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FOREWORD

BY THE RESIDENT COORDINATOR



Welcome to the first quarter of the United Nations (UN) Newsletter covering the period January to March 2024, where we highlight the remarkable efforts and impactful initiatives of the United Nations in Zambia Delivering as One UN.

In this edition of our newsletter, we shine a spotlight on the invaluable support provided by the United Nations to Zambia during challenging times. As the country grapples with the dual crises of cholera outbreaks and drought, the UN's unwavering commitment to the well-being of Zambian communities has never been more evident.

Amidst the alarming declaration of drought as a national disaster, coupled with the persistent threat of cholera outbreaks, the United Nations swiftly mobilized resources and expertise to mitigate the impact on vulnerable populations. In late January, the UN received critical funding amounting to USD 2.5 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), followed by an additional USD 1,090,000 from the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) in February. These funds have been instrumental in bolstering the UN's cholera response efforts, enabling us to provide essential assistance which included cholera vaccines, delivering safe saving medical care where it is needed most.

Furthermore, as the country grapples with the devastating effects of drought, the United Nations remains steadfast in its commitment to provide assistance and support, with attention to the most vulnerable. Through initiatives aimed at enhancing food security, promoting sustainable agricultural practices, and building resilience among vulnerable communities, the UN is working tirelessly to address the root causes of the crisis and ensure a brighter future for all Zambians. As we navigate these challenges together, let us draw strength from our collective resolve and unwavering commitment to leaving no one behind. The stories shared in this newsletter serve as a testament to the transformative power of solidarity and cooperation in times of adversity.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership as we strive to build a more resilient and prosperous Zambia for generations to come.

Happy reading!

Beatrice Mutali
UN Resident Coordinator



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United Nations provides \$2.5 million to fight cholera in Zambia

The United Nations (UN) has allocated \$2.5 million in response to the cholera outbreak in Zambia. The funds, provided by the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), will be used to support efforts by the Government in controlling the further spread of the disease.

As of 31 January 2024, a total of 16,258 cases were reported, including 594 deaths since the outbreak started in October last year, according to the Zambia National Public Health Institute (ZHPHI).

The CERF funds will help cholera case management at health facility level and access to water and sanitation at homes, schools, and health facilities in the most affected areas. Other activities to be prioritized are awareness raising and community engagement through training and deployment of community-based volunteers.

Additionally, the funding will support the protection of key groups, particularly women and girls, who might face the risk of experiencing gender-based violence and sexual exploitation as secondary impacts.

The UN Resident Coordinator in Zambia, Beatrice Mutali, has pledged continued UN support to helping Zambia respond to the emergency.

"We are grateful to CERF for providing emergency funding in a speedy manner. As the UN in Zambia, we are here to support all the way. We are on the ground, through UNICEF and WHO as technical leads with other agencies supporting and Delivering as One to help the Government fight this cholera outbreak," said Ms Mutali.

Through WHO and UNICEF, the UN recently provided 1.7 million vaccines to Zambia, deployed 26 experts and made available more than \$600,000 through core funds to support the Government's immediate cholera response.

The other support provided included the provision of 320,000 sachets of Oral Rehydration Solution, nearly 6,000 test kits, chlorine, soap and personal protective equipment, among other critical supplies.

Zambia is facing an unprecedented cholera outbreak, with the fatality rate around four percent, and children aged below five years being disproportionately affected. The current outbreak has the capital city Lusaka as the epicentre and has been also fueled by the floods occurring in many parts of the country.





United Nations Responds to Zambia's Drought Disaster and Emergency



In response to the Presidential declaration of the drought national disaster and emergency in Zambia, the United Nations (UN) is working with the Government in preparing a drought response plan to support affected households in 84 severely affected districts across seven provinces.

The UN Resident Coordinator in Zambia, Beatrice Mutali, says the UN family has been getting ready to support Zambia and recently developed a Multi-hazard Preparedness and Response Plan to help the country to navigate challenges posed by the onset of El Niño conditions and climate change, as well as the unprecedented cholera outbreak ongoing.

"With the drought response plan, we expect the government to launch a humanitarian appeal that we hope will enable us to mobilize about USD30 million to provide humanitarian support, livelihoods recovery, and resilience building for the over 1 million households of which a significant number are children, at risk of food insecurity, acute malnutrition, and disease," Ms Mutali said.

The dry spell has from mid-January this year affected most of the central and southern half of the country, that has received less than normal rainfall leaving 1 million hectares of maize destroyed, almost half of the country's maize cultivation. It is also projected that the drought will lead to a power deficit or

430 Megawatts and affect ground and surface water levels, with severe consequences for sectors beyond agriculture since +80 per cent of Zambia electricity generation comes from hydropower.





UN Coordinator for El Niño and UNICEF Regional Director Call for international solidarity and support for drought-stricken Zambia



Reena Ghelani, the UN Assistant Secretary General and Climate Crisis Coordinator for the El Niño / La Niña response and Eva Kadilli, UNICEF Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa, called for international solidarity and urged for concerted efforts to support the humanitarian response during their visit to Zambia.

Children and communities in Zambia need urgent support as the country faces a severe drought induced by El Niño, while still battling to recover from a historic cholera outbreak.

The UN representatives met with Government and local partners involved in ongoing efforts to address both the drought and the cholera outbreak and heard from communities and NGOs working on the frontlines of the humanitarian crisis.



“Communities affected by the drought need immediate support in terms of cash and food assistance. At the same time, we must help them become more resilient to climate shocks. The farmers we met who are using climate-smart techniques have been able to harvest some crops despite the drought. This shows us the importance of investing in climate adaptation for countries like Zambia that will face more frequent and severe droughts in the future,” warned Reena Ghelani.

The visit followed a recent declaration by President Hakainde Hichilema of a State of Emergency and National Disaster, noting that 84 of the country’s 116 districts were affected by the prolonged drought and 1 million acres of crops, about half the country’s planted area, had been destroyed.

Experts have warned that the drought will impact food production and electricity generation. Communities in Zambia rely mainly on hydropower, and its consequences could last until the end of the lean season in early 2025. The crisis could have regional implications as well, because Zambia is a major maize exporter in the region.

The Zambian Government has reported over 22,400 cholera cases since last year and more than 720 deaths. Over 8 million people are exposed to severe and intense drought and 6 million people are at risk of food insecurity, who are to be targeted in the response

according to the El Niño Impact assessment, with about 40,000 people facing emergency levels of food insecurity.

“Children are the most impacted by climate shocks, and the impacts of El Niño in the region have been devastating. In Zambia, a large number of the population in need, about 3 million, are children. Throughout the visit, we have been able to interact with community members, including female farmers. They are worried for their children as the drought could lead to an increase in malnutrition cases. This will require immediate attention and UNICEF is ready to scale up our response in country, in coordination with the Government, the UN family and partners,” said Eva Kadilli.

Preliminary assessments indicate that over half of households surveyed have either no food stock left or less than one month supply available, and that more than 57 per cent of households assessed are already employing crisis and emergency level coping strategies.

The United Nations in Zambia has put together a multi-hazard preparedness and response plan to support Government-led efforts, and is calling upon international partners to join forces with the UN, to be able to provide emergency assistance and boost preventive measures and sustainable recovery.



Active case-finding helps to curb Zambia cholera outbreak



Zambia declared a cholera outbreak in October 2023. Three months later, cases began to decline as response efforts were strengthened through a concerted push by the national health authorities with support from international and local partners, frontline health workers, and community-based volunteers.

Among the key outbreak response measures that have helped turn the tide against the outbreak is early detection and reporting of cases at the community level. Every day, active case-finding teams visit households where cases have been reported to ensure that other potential cases are detected quickly to prevent further transmission. The teams also provide households with comprehensive information on how to prevent cholera.

Through its Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response platform, World Health Organization (WHO) has supported the Ministry of Health's surveillance efforts, at both community and health facility levels. The Organization provides technical guidance, tools and support with data analysis and interpretation.

It is early morning in Kalikiliki, an informal settlement in Zambia's capital, Lusaka. The active case-finding team from the nearby Kalingalinga Health Centre is en route to a household that has reported a case of cholera. The team will visit several households during the day, each member playing an essential role in ensuring that they identify

other potential cholera cases and engage with community members to prevent more cases and deaths.

Active case finding is very important to the cholera outbreak response, says Chola Shimangwala, Environmental Health Officer for Lusaka District. Accounting for 86% of the total cholera cases countrywide, the district needs to find out what the source of the infection is, whether it is environmental or due to individual or household risk factors.

"This means we are not just shooting in the dark. Active case finding gives us a clue on which area to concentrate our efforts and resources and improve our interventions," says Shimangwala.

Lusaka's six sub-districts all have active case-finding teams made up of around 120 people.

When the team in Kalikiliki arrives at their first stop, they find that a 12-year-old boy was discharged that morning from Levy Mwanawasa University Teaching Hospital's cholera treatment centre.

"When we reach the household with the reported case, I collect data on some of the things that they may have eaten, some of the places that they may have visited, and on the number of people that have been exposed, for us to determine who is potentially at risk," explains Chilufya Kafula, an environmental health technologist and the team member responsible for collecting data at the

household level.

"This reduces the spread of cholera among community members, especially among people who have been in close contact with the case," adds Lweendo Namitondo, the environmental health officer who supervises the team.

If they identify anyone with symptoms, the team refers the person to the nearest health facility. "This reduces the number of people who die before they can reach a facility," she explains.

Another key element of the team's work is to use a chlorine spray on areas of the property that have potentially been contaminated with cholera, including the entrance and the latrine. This is the task of community-based volunteer Albert Nkhoma.

He has personal experience of the challenges faced by community members and takes his role seriously. "To lose a life is nothing good," he says. "I volunteer because I've always wanted to see improvements for our society. I've always wanted to be part of the solution."

During the visits, environmental health technologist Eric Imbuwa tests the pH and chlorination levels of the household's water. "We want to know whether the water that our communities are using meets the required standard for public health," he says.



Amidst Cholera Crisis, Midwives Become Unsung Heroes, Saving Mothers and Newborns

"How is my baby? Is my baby going to be okay? Has my baby moved?" Bastaba Mwanza had a barrage of questions for the nurse she found in her hospital ward when she gained consciousness, after being out for an entire day.

"Well," the nurse responded, "your baby is fine, the doctor was here and she checked on you." "Are you sure?" came the sharp response from Bastaba.

After some further explaining and assurances from the nurse, Bastaba finally gains composure, and thinks about the events that led her to the facility.

Just the previous day, she was at home enjoying her full health, doing house chores and caring for her two children like she always did. Things changed by mid-day when her four year old son developed a running stomach, which Bastaba dismissed as the regular diarrhoea. By evening she was also experiencing diarrhoea and unlike her son, was also vomiting violently.

Despite being very weak, she initially did not think about going to the hospital. "I thought it would go away like the other times I've had a running stomach, I concluded that we probably ate some food which had gone bad and upset our stomachs."

By the time she was preparing for bed, Bastaba knew that her and son's condition had become too serious to ignore. She had to go to the hospital. "We had gone to the toilet countless times at that point, and were extremely weak." Bastaba recounts.

Her husband rushed them to a local clinic where Bastaba's worst fears were confirmed; she and her son had cholera. "I knew of the

cholera cases in the country and it's symptoms. When the diarrhea and vomiting started, the thoughts of cholera crossed my mind but I was hoping that it was not the case." Bastaba says.

Her son was immediately put on an IV drip at the clinic and showed signs of recovery by morning. For Bastaba however, the situation had only got worse. She had to be transferred to a bigger hospital for treatment.

"I was barely conscious when I was taken by ambulance to the hospital. Throughout this time, my biggest worry was for my unborn child. Immediately we arrived, I passed out."

Bastaba woke up that night at the Levy Mwanawasa Teaching Hospital Cholera Center, one of the referral hospitals fighting Zambia's worst cholera outbreak in more than a decade. She was in the maternity ward, which had being set up to offer specialized care to pre and post-natal women with cholera.

Cynthia Mandele, one of 15 midwives in the maternity ward provided to the facility through UNFPA support as part of it's emergency response to the cholera outbreak was on her night shift the time Bastaba came to.

"The women here come very weak and worried, not only for themselves but also for their pregnancies. It is not easy for anyone to fight cholera, it is worse and more complicated for pregnant women. It's our duty to nurse them back to health and insure the safety of the unborn child," Cynthia says. "The cholera outbreak has

only strengthened my commitment to provide care, during my time at the Cholera center, I have helped deliver 4 babies. It gave me great joy to see the smiles of the mothers of faces even in their tough condition," she adds.

UNFPA has over the years supported the Government of Zambia to help build a competent, well-trained and well-supported midwifery workforce in the country. The midwives are critical to avert maternal and newborn deaths.

Through UNFPA support, the maternity ward cared for and discharged 69 pregnant women and delivered 21 babies since the outbreak was declared in October 2023

Bastaba, who is now back at home, is grateful for the care she received at the facility. "I have resumed going for my monthly antenatal visit at my community hospital and everything is fine. I'm grateful for the care and support I got from the midwives at the cholera center. They were around to cater for our every need, constantly checking on me and the baby."





WHO Zambia launches Cholera Assessment Mission in Central Province amid growing outbreak



In response to the increasing number of cholera cases in Zambia's Central Province, WHO Zambia has undertaken a crucial mission to assess the situation on the ground and map areas for immediate support.

On 15 December 2023, Central Province recorded its first cholera case in Mumbwa district. Since then, the province has witnessed a surge in cholera cases across ten districts, with Chibombo, Kabwe, and Mumbwa being high case-yielding districts.

As of 04 February 2024, Central Province has recorded 1,146 cases with 36 deaths. Sixty-five percent of the deaths are community deaths. This has necessitated the urgent need for interventions to prevent further escalation of the disease. Working with the Ministry of Health at the National, Provincial, and District levels and in collaboration with the Zambia National Institute for Public Health (ZNPPI), WHO Zambia has conducted a thorough assessment of the cholera situation in the province. The team has evaluated the extent of the outbreak, identified high-risk areas, and understood the underlying factors contributing to the rapid spread of the disease.

"Mapping out these areas across response pillars for support will not only address the immediate needs but also help us to implement targeted interventions that will

build resilience against future outbreaks," said Ms. Precious Kalubula, WHO Zambia National Professional Officer for Surveillance and Team Lead.

The preliminary assessment report indicates that the outbreak in areas like Makululu, Katondo, and Nakoli compounds of Kabwe district and fishing camps in Mumbwa and Shibuyunji is exacerbated by inadequate water, sanitation, hygiene infrastructure, and high population mobility.

Since the outbreak declaration, the provincial team has been implementing its response

plan with some challenges, thus slowing the implementation of some activities needed to curb the spread of the disease in the province. However, technical and financial support from partners like WHO, Discover Health, World Vision, and others have proven instrumental in bolstering the provincial response efforts.

"I am happy this assessment has been done because now, as Central Province, we know we will improve the quality of our response. With the gaps identified and solutions recommended, we are confident our health system will be strengthened for this and future outbreaks," said Dr Isaac Banda, Provincial Health Specialist.

WHO Zambia's visit to the Central Province is part of a comprehensive response and preparedness strategy to assess the cholera situation, identify key challenges, and devise targeted interventions for immediate and long-term support.

The outcomes of this mission are expected to address the current cholera outbreak and lay the groundwork for a more resilient and prepared healthcare system in the face of future challenges.

WHO is committed to supporting the Government of Zambia's response efforts. Its coordinated response demonstrates the importance of national and global collaboration in tackling outbreaks and safeguarding the well-being of communities.





Invest in Women; Accelerate progress: UN joins Government in championing investments in Women Empowerment

The Livingstone Institute of Business and Engineering Studies (LIBES) was on the 8th of March the hive of activity as thousands from across the country gathered at the institute's grounds to commemorate the International Women's Day.

Adorned in colourful chitenge fabrics, thousands of women marched to the sound of the military brass band to mark the day which was held under the theme "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress," with a focus on addressing economic disempowerment and highlighting the significance of diversity and empowerment across all sectors of society. Republican President Hakainde Hichilema who was the commemorations guest of honour, stated that investing in women was not only a moral and legal obligation, but is a strategic imperative which will help accelerate development and progress for societies as a whole.

Speaking in his key note address, President Hichilema called for more Constituency Development Funds (CDF) to be channelled towards women empowerment initiatives. The President implored the Members of Parliament and local authorities to ensure the CDF is used to address critical issues that impede women's development such as lack of water and sanitation services, especially in the rural areas.

"One of the priorities of CDF is to ensure that modern maternity wings are constructed in

all health facilities so that women can deliver safely." He said. The President Hichilema also said the government will ensure that more women benefited from the Farmer Input Support Programme, CDF credit facilities and the Citizens Economic Empowerment Commission.

In its vision to make Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stand behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, the United Nations in Zambia supported the commemoration and was represented by Resident Coordinator Beatrice Mutali and UNFPA Representative Seth Broekman, who is also chairperson of the UN in Zambia Gender theme group.

In her remarks, Resident Coordinator Beatrice Mutali announced that the UN will in 2024 invest 1 million dollars in building women's capacity in sustainable forest management, good governance, and climate change smart agriculture.

"As the UN we believe that interventions towards shifting to a green economy are key to amplify women's voices. The UN will enhance its work with the Global Environmental Facility and the Forest and Farm Facility to support women's groups in value addition of forest products." Ms. Mutali Said.

"This international Women's Day is a call for us to enhance public and private investment in programmes to end violence against

women, ensure decent work, and drive women's inclusion and leadership in digital technologies, peacebuilding, climate action, across all sectors of the economy."

On the matters of Gender Based Violence, the Resident Coordinator stressed the urgent need to support women's rights organizations fighting against stereotypes, battling to make women's and girl's voices heard, challenging negative cultural norms, and harmful practices.

She noted that GBV has very close links to poverty, lack of equal opportunities and treatment in the world of work and relates closely to overall development issues.

The United Nations applauded Zambia for key milestones in advancing women's inclusion and leadership through the revision and approval of legal frameworks such as the Anti-GBV act and Marriage (Amendment) Act No.13 of 2023, a landmark legislation towards ending child marriages, by setting 18 as the legal age for all marriages including those under customary law. This work was supported by the joint efforts under the UN Global Joint Programme on Ending Child Marriage in partnership with Gender Division and the Civil Society Network on Ending Child Marriage.

At the same event, various organizations and companies set up exhibitions to demonstrate the different work they do in support of women's empowerment.



Government, FAO Launches National Agricultural Mechanization Strategy NAMS 2023 - 2027



It is only through agricultural transformation that hunger will end and improve nutrition while accelerating economic growth for our country, Zambia's President Hakainde Hichilema has said.

President Hichilema observed that agriculture Mechanization is fundamental to the transformation of Zambia's agriculture, improving farm productivity and enhancing the country's food security.

In a speech read for him by Vice President Mutale Nalumango during the launch of the National Agricultural Mechanization Strategy (NAMS), President Hichilema described the development as a milestone of his administration in the agriculture sector. Government has partnered with the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations

(FAO), the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT), as well as experts from local universities, farmer representatives and the private sector to develop a comprehensive National Agricultural Mechanization Strategy (NAMS), which will be implemented for the next five (5) years.

"In our inaugural address to parliament on 10th September 2021, we pledged to implement policy measures to promote economic transformation, particularly in job-rich sectors such as agriculture, mining, tourism, energy, commerce and industry, green economy, transport as well as information and communication technology," President Hichilema recalled.

He explained that the overall goal of

the National Agricultural Mechanization Strategy is to create an enabling environment for the sustainable development of agricultural Mechanization that considers socio-economic conditions of key stakeholders particularly smallholder farmers, including women and the youth while, ensuring environmental sustainability of agricultural activities.

FAO Country Representative to Zambia Suze Percy Filippini, read the speech on behalf of Ms. Bechdol during the Launch of the Strategy.

Ms. Bechdol observed that empowering farmers with improved tools and technologies will transition them from subsistence to market-oriented farming, attracting more youths to the sector.



UN Zambia Observes the Holocaust Remembrance Day



On 15th February 2024, the United Nations in Zambia hosted the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holocaust. The commemoration, which drew participants from the Jewish community in Zambia, the Youth United Nations Association of Zambia, and members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to Zambia, served as a profound reminder of the atrocities of the past and the importance of collective remembrance.

The Holocaust remains one of the darkest chapters in human history marked by the systematic persecution and extermination of millions of Jews and other marginalized groups by the Nazi regime during World War II.

While the horrors of the Holocaust may seem distant to some, its lessons remain profoundly relevant in today's world, where intolerance and discrimination continue to threaten peace and human dignity.

Against this backdrop, the event began with a short video that introduced the holocaust outlining some key events from 1939 to 1945.

Rabbi Isaac, a representative from the Jewish community in Zambia, shared personal stories and reflections, underscoring the importance of preserving the memory of those who perished and honoring the



As a beacon of international cooperation and solidarity, the United Nations serves as a steadfast advocate for the principles of tolerance and inclusivity, working tirelessly to prevent genocide and atrocities wherever they may occur.



As the Holocaust Observance drew to a close, participants departed with a renewed sense of purpose and resolve.

resilience of survivors.

His testimony served as a stark reminder of the human cost of hatred and prejudice, urging all present to stand against bigotry in all its forms.

Faith Chibwe, a student from The University of Lusaka, emphasized the critical role of young people in promoting tolerance and

understanding.

She also encouraged the youth to become agents of positive change in their communities.

The presence of the diplomatic corps accredited to Zambia added a global dimension to the observance, underscoring the universal significance of Holocaust remembrance.



Minister of Technology and Science has Called for Increased Capacity Building Initiatives for Law enforcement Agencies to Handle Online Gender-Based Violence

The Minister of Technology and Science, Honourable Felix Mutati has called for capacity building programmes to equip law enforcement agencies and the Judiciary to handle reported cases of Online Gender-Based Violence (OGBV) efficiently and effectively. Honourable Mutati expressed concern that without adequate capacity, law enforcement agencies could be a source of increased distress and farther the severity of the effects of OGBV.

He said this during the launch of the Study Report on Online Gender-Based Violence among Women and Girls in Zambia, whose study was facilitated by ZICTA with technical support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as part of the GRZ-UN Joint Programme on GBV Phase II.

The findings from the survey confirm the growing trend in usage of mobile phone services which not only serve as a means of communication but also an avenue for various OGBV risks such including sextortion, extortion, online harassment, hate speech and dissemination of obscene material.

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The survey report has established that the proportion of males to females owning mobile phones was higher and thus correlated to the finding that there are more males aware of the risks associated with being online than females. The report states, "in 2022 males accounted for 544 percent of the individuals that had access to internet services and were aware of risks

associated with online activities while the females accounted for 45.6 per cent. This means that women and girls are likely to be victims of online risks owing to the limited awareness on the existence of such risks".

The most prevalent risks identified by internet users above 10 years that were aware of online risks included fake news, adult pornography and scams accounting for 94.9 percent, 90.1 percent, and 83.7 percent respectively.

Exposure to fake news and scams were the most prevalent incidents that individuals aged 10 years and older with access to internet encountered while online. Specifically, 78.4 percent of the internet users aged 10 years and older that indicated that they were aware of online risks had been exposed to fake news, while 60.0 percent had been exposed to scams. Further, about 47 percent of internet users that were aware of the risks related to cyber bullying while online.

Chileshe Mutale, a victim of OGBV denounced cyber-bullying as a vice that can cause mental health concerns including suicidal thoughts and loss of confidence. She said, "I was devastated, I was depressed, I was so drained. The

comments were so bad. I was body shamed. I was bullied and humiliated."

Narrating the genesis of her ordeal, Chileshe praised ZICTA under the UN Joint Programme on GBV for the role it played in reinvigorating her self-esteem and called for an end to body shaming.

In his concluding remarks, the Minister spotlighted the need for capacity building for law enforcement agencies to protect victims and ensure perpetrators are dealt with according to the Cyber-Security Law.

The Study Report on Online Gender Based Violence among Women and Girls in Zambia is part of a broader GRZ-UN Joint Programme on GBV phase II, which is a multi-partner programme designed to reduce the prevalence of GBV cases in Zambia. It is envisioned that by improving prevention and response strategies that focus on strengthening existing institutional structures, comprehensive and multi-sectoral services will be provided.

The overall phase II GRZ-UN Joint Programme focuses on prevention and response at sub-national and national level.

UNDP works alongside other UN agencies (UNICEF, UNFPA, IOM and ILO) to fulfill provision of a comprehensive anti-GBV package.



Partnerships with Communities and Traditional Leadership Towards Climate Action



"Let us think of tomorrow and not today because when we think of today and not protecting tomorrow, who will suffer? It is our children and grandchildren"

This is a call from Chief Satunyana of Kalomo and Zimba Districts, who has witnessed his beloved chieftom transform from a lively green to a dulling brown in the last decades of his chieftaincy and of his life. Climate change is rolling through his communities and affecting the supply of food and availability of income within the two districts.

This is not an isolated experience, many communities across Zambia's agro-ecological region are experiencing dramatic changes in weather patterns that is leaving many food insecure and without stable sources of income. Increasing floods and extended periods of droughts have affected local farmers' ability to plan their planting and harvest seasons. This is particularly concerning to people living in areas like Zimba, one of the districts within Chief Satunyana's chieftom, where its residents have depended largely on farming to sustain their livelihoods and to earn an income.

Kocebuka Community Foundation, a Community Based Organisation (CBO) in Southern Province, has also observed the growing effects of climate

change specifically in the Zimba and Kazungula districts. To address this trend and facilitate climate mitigation and adaptation in the area, the foundation collaborated with Sichimwa Women's Group to design a project that can enhance food security and stimulate income generating activities within the districts. In June 2022, the Foundation and Women's Group submitted their proposal for the Enhancing Inclusive Rural Community Adaptation & Mitigation to Climate Change project to the Global Environment Facility's Small Grants Programme (GEF-SGP) and were successfully awarded a grant of USD 45,000 (1,028,250).

The project proposal was successful as it resonated with the GEF-SGP's core approach of positioning the climate change affected community at the forefront of developing and implementing the solutions that would further have an impact of their lives. According to Marisa Mushota Kalima, the National Coordinator for the GEF-SGP in Zambia, the programme "believes that communities themselves have solutions to a number of problems that they are encountering."

The support of traditional leadership in the project is also crucial to the sustainability of the project's expected impact. Chief Satunyana attended the launch of the Enhancing Inclusive Rural Community Adaptation & Mitigation to Climate Change project, encouraging this chieftom to actively support the project's implementation, stating: "Let us embrace this project... the emphasis should be ownership by the recipients of the project." This comes hard of the heels of the Conference of the Parties (COP28) where UNDP Zambia held a side event with the Ministry of Green Economy and Environment that covered the necessity of partnerships with traditional leaderships towards effective and comprehensive climate action.

The community and the chieftom's involvement in the project will go a long way in ensuring that the project's impact is maximised and sustained even after its 24-month running period expires. Paswell Nyambe, the Programme Manager of Kocebuka Community Foundation shared his optimism about the project's future, considering the support and involvement of the Chief and community,



Launch of a Transformative Strategic Plan for Disability Inclusion in Zambia

“Persons with disabilities face challenges to fully participate in society which is further heightened by discriminatory social attitudes,” says UNDP Zambia’s Resident Representative James Wakiaga.

“Persons with disabilities face challenges to fully participate in society which is further heightened by discriminatory social attitudes,” says UNDP Zambia’s Resident Representative, James Wakiaga.

Under the United Nations Joint Programme on Social Protection (UNJPSP-II), UNDP works in tandem with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNICEF in Zambia to provide technical assistance to the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) to deliver effective, efficient, and rights-based design and implementation of Social Protection programmes. The project is funded by the Swiss Federation and the Governments of Ireland, the Kingdom of Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Amongst other activities, the UNDP played a key role in the project by supporting the development of the new ZAPD Strategic Plan, after supporting the capacity building of over 150 Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) in national planning, budgeting, and monitoring and evaluation in 5 provinces, in collaboration with ZAPD and Ministry of Finance and National Planning.

In a speech read on his behalf by the interim UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, Ethel Bangwayo, at the launch of Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ZAPD) Strategic Plan 2023-2026, Mr. Wakiaga emphasized that, “the extent of inequalities experienced by persons with disabilities in all areas of development is often the result of shortcomings in the structural, social, political and cultural environments in which they reside, including lack of accessibility of physical and virtual environments; institutional and attitudinal barriers; exclusion; and unequal opportunities.”

Mr. Wakiaga highlighted the UN’s mandate to advance the core principles of the UN Charter and support disability-inclusive development through the twin complementary frameworks of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He stated, “As the development branch of the UN system, UNDP supports member states as they seek to achieve the SDGs by 2030 and fulfil their human rights obligations under the CRPD; we do so through a human rights-based approach to our programming.” He further noted that “We work to build the capacity of both duty bearers, namely



the state and its institutions at the national and sub-national level, to meet their obligations under the CRPD and other core human rights treaties they are state parties to. We also work to build the capacity of rights-holders, namely persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, to empower them to claim their rights.”

As part of the UN system in Zambia, Mr. Wakiaga said UNDP is looking forward to supporting the Government in areas such as CRPD compliant budgeting, the development of the Disability Mainstreaming Guidelines and to build the capacity of OPDs to track the allocation and expenditure of resources for disability inclusion, including the implementation of the 8NDP at national and sub-national levels. These efforts will ensure that adequate resources are allocated for disability inclusion. He reiterated that UNDP remains committed to working with ZAPD to ensure that it achieves its vision of a vibrant agency that coordinates and regulates disability inclusive services.

Speaking during the same launch, Minister of Community Development and Social Services, Honorable Doreen Mwamba, said “the Strategic Plan will provide an operational context for the Agency and enhance its performance in line with the 8th National Development Plan and other national documents in order to efficiently and effectively serve its clientele.”



Cultivating hope: How Zambian smallholder farmers are benefitting from climate-resilient farming



Nanswau, is a single mother of three daughters and a son and the sole provider for her family. In the past, Nanswau struggled to make ends meet. She lacked a reliable source of income, depending primarily on small-scale farming, cultivating crops such as beans, maize, and groundnuts. Her yields were frequently impacted by climate-related factors such as drought and flash floods.

Witnessing her children go hungry and sleep in an unstable thatched-roof house became an overwhelming source of concern for her. "I would constantly worry about my children's well-being and spend sleepless nights praying for opportunities to make a steady income so I could support them," Nanswau said.

"I felt so anxious every time it rained. Due to a leaking thatched roof, my children and I would move into a corner just to avoid being soaked. Every day we would move things around the house to keep them from getting wet – but that did not help, we still ended up soaked", she said. With their uniforms and books often drenched, the children's school attendance was affected. Furthermore, all their household items – including clothing, African mat, and bedding – were consistently damp during the rainy season. This posed a significant risk of pneumonia for her family. "I feared that my children would get sick," she said.

While rain was a constant source of anxiety, so too were recurring droughts. "When my crops were affected by drought, we did not have any harvest and ended up cutting down on meals; at times we would sleep on empty stomachs. When I did piecemeal work on other people's farms, I would buy a 2kg bag of maize meal that would only last us a day and this meant not eating the following days," she said.

In 2022, Nanswau learnt about the SCRALA project through a camp extension officer who informed her about a meeting that was going to take

place within her community regarding the project. Intrigued, she attended the meeting, during which the project's aim was explained by project officers. Afterwards, her name was registered and was later selected-she qualified under the categories of vulnerable households.

Implemented by the Zambian Government through the Ministry of Agriculture, with funding from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and support by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and World Food Programme (WFP), the project – known as SCRALA – targets vulnerable smallholder farmers at risk of being left behind, such as women, the youth, persons with disabilities and the elderly. It aims to reach more than one million people, including transforming the lives of more than 940,000 farmers in Zambia.

The project operates across 16 districts in Zambia and provides comprehensive support to small-scale farmers throughout the agricultural value chain, from farm to market. This encompasses agricultural planning, production guidance, and post-production assistance, along with access to reliable weather information to enable farmers to make informed decisions, including which crops to plant and when.

Additionally, the project offers farmers farming inputs (seeds for resilient crops such as cowpeas, groundnut, maize seed, as well as soil kits and farming tools), enhanced knowledge of conservation agriculture, market access, financial management skills, and opportunities for alternative livelihoods such as goat and chicken farming, fish cultivation, and beekeeping.

These efforts aim to enhance food security, promote sustainable household income, promote climate-resilient agricultural production, thus contributing to the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals, notably No Poverty (Goal 1), Zero Hunger (Goal 2), and Climate Action (Goal 13).

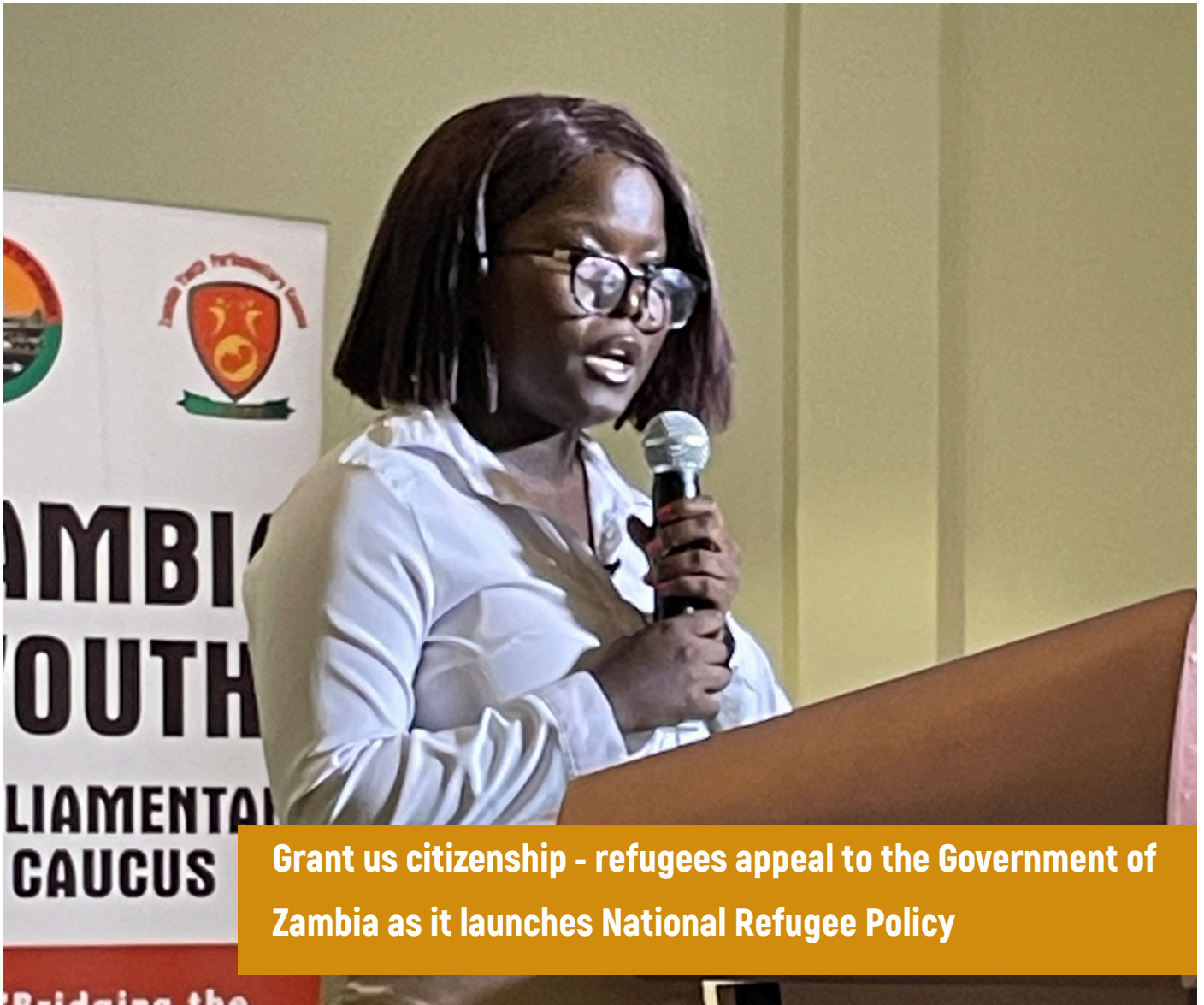
Ultimately, the project is helping build a shock-responsive, risk-informed, and inclusive society, aligning with the country's Eighth National Development Plan.

Nanswau's journey is just one example of the difference this vital initiative is making for communities facing growing challenges driven by climate change.

Later in the year, she had become a participant in the project's pass-on mechanism-the model provides goats (four female and one male) to individuals who have been severely affected by climate change-especially focusing on women and persons with disabilities because they are disproportionately affected by the effects of climate change. Under the mechanism, each participant initially receives five goats and subsequently, once their herd grows to 10, they pass on five goats to the next person in line.

"I was very happy when I received five goats last year because I knew for sure this meant a better life for me and my children, so I looked after the goats so well," Nanswau said.

"I have managed to buy roofing sheets to renovate the house for me and my children. Before, we lived in constant fear of the thatched roof falling on us, especially during the rainy season," said Nanswau.



Grant us citizenship - refugees appeal to the Government of Zambia as it launches National Refugee Policy

"I was born in Zambia and have lived all my life in this country; I went to school here, can speak several Zambian languages fluently and sing the national anthem in several local languages. But why am I still being considered and treated as a foreigner, as a refugee, and not granted citizenship?" Asked Chance Uwela, a refugee student, at the launch of the National Refugee Policy in the Zambian capital city, Lusaka. The event was attended by the Minister of Home Affairs and Internal Security, Jack Mwiimbu, Government and United Nations officials, diplomats, humanitarian and development partners, and refugees on 19 January 2024.

Chance delivered a compelling argument and said she spoke for many refugees living in Zambia. In her speech, she called upon the minister to take action to ensure that the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) grants citizenship to all eligible refugees and former refugees. Without citizenship, they face numerous challenges, including

barriers in access tertiary education, employment, and freedom of movement. By granting citizenship to eligible refugees, the GRZ can help provide people like Chance with the stability and security they need to build a better future for themselves and their families. Chance's appeal serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of recognizing the contributions of refugees and creating an environment that allows them to participate fully in the communities in which they live.

Implementation of the National Refugee Policy in Zambia brings enormous hope and excitement to refugees like Chance, other forcibly displaced persons in Zambia and their host communities.

The policy has been recognized as a significant and singular development in the region and further afield. It is expected to jump-start changes to the national legal framework, policies and administrative guidelines across line ministries to improve

the protection and rights of forcibly displaced persons and create opportunities for long-term solutions for them, while providing significant support to their host communities.

Anticipated changes, in line with the 10 pledges made by Vice-President, Mutale Nalumango, at the 2023 Global Refugee Forum in Geneva, will enable refugees to access tertiary education, skills, and entrepreneurship opportunities. These changes will enable a whole-of-government approach to asylum and refugee management in Zambia, making it possible for refugees to access national services, be counted for national planning purposes and become productive and self-reliant members of their communities in Zambia.



Addressing Youth Unemployment Through Private-Public Partnerships

Over 60% of Zambia's population is under the age of 25 – they are young, capable, and eager to find decent work and contribute to their families' livelihoods and to the development of their country. Yet, despite Zambia's increase in economic growth (averaging 4.9% between 2011 and 2016, and 14% during the period 2017 and 2021) and its dynamic and youthful population, job creation has not kept up with the increasing number of young people entering the labour force each year.

The Government of Zambia, through the Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Arts, has partnered with UN agencies in Zambia in line with its commitment in the 8th National Development Plan, tackling youth unemployment in the country.

"With such a youthful population as Zambia has, economic growth will hinge on empowering young people to create sustainable livelihoods, generate income and find their place in a local, national, regional and international ecosystem that supports their aspirations" – noted the Resident Coordinator for UN Zambia, Beatrice Mutali.

Since its launch in December 2022, the GRZ-UN Joint Programme on Youth – Phase 1, has been testing viable solutions to accelerate job creation and youth empowerment in Zambia. The programme saw the commissioning of a Youth Resource Centre in Mufumbwe, where ICT equipment worth approximately 2 million Kwacha was provided by UNDP. Additionally, through the Internship, Volunteer, Apprenticeship and Graduate (IVAG) programme, over 1500 young Zambians are employed within

various government ministries, agencies, and departments and across various UN agencies in the country.

These interns and graduates are gaining valuable, meaningful, and practical work experience and skills development from their host organisations.

"I am happy to be part of the IVAG programme as I am learning a lot and able to support my family" – shares Grace Mulenga, an intern placed in the District Administrative Office in Nakonde.

Given the systems transformative approach that the programme has adopted, it is undeniable that engagement with all ecosystem actors is critical to its success. Public-private partnerships are key to driving youth upskilling and employment and to scaling the success of initiatives such as the IVAG programme. As the engine of the economy, the private sector must be closely involved in youth empowerment activities to further Zambia's development trajectory and to tap into the full potential of youth in the country.

Speaking at a breakfast event held with the private sector to explore mutual interest areas regarding youth employability, the Honourable Minister for Youth, Sports, and Arts, Mr Elvis Chishala Nkandu, MP, noted: "The private sector constitutes about 90% of employment opportunities on the African continent similarly for Zambia too.

This is why the government of the Republic of Zambia values the role of the private sector in achieving sustainable development. We have seen how the private sector has been

gradually expanding with an increased investment by local and international companies, financial institutions, bilateral partners, resulting in increased economic and employment opportunities in the country."

During the private sector engagement meeting, Managing Directors, Chief Executive Officers, and other senior representatives from various private sector organisations, including Standard Chartered Bank, MTN Zambia, Umoyo Natural Health, SeedCo, Ecobank, Zamtel, Liquid Technologies, Choppies, 260 Brands, ABSA, Zambian Breweries, Prudential, Zanaco, CFAO and many others, led insightful and engaging discussions on key areas and approaches to enhance youth employment in Zambia.

The meeting ended on a high note with concrete pledges being made by the private sector to offer more internships as part of IVAG programme and to partner with the joint programme in various ways to enhance youth employability and enterprise development.

In his closing remarks at the private sector engagement meeting, James Wakiaga, the UNDP Resident Representative for Zambia highlighted, "With the support of each one of us, the impact and scale of this initiative can be multiplied".

He further encouraged the private sector to "join on this journey towards empowering the vibrant youth of this country."



First Cohort of 27 Veterinarians and Para-Veterinarians Successfully Complete In-Service Applied Epidemiology Training (ISAVET) Programme



In Zambia, a transformative initiative has recently come to fruition. With its inception in September 2023, the In-Service Applied Epidemiology Training (ISAVET) Programme, a collaborative venture led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in partnership with the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), has reached a pivotal milestone. 7th March 2024 witnessed the graduation of the programme's first cohort, comprised of 27 dedicated veterinarians and para-veterinarians. Organized under the auspices of FAO's Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD), this milestone not only signifies Zambia's commitment to advancing veterinary expertise but also marks a significant leap forward in fortifying the country's capacity for field epidemiology in the vital realm of animal health.

Since its inception in 2018, the ISAVET program has been a beacon of hope in tackling endemic, emerging infectious, and transboundary animal diseases. By adopting a "training through service" approach, the program has been instrumental in equipping the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock with the necessary skills and knowledge.

Zambia embraced the ISAVET Program in June 2023, marking a significant step towards empowering local stakeholders to drive the initiative forward. The inaugural training for Cohort 1, comprising 30 passionate participants, was tailored to emphasize practical learning and real-world application. Through focused efforts

on disease surveillance, prevention, and control measures, ISAVET is paving the way for a healthier and more resilient livestock sector in Zambia.

Eng. Himba Cheelo, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, affirmed, "The Frontline In-Service Applied Veterinary Epidemiology Training ISAVET will help in bolstering and enabling officers in the frontline to detect and provide effective early responses to animal diseases." This declaration underscores the critical role ISAVET plays in equipping frontline personnel with the necessary skills to safeguard animal health and ensure a sustainable future for Zambia's agricultural industry."

FAO ECTAD in Zambia plays a pivotal role in supporting the ISAVET Program, providing technical expertise and guidance to ensure its success. This eight-month journey culminated in a proud moment as the first ISAVET cohort graduates, equipped with enhanced epidemiological competencies.

This marks a significant milestone towards improved capacities in detecting, preventing, and responding to animal diseases in Zambian communities, ensuring better livelihoods and food security' said Suze Percy-Filippini, FAO Representative in Zambia.

The ISAVET Cohort 1 Graduation Workshop evaluated the performance of trainees, facilitated the formation of an alumni association, and conducted an After-Action Review (AAR) to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for future program enhancements. This

graduation signifies a significant stride in bolstering the capacity for field epidemiology within Zambia's animal health sector.

"Skills and knowledge gained through the ISAVET program will serve as a solid foundation for future works because the skills will strengthen," emphasized Robin Sharma, Deputy Director of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission. This statement underscores the invaluable contribution of ISAVET in enhancing capabilities and ensuring sustained progress in veterinary epidemiology.

Blessings Kantu Kalimbika, a Tsetse Biologist from Kaoma District, expressed deep gratitude for the invaluable training provided to ISAVET Cohort 1. Over the period from 24 September 2023 to 7 March 2024, the cohort embarked on a transformative journey, refining their abilities in disease detection, surveillance, intervention, reporting, and local research. Kalimbika extended heartfelt appreciation to FAO, USAID, and the government for offering this enriching opportunity, recognizing their pivotal role in empowering individuals like himself to make meaningful contributions to the health and well-being of Zambian communities.





How Zambia's 1000 Days in SCT Gender and Nutrition Sensitive Pilot is empowering women in Mwinilunga, North-Western province



Situated in the North-Western part of Zambia, Mwinilunga district is blessed with numerous water bodies, including hosting the source of the Zambezi River. Like many other rural areas in the country, Mwinilunga faces significant challenges when it comes to poverty. The poverty situation in this district is characterized by high levels of deprivation, limited access to basic services, and a lack of economic opportunities. Most of the population depends on subsistence farming as their primary means of sustenance. However, agricultural productivity continues to suffer due to a combination of factors such as climate change-induced erratic weather patterns, inadequate land management practices, and limited access to modern farming techniques. These compounding effects of climate change have made it increasingly challenging for farmers to maintain a consistent and sufficient yield. Consequently, addressing these issues becomes imperative for uplifting agricultural productivity in the region.

As a result, many families struggle to produce enough food to meet their daily needs, let alone generate surplus income. This leads to chronic food insecurity and malnutrition, particularly among vulnerable groups such as children and women.

This picture holds a special significance for Felister Chisefu, affectionately known as 'Nyampasa', the mother of twins. With a total of six children, including the two-year-olds Ntemesha and Nkundefzhi, Felister's journey is

both challenging and heartwarming.

"When the twins were born and my husband left us, I found myself relying on the kindness of others for my basic necessities," revealed Felister, reflecting on her past. "While it wasn't always enough to fulfill all of our needs, I am grateful for the assistance that was provided."

After her husband left, Felister decided to join her mother in the village. It wasn't long before she discovered the district office under the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS) conducting registration to support pregnant women, lactating mothers and adolescent mothers with children under 24 months. Intrigued, Felister went through a selection process and was successfully enrolled on the Gender and Nutrition-Sensitive Social Protection pilot initiative. This pilot program, known as the 1000 Days in Social Cash Transfer (SCT) pilot, offers not only financial assistance but also a range of complementary services aimed at enhancing the nutritional status of households in Chipata, Kalabo, Mpika and Mwinilunga districts. The 1000 Days in SCT pilot is part of the United Nations Joint Programme on Social Protection II in Zambia's collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) through MCDSS.

Felister happily shared, "Receiving a bi-

monthly cash transfer of ZMW550.00 (USD24.09) allows me to provide food and clothing for my children. Sometimes, I am able to buy meat and chicken. Additionally, I have begun investing. I purchased a pig recently which is currently pregnant.

As Felister prepares to exit the pilot given that the twins will be soon reaching 24 months as per the programme guidelines, she eagerly discussed her plans for ensuring her daughters' nutritional requirements are consistently met. When asked about her strategy, she confidently revealed, "Grateful for the financial support received, I have embarked on a small-scale piggery and farming venture. My goal is to create a sustainable income stream that will not only support my family but also allow me the opportunity to invest in another pig as I exit the pilot."

The 1000 Days in Social Cash Transfer pilot is led by the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services in collaboration with Ministry of Health (MoH) and the National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC) with technical support from the GRZ-United Nations Joint Programme on Social Protection Phase Two (UNJPSP-II). Financial support is provided by the governments of the Republic of Ireland, the Kingdom of Sweden, the Swiss Confederation and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Their generous contributions have enabled us to provide cash assistance tailored to families' specific needs.

This approach ensures that households can exercise autonomy with dignity, having the freedom to decide how to utilize the funds or make purchases without any imposed conditions to meet the nutrition needs of pregnant women and children below 24 months of age.(WHO), Zambia has an estimated 2 million Persons with Disabilities (equivalent to approximately 15 percent of the total population).



OP-ED – INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY 2024

“INVEST IN WOMEN: ACCELERATE PROGRESS” - António Guterres, UN Secretary General



The fight for women's rights over the past fifty years is a story of progress.

Women and girls have demolished barriers, dismantled stereotypes and driven progress towards a more just and equal world. Women's rights were finally recognised as fundamental and universal human rights. Hundreds of millions more girls are in classrooms around the world. And pioneering leaders have

smashed glass ceilings across the globe.

But progress is under threat. And full equality remains light years away.

Billions of women and girls face marginalization, injustice and discrimination, as millennia of male domination continue to shape societies. The persistent epidemic of gender-based violence disgraces humanity. Over four million girls are estimated to be at risk of female genital mutilation each year. Discrimination against women and girls remains perfectly legal in much of the world. In some places, that makes it difficult for women to own property, in others, it allows men to rape their wives with impunity.

Meanwhile, global crises are hitting women and girls hardest. Wherever there's conflict, climate disaster, poverty or hunger, women and girls suffer most. In every region of the world, more women

than men go hungry. In both developed and developing countries, a backlash against women's rights, including their sexual and reproductive rights, is stalling and even reversing progress.

New technologies – which have such potential to dismantle inequalities – too often make matters worse. That can be because of unequal access, algorithms with baked-in bias, or misogynistic violence – from deep fakes to targeted harassment of specific women.

At our current speed, full legal equality for women is some 300 years away; so is the end of child marriage. This rate of change is frankly insulting. Half of humanity can't wait centuries for their rights. We need equality now. That means accelerating the pace of progress. And that relies on political ambition, and on investment – the theme of this year's International Women's Day.

Youth Week

From the 5th to the 15th of March, the National Youth Week commenced with a series of events aimed at honoring the contributions of young Zambians and empowering them to shape the country's future under the theme Zambia@60#Bethechange.

The festivities commenced on March 5th with the official launch event, marked by a dynamic showcase of entertainment. From invigorating aerobics sessions to engaging fun games, the launch set a spirited tone for the week ahead, inviting youth from all corners of the nation to participate and engage.

On March 6th, the spotlight turned to the Youth Careers Fair, where young minds gathered to explore pathways to success. Esteemed speakers, including prominent figures, delivered keynote addresses underscoring the pivotal role of youth empowerment and innovation in fostering economic growth and sustainable development. Minister of Water Development and Sanitation, Hon. Mike Elton Mposha, representing the Vice President, reaffirmed the government's commitment to supporting young people in their journey

towards employment and entrepreneurship. "Our goal is to reduce the unemployment rate by encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship," emphasized Minister Mposha, echoing the government's dedication to nurturing a conducive environment for youth prosperity.

James Wakiaga, the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), echoed these sentiments, praising the government's leadership in youth empowerment initiatives. He highlighted the GRZ-UN Joint Programme on Youth as a shining example of successful collaboration, emphasizing the importance of collective action in addressing youth empowerment and employment challenges.

March 7th witnessed a heartwarming display of community spirit with the Youth Community Service initiative. Young volunteers came together to clean three key locations: Kamwala Market, Matero After Care Home, and Chiyota Youth Resource Centre, demonstrating their commitment to making a positive impact in their communities.

On 12th March, the National Youth Day, all eyes turned to Chipata in the Eastern Province, where His Excellency Mr. Hakainde Hichilema, the President of the Republic of Zambia, led a solemn wreath-laying ceremony. This gesture paid tribute to the sacrifices of past generations, reminding the youth of their role in shaping Zambia's future.

The peak of the week arrived on March 15th with the National Youth Indaba and the official launch of the National Youth Policy by President Hakainde Hichilema.





“Water is Life” – Working with Habene Community Members to Revive a Life-Giving Water Source



Mubuyu River is not a natural stream, but has earned its name from the floods that characterise it during the rainy season. It has since become a life source for many wards and villages around Munyumbwe, Gwembe district – it provides water for drinking, cooking, crop gardens, and for livestock and local wildlife. For many years, the communities along the Mubuyu River have depended on its water for their livelihoods, using it to sustain themselves and their families. But times are changing, and weather patterns are becoming increasingly unpredictable, leaving the communities along the valley food insecure.

Gwembe District, located in Lower Zambezi, is a natural water basin in Zambia’s agro-ecological region I. The basin receives less than 800l of rain annually and is prone to droughts and flash floods. The flash floods destroy crops, livestock, and infrastructure, while spreading diseases such as cholera and typhoid.

In the months following the heavy rains and floods, the district is hit by an 8 month long dry season. With temperatures reaching as high as 40°C, the valley dries out completely. To manage during the dry season, community members have dug small water wells, called Chikala in Tonga, on the Mubuyu river floor. The water wells are used to source drinkable water for households but are not large enough to provide the community with water for their crop gardens and livestock. Instead, the community have built dam walls along the river floor out of sand bricks. These walls help store some water for their cattle, pigs, goats,

and crops.

While these solutions have gone a long way in ensuring that community members can provide food for their families, many residents have opted for alternative sources of income such as charcoal burning, to boost and sustain their livelihoods. This leads to increased deforestation, further compounding land use issues the district already faces.

“The chikala have helped, but it is not enough to stop many animals from dying and to last until the next rainy season... That is why we are burning the charcoal for extra money to get food for our families”, shares Mutinta Moonga from the Women’s Group.

Francis Kasamala, the Executive Director of a Zambian NGO – Programme Against Malnutrition – has been working with communities in Gwembe District for years on several projects. Over the last decade, he noticed the weather patterns continue to change, affecting the water supply in the surrounding communities. Community members had even approached Francis to discuss the worsening weather conditions, expressing a desire to collaborate on a project that improves the community’s access to water.

“The valley is dry immediately after the rainy reason for 7 to 8 months in the year, our animals are dying, and we cannot even water our crops. But in the months between late December and to early March the heavy rains fill the Mubuyu river and even floods the

villages, I think it would be a good idea to save that water for the rest of the year so that the surrounding communities can have water for their homes and animals”

In June 2022, the Global Environment Facility’s Small Grants Programme (GEF-SGP) published a call for project proposals that address climate change, and water and land management in Zambia’s drought and flood prone districts. PAM worked with the Kubota Muzeezo Women’s Group in Habene Village to develop a project proposal that would resolve some of the water related issues in the village and in the district.

“When we came here, we asked the community what they wanted and they all said water – and that is how this project was conceptualised”, shares Francis.

The project aims to enhance food and nutrition security and incomes of the vulnerable rural households in Gwembe through improving the community’s access to water and promoting water efficient and climate smart agricultural practices. By building a weir dam that will store water from the rainy season for up to 6 months, when the dry season hits, the water will be slowly released into the surrounding streams that typically dry out during the yearly droughts.

Additionally, the Kubota Muzeezo Women’s Group will remain instrumental throughout the project’s two-year period by engaging the community on water efficient and climate smart agriculture and on enhancing proper land and water management.



UN Staff, Families Donate Essential Items for GBV Shelters in Lusaka



It is largely known that many of the GBV shelters are under-funded and under-supplied, and this campaign provided the opportunity for UN staff to make a tangible difference to the lives of people who have experienced severe trauma and intimate partner violence, many of them awaiting trial in the safe houses that UN staff have supported during this campaign.

The UN in Zambia calls on Cooperating Partners and other large businesses to join us collecting material donations for GBV shelters around the country during 16 Days of Activism Against GBV in 2024.

During the 2023 International Campaign for 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, staff members across UN agencies and offices in Lusaka participated in a material donation drive in support of victims and survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Chongwe, Kafue and Lusaka.

Jointly organized by the Lusaka Gender Division and the United Nations (UN) Gender Theme Group, this initiative allowed UN staff to donate toiletries, dry food and clothes for babies, children and women who are currently living in safe houses across the Province. The donation campaign started on International Day of the Elimination of Violence Against Women on 25th November 2023 and was concluded on International Human Rights Day on 10th December 2023.





IOM Zambia empowers young vulnerable people with trade skills

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) in partnership with Save the Children, Young Africa and Chisomo Community Programme delivered vocational skills training and graduated over 160 beneficiaries of IOM's SRHR - HIV Knows No Borders (KNB) Phase II program in Zambia funded by the Embassy of the Royal Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The graduation ceremony took place at Uncle Chipeta's Lodge in Chipata District of Eastern Province, where Ms. Keisha Livermore, IOM Zambia Chief of Mission, emphasized the importance of vocational skills training in empowering individuals, particularly women.

She highlighted how the program aimed to equip participants with essential skills and knowledge across various trades, thereby creating sustainable livelihood opportunities, promoting economic independence, and breaking the cycle of poverty and vulnerability.

Ms. Livermore further noted that the vocational skills training initiative served as a crucial step in addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and combating HIV prevalence within the community.

"This graduation is particularly special as we also recognize and celebrate International Women's Day under the theme: "Investing in Women, Accelerating Progress." I am delighted to see how the theme coincides with this graduation which has approximately 62 young women who have passed their exams



and completed their internship obligations," added Ms. Livermore.

Dr. Tasanya Chinsamy, IOM Migration Health Policy Officer, representing Dr. Mabuza, the KNB Regional Manager, reiterated the project's goal to reduce economic vulnerability and consequently decrease SRHR risks among affected individuals. The aim was to empower participants to make safer and informed SRHR choices, thereby improving SRHR outcomes on both individual and public health levels.

Mr. Clement Chilembo, Assistant Secretary, conveyed appreciation to IOM Zambia and its partners for implementing the KNB project in Chipata. He extended special gratitude to the government and people of the Royal Kingdom of the Netherlands for their generous financial support to Zambia through the KNB Project.

Selina Njobvu, Food Production graduate, thanked IOM Zambia, Young Africa, and their partners for funding her studies. She said, "This program didn't just teach me Food Production skills, but also gave me knowledge about SRHR, which helps me make better decisions about my sexual and reproductive health."

On March 15, 2024, a total of 166 individuals graduated from IOM Zambia SRHR - HIV KNB Vocational Training and Skills Program. Among them were 46 female sex workers, 57 male Youth Vulnerable People (YVP), and 63 female YVP. The graduates specialized in various trades including Food Production, General Agriculture, Fashion Design and Textile Technology, Electrical Technology, and Automotive Engineering.





Zambia WOW! Launch of Mukuba UniPod at Copperbelt University is a Monumental Achievement, UNDP Regional Director

As the country joins 12 other African countries in leveraging youth creative and innovation skills to stimulate development through innovation and technology



February 26th Kitwe, 2024 – Today marks yet another monumental occasion for UNDP and the people of Zambia as the nation joins 12 other African countries in launching a University Innovation Pod (UNIPOD), a strategic effort to bolster Africa's burgeoning innovation system intended to contribute towards supporting local grass root innovations that respond to development challenges.

The UniPod is a UNDP flagship initiative, implemented through the Timbuktoo – a pan-African startup builder and venture fund with aims to bridge gaps in early-stage risk capital for African startups, and the UNDP Accelerator Labs – the largest and fastest learning network for solving development challenges, the UniPod will tap into the incredible potential of makers, creators, and entrepreneurs on the continent to solve complex developmental challenges. Named Mukuba UniPod, the hub is housed in at the Copperbelt University in Kitwe, creating a space for entrepreneurs and innovators to engage on and exchange ideas, develop prototypes, test solutions, access a wide variety of resources to scale ideas into

marketable solutions.

The launch of Mukuba UNIPOD is therefore an opportunity to engage youths to channel their talents towards innovative solutions – a cornerstone of sustainable development.

Speaking at the launch of the UNIPOD in Kitwe, the UN Assistant Secretary General and UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Africa, Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa shared that “the launch of the University Innovation Pod (UniPod) underscores Zambia's pivotal role alongside 12 other African nations, demonstrating the transformative power and strategic influence of innovation influence of innovations in improving the lives of people.

Ms Eziakonwa expressed joy at both the nation of Zambia and CBU for achieving this landmark status in the use of technology and innovation to attain sustainable development, “we extend our heartfelt congratulations to Zambia and the Copperbelt University for the monumental achievement of establishing the country's pioneering UNIPOD”.

The UniPod was established after 10 months of implementation has been set to not only cater for the Copperbelt University students but will cater for all innovators across the country with a particular focus on promoting female led grass root innovations, bringing together diverse actors in the innovation ecosystem and leveraging Private sector partnerships with Liquid Intelligent technologies leading the way. With this backdrop, Ms Eziakonwa has recognized Mukuba UniPod as a model UniPod, which must be used in establishing other Innovation Hubs particularly across the country.

The incredible innovations and technologies that were showcased at what the UNDP Regional Director dubbed as a “Centre of Excellence” has to the re- evaluation of Zambia's suitability as a host for a Timbuktoo Innovation Hub, in addition to the eight innovation hubs in Africa!

“This is a centre of excellence. It is a model for establishing other UNIPODS and I believe that Zambia should be the 9th country to join the Timbuktoo project”, Ms Eziakonwa shared.





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UN Zambia Cholera Response





UN TEAM IN ZAMBIA



Beatrice Mutali
UN Resident Coordinator



Suze Percy Filippini
FAO Representative



Edith Kirumba
IFAD Country Director for Lesotho,
Botswana and Zambia



Wellington Chibebe
ILO Country Director- Zambia,
Malawi & Mozambique



Keisha Livermore
IOM Chief of Mission



Ramin Granfar
ITC Country Manager



John Kimathi Ndungu
UNCDF Acting Officer in Charge



Penelope Campbell (Ph.D)
UNICEF Representative



Khauhelo Mawana
UNCTAD Regional
Coordinator



James Wakiaga
UNDP Resident Representative



Eunice Kamwendo
UNECA Regional Director



Nisha
UNESCO Regional Director
and Representative a.i



Meseret Teklemariam Zemedkun (Ph.D)
Head of UNEP Southern Africa Sub-
Regional Office



Abigail Noko
OHCHR Regional
Representative



Preeta Law
UNHCR Representative



Masayuki Yokota
UNHABITAT Task Manager for
Zambia



Diego Masera
UNIDO - OiC Regional Office in
the Republic of South Africa



Dr. Tharcisse Barihuta
UNAIDS Country Director



Rainer Frauenfeld
UNOPS Director



Jane Marie Ongolo
UNODC Representative of Regional
Office for Southern Africa



Seth Broekman
UNFPA Representative



Cissy Byenkya
WFP Representative and
Country Director



Dr. Nathan Nsubuga Bakyaite
WHO Representative



Agnes Kijazi
WMO Regional Director



UNITED NATIONS
ZAMBIA



UN House, Alick Nkhata Road
P.O. Box 31966
Lusaka, ZAMBIA
Office: +260 211 386200 Ext 221
Email: rcs-unzambia@un.org



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