with the Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research (ZIPAR), a national think tank, to provide timely capacity building through the preparation of a Budget Analysis Toolkit and the provision of targeted technical trainings for law makers (Members of Parliament) and policy makers (Permanent Secretaries). Beyond raising awareness on the national budget and its formulation process, the Budget Analysis Toolkit will strengthen the capacity of policy and law makers and the public on the analytical activities involved in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of the national budget.

Specifically, the Toolkit will facilitate understanding and interpreting of the national budgets within the national development planning and financing. With the toolkit, members of the executive and legislative branches of government, are better equipped with knowledge, skills, competences, and practical examples for making evidence informed inputs, comments, and advocating for the right fiscal policies to be employed towards the achievement of the national objectives and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The training seminar for the Members of Parliament was officially opened by the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly Hon. Malungo Chisangano on 19 December 2021, followed by three targeted sessions for MPs, and Staff of the National Assembly. The Budget Analysis Toolkit was launched on the 23 February 2022 in Chilanga district by the Secretary to the Cabinet, Patrick

Kangwa in a training seminar attended by Permanent Secretaries representing all key sectors and government ministries. A total of 49 MPs and Clerking Staff of the National Assembly attended the training seminars while 59 PSs participated for the members of the executive, bringing the total number of beneficiaries to 108 out of the targeted one hundred representing 108% achievement. From the 108 participants, 48% were female while 52% were male, showing a particularly good gender representation.

Following the training there has been an overwhelming demand for the Budget Analysis Toolkit, from the various spheres of the government, the public, the private sector and the donor community, whose interest has gone beyond just understanding the budget, but has also triggered more discussions around fiscal space for SDGs and budget transparency. For the National Assembly, the training on budget analysis and the Toolkit were as they will enhance the capacity of the MPs and improve Parliament's oversight role in budget scrutiny and interpretation. In addition, the Toolkit came at a time when the new government and Parliament had just initiated their mandates, and good proficiency in subjects such as the budget forms the basis for their day-to-day responsibilities.

In the backdrop of the new government's focus on transparency and accountability, the launch of the Toolkit calls for controlling officers, as fore runners in helping government to execute and account for the public funds, to gain a better understanding and be better equipped to not only scrutinize the national budget, but to also meaningfully master the various analytical issues on the budget. Permanent Secretaries have the most crucial role in ensuring enhanced internal control systems to promote greater transparency and accountability in the utilization of public resources.

The training has had an overwhelming acceptance and demand from the three arms government, which have renewed requests for more support on planning and budgeting in line with the 8NDP and the SDGs. UNDP will continue leveraging from the catalytic SDG Fund supported INFF Joint Project to provide the critical capacity strengthening for the government at national and sub-national levels to enhance evidence-based planning, budgeting, and financing for SDGs. And within the implementation of the National Planning and Budgeting Act no. 1 of 2020, UNDP will provide targeted training in areas such as sector budget analysis, gender-based budgeting, constituency development resource mobilization and funding, budget tracking, domestic resource mobilization.



UNDP Resident Representative, Mr. Lionel Laurens with Permanent Secretary Monitoring and Evaluation, MoNFNP Mr. Trevor Kaunda (left) and Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet, Mr. Siazongo Siakalenge at launch of the National Budget Assessment Toolkit.



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